

Biological Farmers of Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

May 5, 2010

CAN WE AFFORD NOT TO GO ORGANIC?

Evidence for the benefits of organic food is mounting, according to the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) General Manager Holly Vyner who makes comment in response to recent reports about a study claiming that organic food offers no nutritional benefits over non-organic food.

Ms Vyner has today drawn attention to a report by the French Agency for Food Safety (FAFS) which found that organic foods are more nutritious than conventionally-produced foods and contain lower levels of pesticides.

Ms Vyner said the report by FAFS also showed that organic foods have lower levels of nitrates, which belong to a class of chemical compounds, more than 90 per cent of which have been declared carcinogenic.

Ms Vyner also drew upon findings from the largest ever study of organic and non-organic production commissioned by the European Union (EU), for which preliminary findings have shown overwhelming evidence that organic produce has significantly higher nutrient levels.

Evidence from the \$27million, four year study found that organic fruit and vegetables contained between 20 and 40 per cent more antioxidants, which scientists believe can cut the risk of cancer and heart disease, Australia's biggest killers.

The research also found organic produce contained higher levels of vitamin C, antioxidants, beneficial minerals such as iron and zinc and substantially higher levels of compounds thought to boost health and combat disease.

"If you have 20 per cent more antioxidants in every portion of vegetables, then it's simply a question of maths - eating four portions of organic is equivalent to eating five non-organic portions," Ms Vyner said.

"Chemical-free is only a small part of the organic picture with plenty of research evidence to demonstrate that organic food is the choice when buying food and fibres produced with animal welfare, the environment and human health in mind," she said.

Ms Vyner went on to say that with a guarantee for so many health and ethical benefits, it is little wonder certified organic produce is claiming an increasing share of the Australian marketplace.

"Despite widespread drought and the global recession, according to BFA's 2008 Australian Organic Market Report there has been a growth in organic farm gate sales by 80 per cent in the four years since 2004 and organic retail sales have topped the half billion mark," she said.

"There will continue to be new studies revealing the health benefits of organic food, and as the organic industry grows, attacks claiming organics is no better for you and is a waste of money, will keep emerging in the media. This latest review is by no means the last we'll hear of this debate."



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In its report on the "top 10" growth industries, global industry researcher IBIS World last month stated that organic farming revenue is poised for a growth spurt. The growth spurt would mean an increase of 14.8 per cent in 2010, raising the value of the organic industry to \$430 million. "This places organic farming in the top two growth industries in Australia this year," Ms Vyner said.

"Research shows that six in 10 Australian households buy organic produce at least occasionally, attracted first and foremost by the omission of synthetic pesticides, GMOs and synthetic food additives, but also by organics' better flavour and nutrition, and its proven benefits for animals and the environment."

For more information and 20 reasons on why you should buy organic, go to www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260

The full French Agency for Food Safety (AFSS) scientific report can be found at http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/organic/ASD_Lairon_2009.pdf

END

All media are welcome. Media images and interviews will be available for both events.

Post- event information will also be available.

For more information contact:

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