

From the General Manager:

# A wave of sustainability discussion gains support for organics

AT THE time of writing this article there had been some break in the dry conditions across much of southern and eastern Australia and hopefully seasonal conditions will improve for all producers across Australia. The health of the BFA Group and Australian organics is very much aligned to the health of the primary production sector and we empathise with producers who have experienced challenging conditions over the last few years. As supply factors are starting to push organic products to retail price levels that may cause consumer price resistance and limit the growth of the industry, it is hoped that the production environment improves and supply with it.

Associated with the seasons is the fact that climate change and the environment are very much the topics of discussion at a political and economic level and our industry finds itself in an enviable position with credible and defensible arguments for further support and recognition. The BFA Group is working to ensure our industry is recognised for its contribution to the options available for combating climate change and acknowledging the importance of the environment.

This winter edition of the Journal highlights that critical sector of the industry – retailers and consumers - and given the acknowledgement that the environment and sustainability are important factors in consumers' purchasing decisions, the future for organics from a demand perspective continues to be encouraging. This edition also focuses on Victoria – the heart of the organic retail and restaurant trade.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

By the time you receive this Journal the BFA/OGA Certified Small Producers Program will be in operation. This program has been some time in the planning and already interest from small producers starting out in organics has been very encouraging. As a Group the BFA is very proud of this program and we look forward to growing this sector of the industry. An article in the Journal further explains the program. We welcome all participants in the program and trust the rest of the industry will support this important initiative.

As with any industry starting to impact on entrenched interests there is always the opportunity for opponents to cause confusion through sensationalist media articles and unsubstantiated claims. The last few months saw a number of negative and inconsistent articles in the mainstream media that had the potential to cause confusion in consumers minds. Fortunately the BFA was able to successfully argue their inconsistency and correct claims that were factually wrong. Even though incorrect media coverage is unfortunate – it also shows we have reached a level of success where organics is considered to be challenging certain sectors of society that see the organic sector as a threat.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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These attacks will continue therefore please feel free to contact the BFA where you see articles that are incorrect and we will defend the facts of the industry.

## BFA INITIATIVES

The annual Organic Report has been published and contains much useful information on the industry over the last 12 months. We think it's a great source of information and is available free to download from [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au).

As always the BFA Group continues to promote organic operators and the sector at both domestic and international exhibitions. Organic Crop Protectants (OCP) and BFA were present at the Ausveg Vegetable Conference in Sydney and noted that awareness of the organic sector was strong and interest high. It is fantastic to also hear of the success and interest raised at BFA's Victorian Organic Roadshow in May. The diversity of backgrounds of around 100 attendees made a great day for networking and discussion. These events will continue to be run in regions across all states of Australia for the benefit of linking industry; keeping certified operators in the loop of information and educating those interested.

BFA also organised in collaboration with Austrade Osaka a presentation and exhibition to a group of trade buyers in Japan. This exhibition was well supported by ACO clients and it is hoped orders are forthcoming.

The end of another financial year is at hand and I'm happy to report The Group results are looking encouraging and the Certification bodies Australian Certified Organic and OGA Certified have completed the audit schedule on time and with improved operating efficiencies. I trust you are seeing this improvement in our services as a Group. We look forward to rolling out a number of initiatives in 2007/08 year.