

From the General Manager

20 years and striding forward

By MICHAEL BLAKENEY

WELCOME to a New Year and a year in which the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) celebrates its 20th anniversary. We will run a series of articles in this year's *Australian Organic Journal* remembering some historical milestones in the group's development and celebrating the level of professionalism the industry has achieved.

In this autumn edition, we feature the processing side of our industry, which is becoming increasingly prominent and professional as consumers with busy lifestyles begin to enjoy organic versions of conveniently prepared and packaged foods.

INDUSTRY NEWS

In continued pursuit of debate and discussion surrounding the regulation of organics in Australia, we have included an interview with Michelle Glogau, chief executive officer of BioGro in New Zealand.

Interestingly, NZ has been down the road of domestic certification schemes as well as establishment of a national standard funded by Government and we hear her view on the results of these decisions as similar developments occur in Australia.

Please take note of the article on standards in this edition. The BFA has 13 committees set up to work on standards development for different areas of industry.

However, they need your input and opinion on how standards should be developed in keeping with ideals of the organic movement and at the same time allowing sustainable development of industry.

I recently had the pleasure of presenting at the Biodynamic Organic Agricultural Bureau (BOAB) meeting in Adelaide and it was interesting to hear different viewpoints on certification positives and challenges.

The BFA certification subsidiaries, Australian Certified Organic (ACO) and Organic Growers of Australia Certified Ltd (OGA), are open to constructive comments and look forward to continue improving services to clients.

BFA INITIATIVES

The BFA has always engaged mainstream retail channels, and efforts in promoting the certified organic sector are starting to bear.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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An interview with Coles in this edition highlights this supermarket's interest and support of certified organic for their shoppers' guarantee of true organic produce and processed products, and peace of mind when shopping.

While appreciating the role of farmers' markets and smaller retailers, it is inevitable that larger retailers will become more involved as the demand from their shoppers for clean, green and organic food becomes greater.

The benefit of this, of course, is that more organic products are being sold where the majority of people shop. This will introduce conventional food shoppers to organic products and help the sector become mainstream.

By the time you read this, ACO and its clients will have exhibited at Biofach Germany. This promotion is critical to the ongoing success of the Australian organic export industry and highlights the group's ongoing support of the sector.

Late last year, I had the opportunity to attend the Western Australian BFA Roadshow and was left excited at the development of the industry in the West. Looking ahead, there is much to be excited at – here's looking forward to another 20 exciting years.

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