

Regional news:

Certified organic wool sale a success

On Thursday, May 24, Elders Ltd held Australia's largest ever organic wool sale in Melbourne.

The sale was a success with wool prices on the increase and a significant price premium gained on organic wool, largely represented by consultancy group Organics for Rural Australia (ORA)/ Rural Organics.

The premium prices gained by the three ORA wool growers McClure & Daughters (Trevallyn Station), Jack Ker (Tarella Station) and Brendon Cullen (Mt Westwood) was welcome, reflecting the rising interest in the niche market of organic wool on top of the already high market result for the week.

ACO staff and Elders' Goeff Redden have worked with ORA and Rural Organics since the consultancy group began in 2001. For ORA Managing Director Janie McClure it has been about building and developing relationships for creating a unique teamwork which has enabled the establishment of an organic wool sale and provided a framework for future development of organic wool production in Australia.

Janie says "Our consultancy group together with Elders and ACO have cooperated to ensure that the certifications and supporting paper trails were in place for the wool to be marketed with organic integrity.

"Elders BWK provided the highest bid overall for around



600 bales of certified organic wool of which over 90% was provided by ORA," she added.

The wool is likely to be made into woollen fashion items in the UK and US to service the rapidly growing trend for environmentally friendly clothing.

NEW ORGANIC GROWER'S GROUP IN NORTHERN VICTORIA RECEIVES HEADY SUPPORT

Following a successful organic open day south of Echuca, northern Victoria a number of local producers expressed a desire to join the proposed *Central Victorian Organic Network*. The aim of the network would be to better the chances of success in export markets and to access funding proposed by state and local governments.



In April Craig Sobey organised and hosted a successful organic open day on his property in the beautiful grounds of Ballendella Castle, south of Echuca, northern Victoria.

A meeting was principally attended by a core group of growers and processors in order to put in motion the formalisation of the network group, with the invaluable contribution of Richard Billing of Riverina Organic Farmer's Organisation.

Attendees recognised the chance for their own businesses and their community to seize a potentially lucrative opportunity against what has been a rather austere backdrop of the drought.

"It is indeed rare that so much interest and support has been generated by all three levels of government, industry and the farming community to form a network of like-minded persons to develop the supply of premium organic goods for direct export," Craig Sobey, founder of the group, said.

"As a newly formed group with a professional plan of development we are keen to find persons with the vision and energy to develop our network rapidly including a vast range of growers, processors and retailers etc all along the value chain.

"We are committed to help where we can in introducing interested persons to the knowledge and experience shared freely amongst our group and to enjoy with us the quite incredible support we are receiving from government, industry and the wider community."

The elected committee welcomes those wishing to enter the certified organic market regardless of their scale of operation, whether they be producers, processors or traders.

Find out more about the group at <www.elsobey.com.au> or by contacting Craig Sobey on 0427 099 588.

“SERIOUSLY GOOD” – BARAMBAH ORGANIC WINS DAIRY AWARDS

Family-owned organic dairy Barambah Organics is winning awards to back up years of accolades received from highly respected food critics and the many grateful consumers of its milk and dairy products.

Based at Inglewood, Queensland, Barambah Organics was founded by Ian Campbell, a qualified nutritionist who believes passionately in organics for a healthier and more environmentally sustainable production.

Not only has organic management of the property proven to be a viable production alternative since the family started organic production in 1990, it has gained the company much recognition for its milk products.

The latest example is Highly Commended in the Vogue Produce Awards 2007 for their organic yoghurt, “An outstanding product,” as described by awards judge Philip Johnson.

In addition, at the Dairy Industry Australia Awards in May 2007 seven silver awards were won for products including the “Fig Tree Paddock” Double Cream Brie, “Gold Hawk” Washed Rind, the Full Cream Milk and a number of yoghurts.

Four silvers awards were taken at the Sydney Royal Dairy Show in March this year.

Ian Campbell says that Barambah’s successful applications for two grants and a scholarship since 2000 have contributed to the success of their products. “The Federal and State



Cows walking towards the dairy before the rain at Glenarbon. Left: Barambah’s organic Brie.

Governments have given us enormous support and encouragement and we are very grateful for this,” Mr Campbell says.

Matthew Evans, food journalist for *Good Living in the SMH* writes “Using the batch method, Barambah Organics produces the best-tasting milk I’ve found commercially. ‘That’s how milk used to taste,’ is a common response.”

Barambah Organics produces milk, yoghurt, quark and a double-cream brie. For more information visit www.barambahorganics.com.au.

ORGANIC MILK MAKES A SPLASH AT SYDNEY ROYAL SHOW

A small NSW South Coast co-operative which launched its own milk brand for local consumption just 18 months ago has already made quite a splash.

South Coast Dairy, a subsidiary of the Berry Rural Co-operative Society Ltd, collected one gold and three silver medals for its milk at this year’s recent Sydney Royal Show dairy produce awards. The gold medal milk, an organic light product, scored 19 out of 20 and was also chosen best milk of the show. Not only that, South Coast Dairy’s sales are expanding rapidly and it is exploring the possibility of expanding its product range.

Source: Extract from the May 17 issue of *The Land*, NSW’s weekly rural newspaper.

Editor’s note: South Coast Dairy is supplied by milk processors Country Valley & Highland Organics. The producers of the milk are dairyfarmers EL & TL Smillie. Both operations are certified organic through ACO.

ORGANIC FARMLAND TRANSFORMED WITH NATURAL SEQUENCE FARMING

Mulloon Creek consists of 5700 acres of ACO certified ‘A’ Grade biodynamic farmland east of Bungendore, NSW. Managed by owner Tony Coote, the property has been successful in receiving an Australian Government National Landcare Program grant in order to establish the property as a demonstration site for testing the principles of natural sequence farming.

Natural sequence farming (NSF) is a technique developed by Peter Andrews for rural landscape management with the aim of restoring natural water cycles, allowing the land to become renewed and be productive despite drought conditions. The results of NSF have led to intense interest from scientists, producers, and now, government.

More information on NSF is available at www.nsfarming.com.

REVIEWING THE STATE MORATORIA ON GM CROPS

As governments review their bans on genetically manipulated (GM) crops in 2007 and 2008, action by farmers is urgently encouraged. Australian organic and biodynamic producers will be among those to suffer if the states’ moratoria on GM crops are not extended.

Farmers are urged to act now:

- renew support for the state GE crop moratoriums;
- support an extension of the bans in five States and the ACT until 2013; and
- ensure our dairy foods are GM-free. The United Dairy Farmers of Victoria (UDV) AGM on June 19 will be a key moment in Victorian dairy farms staying GM-free for at least another two or three years.

Please contact geneethics now to find out how you can act now to extend the moratoria. For further information, visit www.geneethics.org, email info@geneethics.org, or phone 1300 133 868.