

Regional news:

## Organic auditor training success

ANOTHER eight participants successfully completed the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) Auditor Training Course in Brisbane in February.

As part of the five-day course, the group enjoyed a field trip to A-grade certified Sandy Creek Organic Farm in the Glasshouse Mountains and successful processing operation Gigi's Ice Cream & Desserts at Kunda Park.

As the only QSA-registered training of its kind, the course gained popularity with people wanting a good background in domestic and international organic regulations. This may include potential work in auditing and consulting services, quality assurance and farm management.

BFA Auditor Training Courses are held twice a year or on demand. To keep informed about courses coming up and for further information, email <info@bfa.com.au>.



Recently successful candidates of the BFA Auditor Training Course in Brisbane.

### EIGHT MACRO STORES

MACRO Wholefoods Market has brought an organic sea change to northern Sydney with the opening of a new 1000-square-metre organic supermarket and cafe at Westfield Hornsby last December.

"Macro is thrilled to be able to offer more shoppers the choice of clean, organic foods as we open our seventh organic supermarket at Westfield Hornsby," owner, Pierce Cody, says.

"I believe that Macro represents the future of food, with more and more consumers calling on retailers to consider their role in the responsible service and production of food. Macro supplies healthy, chemical-free foods that are produced and packaged locally using responsible and sustainable methods."

Organics is a blossoming industry in Australia currently valued at more than \$350 million a year and expected to grow by up to 30% this year. Macro's move into Westfield Hornsby reflects the growing mainstream appeal of organics in Australia.

This will be Macro's seventh store nationally, the third in NSW, and the company's second venture into a shopping centre after Macro's phenomenal debut at Centro The Glen at Glen Waverley, Victoria, in March.

The opening of a stand-alone store at Concord in Sydney's Inner Western suburbs in January has taken the total number of Macro Wholefoods Markets in Sydney and Melbourne to eight.

Source: website <www.macrowholefoods.com.au>.

### NEW INITIATIVES FOR NSW

A NEW \$250,000 Organic Industries Initiative package has been launched at the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Bathurst Agricultural Research and Advisory Station.

The initiative will fund two new organic agricultural positions and new infrastructure at Bathurst as well as creating the NSW Organic Ministerial Advisory Council.

The council's role will be to advise the Minister for Primary Industries on important matters facing the NSW organic indus-

tries and help harness the full potential of prospering organic markets by developing a strategic plan for the industry and an approach to further develop the organic farming sector in NSW.

Visit website <www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/news/recent-news/agriculture-news-releases>.

### FARMBIS TRAINING AID

THE AAA FarmBis program is a part of the Australian Government's Agriculture Advancing Australia (AAA) package.

It provides financial aid to primary producers and rural land managers to undertake business and natural resource management education and training activities.

FarmBis is part of the AAA package which focuses on improving primary producers' business and risk management skills and helping industries build self-reliance and manage change. It also focuses on helping farm families in serious financial difficulty.

You can attend commercially available training, or groups of individuals can attend tailored training and claim a percentage of the course cost. However, you need to apply for FarmBis funding before you begin your training.

All states, excluding NSW, have developed a FarmBis training subsidy scheme. Note: Eligible activities and subsidy levels differ between participating States and the Northern Territory.

**Contact: National:** website <www.farmbis.gov.au>; **Northern Territory:** phone (08) 8999 2077, website <www.nt.gov.au/dpifm/Primary\_Industry/index.cfm>; **Queensland:** phone 13 25 23, website <www.farmbis.qld.gov.au>; **South Australia:** phone 1800 182 235 (free call), website <www.farmbis.sa.gov.au>; **Tasmania:** phone (03) 6336 5444, phone <farmbis.dpiwe.tas.gov.au>; **Victoria:** phone (03) 5448 2600, email <farmbis@ruralfinance.com.au>, website <www.farmbis.ruralfinance.com.au>; **Western Australia:** phone 1800 198 231 (free call) or (08) 9368 3333, website <www.farmbis.wa.gov.au>.



## Grassroots support

THE IDEA to form an organic farmers' group among South Australian organic farmers has, with great support, quickly become a reality. Four dedicated biodynamic growers organised an initial meeting in October 2005, where organically oriented supporters gathered to lay the foundation for BOAB (Biodynamic and Organic Agricultural Bureau).

The certified organic growers are: Ulli Spranz, B.-d. Farm Paris Creek; Gavin Dunn, Four Leafs Milling; Adrian Strachan, Willunga Hills Organic; and Graeme Schultz, Forest Orchards.

BOAB is now established under the umbrella of the South Australian Agricultural Bureau as one of more than 90 AG Bureau branches in SA, being able to take advantage of an existing organisation with a constitution and structure in place, and set up for groups with a grassroot foundation.

The idea for the grower group has developed out of the need for better networking to improve communication; to exchange ideas, experience, thoughts and problems; and to act as one voice in representing projects to other interested parties, including certification bodies, Government, the market, etc, while maintaining individuality.

A primary goal is to help other farmers come into the industry and support them in their effort to gain certification.

"To be able to contact other people with the same interest in order to sophisticate growing methods and increase organic production without losing focus on the essential environmental aspects is a vital part of networking," Ms Spranz says.

The group has been holding four field days a year, all a tremendous success, as well as hosting monthly evening meetings for members and supporters, often with guest speakers.

BFA chairman, Doug Haas, and general manager, Michael Blakeney, were recently invited to make a presentation to the group on BFA Group services.

Mr Haas says: "The concept of regional organic groups for supporting new and existing growers and operators has the full support of the BFA.

"While BFA can provide wider overall benefits on a national scale, grower groups such as BOAB have been successful at assisting development of industry at a regional level, including supply and market networks.

"It is BFA's desire to strengthen linkages with grower groups into the future for co-ordinating roadshows such as the successful ROFO/BFA Roadshow in the Riverina in NSW last year and supporting other opportunities for regional development. Combining the resources of the BFA with local knowledge makes sense for providing the best outcomes for industry."

BOAB welcomes every new member.

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**Mel Edwards and Elizabeth Johnson admire strawberries at Yultiwirra Garden. Top: BOAB field day at Yultiwirra Garden, Delamere, last April.**

### THE LARGER grower organisations in Australia include:

- Riverina Organic Farmers Organisation (ROFO), phone (02) 6973 8606;
- Australian Organic Institute, Surfers Paradise, Qld, phone (07) 5535 9433, email <kay.allen@bigpond.com.au>;
- Canberra Organic Growers Association ACT, phone (02) 6288 2443, email <info@cogs.asn.au>, website <www.cogs.asn.au>;
- Organic Producers Assoc, Far Nth Qld, email <opafnq@austarnet.com.au>;
- Hunter Organic Growers Society, NSW, email <earth-haven2004@yahoo.com.au>;
- Organic Growers Association of WA (OGAWA), phone (08) 9453 1783, email <enquiries@agawa.org.au>;
- Soil Association of SA (SASA), phone (08) 8339 7152 or 0418 852 566, email <jennypat@ozemail.com.au>;
- Organic Agriculture Association Inc, Vic, phone (03) 5152 2276, email <egoaa@hotmail.com.au>.

**For a more complete list visit the links page, website <www.bfa.com.au>.**