



Two groups co-operate for a Riverina roadshow success. Left to right: Michael Blakeney (BFA General Manager), David Booth (ROFO and BFA member), Doug Haas (BFA Chairman).

Roadshow keeps organics moving

The BFA Organic Roadshow has kept organics moving and networked in regional Australia.

Most recently, an emerging number of organic farmers attended the first ever organic workshop/ roadshow in Yanco in the Riverina in September.

BFA ran the workshop in conjunction with Riverina Organic Farmers Organisation (ROFO) with the cooperation of NSW DPI with the aim of providing the members of both groups, as well as those interested in the fast growing organic industry, with the opportunity to network and gain knowledge in organic production systems.

More than 70 farmers from organic and conventional farming operations attended, some from as far away as Balranald, Albury, Cootamundra and Ivanhoe.

The majority of speakers were A-Grade certified producers from the Riverina area who willingly shared their wealth of first-hand knowledge in organic production. The diversity of production in the Riverina was reflected in the variety of topics which ranged from livestock to green manures, to rice, to beer production.

DPI also participated with Geoff Duddy presenting research conducted in organic lamb and wool with some valuable information provided on Dorper lambs. At the end of the day there was a tour of the DPI's spelt trials involving different varieties of spelt and an innovative breeding program using natural selection.

David and Mary Booth, members of both ROFO and BFA were key drivers for the roadshow. "It can still be difficult obtaining information on organic production and therefore knowledge sharing between producers is highly beneficial. The advice given on the day was practical and appreciated by those in attendance. The opportunity to network with others was equally valuable. It was a great day and one which we hope will become an annual event," said David.

Doug Haas, BFA Chairman added that while it had taken him three days of travel to attend the roadshow he was delighted to attend. "The co-operation between BFA and ROFO resulted in an event that was regionally relevant and well organised. We look forward to working together with ROFO again in the future," he said.

Healthy Soils Workshops

The Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms (HSSF) program is an initiative of the Natural Heritage Trust in partnership with the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and managed by Land & Water Australia.

Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) has been successful in receiving funding support as part of this initiative for delivering workshops on low input farming approaches to soil health management for regional stakeholders and land resource managers across south-east Queensland.

The project will involve holding 20 workshops facilitated by people with extensive industry and extension experience.

The courses incorporate action learning processes focused on developing knowledge on how farm practices can be designed and integrated to achieve soil health outcomes, reduce production cost, reduce energy use and reduce downside externalities, whilst sustaining optimum production.

As at November 2006, four workshops have been carried out in Maleny, Rathdowney, Toogoolawah and Tansy-Goomeri.

The next planned workshops will be run in the Gatton and Bundaberg regions. These will be particularly aimed at benefiting organic practitioners from all farming enterprise sectors, however are open to all interested.

To register your interest in a workshop please contact Greg Paynter, greg.paynter@bfa.com.au, 07 3350 5716.