

A gauge for guiding future growth



Doug Haas has served on the BFA board for the past 12 years while carrying out the role of chair interrupted for the past 11 years.

By BFA chairman DOUG HAAS

IN MY 12 YEARS OF HAVING BEEN involved on the board of the BFA, the organic industry – while at times appearing to have paused or be catching its breath – has been continuously working behind the scenes to move ahead with direction, strength and determination. The task ahead, to create a stable, viable and professional industry, often appeared so great that to enter into organic production could be seen as a leap of faith.

This year, however, has seen a new level of clarity for the organic marketplace. A 2008 market report commissioned by the BFA and launched in July now provides detailed figures as to the industry's current value as well as likely future trends. This information is essential as a gauge for assessing future capabilities and planning direction.

At the same time the marketplace has matured to the point where supply chains are catering for supply to mainstream markets, some larger manufacturers are sourcing the quantity of produce required for enabling them to enter the market, and consumers are finding more often that there is an abundant choice and availability of quality produce.

While there are always greater efficiencies and developments to aspire towards I believe we have reached a milestone in the development of our supply chains and market presence.

Of course there are issues other than supply chains to counter, and regulation of the marketplace is another area which has plagued industry's development since its initiation. In the month of July a new proposed draft organic standard was released by Standards Australia and is available for comment by industry members. The

standard, while still requiring work to ensure it can deliver value to industry, provides hope that there will one day be a minimum domestic organic standard to reference in the court of law issuing a warning to all of those companies with brands and labels that fraudulently claim to be organic.

Among the trials and tribulations there have been excellent rewards for the efforts of many organic industry members. Apart from a reasonably reliable premium to be received across most sectors, organic produce is winning awards for its quality, from fresh produce awards through to wine awards and, most recently, at the Food Challenge Awards. The three top winners of this event (a prestigious and fiercely competitive mainstream competition), incredibly, were three Australian Certified Organic (ACO)-certified organic manufacturers, namely Organic Bubs, Pitango and Ozgatics.

The BFA group will continue to represent, from the farm-gate level through to government policy level, the interests of industry members. In particular, it is the continual travelling to different regions throughout Australia with the BFA Organic Roadshow that ensures the group continues to listen to the grassroots of industry. We must always remember that it is simply the grassroots and stakeholders of the organic industry who really own the industry and will always know what's best for industry.

I wish you all the best for the coming season and do hope to meet you at a BFA Organic Roadshow in the near future.

(A calendar of roadshows can be found within this issue of AOP and further information is available at www.bfa.com.au)

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BFA AGM – October 25

ALL MEMBERS AND INTERESTED industry participants are invited to attend the BFA AGM to take place on Saturday October 25 at Central Bardon Conference Venue, 390 Simpsons Road, Bardon (Brisbane).

Take part in decisions for the future direction of the Co-op, hear presentations on current and diverse industry issues and enjoy a day of

networking and organic taste treats.

The BFA is now calling for resolutions and nominations for directors.

If you haven't already received an invitation as a BFA member and would like further information please contact the BFA office, phone: (07) 3350 5716 ext 233; email: media@bfa.com.au

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