



Why BFA registered products can't be called ORGANIC

By Dr Andrew Monk, BFA Director and Standards Subcommittee Chair

The BFA's Australian Organic Standard (AOS) has covered a whole raft of production and marketing requirements for organic and related naturally occurring products through the past two decades for the Australian organic industry. Such requirements cover everything from mushroom and tree (silviculture) production, fair trade, aquaculture, and food and fibre processing requirements, through to fertilisers (both minerals and truly "organic" fertilisers) and other naturally occurring products.

Products including: minerals; salt; water; cleaning products and similar items in many instances are not in themselves "organic" - as they are not of agricultural origin (the base requirement for all things organic). However these products otherwise are natural, conform to the general stipulations of the organic standards of the world and are deemed the "best in their class". The BFA has both an "Approved Product" category and an "Allowed Input" category.

Recently the BFA's Bio-Inputs Subcommittee, at a sector wide consultative forum, moved unanimously to enable a new labelling allowance for fertilisers and other farm and garden inputs as "Certified Product for Organic Farming/Gardening" with the

Bud logo. It is important to note that it is not stating that the product itself is "organic" as for instance in the case of mineral fertilisers they are not and will never be (they are minerals not of agricultural origin).

Some products - such as salt and water - can carry, after audit and review to confirm compliance under the AOS, "Approved Product" status but may NOT use the words "organic" to denote the status or nature of the product. Consumers may be aware that there have been some products in the marketplace from time to time from marketers that are not approved for use - but which are using the word organic on labeling. The most notorious of these has been water products. If consumers do discover any products such as water that are claiming to be "organic" we ask that you directly inform the certification office which handles these matters and confirm (in writing) the name of the company, the product and its label or marketing claims, where you have seen this product and any other relevant information (at times we have been alerted to websites containing unauthorised information - and have moved to close these down or change their content). Please write to: BFA, PO Box 530,

Chermside Qld 4032, ph 07 3350 5716, email certification@bfa.com.au). For that matter, please do this for any products that concern you or which you have questions about.

Note that some drink products eg flavoured waters and other mixed drink products are permitted to be labelled as "certified organic" where all ingredients other than water are in fact organic (eg spices, herbs, sugars, etc).

The BFA ensures the AOS remains both up to date and is owned by the members of the BFA by regularly taking comment from industry on the existing document and future additions to it. The BFA aims to have a new version of the AOS out to industry by mid next year and welcomes comment in the meantime to the existing AOS (2006) plus working additions to it - which more recently have included cosmetics, farmers markets and changes to the labelling allowances for fertiliser and biopesticide marketers.

To check these documents, and for a free download of the BFA member owned AOS, visit www.bfa.com.au and click on Australian Organic Standard under the Industry Resources menu. Comments on the Standards may also be submitted from this page. 