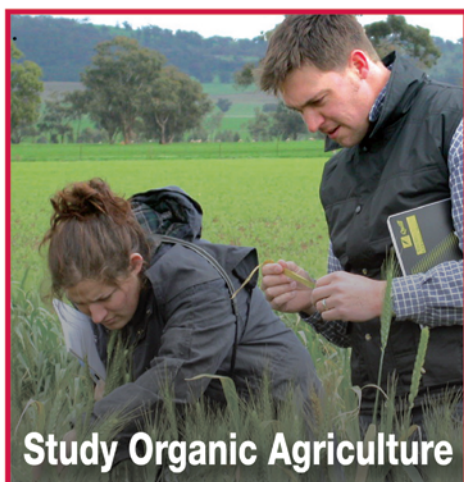


# Organic training

## Tradition in the soil

» The increasing demand for organically-grown food has created a need for more farmers to take on the organic mantle. Some organic farmers are born to the profession, such as Rob Bauer, who is a sixth generation farmer on Bauers' Organic Farms. Many of the early organic farming pioneers, like recently-retired Bill A'Beckett from Central NSW, learned their profession by scouring literature –most of it written for northern hemisphere practices - and tapping into the wisdom of the few local organic or biological farmers. Today, organic production is becoming increasingly respectable - even prestigious - and the path to organic learning is made smoother. TAFEs, universities and other eminent seats of learning now offer courses in organic and related farming methods. This is a snapshot of some courses on offer.



### Study Organic Agriculture

Charles Sturt University offers the only course on Ecological Agriculture in Australia, teaching the ecology of farming, production techniques, financial and marketing management. Gain the skills and knowledge to help answer the big questions regarding sustainability.

For course details contact Kerry Cochrane on 02 63657579 or [kcochrane@csu.edu.au](mailto:kcochrane@csu.edu.au) or visit [www.csu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/ecological\\_agriculture/](http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/undergraduate/ecological_agriculture/)



### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### Armidale (New England Institute TAFE)

Certificate IV in (NRT - Nationally Recognised Training): Agriculture (Organic Production); Course no. 884

Entry requirements; Year 10 or equivalent. Intended for people operating existing production units or who are considering converting to organic methods or employment in organic enterprises.

**Further information:** Ph 02 6773 7700

#### Bathurst (Western Institute TAFE)

Organic Farming Studies; Statement of Attainment; Course Number: 652 Intended for people operating existing production units or who are considering converting to organic methods or employment in organic enterprises. When you finish this course you can apply for advanced standing in the Certificate IV in Organic Farming (0653).

**Further information:**

John Dwyer ph 02 6338 2542;  
Cameron Fisk ph 02 6393 2683

#### Goulburn (Illawarra Institute TAFE)

Agriculture (Organic Production) Diploma (NRT) Course No: 900  
Agriculture (Organic Production) Certificate IV (NRT) Course No: 884

**Further information:** Brian Faulkner  
ph 02 4823 1800

#### Moss Vale (Illawarra Institute TAFE)

Introduction to Organic Gardening  
Module/Unit: 26912A  
Short commercial course; \$195

**Further information:** Ph 02 4823 1910

#### National Environment Centre (Riverina Institute TAFE)

Agriculture (Organic Production)  
Course No: 900

A Diploma of Agriculture specializing in organic farming and designed specifically for students working on farms and/or unable to attend classes. Each student has a qualified and experienced teacher, who is an organic farmer or farm advisor. The learning process involves research, questioning, and reflection on individual farming systems.

**Further information:** Rob Fenton or  
Gerard Lawry ph 02 6043 6700;  
[rob.fenton@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:rob.fenton@tafensw.edu.au)

#### Richmond (Western Sydney Institute TAFE)

Agriculture (Organic Production) Diploma (NRT) Course No: 900  
Certificate IV in (NRT): Agriculture (Organic Production); Course No. 884  
Intended for people operating existing production units or who are considering converting to organic methods or employment in organic enterprises.

**Further information:** Email [richmond.wsi@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:richmond.wsi@tafensw.edu.au); or contact Kay Carter, Head Teacher Agriculture on 02 45709 094; [kay.carter@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:kay.carter@tafensw.edu.au). Course TBC.

#### Wollongbar (North Coast Institute TAFE)

Agriculture (Organic Production)  
Course No: 884  
The Organic Farming Certificate course has been running for 17 years and is tailored to suit new and existing growers wanting to upgrade their organic skills. Full- or part-time; includes day or evening sessions as well as practical sessions and farm visits.

**Further information:** Dave Forrest  
email [organicforrest@hotmail.com](mailto:organicforrest@hotmail.com)  
or ph 02 6688 4346

# Certified organic TAFE farm breeds success

» **Rob Fenton** has been teaching organic and sustainable farming practices for 22 years.

"FOR QUITE some time there were no organic courses as such, until the certificate for organic farming was developed twenty years ago, when I was teaching at Albury TAFE," says Rob. "I immediately started teaching that course with a colleague, Bob Hathway, because it seemed the right way for agriculture to go."

Rob was fortunate in having the support of the campus manager, Rob Logan, but met with resistance from conventional farmers and from local industry.

"Most of the conventional farmers thought we were loopy," he recalls. "Local industry didn't like what we were teaching because they didn't think our graduates would be employable in their enterprises. That cost us a lot of student numbers initially but after a while other students sought us out because of what we taught. Once we became certified organic with Australian Certified Organic, and involved with the BFA, our support

base just skyrocketed."

Observation and analysis, ever the keystone of organic farming, pushed Rob into the next stage. The rural ravages of drought and the threat of worse to come through global warming prompted him to develop a course that would deal with the uncertainty of radically changing climatic conditions. The nationally accredited Diploma in Organic Farming was born four years ago and is now offered in several TAFE institutes in NSW.

Rob's Albury-based course has the distinct advantage of having its own working organic farm campus, the National Environment Centre. The course at Albury TAFE offers both distance education and internships on the NEC farm, where students become part of the management team.

Success breeds success; after struggling with low student numbers in the early days the course is now booked to the hilt and the



The TAFE farm has found alpacas, with a donkey as back up, highly effective at protecting their mob of sheep from dogs.

distance course will need to be expanded to accommodate applicants.

At present there are approx. 50 students enrolled for the Diploma, a mix of interns, distance students and part-time classroom students, and the next intake will include the Diploma's first overseas students.

## NEW SOUTH WALES Charles Sturt University, Orange, NSW

Bachelor of Ecological Agriculture: subjects in organic agriculture & horticulture, biodynamics, permaculture and subjects related to ecological production. Primarily by distance but students can study internally.

**Further information;** Course Coordinator Kerry Cochrane  
ph 02 63657 5709,  
email [kcochrane@csu.edu.au](mailto:kcochrane@csu.edu.au).

## QUEENSLAND Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture (NTS)

Nutri-Tech Solutions (NTS) has been delivering four-day courses on sustainable farming techniques for over 8 years. FarmReady approved (Australian primary producers can receive reimbursement for the full course fee plus course related costs). Primarily held on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in March, July and November.

**Further information:** Ph. (07) 5472 9900;  
[www.nutri-tech.com.au](http://www.nutri-tech.com.au)

## VICTORIA Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT)

Two-year Diploma of Agriculture (Organic Production) consisting of ten modules, including soil management, livestock and cropping and conversion to organic production. Nationally recognised Rural Production Training Accreditation.

**Further information:** Marli Draper  
ph (03) 9269 1042;  
[marlid-aas@nmit.vic.edu.au](mailto:marlid-aas@nmit.vic.edu.au)



\*minimum quantity applies

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