

NEWS BITES

- Nestle, Schweppes, Foster's and Lindt join other brand super-powers to publicly veto GE ingredients as revealed by the recently launched 2010 Greenpeace Truefood Guide. Meanwhile, choosing certified organic remains one of the only sure means of avoiding GE ingredients in foods

- Woolworths' plans to introduce its Macro Wholefoods brand, (acquired midyear as a private label for packaged organic products), have been put into operation with the recent launch of Macro products in stores across the country

- Organic produce has been tipped as one of the "hottest" fine dining trends for 2010 in a survey of over 1800 professional chefs released in December 09 by the American Culinary Federation (ACF).

- Annalise Braakensiek, Australian model, actress and TV presenter grew up on a biodynamic farm and among many talents is an accomplished organic vegetarian cook, advocating "you are what you eat". She is a firm believer not only in organic for health, but for animal cruelty-free farming. Annalise is now turning heads with the recent launch of an organic cotton and bamboo lingerie line.

- ACO certified organic company Preshafood recently won first prize in the 'Best New Juice or Juice Drink' and the 'Best New Beverage Concept' categories, at the international Beverage Innovation Awards held at Drinktec in Germany, outshining beverage giants such as PepsiCo and Coca-Cola.

- Celebrity Chef Kylie Kwong was MC at the Dalia Lama conference in Sydney early December. Award winning certified organic produce from Bauers Organic Farm was a major feature of the menu on the day.



Fonterra expands organic four-fold in Australia

THE WORLD'S largest dairy trader has grown sales of its organic ingredients to the Australian market by more than 400% in the past year, making Oceania its second largest market for organic goods.

Fonterra Pty Ltd sold around 700 tonnes of organic dairy ingredients from New Zealand to Australian food manufacturers, processors and retailers.

According to Trevor Li Donni (Fonterra Domestic Ingredients Manager, Australia) Fonterra's dedication to the organic sector, coupled with a determined marketing and resourcing mix led to the rocketing figures.

"Our growth does not represent an immense surge in demand for organic dairy from Australian consumers over just one year – however, it does show there was an increase in maturing of the market and greater acceptance of organics within the grocery sector in Australia," says Mr. Li Donni.

"Supermarkets and retailers in Australia are becoming more willing to engage with organic product and organic manufacturers which is very encouraging. Fonterra has given a lot of resources and time to furthering the organic sector, because we see a long-term future for this market."

However he admits Fonterra had not anticipated growth in Australia would be "quite so strong!"

Oceania is now one of Fonterra's largest markets for organic ingredients, due in part to major retail demand in Australia for items including organic butter, cheese and whole and skim milk powder. Fonterra also supplies organic milk protein concentrates.

Milk for the ingredients is sourced in NZ, where the company has actively helped dairy farmers gain organic certification under a unique incentive programme.

Mr. Li Donni says the company is committed to organic from the 'farm up'.

"We pay farmers who come on board an organic premium price for their milk from the day they decide to go organic, despite the fact that they will be in the conversion process for the next three years and we cannot market their milk as organic until the end of that period," says Mr. Li Donni.

"We have currently 'recruited' between 19,000 – 20,000 organic dairy cows, and are targeting to

Above: Rick Carmont (Global Category Manager), Trevor Li Donni (Domestic Ingredients Manager) & Hamish Brewer (General Manager Sales) Fonterra, at Organic Expo 2009 (Melbourne).

increase that to 55,000 by the end of 2013 through our farmers programme."

He says the more farmers that come on board, the better it is for the industry – "we need to know we have a very consistent source of organic dairy to supply supermarkets".

Rick Carmont (Global Category Manager for Fonterra) says while no organic dairy is currently sourced in Australia, Fonterra has a good relationship with Australian organic dairy producers that will promote overall organic industry growth.

"We have a healthy working relationship with organic farmers on the ground. Australian producers have a greater focus on fresh milk and dairy whereas Fonterra provides ingredients – the combination is complementary and we are together growing the market for organic dairy."

Mr. Carmont says Fonterra has selected Australian Certified Organic as the certifier of choice for its Mainland brand organic lines.

He says Fonterra is looking forward to future growth of organic in both Australia and the Asia-Pacific regions.

"We don't imagine growth will occur again in the huge leap it has this past year, but we anticipate a good, steady rise in interest," he says.

"This is helped in all countries by the fact that Fonterra's profits are returned directly to our producers, supporting a future for farming." He says the potential of the organic market is also looking strong in Asia (including Korea, Japan and China) where farmland is limited and the concept of safe and natural food is valued.

He says overall, organic has meshed beautifully with the wider Fonterra brand.

"We remain focused on the two 'A's of organic – is it available and is it affordable (for the consumer)?" he says.

"For us, organic is proving very successful when these two things are in place."

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