

Own the influence with BFA

I am a firm believer in commercial viability/ reality, whether for small or larger operations, and also service and integrity, (not necessarily in that order).

This year has been an excellent mix of all, delivering major gains to members, clients, and the overall industry.

This has been achieved through several major changes to the management structure of the group. In February of this year BFA established a senior working group made up of people who I had worked with for many years and I knew would deliver in full, no matter how steep the slope. These people include Mr Howard Rubin (Chief Financial Officer, BFA), Ms Holly Vyner (General Manager, BFA), Ms Akiko Nicholls (Managing Director, ACO), Mr Graeme Stratford (BFA Company Secretary), Dr Andrew Monk (BFA Standards Convenor) and Mr Greg Blakeney (Organic Client Support Officer).

With the assistance of these key people, working together, we have a great formula for delivering the best results for both service

and bottom line Profit & Loss. BFA returned the greatest profit in the history of the group without any real increases in charges and in come cases these have actually been reduced.

This demonstrates what may be achieved if the Group is to stay focused, fully energized and all working for the same goals.

A full compliment of Roadshows across five States has once again been delivered to members and interested parties from Cairns to Perth. There is no doubt that these events are appreciated and give our grass roots, members and stakeholders the opportunity to listen to very informative speakers while mixing with like minded people from within industry. An emerging trend has become very clear, and that is that a large portion of non-organic farmers are seeking more knowledge of biological farming methods; I believe that there is an excellent opportunity for the BFA to take this opportunity and fill this space.

The Organic Growers of Australia (OGA) moving into the BFA Group was an excellent decision by both BFA and OGA. OGA is actually a scheme for small growers and has continued to fill that very important gap in the supply chain recognizing the importance that the smaller grower plays both in supplying niche markets and also attracting new people to the industry. A big thanks to Howard Rubin who oversaw the successful transition. The OGA is growing equally as fast as the rapidly expanding ACO and plays a very strategic role in educating newcomers to organics at Farmers' Markets. OGA is now ISO 65 accredited to the IOAS (IFOAM) Group, once again leading the way in accredited organic certification specific for the Australian marketplace and compliant to the new base AS 6000.

A resounding 94% of voting members approved the recent roll-over of the Co-operative to a Limited by Guarantee entity. This will continue to strengthen accountability and corporate governance provisions. It is simply another step in the



ongoing development and evolution of the BFA.

An important point to remember is that if you are using the "Bud", then your business has the advantage of the trusted branding having nearly double the recognition of any other Australian organic certification mark and about 80% of organic products now on retail shelves carrying the logo.

This is an inspiring effort for a group of farmers and their wives who had this great idea some 20 plus years ago.

The next few years ahead now are years to begin reaping the rewards which will include a greater capacity to reach the mainstream consumer and media to promote our message and the objects that the BFA Co-operative was founded upon some 22 years ago. With your ongoing assistance and support this will be made all that much easier and more successful.

By Doug Haas
BFA Chairman

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