

A microbial diet: better eating starts with soil

By JAIME NEWBORN

IF THE ADAGE “YOU ARE WHAT YOU eat” is accurate, it seems we could all do with a bit more high-quality dirt in our diets.

That’s the position of Dr Carole Hungerford, whose book *Good Health in the 21st Century* takes a common-sense approach to living well that works, quite literally, from the ground up.

“Soils are absolutely critical to our health,” says Dr Hungerford. “Firstly, health-promoting minerals must be in the soil otherwise they cannot get into food. Secondly, vitamins and other phytochemicals are created by plants in a natural response to stresses from their environment. Unfortunately that puts modern agriculture well behind the eight-ball in terms of health because even good food grown in chemically depleted bad soils won’t deliver the optimum nutrition you would hope for.”

Dr Hungerford is one of a growing number of medical practitioners taking a more holistic view on health problems. She says factoring in the intricacies of the environment in which we exist when it comes to addressing medical conditions is critical.

“At the moment doctors will rush in like a bull to treat something like high cholesterol, for example, and prescribe cholesterol-lowering drugs without looking at enzyme pathways or considering how antioxidant levels may affect the situation – which all comes back to diet.”

She says the ‘disease-and-treat’ approach currently favoured by the medical industry is focused on finding solutions after problems occur – not on preventing them beforehand.

“This is unlikely to benefit anyone but drug companies, which are creating a reliance on prescription pills in the same way chemical companies have created a reliance on synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertiliser in agriculture.”

She says she began to realise common medical ailments could be connected with food production when she was browsing a book on – “of all things” – animal nutrition.

“I realised when an animal gets sick, the first thing a vet will say is, ‘What is this animal eating? What’s wrong with your soil? Are there any deficiencies?’ And I thought, ‘That’s funny – because as doctors we don’t ever ask those questions.’”

Now Dr Hungerford says deficiencies of



“If we were all eating organic foods grown in pristine soils and we didn’t process that food ... we could slash our health budget conservatively by 70%,” Dr Carole Hungerford says.

key plant-derived minerals including zinc, selenium, calcium and magnesium can be traced back to everything from common ailments to chronic disease.

“For example, magnesium and selenium depletion are, I believe, a crucial factor in modern epidemics of asthma, osteoporosis, depression and obstetric intervention.

“Lack of magnesium has also been identified as one factor in common health issues including asthma and migraines, painful periods, irritable bowel syndrome and high blood pressure.”

She says a study conducted to determine whether selenium had an effect on non-melanoma skin cancer revealed incidentally that those receiving the mineral had fewer cancers of the prostate, colon and lung.

“And of course, vitamins – which *cannot* be made in the body and therefore must be eaten – are essential to life, with vitamin A thought to offer some protection via beta carotenes to sufferers of exercise-induced asthma; deficiencies of vitamin B linked to diarrhoea, dermatitis and dementia; and lack of sufficient folic acid (folate) connected to birth defects, cancer and depression, among other things.”

But she says applying synthetic fertilisers to depleted soils to make up missing trace elements is not an answer.

“There are many problems with synthetic fertilisers – recurrent applications tend to increase the acidity of the soil, reducing its fertility. And many minerals, like magnesium, molybdenum and selenium can only be taken up by a plant when the soil is neutral.

“Even when soil analysis reveals adequate minerals, they may as well not be there if the soil is so acid they are unavailable to plants.”

She says in addition the effect of pesticides and herbicides on humans is an increasing concern.

“It’s becoming accepted that farmers have more lymphomas and cancers than people living in the city – that’s not something that should be happening.

“Agricultural chemicals can pass from the blood to the brain and are one of the strongest environmental correlations with Parkinson’s Disease.”

She names cancer and infertility specifically as the two top problems that will increase if chemical methods in agriculture remain unchanged in years ahead.

“It will be a double-pronged situation – a case of declining nutrients available in food, with more and more accumulation of environmental toxins.”

She says although it can’t provide all the answers, going organic is a good place to start for farmers and consumers.

“Bio-dynamic or organic production is the closest thing we have to a solution. If we were all eating organic foods grown in pristine soils and we didn’t process that food – so if we ate rice we ate brown rice and if we ate wheat we ate whole wheat – we could slash our health budget conservatively by 70%.” 🌱

For more information on *Good Health in the 21st Century* by Dr Carole Hungerford see www.carolehungerford.com.au

Farms in fashion: traditional organic sweet corn unsurpassed at this year's Vogue Awards

One of Australia's largest organic producers has officially put local, high quality, and traditionally grown sweet corn back 'in style'. Australian Certified Organic (ACO) sweet corn from Bauer's Organic Farm near Gatton (Queensland) has surpassed fresh produce entries from farmers nation-wide to take a gold medal at this year's Vogue Entertainment + Travel (VE+T) Produce Awards.

Rob Bauer - a sixth generation farmer - says 'going organic' has helped keep the quality of his kernels high - with the corn described by VE+T judges as 'in a world of its own'.

Further organic winners and finalists in the VE+T Produce Awards include: Daylesford Organics (overall winner, 'From the Earth' category) and Australian Certified Organic companies Barambah Organic Dairy (for natural organic yoghurt), Grandvewe (for La Mancha sheep's cheese) and Gundooee Organic (for organic Wagyu beef).

"This one's for organic!" Ladybird Organics flies high at Aus vegetable awards

Certified organic fresh produce is finally being taken seriously says Steve Skopilianos, whose Australian Certified Organic company Ladybird Organics has won this year's Innovative Marketing Award at the Ausveg Vegetable Industry Conference - one of the fresh produce industry's peak events.

Displaying flair, creativity, and a serious environmental conscience Ladybird Organics (Keilor, Vic) beat large-scale operators to the

punch for committing to biodegradable corn-resin - not plastic - bags for its high-convenience lettuce packs.

Steve Skopilianos, director, says steering clear of plastic could not have been a better decision, providing an eco-friendly answer to the question "How do you wrap organic?"

He says broader recognition from the wider vegetable industry is an important sign certified organic is here to stay - "This one's for organic!" he said upon accepting his latest award.

'Winemaker of the Year' un-corks organic at BFA organic roadshow

Troy Kalleske - owner of Kalleske Wines, a certified organic winery since the early 1980s - has been named 2008 Winemaker of the Year at last year's 'Barons of Barossa' Declaration of Vintage ceremony.

At the BFA's Organic Roadshow in Adelaide in May, Troy treated those with a thirst for organics to a series of 'how to' tips on organic wine-making and marketing.

"The way we produce our grapes plays a big part in the purity and quality of our product, says Troy. "Doing things as naturally as possible creates a wine that is more site representative, and reflects the real taste and soil of our Greenock region (67 kilometres from Adelaide), as well as creating a wine that is more inherently balanced. Once you're set up and know what you're doing, organic production and wine-making is relatively simple. It certainly doesn't have to be any more costly than operating conventionally."

Kalleske wines can now be found in more than 18 countries worldwide, and are distributed nationally. ☺

ORGANICA GREEN-FERT HIGH K 2:0:20
High quality potassium foliar fertiliser

- 20% Potassium + 2% Nitrogen + 0.75% Silica + Trace
- Foliar and Trickle
- Excellent for use on vegetables, fruit, and broadacre crops requiring a high quality source of organic Potassium and Nitrogen.

NOW available:

- ☑ Sunblok Fruit & Crop Paint - No more sunburnt crops! Extend your growing season. Rainfast, easily applied & removed. Melons, Capsicums, Mangoes etc.
- ☑ Nitrogen Infused Humates - Humates 20% + Trace + 4% Fish Concentrate
- ☑ Phos-S-SI-CAL P 20% - Ca 32% - Silica 1.55% - Sulphur 3% + Trace.

LIQUID N N12:0:3+Humates
 ★ 12% Nitrogen (4% immediate)
 ★ 3% Potassium
 ★ 5% Humates + 1% Fulvic
 ★ 7% Amino Acids
 ★ Trickle
 ★ Foliar
 ★ Broadacre

Available Now!!

ALL ORGANIC PRODUCTS BFA REGISTERED PRODUCT

For more information, prices and location of your nearest distributor:
Organica Green Organics
 Ph: 07 3290 5441 Fax: 07 3290 5443
 Email: organica.australia@yahoo.com.au

NTS World Leaders in Biological Agriculture

77 BFA Registered Products

Over 200 High-Analysis Products for all Your Farming Solutions (humates, minerals, microbes & foliars)

Four Day Course - NTS Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture (FarmReady Approved - primary producers can effectively attend for free)

Soil and Plant Analysis Service for Personalised Input Requirements (save money and increase productivity)

Free Agronomic Advice
 07 5472 9900 info@nutri-tech.com.au
 www.nutri-tech.com.au

NTS NUTRI-TECH SOLUTIONS