

Australian HomeGrown makes its mark

In January federal agriculture minister Warren Truss launched the Australian Homegrown logo and campaign. For the first time, Australian consumers will have a clear, unambiguous, generic indicator on labelling that signifies that food – fresh or processed – is 100% Australian.

Surveys over the years have shown that about 90% of consumers wish to know where their food comes from.

The campaign is particularly good news for those sectors of the farming community that are battling to compete with imported products on the market. (See page 34 for a report from Googa Farms of the difficulties they are experiencing.)

The HomeGrown initiative was first trialled in Victoria with \$500,000 provided by the Australian Government to launch a pilot campaign.

Further to its success and in keeping with a Coalition election commitment, in May Mr Truss announced another \$3 million in funding for a national campaign provided for in the 2005-06 Budget.

The funding is expected to be matched by industry and to



be fully self-supporting through industry licensing contributions from June 2007.

Over the next two years a national roll-out of the campaign will occur in major capital cities and town centres across Australia through a national advertising and public relations program. Consumers can expect to see the logo on a broader range of products as new industries sign on.

The campaign is owned and managed commercially by Australian HomeGrown Ltd (AHG). AHG is a not-for-profit company which receives funding through annual membership from industry groups and producers. To use the logo requires accreditation and compliance

with AHG's Code of Practice.

An annual fee is paid for use of the logo based on the turnover of participating companies.

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New learning directions in organics

Developments are underway towards providing exciting new training courses for the benefit of producers and all in the organic industry. BFA, in partnership with experienced rural management and organic trainers, is planning to offer learning opportunities and practical skills to people in the organic sector.

This will allow all those in organics to enhance management skills and so remain competitive and sustainable in a rapidly changing market.

Training will align with the Vocational Education Training (VET) system and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Courses within these frameworks are nationally recognised and successfully completed course components may also be credited towards courses up to Advanced Diploma level.

The proposed courses will vary in length and will be offered so that those working full-time can access these opportunities. Proposed topics include organic farming and management, quality systems such as HACCP, land resource management, farm business management and environmental management.

Benefits that participants would receive include:

- Training for current and would-be organic farmers

- Training for producers, processors and consultants in the requirements of organic certification
- Training in export marketing of organic products
- Recognition of prior learning and current competencies, through registered training organisations, for experienced organic farmers, managers and workers
- Links to information and wider opportunities through the networks formed by the groups that attend the courses

The benefits of the courses would extend to all industry. Savings gained by producers from improved on-farm management would provide increased efficiency to the marketplace. The courses would also contribute to bringing organics in line with quality, food safety and environmental regulatory requirements.

Opportunities for funding through Farmbis and other initiatives are currently in negotiation.

Updates on developments will be given in future editions of the *Journal*. Input from interested people is welcome. Contact the BFA head office on (07) 3350 5716 or email < info@bfa.com.au >.