

# Research is paying off

## The latest in organic R&D news

### NO FOOD RISKS

There are no public health and safety risks or quality issues with certified organic food products being sold in NSW, according to a NSW Food Authority survey.

In March 2005, the NSW Food Authority conducted a pesticide residue survey on food products in NSW that were certified organic. Sixty samples from 12 certified organic food products were analysed for pesticide residues. Samples were tested for residues of agricultural compounds/pesticides commonly associated with the food products tested.

Consistent with results of other residue surveys conducted in Australia and NZ, no residues were detected.

Copies of the 'Report on the NSW Food Authority Organic Residue Survey' (May 2005) may be obtained from Robyn Neeson email: [robyn.neeson@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:robyn.neeson@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

– [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au)

### OLIVE PROBLEMS STUDIED

The Sustainable Pest and Disease Management in Australian Olive Production project is the first to comprehensively address pests and diseases in Australian olives.

The rapid expansion of the olive industry provided the opportunity to develop a clearer picture of the pest and disease complex in major olive-growing districts, as well as education on sustainable options for their management. Report summary and access to full report at: [www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/NPP/05-080sum.html](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/NPP/05-080sum.html).

Also read The Olive Industry – an Environmental Systems Framework at: [www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/NPP/04-057sum.html](http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/NPP/04-057sum.html).

– [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au)

### KIND CAPSICUM CONTROLS

New research shows the strategic use of natural fungicides has the potential to effectively reduce or prevent powdery mildew in capsicums and chillies in tropical regions.

Ayr-based Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries senior plant pathologist Dr Chrys Akem said the research, funded by Horticulture Australia Limited, could have more widespread benefits for several major production areas.

## Black spot apple trials

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Queensland (DPI&F) is trialling new black spot (*Venturia inaequalis*) resistant apple varieties suitable for organic orchard systems, in a project supported by Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL), Apple and Pear Australia Ltd (APAL) and the Rural Industry Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC).

This project has involved the establishment of a one-hectare commercial orchard block (1100 trees) in the Stanthorpe district of Queensland to certified organic standards, used for research. In 2006 the planting will produce Australia's first organically grown crop of a new, high quality, Queensland-bred black spot resistant apple.

**A full article on the results of the research will be published in a coming issue of AOJ.**

"Powdery mildew has a wide host range within field and horticultural crops, including capsicums, tomatoes and chillies," Dr Akem said.

DPI&F research stations have been screening a range of natural fungicides to identify which were the most effective with most positive results from cow's milk and silicon.

"These combinations can cut back on the many toxic and expensive fungicide sprays needed to control powdery mildew on capsicums. They have the potential to reduce growers' costs and protect the Great Barrier Reef from farm run-off."

Dr Akem said more effective and sustainable alternatives were necessary because powdery mildew was showing signs of developing resistance to present control methods.

– [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)

### ORGANIC SPELT WHEAT RESEARCH

A new participatory project has begun in NSW to improve the quality and agronomic characteristics of spelt wheat.

The project involves ACO certified David and Mary Booth of Buronga Organics; plant breeder from NSW DPI, Dr David Luckett; and organic industry liaison officer, Robyn Neeson.

Selections for increased grain size and early vigour will be made and tested.

– [www.grdc.com.au](http://www.grdc.com.au)

### UK: LAMB & PERENNIAL PASTURE RESULTS OPTIMISTIC

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Victoria has been continuing trials to demonstrate organic lamb production systems and enable producers to make informed decisions about converting to organic. The lambing was described as a "hard start but fantastic finish".

Information on the results so far including information on the prevention of parasites is available from DPI.

Results of the Perennial Pasture research has indicated that where perennial species were sown in rows, there was better emergence with all species except fescue.

More information on both of these trials is given in the DPI Organic Newsletter: [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au).

## International R&D news

### USA: GLYPHOSATE FUSARIUM LINK

Fusarium head blight (FHB) of wheat represents both a serious food safety concern and an economic threat to farmers.

A new paper by Fernandez et al, published in *Crop Science*, points to the application of glyphosate as a significant predisposing factor for the development of the disease.

– [www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5710](http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=5710)

### UK: GM CONTAMINATION LINGERS

GM crops contaminate the countryside for up to 15 years after they have been harvested, new UK government research shows. The study was published by the Royal Society and financed by GM companies and the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

– *The Independent on Sunday* [news.independent.co.uk/uk/environment/article318238.ece](http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/environment/article318238.ece); *Daily Mail*, Oct 10.