

# Life gets cheesy for SA couple

Never a couple to sit still, Ulli and Helmut Spranz are planning the next venture for their hugely successful bio-dynamic food business B.-d. Farm Paris Creek.

Next year they plan to open a factory to produce Swiss hard cheeses and French speciality cheeses, which will perfectly complement their range of bio-dynamic milk and natural dairy products.

The new cheese factory is part of a long-held ambition to produce bio-dynamic cheeses and will also provide the couple with a way of using excess milk in a long-life product.

This year, B.-d. Farm's achievements have been honored with three finalist nominations for the prestigious Rabobank Agribusiness Awards for Excellence – the premier achievements for Australia's food and agribusiness industries.

B.-d. Farm was a finalist in the categories of agribusiness value-adding; environmental and energy management; and rural enterprise – an award B.-d. Farm won last year.

The company's sustainable land and water management practices were also recognised with B.-d. Farm being nominated as a finalist in the Landcare Primary Producer Awards.

The company processes 40,000 litres of milk each week, through a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant that was built in 2001.

Apart from selling it as a fresh and pure product, the non-homogenised milk is also used to make a range of yogurts, butter and quark, which is a European style cottage cheese



**B.-d. Farm processes 40,000 litres of milk a week.**

similar to creamed cheese. The products are found in supermarkets and health food stores across Australia and in South-East Asia.

Over the years, B.-d. Farm has increased its land and dairy herd from 66 hectares and 40 cows in 1989 to cover 1200 hectares and 500 cows in and around Paris Creek today – this includes neighboring farmers who have also adopted bio-dynamic farming methods to supply the Spranz with milk.

During the past five years, Ulli and Helmut have shared their knowledge by holding bi-annual workshops in bio-dynamic and organic farm management and homeopathic animal management. The farm and factory are also open for educational tours once a week.

"We show them how an enterprise can be both commercially viable and environmentally friendly and sustainable," Ulli said. ■

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# Non-toxic product wins TV coverage

COOEE Products appeared on ABC TV's New Inventors program in August with one of their products that is registered with the BFA.

The invention is an additive made from natural food grade additives dubbed FT50, which allows bitumen to be mixed easily with cold water to produce Cooee Ecotrax. This works as a hydrophobic binder (a water repelling binder), applied to road bases, and acts as a shield against water ingress which is the main cause of road deterioration and potholes.

This ability to mix bitumen easily with water in a non-toxic

way is being used in road construction and for dust control in broadacre applications.

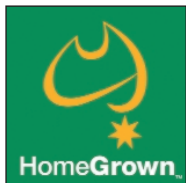
The same technology has been applied to coating timber posts with the water-based bitumen compound. The timber coating product, TimberTreat Plus, is ideal for use on vine support posts in organic vineyards and on tomato stakes and timber trellises. ■

**Contact: For more information on Cooee Products phone (07) 54770953; email < fvos@cooeebiosciences.com >.**

## BFA secures the HomeGrown Advantage

On November 3, BFA received formal notification from Australian HomeGrown (AHG) confirming BFA as "both a member of the organisation and a licensee of the HomeGrown logo".

The alliance promises to provide cost-effective access in future for ACO clients to use the AHG logo. This will provide marketing benefits to those ACO clients in industries forced to compete with imported goods on the Australian market for prices at a fraction of the cost.



The principal executive officer of AHG Marcus Elgin, wrote: "We look forward to developing a strong and mutually beneficial alliance over time. AHG is

cognisant of the leadership position that BFA has taken in its decision to work with HomeGrown. This decision will, in our opinion, create substantial benefit for BFA members.

"We look forward to working with BFA to develop programs that add value to each of our member groups, the agricultural sector and community in general," Elgin said.

*More information will be given in the next issue of AOJ.*

## World Organic Congress

Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) was proud to sponsor the 15th IFOAM World Organic Congress in Adelaide last month.

Among the major outcomes of the congress was the passing of a declaration calling upon governments worldwide to actively endorse and practically support organic agriculture. One thousand delegates from over 70 countries supported the declaration.

The IFOAM Congress presented 360 papers on a broad range of issues including development policies, the role of organic agriculture in addressing biodiversity, climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon sequestration, social justice, food security and quality, animal husbandry and animal welfare, as well as national perspectives of organic agriculture's contribution to rural development.

The scientific nature of the congress and multitude of research presented substantiates the claims in support of organic agriculture.

The IFOAM General Assembly saw 250 IFOAM member organisations discuss and vote upon on a range of issues. The most significant were the elections of the new world board and the adoption of a revised set of organic principles being: health, ecology, fairness and care.

*See pages 32-35 for two interviews with IFOAM Congress speakers.*

## SA farmers form group

The idea to form an organic farmers group has been growing steadily among many SA organic farmers.

Now four dedicated certified organic and/or biodynamic growers have made it happen. They are: Ulli Spranz, B.-d. Farm Paris Creek; Gavin Dunn, Four Leaf Milling; Adrian Strachan, Willunga Hills Organic and Graeme Schultz, Forest Orchards.

On October 23, the founding meeting took place at B.-d. Farm Paris Creek in the Adelaide Hills. More than 60 of the state's 120 certified farmers attended, and an additional 30 farmers sent apologies – organisers said they were extremely happy with the turn up.

### Organic Advantage

BFA's e-zine Organic Advantage has now become punchier, to the point and more regular. Even better – it's free!

To keep up-to-date with industry news, subscribe by following the links on the website: [www.bfa.com.au](http://www.bfa.com.au) or email [media@bfa.com.au](mailto:media@bfa.com.au).

"It could not have been better, we were hoping to be able to attract 20 to 30 people at this extremely busy time of the year. This exceeded our expectations by far. We had farmers coming from as far as Kangaroo Island and the Eyre Peninsula," Ulli Spranz said.

One of the aims of the founding members was for all SA certified organic and/or biodynamic farmers to be united under one roof and work together.

Speakers from Primary Industries and Resources SA, the Advisory Board of Agriculture and the Agriculture Bureau of SA added very good value to the day.

The new group welcomes any organic farmers who could not attend the meeting to make contact.

**Contact: Ulli Spranz, phone: (08) 8388 3339.**

## New era as certifiers unite

October 2005 saw the historic formation of the Organic Certifiers of Australia (OCA).

The OCA consists of the seven Australian organic AQIS accredited certification bodies and has been established as the single national organisation to lead and represent the collective interests of the organic industry regarding certification and related matters.

The formation of the OCA heralds a new era of Australian organic industry professionalism, unification and co-operation.

## Organics steal the limelight

Industry members have been kept busy with organics playing a part in many mainstream events over the past few months.

The largest food trade show in the country, Fine Food Australia was the ideal place for BFA to promote the organic industry and also showcase a range of Australian Certified Organic products.

This huge trade exhibition attracted a record 28,300 buyers with almost 2000 of them coming from overseas. The large response received by those who exhibited on the ACO stand as well queries regarding organic certification was indicative of the interest there is in the food industry about organics.

And the BFA, beginning on September 1, has participated in a travelling consumer show featuring celebrity chef Mirko Grillini conducting cooking demonstrations using organic produce.

Every day consumers in major shopping centre malls have been exposed to the shows taking place in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and some larger regional centres.

Chef Mirko Grillini said: "Many consumers have been curious about organics and how to recognise them when shopping. The travelling show has had a positive response from all and provided valuable exposure for the ACO Bud logo."

## First harvest success for olive grove

Sawyers Brook Estate Olive Grove was presented a bronze medal, Class 1a, for their Frantoio oil from the first harvest at

the Northern Rivers Olive Oil Show in August in Tamworth. This is the first major show of the year and attracts a large number of producers from across the country. Sawyers Brook Estate, in the heart of the Hunter Valley, produces a range of olive oils from famous Tuscan varieties and table olives from Italian and Spanish varieties as well as citrus fruits and Russian garlic.

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