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NEW FINANCIAL INCENTIVE FOR SMALL ORGANIC PRODUCERS TO BOOST REGIONAL ORGANIC MARKETS

Adelaide, SA – 27 November 2006 – Market premiums enjoyed by large certified organic producers will now be more readily available to small organic farmers in Australia, due to a new low-cost certification initiative announced by leading national organic certifier, NASAA, at a meeting in Adelaide today.

The move is expected to boost availability of fully certified organic and biodynamic produce at regional markets whilst maintaining product integrity by ensuring that all product is compliant with the National Standard.

“Anecdotal evidence suggests demand for properly certified produce is exceeding supply at many regional and local markets”, according to NASAA general manager, Debra Arnold. “This will enable the small producers involved to become fully certified and maximise the appeal of their products to a growing army of consumers”.

With the initiative, NASAA will offer a low cost group certification to organic farming clusters throughout Australia. The program is expected to support the growth of small, certified Local Producer Groups.

“The certification will cover both domestic and export sales. Depending on the size and location of groups the certification cost for each local producer could be as low as \$330 per year – around half the current NASAA individual producer certification rate, and an even greater discount to competitive certification rates”.

The envisaged cost economies derive from savings in inspection, travel and administration. Producers will form themselves into “local” groups for their annual inspection implemented under a new NASAA electronic certification program called “E-Cert”.

The initiative coincides with the announcement regarding a new Australian Organic Standard from leading national authority, Standards Australia.

Standards Australia has announced it will develop an Australian national standard in 2007. Producers or other organisations flouting the new Standard would be exposed to action by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

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NASAA at a Glance

Formed in 1986, The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) is one of Australia's largest organic certifiers.

With operations both in Australia and overseas, the company provides certification and inspection services, which assist in facilitating market access throughout the world for NASAA certified organic product.

NASAA is accredited with the following bodies and programs: AQIS (Australian Quarantine Inspection Service), IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements), ISO65 and the United States National Organic Program (US NOP).

With a national office based in the Adelaide Hills in South Australia, NASAA is a non-profit company limited by guarantee comprising an association of members and certified operators (over 1000).

For further information visit the NASAA website at www.nasaa.com.au.