



MEDIA RELEASE

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Macleay Valley farmers, gardeners and green thumbs invited to an Organics for Beginners workshop

Small-scale famers and green thumbs across the Macleay Valley will have the chance to learn about the environmental and economic benefits of 'going organic' at an Organics for Beginners event in October.

Hosted by Macleay Landcare and the Macleay Valley Food Bowl initiative, the free Organics for Beginners workshop will be held at an Organic Farm (TBC), Kempsey on **Saturday 31 October 2015** from 9:30am to 4:30pm. The free full day workshop will cover the basics of biological bug control, composting and organic production.

The workshop will include a general discussion surrounding the organic industry and certification for small operators by Australia's leading organic certifier, the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA) and will include presentations by legendary Australian organic trainer and best-selling author Tim Marshall of TM Organics.

Tim Marshall brings 30 years of organic experience, know-how and a common sense approach to organic growing. He will de-mystify the compost process, will discuss how to manage unwanted pests biologically, using bugs in your gardens and farming systems, bringing a sense of humour to the process of production for the home and farm.

Tim was a co-founder of NASAA and Organic Guarantee System Co-ordinator for the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). He has visited more than 4,000 certified organic properties in more than 30 countries.

NASAA Operations Manager and workshop organiser Peter Hastie said the event will provide solid advice based on science and practical experience on how to improve farm health.

"We'll be talking about the environmental benefits of biological and natural farming practices on improved soil health and longer term sustainability and viability of farms," he said.

"The workshop will cover topics like how to enrich and improve soil, increase the yield and health of plants, and reduce water use.

"We'll also be explaining to farmers the steps to organic certification from small farm perspective, as well as covering organic industry market trends."

Peter said domestic and international demand for organics was being driven by consumer concerns over health, food safety and sustainability.

"Demand is now to the point where many NASAA certified organic processors simply cannot source enough organic and local resources," he said.

"So as well as the health and sustainability advantages of producing your own great Organic food at home, there are also potential economic benefits of becoming a certified organic producer".

"Our aim is to help farmers weigh their options when it comes to capitalising on the emerging markets for organics and inform green thumbs of the importance of eating Organic."

RSVP: Macleay Landcare on 02 6562 2076

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About NASAA:

The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA) was formed in 1986 and supports the education of industry and consumers on organic, biodynamic and sustainable agricultural practices.

NASAA was Australia's first organic certifier.

Today, its certification arm, NASAA Certified Organic (NCO), provides certification and inspection services to assist Certified Organic operators access every organic market in the World.

NCO is the largest certifier of agricultural land in the world. NCO certifies more than 1,000 operations in 13 countries, certifying some 12m ha of agricultural land worldwide.

In early 2014 NASAA became the first foreign certifier approved to inspect Australian based operations for certification to Chinese Organic Regulations for direct export to China.

In August 2015 Ben Copeman, General Manager of NASAA was named the Australia China Business Council (ACBC) 2015 Industry Leader of the Year at the South Australia, China and Hong Kong Business Awards.