

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Herbicide concerns highlights need for alternative solutions

In response to the public dialogue on the use of synthetic herbicides, the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture (NASAA) is calling for long needed research supported by government into alternative weed management systems for producers.

NASAA Chair, Glenn Schaube, said that weed management was a concern and constant challenge for all producers, including those certified organic, and called on state/federal governments to focus more on developing alternative methods of weed management.

“The organic sector is growing at around 15% a year and occupying around 2% of agricultural produce worth approximately \$2 billion to Australia’s economy,” Mr Schaube said. “Australia also has the largest area of land under organic certification which includes numerous large scale grain and seed producers.

“For the increasing number of organic producers there is a growing economic need to develop alternatives to synthetic herbicides for the management of unwanted weeds.

“Unfortunately, apart from the certified organic sector, few are looking at developing alternatives free from synthetic chemicals that achieve optimal efficacy in mitigating the effects of weeds on crop production, while maintaining and building soils and productivity,” Mr Schaube said.

Preventative rather than remedial measures are the first line of defence for organic systems. Synthetic herbicides are not available to organic producers under the *NASAA Organic and Biodynamic Standard* and the *National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce*. This is in line with organic market demand globally, and the organic standards of NASAA’s contemporaries and major trading partners such as the European Union, United States, China and Japan.

Many weed management applications permitted in certified organic farming systems are limited to hand, steam or flame weeding, slashing and management practices such as crop rotation and plant diversity for natural competition as viable options. This invariably adds to production costs, which in turn drives up the price of organic products for domestic consumers and exports.

“We all want to ensure the products used to produce our food are used safely and pose as low a risk as possible,” Mr Schaube said.

“Given the growth in the organics sector, we believe it is time for governments of all persuasions to partner with the certified organic industry and invest in developing a new generation of effective non-synthetic weed management practices.”

### **ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, AUSTRALIA**

Formed in 1986, the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia supports the education of industry and consumers on organic, biodynamic and sustainable agricultural practices. NASAA’s Standard covers the organic supply chain – from input manufacturers to producers, processors to wholesale and retail operations - ensuring organic integrity ‘from paddock to plate’.

### **ABOUT NASAA CERTIFIED ORGANIC**

NASAA Certified Organic is a fully-owned subsidiary of the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia and provides the certification services to operators within Australia, its territories and Internationally.

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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, AUSTRALIA LTD**

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