



ORGANIC INSIGHTS

SUMMER EDITION - 2016

A woman wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, a light blue zip-up jacket, and dark jeans stands on a rooftop garden. She is smiling and looking upwards. In her left hand, she holds a small potted plant, and in her right hand, she holds a green-handled rake. The background features a city skyline with various skyscrapers, including a prominent one with a spiral design. Several drones are flying in the sky around her.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...
NASAA CELEBRATES 30 YEARS
OF ORGANIC LEADERSHIP

IN THIS ISSUE...

- > DISEASE PREVENTION
- > RAISING NATURALLY HEALTHY SHEEP
- > SUPPORTING ORGANIC RESEARCH

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MESSAGE FROM THE GM

SUMMER 2016



IT IS NASAA'S 30TH BIRTHDAY THIS YEAR AND THE SIGNIFICANCE IS NOT LOST ON ME.

Three decades of operation has created a considerable legacy – not least of which is the establishment of nationally and internationally accredited certification programs and organisations like NCO.

Formalising, defining and establishing the concept of 'organic' was a very early goal for us and one that I think now is well in hand. The next phase of action will require us to support and grow the role of sustainable practises.

We all know that the organic market is growing but as a percentage of agriculture overall it is still limited to 1% or 2%. I would like to see NASAA help take organics to the place where it can compete more completely with synthetic agriculture – to a point where the broader goals of organics can have a more significant impact on society as a whole.

THIS NOT ONLY REQUIRES POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE - IT WILL ALSO RELY HEAVILY ON THE PRACTICAL.

Luckily, when it comes to practical solutions, there are no greater innovators than sustainable agriculturists. The spirit of the stump jump plough lives on, even if sometimes at a microscopic level.

I have seen this in visits recently to some of our Tasmanian operators as well as from speakers at our recent INTO Organics seminar series. From elegant mechanical weeding inventions, biological control

and microbiological solutions to just plain well thought through agronomics - promoting farming practice that integrates with soils, microclimate and biota.

I also know that the success of any innovation is limited by the speed and ease with which it can be communicated and transferred across an industry. Organics will only sustain itself intellectually if the isolation of ideas is overcome. The more people who are engaged the more solutions will be developed.

Finding the answer for our industry to more effectively share knowledge is a challenge that NASAA is now preparing to take on.

I am not sure what the specific solution is yet - but it will involve modern communications solutions - so I guess that the 21st century is actually a very good place to start our next 30 years.

Mark Anderson
General Manager



LIVESTOCK - DISEASE PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE WHEN IT COMES TO EFFECTIVE LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT, ACCORDING TO DR CATHIE HARVEY, REGISTERED NATURAL VETERINARIAN, NUFFIELD SCHOLAR, ORGANIC FARMER AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE RECENT NASAA INTO ORGANICS SEMINAR.

Dr Harvey shares some of her thoughts on effective livestock management practices, her own journey to organic farming and the practice of homeopathy.

As a certified organic dairy farmer and registered veterinarian in South Australia, Dr Harvey has spent much of her lifetime ensuring the welfare of our domestic pets and livestock. She uses veterinary homeopathy as her main mode of treatment, and is the only fully qualified veterinary homeopath in the State.

An understanding of the limitations of conventional veterinary medicine, following 20 years' of practice, inspired Dr Harvey to research alternatives in natural methods of animal husbandry and treatment.

Today, in addition to homeopathy, Dr Harvey, employs natural feeding, herbal medicines and Bush Flower essences in her holistic approach to treating patients, practicing in Adelaide, as well as consulting from her farm in Narrung.

Our own journey to organic has been a long one. We conventionally farmed dairy cows very successfully for 20 years. Our farm was in the top 10% in the State and yet we were experiencing a continual decrease in farm revenue and profitability over time.

If you had asked me 20 years' ago whether we would be farming organically today, I would have thought you were crazy. But extensive reading of the practices and philosophies of Jerry Brunetti, Arden Andersen and Rudolf Steiner, and observation of animal behaviors and treatment through my practice, and on the farm, lead me to understand that there had to be a better way.

Today, our farm is certified biodynamic (since 2007), and I am a registered homeopathic veterinarian.



PART OF A GROWING INDUSTRY

The farming of organic livestock has grown substantially in Australia, in pace with the rapid growth of the broader Organic Industry.

Figures from the Australian Organic Market Report 2014 indicate that Dairy sales accounted for the largest share of Australian organic farm gate sales at 22.3%, with the sale of milk achieving a 20-25% premium over the long term. This was followed closely by meat sales at 16.2%, with the average growth for organic beef businesses at 45% in the year. Beef sales attracted a premium of 40% in North America, and in Australia of between 6-25%.

All figures point to continued growth in the sector.

THE ROAD TO ORGANIC

With more conventional farmers seeking advice on organic certification as a way of realising potential benefits of improved price stability and profitability, it's important to revisit the primary principles driving organic livestock farming to:

- Produce optimal quantities of food and fiber
- Produce food with high nutritional value
- Provide livestock with conditions to satisfy their behavioural and physiological needs and feed
- Maintain or increase genetic diversity of animals and plants (Non-GMO)

To these, I add my own simple principles:

- Understand the Organic Standards
- Develop expertise in herd management
- Nurture soil to grow your feed
- Provide alternative therapy, or refer to natural veterinary experts
- Provide conventional treatment when required (and where allowable under Organic Standards)
- Prevention is better than cure
- Be committed to being Organic

The focus of organic livestock management, therefore, is on the adoption of the best animal husbandry practices to promote healthy, disease resistant-animals.

THE TREATMENT SPECTRUM

It's important to understand from the outset that approved veterinary treatment should be an adjunct to NOT a replacement for good management practice. Reliance on substances rather than appropriate management

practices are not in accordance with organic farming principles. Having said that, under organic management standards, conventional veterinary treatment must not be withheld if animals do suffer disease despite appropriate management.

In a hierarchy of control, Alternate Treatment options should first be explored, including:

- Phytotherapy (herbal)
- Homeopathy
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic remedies

Only if these options are not successful should conventional veterinary treatment be given, under veterinary supervision, to prevent suffering and distress to the animal.

HOMEOPATHY

I have used homeopathy treatments extensively in managing our own organic dairy herd, and have researched its' use on organic farms worldwide.

Homeopathy is a very complex treatment modality, with over 2000 available remedies. Homeopathy focuses on individualised animal or herd/group treatments. It can be used as a preventative measure and for first aid symptom treatment, or at a deeper level for whole animal/ group holistic treatment.

The benefits of homeopathy are many and include ease of administration and use, including as a simple first aid remedy; there are no withholding periods for animals or products, no antibiotic resistance, and no harmful side effects.

It's important to understand that homeopathy is not a treatment panacea, and similar to the experience in humans, some animals may respond better than others – it really depends on the underlying health of the animal and internal and external stresses - called 'obstacles' - to cure. In our experience, using organic farming practices and principles, however, we find that our calves are responsive to treatment, and we have a low mortality rate. We find that most conditions that are treated conventionally can be treated with homeopathy.

Whilst homeopathy is still viewed with some scepticism in the conventional medical fraternity, there is now a body of research that looks at homeopathic treatment as an energy medicine. Comparative trials set up by conventional medical groups, however, are not really designed to provide adequate measures that account for the individualized approach to animal treatment that is homeopathy.

Conventional medicine treats the disease, based on symptoms and causative agent, whereas homeopathy treats an individual animal or herd that exhibit symptoms, and taking into account the individual animals' unique profile.

There is some good emerging research in areas, though, that has been published in veterinary journals including the 'Chris Day trials', which look at a remedy for pig stillbirths, and a further study on homeopathic treatment of mastitis.

Homeopathy and other natural approaches to medicine can be challenging for those who believe that a symptom and causative approach is the only sound method of analysis. I would encourage them to question this belief system. Just because we don't understand something or can't provide a full explanation about how it works, doesn't mean it doesn't work.

Where would medicine be today if we had that approach?

A SPECIAL NOTE ON VACCINES

We develop and administer nosodes to individual animals as an alternate homeopathic remedy that is likened to vaccines. It is not a vaccine and does not produce an antibody response in the animal.

The use of nosodes as a preventative measure seeks to boost the animal's immune response to challenges, thereby improving disease resistance. Nosodes can be developed from pathological tissue, micro-organisms, diseased tissue or products of disease e.g. discharge.

For example, we use a mastitis nosode formulated from mastitic cows within our herd to stimulate herd immunity and resistance to mastitis infections. This nosode is placed in the cows' drinking water weekly.

Nosodes can be broad ranging in application; from the treatment of worms to footrot, clostridia, and mastitis. There are examples from the UK of a nosode used in dog kennels to prevent parvo virus. We ourselves are trialing a brown snake bite nosode on the farm with our dogs and cat.

It's important to note, however, that conventional vaccination is not ruled out when an endemic disease is present that can't be managed.

WHEN TO CALL THE VET

A sympathetic vet can assist in making a conventional diagnosis, advise on best practice animal husbandry, and supply expert knowledge in allowable treatments.

A vet that practices holistic natural treatment can further provide alternative therapy that takes into consideration the whole animal, including; animal history, diet, vaccinations, parasite treatments and environment.

This may include advice on:

- Milk performance
- Production diseases
- Nutrition and feeding
- Cow environment
- Reproductive Management
- Dry cow management
- Calf and heifer Management
- Herd health monitoring
- Hygiene

Remember, prevention is better than cure.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dr Harvey regularly runs educative sessions on homeopathic treatments with veterinarians and organic farmers.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Further information on studies into the effectiveness of homeopathic treatments can be found at

[CLICK HERE](#)



DR CATHIE HARVEY



THINKING ABOUT IMPROVED PRODUCTION? THEN THINK ABOUT COMPOST QUALITY



THE QUALITY OF COMPOST IS HIGHLY VARIABLE IN AUSTRALIA, WITH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOW AND HIGH QUALITY PRODUCT NOT UNDERSTOOD GENERALLY, PARTICULARLY IN AGRICULTURE.

Jono Craven regards a lack of understanding of quality differentiation as a key issue hampering the effective, sustainable use of organic compost to increase agricultural production, and one identified in his recently completed Fellowship Report.

Mr Craven's interest in compost quality initially came from his involvement in the development of Gippsland Water's Soil and Organic Recycling facility, near Sale. As a producer of organic compost, and in observing other compost products, Jono has seen first-hand the range in quality of compost products, and mix of success in use on-farm.

The lack of consistency led Jono to research key drivers for the successful and sustainable use of organic waste. He applied for a Churchill fellowship successfully in 2015, to undertake an 'Investigation of effective recycling of Urban and Agricultural Waste to provide positive outcomes for Agriculture' with the goal to determine how to achieve better agricultural results from compost.

Mr Craven's research led him to study systems in Israel, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, UK, USA and Canada over an 8 week period. This enabled him to observe best practice overseas, viewing systems in countries characterised by more intensive farm production, less resource availability, higher environmental standards and greater recycling innovation.

While Mr Craven believes Australia has a fair way to go, he believes that the potential to develop voluntary industry standards that define compost quality will go a long way to assisting identification and customer recognition, leading to more effective on-farm use.

In a recent interview with ABC Rural, Mr Craven said

that, "there's a broad spectrum of compost being produced and I think we probably need some voluntary industry standards to break those up into different standards so people know what they're going to get."

He believes that there is a problem in referring to all organic material as compost without a quality benchmark. Someone who would not be in disagreement with the compost quality equation is Trent Milford from Peats Soil, although the method in which this might be evaluated may be up for debate.

"A voluntary code may be open to individual adoption and interpretation," he says, "and there are already some existing mechanisms in place."

"For example, our input products are certified with NASAA, whose Standards we believe provide the highest level of independent assurance of quality and acceptability as a farm input."

"Organic certification provides an assurance of the integrity of our product, which alongside our EPA Licencing and membership of the AORA (Australian Organics Recycling Association) provides consumer confidence in the application of our products."

As a key sponsor of the recent NASAA IntoOrganics seminar, Trent spoke of the importance of understanding the end user's requirements.

"Different soil types and different crops will require different types of composts, so it's not a one type of compost fits all situation," he says. "An understanding of the existing soil biology, and crop managed, influences the requirements for compost application, and composition, to achieve desired outcomes."

FURTHER INFORMATION

Follow Jono's research journey through a series of video blogs

[CLICK HERE](#)

Peats Soil & Garden Supplies

[CLICK HERE](#)

LISTENING CLOSELY TO DR HARVEY'S PRESENTATION AT THE INTO ORGANICS SEMINAR WERE ORGANIC SHEEP FARMERS, RITA AND JUSTIN PORKER, OF KINMANA ORGANICS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S MALLEE DISTRICT.

RAISING AND MANAGING NATURALLY HEALTHY SHEEP

Raising and managing naturally healthy sheep that require minimal intervention has been the aim of the couple, who have been certified for 12 years with NASAA.

This philosophy has extended from the selection of the hardy Dorper sheep for their herd; selected for their self-sufficiency with no need for shearing, crutching and mulesing, and disease resistance – to active pasture management and use of preventative health tonics, and first aid treatments, using natural and organic methods.

Rita Porker wholeheartedly agrees with Dr Harvey's philosophy that the good management of livestock is of utmost importance.

"At Kinmana Organics, the use of veterinary treatments are not needed, owing mainly to the hardiness of the Dorper breed and, secondly, to the preventative measures taken in supplying free-feed of organic supplements," says Rita.

The animal health program at Kinmana Organics begins at ear-tagging time of the lambs. If there are any health issues, they are quickly dealt with. As the lambs grow, they are weighed and drafted, choosing only the best lambs for market.

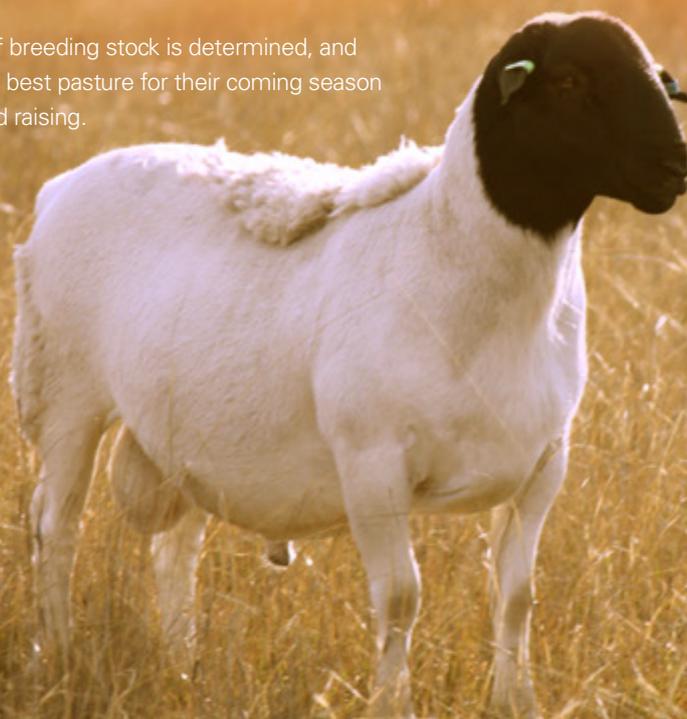
Careful selection of breeding stock is determined, and ewes are given the best pasture for their coming season of lamb bearing and raising.

Sheep are grass-fed only, avoiding common issues with grain overload.

"In addition to native pasture, organic supplements are provided, with lambs receiving a preventative health tonic of organic apple cider vinegar, garlic, Minkel (minerals & kelp) and cod liver oil. The tonic helps with parasites and overall wellbeing," says Rita.

To extend grass availability throughout the year, the couple use a Fodder Solutions 'Fodder Factory', a supplementary feed product in the form of nutritious sprouted barley biscuits. The biscuits are made on farm from the previous season's barley crop. This triples the available protein (grain to sprouts). In 7 days, the grain grows, watered inside the fodder factory, and is turned into large, sprouted mats, which are then manually fed to the livestock.

"The challenge this year was the internal parasite burden (being a wetter winter than usual)," says Rita. "This issue was successfully addressed, however, through early detection and organic treatment at 6 weekly intervals."



Dedication to organics began for the couple over a decade ago when Justin's health necessitated change. His personal journey with severe chemical sensitivity made him committed to producing 100% natural, chemical-free meat available for others to enjoy.

Today, the couple's product range extends from bulk, wholesale and retail Organic Lamb products, to a range of complementary organic chicken and other poultry product (sourced off-farm), providing a diverse meat offering.

The Kinmana business model is based on a true 'paddock to plate' concept with direct product distribution through home delivery service. The business directly employs dedicated, highly knowledgeable distribution staff to service a range of delivery locations across South Australia. A high percentage of product sales are repeat business from a network of loyal customers, and from referrals.

"We've found that there is a growing market of consumers who want to have a more direct relationship with their food suppliers," says Rita.

"Our customers are discerning people who demand greater knowledge of what they are consuming, where it has been sourced and how it has been managed," she says.

That fundamental understanding of the consumer of Kinmana product has been enhanced with the couple's recent awarding of an Agribusiness Growth Grant through Food SA, offering business mentoring that has enabled the couple to focus on further developing their business, with support in planning for growth, product marketing and branding.

Justin and Rita were honoured as finalists in the 2015 'Premium Food & Wine from our Clean Environment' award (Murraylands and Riverland) – a Foodland sponsored award that recognises excellence, achievement and contribution to South Australia's regional community.

Life is busy on the farm, but the couple's 5 home-schooled children all help with the feeding and care of the animals.

AND THE TRADITION CONTINUES

THE COUPLE'S OLDEST CHILD IS NOW LOOKING TO DEVELOP A NEW STRING TO THE KINMANA BOW, WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF HERITAGE POULTRY FOR MEAT PRODUCTION.

Both Rita and Justin have been proud that their child, Jacinta, 13, has shown a real interest in the genetics of suitable poultry breeds for meat production, with plans to cross different heritage-breed chickens to produce a suitable, large-size meat bird.

The benefit of heritage-bred birds are that they are able to naturally breed (without the use of artificial insemination) and are naturally omnivorous, just as nature intended. A heritage-bred chicken only requires a diet of native pasture and whole seeds and grains and, allowed to grow 12-16 weeks, develop great muscle tone and texture.

The family believes that this provides an alternate, ethical choice when compared to today's commercial meat chicken farming, with its emphasis on rapid growth. Through ongoing experimentation, and with the support of business mentors, the couple will continue to refine their product offering.

"Our vision is that our family farm will be a leader in the production of certified organic lamb and poultry in South Australia, developing the highest standards for quality, consistency, sustainability and integrity in our product and relationships," says Rita.



KINMANA ORGANICS' POPULAR 'LAMB HAM' IS HOT RIGHT NOW FOR CHRISTMAS – THAT'S IF YOU ARE A LUCKY SOUTH AUSTRALIAN.

Lamb Ham is made with Organic Lamb, coconut palm sugar, Himalayan rock salt, and whole ground spices. NO NITRATES or preservatives. It's available in popular sizes of 500g sliced packs, 1kg bone-less and 2kg bone-in pieces. Limited quantities available.

But, be quick. To order your Lamb Ham, please contact Justin and Rita by phone or email and quote: NCO OFFER, by 20th December for delivery to SA locations on 22nd December. Pick-up locations and delivery details are advertised on the website. LIMITED QUANTITY AVAILABLE. (Pre-orders for 2016 are now closed on the website).

Go to www.kinmanaorganics.com.au for further details. Email: rita@kinmanaorganics.com.au Or phone Justin & Rita on 0418 805 075

SOIL HEALTH

THERE'S A PARTY GOING ON DOWN HERE

FROM THE PARTY ANIMALS TO THE QUIET ACHIEVERS - AND NOT FORGETTING THE WALLFLOWERS - THE ACTIVE BIOLOGY OF OUR SOIL IS MADE UP OF A DIVERSE RANGE OF MICROBES, ALL DOING THERE THANG.



Understanding the driving behaviors and food sources of these microbes is fundamental to effective soil management, according to Dr Ash Martin, Managing Director of Microbiology Laboratories Australia, who spoke at the Into Organics seminar on the importance of 'looking after the little things'.

Whilst much research and understanding of the physical and chemical properties of our soil exists, there's not been a lot of focus in the biological area – where the real activity happens. Until recently, that is.

Dr Martin and his colleague, Maria Manjarrez-Martinez, have both observed an increased interest from farmers in the underlying biology of soil systems, driven from an interest in getting the best out of the soil, and quantifiable outcomes on the performance and quality of farm input product utilised. Organic farmers, however, according to Dr Martin, already have the lead on their conventional brothers in the understanding of soil health.

KNOW YOUR MICROBES

Microbe identification is the first step toward effective management of your microbiology. Knowing what exists in the soil now, will assist in developing a program to effectively manage and promote desired microbe activity. An analysis of fundamental soil microbiology, therefore, is an important first step toward supporting better soil management decisions that aim to foster:

- More efficient use of inputs
- More consistent outcomes
- Increased soil productivity
- Greater profitability

Getting the microbial balance right can deliver more consistent outcomes (even during weather events such as drought), through improving soil structure and nutrient availability, and through suppressing disease.



DR ASH MARTIN

A MICROBE IS A MICROBE?

Microbes play an important role in soil nutrient cycles.

Microbes are particularly concentrated in the plant root zone (rhizosphere). Types of available food will influence what microbes are present, and how fast this is broken down – along with the environment and interaction with other microbes (synergistic/antagonistic).

Every nutrient, therefore, that you apply to your soil is affected by soil microbes before it reaches the plant. Any break in the microbe link can seriously disrupt the supply of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients to your crop.

The main groups of soil microbes, both of which exhibit their own unique characteristics are:

BACTERIA

Bacteria are the party animals – the ones that are after the fast, quick-fix sugar hit. They're a diverse group of single-celled microbes that can be relied on for speedy decomposition of proteins, amino acids and sugars. Bacteria only move when there is moisture around – otherwise, they are happy to stay at the bar.

FUNGI

Fungi are the quiet achievers - taking their time to get into the party. They are single-celled (yeasts) or multi celled (moulds, filamentous fungi) microbes that love to break down more complex sugars, cellulose and starch (carbohydrates).

Only Mycorrhizal fungi brings nutrients to the plant from outside, playing a very important part in a soil system, particularly influencing soil structure. Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (VAM) is particularly beneficial in the production of glomalin – long-lived carbon-rich soil exudate referred to as soil 'superglue'.

HOW DO WE BETTER MANAGE OUR MICROBES?

Firstly, we measure them. Then we find out whether current levels are 'good' or 'bad'. And finally, we employ management practices to improve them.

Typical testing methodology employed by Microbiology Laboratories Australia include:

SOIL INDICATORS

Provides a picture of key soil processes: nutrient solubilisation rate, nutrient cycling rate, nutrient accessibility, drought and disease resistance and the overall microbial balance.

IDENTIFICATION OF KEY MICROBE GROUPS

Indicates the level of microbial diversity and nutrients held in microbes. Level of microbial activity, CO₂ release, microbial biomass C, N release, P release.

Comparative tests of input products may also be conducted to evaluate relative performance.

HOW DO WE INCREASE THE DESIRABLES?

Dependent on results from testing, specific methods can be employed to increase numbers of beneficial Microbes, or to foster a better balance.

INCREASE BACTERIAL BIOMASS

Build soil carbon using a mix of semi-complex AND simple C forms.

- Gram + and Gram –
- Amines, proteins, sugars and starches
- Meat meal, fish fertilisers, starch, molasses, sugar
- Low C:N ratio residues – Watch soil C:N (<20:1)

INCREASE FUNGI

Build soil carbon using complex carbohydrates

- Stiff or woody residues with high C:N
- E.g. wheat straw, wood chips, woody compost (C:N >20:1)
- Manage soil C:N well (<20:1), consider additional N

INCREASE GENERAL MICROBIAL BIOMASS

Build soil carbon using diverse carbohydrates

- Simple, semi-complex and complex carbohydrates
- Residue mulching/digestion
- High carbon fertilisers/soil conditioners
- Manage C:N carefully (<20:1)

INCREASE MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI (VAM)

Stimulate, inoculate

- Stimulated by increasing soil Carbon
- Avoid over-tillage, over-fertilisation, fungicides
- Inoculate with good quality, verified inocula

INCREASE MICROBIAL DIVERSITY

Build soil carbon & consider inoculation

- Simple, semi-complex and complex carbohydrates
- Compost, compost extracts, compost teas
- Residue mulching/digestion
- Watch soil C:N (<20:1)

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE BE TESTING?

Dr Martin suggests a regime of testing each year, at the same time in the crop cycle. This provides a baseline for tracking changes in soil biology over time.

LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED!

Microbiology Laboratories Australia's test reports include a variety of useful tools that help to understand and manage microbiology; informing interpretation and agronomical decision-making and recommendations.

Visit <http://www.microbelabs.com.au/>.

SPEAKING OF PARTIES...

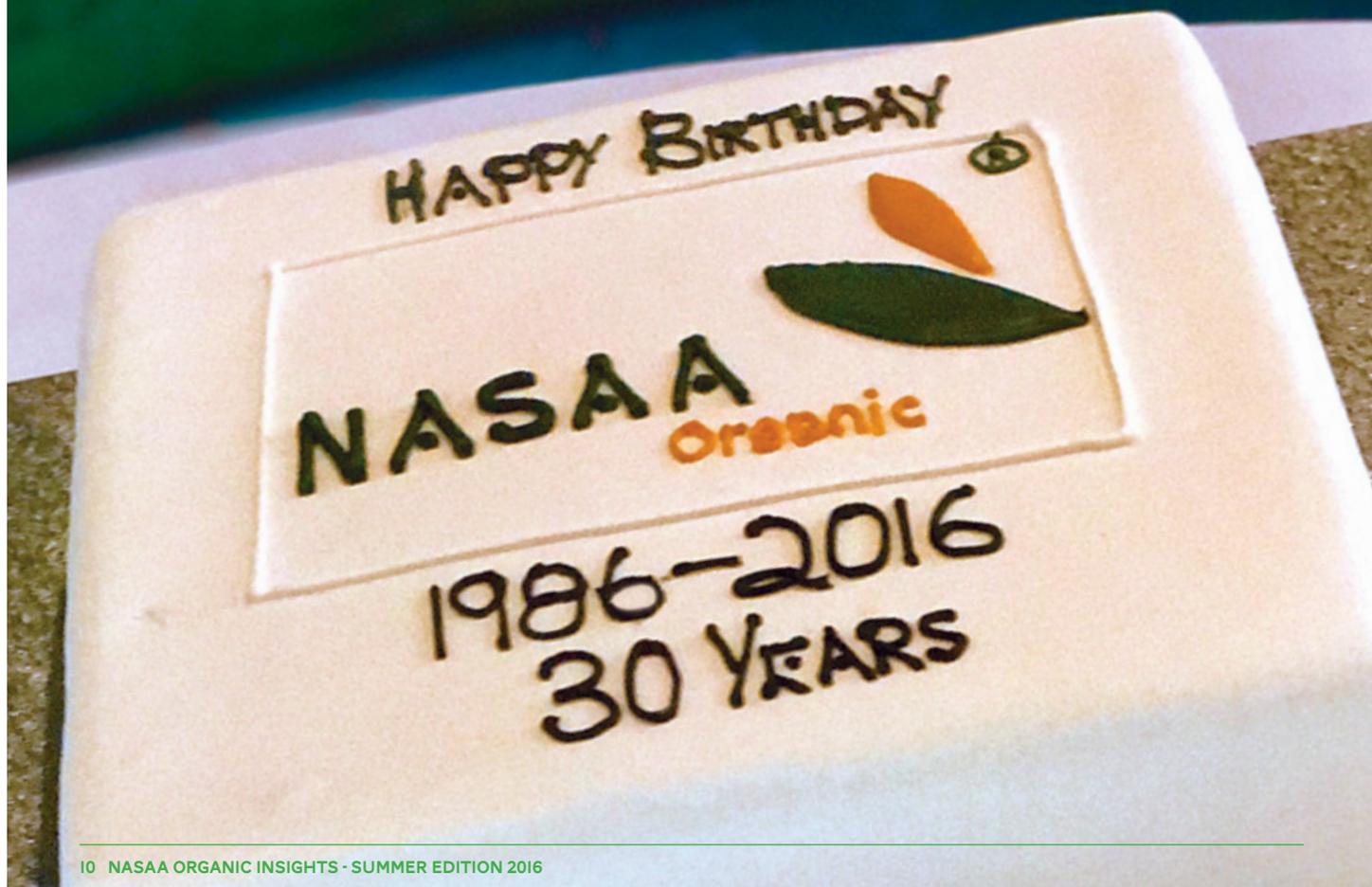
NASAA CELEBRATES *30 years'* OF ORGANIC INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

FROM ITS ORIGINAL INCEPTION IN 1984 WITH THE OBJECTIVE TO PROMOTE THE UNDERSTANDING, RECOGNITION AND GROWTH OF SUSTAINABLE, ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN AUSTRALIA - TO TODAY, AS ONE OF THE LARGEST NATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFIERS, NASAA'S EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY REFLECTS THAT OF THE ORGANIC INDUSTRY ITSELF IN AUSTRALIA.

And how things have changed. Once seen as a fringe-dwelling element made up of tree-hugging hippies to a more - than billion dollar industry in this country.

Tim Marshall, well known organic identity and consultant, and a founding Board member of NASAA, is one organic pioneer who can well remember the journey and the people behind the organic movement in Australia.

As Tim recalls... "NASAA arose from a workshop run by Sandy Fritz at a Soil Association of SA Organic Conference and Fair, in 1984. Sandy's proposal was for a national 'peak body' for the organic industry and a 'Clearing House' of information on organic systems."





L · R FRONT
 ELS WYNEN, SANDY FRITZ, TIM MARSHALL
 (ALL LIFE MEMBERS)

L · R BACK
 GLENN SHAUBE, JAN DENHAM, PHIL ROWE,
 GEOFF RICHARDSON, LAURIE GALPIN
 (ALL CURRENT DIRECTORS, EXCEPT GEOFF)

“The first meeting of the NASAA ‘Steering Committee’ was held at the annual Easter Field Day held at Geoff Wallace’s property in Kiewa, Victoria. Lionel Pollard, the convener of WWOOF, suggested that the Organic Standards he had been asked to develop for Victorian use should in fact be national standards, and that NASAA could take over the project.”

“So NASAA gradually evolved into a certification body, as it became obvious that of all the tasks before us, the most important and achievable was the identification of genuine organic produce.”

“CERTIFICATION WOULD GIVE THE MARKETPLACE THE ASSURANCE IT NEEDED TO GROW.”

“The first version of the NASAA Standards was created after many public meetings, correspondence with all the organic groups in Australia we could identify, hundreds of letters, and close reference to IFOAM Guidelines and such international standards as could be accessed, principally the Soil Association and California Certified Organic Growers Standards.”

“Although much slimmer than the current document, the original standards were basically the same and very consistent with what we have today. The main difference was that the first Standards said much less about processing and hardly touched upon distribution. Indeed, NASAA was to become one of first certification bodies in the world to have very well defined processing standards, to certify retail establishments, and definitely one of the very first to certify farming inputs.”

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

While it may now be a term that is used globally, sustainability in farming production is what we have been talking about for the last 30 years.

Issues of climate change, drought, water scarcity, waste management, salinity, plant and animal disease and human health have contributed to the questioning of traditional methods of agricultural production. Today, conventional farmers are looking to their organic brothers for answers to the big agricultural challenges.

If not converting to organic, then many are applying some of the principles of organic agriculture for overall farm health.

NASAA has been known as the quiet achiever in the industry, promoting the highest standards of organic agriculture in Australia. We have formed international alliances to facilitate export paths for our organic producers, and to expand the shared knowledge of the World’s organic farming community. We’ve punched above our weight in delivering the IFOAM World Congress in Adelaide, placing Australian organic agriculture on the global stage. And we continue to lead the way in promoting Australia’s clean, green image internationally.

Our birthday celebration is, of itself, a reflection of the development of the industry in Australia over the last 30 years. We invite you to reflect on this, and your own contribution.

Here’s to the next 30 years!



AN OPPORTUNITY

SUPPORT ORGANIC RESEARCH WE CAN TRUST

ORGANIC TRUST AUSTRALIA OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS, PRIVATE AND CORPORATE, GOVERNMENT AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT TO GET BEHIND THE ORGANIC INDUSTRY.

Quality research has the potential to make organic food more available to all consumers and to establish Australia as a world knowledge leader and innovator in organic food production.

Organic Trust Australia was established to manage funds received from private donors and public grants for the purpose of research and education in organic agriculture in Australia – supporting projects for consumers, producers, traders, and educational groups (both individuals and companies).

Established under the governance of the Organic Federation of Australia, the Trust has established project research priorities and a framework for project assessment across agronomic, economic, social, marketing and policy issues.

Projects for 2017 are varied, catering for a wide range of interests, and are designed to make a difference, through improving the skills and understanding of organic food production, including:

- A promotion of evidence-based information supporting the compelling arguments for organic agriculture
- An examination of alternative sources of phosphorus for certified farms
- A comparison of soil microbial diversity in organically and non-organically farmed soils

There are many ways that individuals and companies can be involved to support this important research such as this.

To become a financial support or investor, or to volunteer on research projects contact the Trust directly via email to Info@organicaustralia.org.au.

FURTHER INFORMATION

View the range of current and completed projects funded and managed through the Organic Trust since 2012

[CLICK HERE](#)



THE (GATE) SIGN OF ORGANIC INTEGRITY

You've been through the application process, transformed your farming practices over time, conscientiously labelled and packaged your produce with the fundamental symbol of organic integrity...

BUT WHAT MARKS YOUR PROPERTY AS SPECIAL?

Yes, a sign that shows the world your certified organic status!

No, not a warning to intruders but a fundamental display of your commitment to certified organic farming principles.

GATE SIGNS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE NASAA OFFICE.

STAFF NEWS

THE CELEBRATIONS CONTINUE IN THE OFFICE

ALONG WITH ITS 30TH BIRTHDAY, NASAA HAS CELEBRATED ANOTHER MILESTONE THIS MONTH – THAT BEING THE 10 YEARS' SERVICE BY STAFF MEMBER, LEE MASTUS.

Lee joined NASAA in November 2006 as our Administration Officer and, for many years, was the friendly voice most people spoke to when first calling NASAA. In her time with both NASAA and NCO, Lee has given dedicated service and has always been ready and willing to give support in any areas needed. She has, therefore, proven invaluable in many areas of the organisation's operations.

Many of our operators have had contact with Lee over the years as she has moved across various roles providing management support, front-line customer service, marketing and certification support. Or, some of you would have met Lee at any one of the many events that NASAA has supported or participated in across the country.

This enthusiasm and involvement in all aspects of the organic industry has marked Lee's term in office, and places her as one of the most knowledgeable members of our staff on all matters NASAA related.

Among Lee's other, more hidden talents, is a flair for interior design that has come to light in the recent renovation of the NASAA/NCO offices. Under Lee's supervision, the office is now a bright and modern workspace that reflects the organisation that NASAA and NCO are today.

Lee has currently taken on the position of NASAA Project Coordinator and will be integral in NASAA communications and activities going forward.

We all thank Lee for her years of service and look forward to her ongoing contributions for many years to come.



FACT SHEETS ON ALTERNATE PHOSPHOROUS SOURCES

AN EXCELLENT (AND FREE) SERIES OF PUBLICATIONS FROM FIBL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE THAT LOOKS AT ASSESSING THE EFFICIENCY OF ALTERNATE PHOSPHOROUS FERTILISERS FOR ORGANIC FARMING.

CHARS, ASHES AND SLAGS

The fact sheet describes different combustion and gasification methods, as well as several types of chars, ashes and slags with their characteristics and possible applications. The fact sheet also outlines various options to enhance the use of combustion products in organic agriculture.

MEAT AND BONE MEAL

Since the BSE crisis in 1999, use of meat and bone meal on organic agricultural land has been prohibited in the EU. The fact sheet shows what actions are needed to ease the statutory restrictions for use of meat and bone meal as fertilizer, whilst maintaining the desired nutrient concentration.

COMPOST AND DIGESTATES FROM URBAN ORGANIC WASTES

Organic wastes from urban areas are important potential sources for nutrient recycling back to agriculture. The fact sheet looks at the process performance of the two main waste treatment options; composting, and anaerobic digestion, and fertilizing efficiency.

SEWAGE PRECIPITATION PRODUCTS

The application of sewage sludge to agricultural land is currently prohibited. There are various technologies to recover phosphorous by crystallization or precipitation from waste water and sewage sludge. Depending on the input material, nutrient concentrations and concentration of contaminants can vary. The fact sheet looks at the most important aspects to assess the suitability of sewage sludge precipitation products for use in organic farming.

CERTAINLY WORTH A DOWNLOAD (OR FOUR)

[CLICK HERE](#)



GROWTH IN VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

GLOBAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS (VSS), AND ORGANIC STANDARDS

Another interesting report from FiBL looks at the Growth in Voluntary sustainability standards (such as FairTrade, UTZ certified, Rainforest Alliance and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)), as well as growth in organic agriculture. The study looks at the total cropping area for VSS and organic, market share of selected crop varieties, and top country markets.

The report identifies that whilst most of the VSS are growing very fast, organic still has the lead with more hectares certified worldwide. The VSS also focuses on a small range of products, whereas organic covers a broader variety of commodities.

Good news for all as both continue to grow.

[LEARN MORE AT THIS LINK](#)

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NO-TILL AGRICULTURE QUESTIONED

ACCEPTANCE OF REDUCED AND NO-TILL AGRICULTURE IS STILL BEING QUESTIONED.

A recent article by Nicholas Staropoli from the Genetic Literacy Project reveals that there is still a reluctance within the farming community to accept the more sustainable practice of (farming without mechanically disturbing the soil) – and, surprisingly, this includes organic farmers. Nicholas identifies, conversely, that farmers growing genetically modified crops have been no-tills fastest adopters.

The article looks at how this interesting situation has arisen and the significant benefits achieved through the practice:

- Elimination of soil erosion
- Increased water retention
- Increased biodiversity
- Reduction in labour cost
- Improved yields

[CLICK HERE FOR LINK TO ARTICLE](#)

In addition to Nicholas' article, the TILMAN-Org Project, representing a European Network examining reduced tillage and green manures for sustainable organic cropping systems, has produced a youtube video that looks at survey results of farmer motivations and the

common challenges experienced with minimum or no-till farming – exploring issues including weed challenges, climatic conditions, nutrient availability, and the destruction of previous cover crops.

[SEE FOR YOURSELF](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

CLOSER TO HOME

The Victorian No-Till Farmers Association and South Australian No-Till Association both host regular events to promote no-till farming across respective states.

In addition, the Western Australian No-tillage Farmers Association's (WANTFAs) Long Term No-Tillage Systems Farming Project, funded by Grains & Research Development Corporation (GRDC), is being conducted to provide valuable data and information to growers, to help advance no-till systems.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[Victorian No-Till Farmers Association](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

[South Australian No-Till Farmers Association](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

[Western Australian No-Till Farmers Association](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)



OUT AND ABOUT



19TH ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS

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IFOAM WORLD CONGRESS 2017

Something to put firmly in the diaries. The next IFOAM World Congress 2017 will be held in Delhi, India from the 9th – 11th November. The congress is held every three years in a different country, with India successful in its bid to host the event in 2017, on the back of rapid growth in organic agricultural production in the country.

The Call for submission of papers closed September 30, 2016 in what is bound to be an informative, educative and fun program.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

[CLICK
HERE](#)

IN TRIBUTE

THIS MONTH WE PAY SAD TRIBUTE TO TWO SUSTAINABILITY PIONEERS:

BILL MOLLISON



Bill Mollison, co-founder of the Permaculture concept in Australia. A reflection on Bill's work and tribute appears in the Conversation.

[CLICK HERE](#)

AUDREY WINDRAM



Audrey Windram started the Stirling Organic Market and also played a key role in 'The Organic Food Movement' - the first attempt to start organic certification in Australia, in 1972. An outline of Audrey's achievements can be viewed below.

[CLICK HERE](#)

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NEWS ROUNDUP

VIEW THE LATEST NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA AND AROUND THE GLOBE - JUST CLICK ON THE LINK PANELS ON EACH STORY TO SEE AND READ MORE.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE DAIRY INDUSTRY



Some good news further bolstering the dairy industry as Australian Consolidated Milk offers dairy farmers premium price to convert to organic.

[CLICK HERE](#)

DOUBTS ABOUT THE PROMISED BOUNTY

Doubts have been raised about the promised bounty of genetically modified crops. An interesting article in the New York Times that looks at whether genetic modification actually realizes claimed benefits of increased crop yields and reduction in use of pesticides.

[CLICK HERE](#)

NOT SUCH HAPPY NEWS FOR DAVIES APIARIES



WA organic farmer Davies Apiaries, which sells honey under the Baldivis Gold label is seeking legal redress against a supplier of pollen feed after losing its certified organic status following introduction of a deadly bacterial disease.

[CLICK HERE](#)

IS ORGANIC WINE BETTER THAN CONVENTIONAL?

Set up a home experiment, or listen to a debate between an organic winemaker and a traditionalist.

[CLICK HERE](#)

SEASONAL FLUCTUATION HITS OUR FARMERS IN SOUTHERN NSW

[CLICK HERE](#)

BETTER NEWS FOR THE NT BANANA INDUSTRY



The Northern Territory's banana industry is recovering following an outbreak of freckle fungus. ABC Rural interviews organic farmers Alan Peterson and Julie-Ann Murphy.

[CLICK HERE](#)

FOLLOW POLYFACE FARM OVER 4 YEARS

Documentary buffs add this one to your list. Australian farmers and film producers, Lisa Heenan, Isabella Doherty, and Darren Doherty, follow the fortunes of US organic farming pioneer Joel Salatin's Polyface Farm over a 4 year period.

[CLICK HERE](#)