

Organic Insights

DECEMBER 2009
ISSUE

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Magazine of the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia

Thinking Organic, Think NASAA, You're in Good Company!

To All Our Valued Members,
Clients, Customers, Associates
and Consumers....

and our friends across the
Organic Industry,

the
National Association for
Sustainable Agriculture Australia

wishes you all a
Very Happy Christmas
and a
Prosperous New Year!

Publisher

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Rod May

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Contributions

Articles and other contributions are very welcome and may be published at the discretion of the editor.

Photographs and images are best received as JPEG files and can be supplied via email.

Articles can be supplied as text or Word documents.

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Cover photographs courtesy Stephan Oulianoff,
Central Organics Stand 72

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NASAA Welcomes some new faces

Over the last few months we've had a few staff changes at the NASAA Head Office including new people in finance, quality, administration and certification.

It's always nice to know who you're dealing with on the end of the phone so we've put pen to paper and faces to the names,...read on!



Brenda Lockett
NCO Quality & Administration
Assistant

I grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan, Canada and moved permanently to Australia 21 years ago after undertaking the International Agriculture Exchange Association program living and working on a farm at Corak East Victoria.

After spending an additional 20 years in the farming industry in Victoria playing an active part operating machinery, working with sheep, and dealing with farming issues I've recently made a move to Adelaide.

Previous working experiences range from a large cooperate company doing Accounts Receivable, Tree Planting, Weighbridge Operating and clerking in a Farm Machinery Business for seven years.

The last 10 years I have spent working in the Healthcare Industry doing Quality Management for 7 of those years. Over the years I have obtained Diplomas in Data Processing, Business Administration, Quality Auditing and nearly completed my Quality Management.

I look forward to working with NASAA Certified Organic and the accreditation processes.



Luke (WenPeng) You
NCO Certification Officer

Luke (WenPeng) You is the NCO's latest addition to the certification team based in Stirling, SA.

Luke was achieved his Master of Science award in 2000 and has been working in the organic sector ever since.

He has substantial experience across organic inspection and certification systems with ten years experience in the industry working to NOP, JAS, EU, China GBT and IFOAM standards.

Luke also worked for IFOAM for eight months in Bonn in 2007 so has a great deal of experience and knowledge of international certification processes and accreditation systems.

This experience will further enhance the capabilities of our dedicated certification team and Luke can be contacted at the NCO offices or directly by email at luke.you@nasaa.com.au

Luke has already been out and about South Australia spreading the NASAA word, recently attending the Business SA Gateway to Asia Exporters Expo with David Silkstone.



Organic - a descriptor for ecological land management

By Rod May

As the world scrambles for solutions to the growing climate and ecological crisis, there remains a glaring gap in the solutions proposed.

The recent Victoria State Governments White paper on Biodiversity and climate change for example, makes some distressing observations on the steady decline of ecosystems, soil quality and climatic options.

Central to the downward trend is the unspoken but implicit failure of the marketplace to make any account for the methods of production and the impact of that production on agricultural and ecosystem integrity.

This dualism of itself speaks clearly of the schizophrenic approach that ecosystem and agricultural managers and policy makers have inherited from the dominant religious and cultural discourse of man vs nature. It's as if there is some recognition of the need to bring nature to the table, but those policy makers don't appear to know how to write the invitation.

In other words, our production driven uncles and aunts are not having the conversation with our ecologically driven nieces and nephews and if they are, they appear not to be in agreement.

The organic family have long understood that we can all come to the dinner party and that not only do we have table space for our venerable old natives and those brash young Europeans and Americans but that we can truly integrate them and see many of the functions of the ecosystem played by newcomers. Even our weedy cousins can have a seat at this new table where nativism and specism are treated with the disdain they deserve.

The UN biodiversity protocol makes no differentiation between native and exotic species and gives no succour to the separatists that see one party for production with native ecology in the zoo. Sure, there are some 'flagship' native systems worthy of protection but until we integrate production with agro-ecology, governments will continue to circle the issues, develop more white papers and wonder why nothing improves.

Soil, plants, animals, the atmosphere and ultimately ourselves will benefit from an end to a non-discriminating market that has no recognition of the exquisite fusion of ecosystem functions that have been glimpsed on our organic frontier.

Ours is the dinner party of the agricultural age and one that promises three courses for perpetuity.

Central Organics at the Adelaide Markets...

NASAA recently visited one of our certified customers to find out a little more about their business and how Central Organics, Stall 72 is doing...Seems to be going pretty well by the awards!

By David Silkstone and Gaye Lamb

Courtesy Ally Fricker and Stephan Oulianoff, Current owner of Central Organics Stall 72



Gaye Lamb from NASAA visits Stephan Oulianoff, current owner of Central Organics Stall 72 in the Adelaide Markets

‘The food we eat should not be coated in kerosene and chemicals; it should not be fed by synthetic fertilisers so it becomes overblown and tasteless’, quoted Ally Fricker some years ago.

‘Our food should provide us with all the nutrients that our bodies require, not be deficient in vitamins, minerals and trace elements due to starved soils’.

In the early 1970’s the interest in ecology and organically grown food was spreading rapidly and Ally Fricker was keen to do what could be done to promote these ideas. When a business opportunity presented itself in 1972, Ally, and John Healey decided to buy Stall 72 and provide the first outlet for organically grown food in Adelaide.

The Central Market with its convivial atmosphere seemed a good place to do this and the hope was that the idea would catch on and encourage more growers to change their approach. While

recognising organic growers warranted top prices for good quality produce, Central Organics nevertheless aimed to keep prices as low as possible for customers. They also encouraged customers to bring their own baskets to minimise waste of paper (plastic bags hadn’t even been introduced!).

At first the venture created quite a lot of scepticism and antagonism from other growers and retailers, some of whom maintained that growing organically was not an economically viable option and would not believe Stall 72 produce was genuine.

Despite these attitudes the business flourished (grew!) and the key to success lay in establishing a good rapport with suppliers, visiting their properties and learning about their growing methods.

‘This was essential as there was not a standard setting organisation to provide guidelines or to act as an industry watchdog’, quoted Ally, ‘But visiting the gardens and orchards of our suppliers, although time consuming was never a chore as nearly always their gardens were a delight’.

Stephan Oulianoff (the current owner of Stall 72) together with his family was one of the first suppliers of Central Organics. He had glass houses in the deep red-brown soils of Elizabeth North and grew the most wonderful tomatoes, zucchinis, capsicums and eggplants.

Other organic growers at this time included, Frank McMahon, Mrs Bubbat, Audrey Windram,



Stephan Oulianoff proudly displays the National Small Business Awards 2007 and 2008 won by Central Organics Stall 72

Mel Edwards, Fred and June Matthews and Roy Ellston.

Biodynamic growers included George and Vicky Ptremsky, Rowena and Becky McGhie and the late Harold Pettman..

Some of these people are still supplying their produce to the market and have, of course, been joined by many others.

The business was originally called 'Frickers Food Conspiracy', a reflection of the 'topsy-turvy' political climate of the late 1960's, early 70's; and as an expression of the hope that Stall 72 might play a small part in undermining the grip the giant chemical companies have on the way food is produced.

The ladybird which can be found in every organic garden, decorated the fascia board above the stall and after became the symbol of organic produce.

Ally Fricker managed Stall 72 from 1972 to 1975 and formed the Organic Food Movement which developed some of the first guidelines for organic produce.

Since these very early days, Central Organics Stall 72 has continued to thrive in a consumer driven environment where customers have become more aware of the values of organic produce and the need for such produce to be genuinely organic.

What better reassurance could we give consumers than a seal of approval and assurance for the business as certified organic by NASAA, the first, oldest and most trusted organic certification body in Australia.

In recognition of this achievement, Central Organics Stall 72 at the Adelaide Markets has been voted Winner of the National Small Business Champion Award 2007 and 2008.

What better than organic produce guaranteed by the most recognised certifier in Australia sold through an award winning organic business?

We wish Stephan all the best for the future and a prosperous and rewarding New Year for Central Organics Stall 72!



Just some of the beautiful organic produce on display at Central Organics Stall 72 - Definitely worth paying Stephan a visit!

If you would like to submit an article about your business for inclusion in Organic Insights, please let us know!

We're always interested to hear how you're doing. Has your business won an award, what do your customers think? What's in your area?

Don't be shy...contact David Silkstone at NASAA, we look forward to hearing from you!

Events and expos

A round up of some of the latest events attended by NASAA to spread the word...



Carbon Farming Conference and Expo - Orange, NSW

A report by Oliver Holmgren

The national conference and expo of Carbon Farmers Australia in Borenore, NSW saw over 400 hundred farmers, scientists and industry representatives gather this week passed to discuss all matters carbon.



Visitors and exhibitors at the Carbon Farming Conference and Expo held at Orange, NSW

NASAA enjoyed good exposure to the receptive audience, especially considering we were the sole Organic certification body present.

Natural Sequence Farming saw extensive coverage as did soil carbon testing methodology currently in development.

Fortunately, due to the format of the conference, I was able to attend almost all of the sessions without leaving the stall unattended.

Although the level of interested was less than that off the Olive expo, I had in-depth discussions regarding certification with around thirty people.

NASAA will be working with the NCO to monitor feedback from clients and potential clients regarding our presence at field days, conferences and expos.

This information could be very useful in reviewing where there are emerging areas of interest and potential opportunities for

The hot topic of measuring soil carbon was the focus of many papers and discussion. Several methods of testing have surfaced as potentials although we are still a way off cheap, accurate and fast testing.

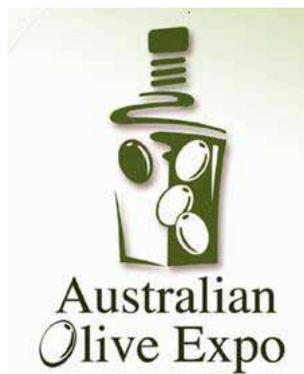
One CSIRO scientist present a paper that may just have a solution that has been overlooked until this point. The paper showed very strong correlation between levels of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus and Sulphur in humus, among other things. This linear relationship between carbon and nitrogen may prove to be an indirect way of accurately, quickly and cheaply measuring soil carbon.

Conference organisers, Michael & Louisa Kiely, indicated their strong support for a NASAA carbon standard and look forward to our developments on this front.

I will be having further discussions with Rod about the implications of the papers presented on possible carbon certification by NASAA. We'll let you know of any developments on this front.



Visitors attend one of several conference sessions held at the expo.



Australian Olive Expo - Canberra, NSW

A report by Oliver Holmgren

The national Olive Expo was recently held at the exhibition park in Canberra. This was two day expo bringing together a wide range of producers, processors and speakers from the olive industry.

The NASAA stand had good exposure with strong interest from many Olive growers, the majority of which managed farms on the scale of 1000-4000 trees.

The raw numbers of people at the expo did not come close to that of the Melbourne Organic Expo however those attending were well informed, interested in the organic option and proactive.

Inquiries from several particularly large operators

are well worth NASAA's consideration. One such producer presses 15,000,000L of olive oil per annum in Victoria.

There was also interest from exporters of olive oil to china looking for sources of Certified oil on the scale of 75,000L per month.

One NASAA certified oil producer reported he is achieving over \$31/L for his at wholesale to Japan under JAS.

I believe the NASAA presence at the Australian Olive Oil Expo was very worthwhile and we have some potentially rewarding opportunities to follow up.



Visitors attend one of many conference sessions held at the expo.

Business SA - Gateway to Asia Exporters Expo, Adelaide, SA

A report by David Silkstone

David Silkstone and Luke You recently attended the Business SA Gateway to Asia Expo held at the Grand Chifley in Adelaide.

This event was primarily aimed at providing opportunities for businesses with Asian export links to view a range of produce such as wines, vegetables, seafoods and cosmetics.

Although most of the exhibitors had a specific product to sell, NASAA's stand did receive a number of enquiries as to the nature of the business and what we do.

This provided plenty of opportunity to promote the values of both the organisation and the organic industry using product examples around us.



Luke (WenPeng) You on the NASAA stand at the Business SA Gateway to Asia Expo in Adelaide

A worthwhile opportunity that allowed NASAA to promote our services to a broader range of potential customers and consumers.

Logos to look out for

Earlier this year we announced the restructure of NASAA and how the new business structures would work.

We thought you'd like to know about the logos to look out for...

Earlier this year it was announced that the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA) would be restructured into two distinct businesses for operational and business reasons.

In summary, NASAA transferred its certification business to NASAA Certified Organic (NCO), a wholly owned subsidiary of NASAA, established to independently deliver our internationally accredited certification services.

NCO may trade as NCO P/L or as NASAA Certified Organic or as NASAA Certified or under any other names as NASAA sees fit.

NASAA will continue to provide organic advocacy, education and promotion along with Membership Services and other activities consistent with NASAA's values and objectives.

In light of these recent changes, we needed to develop a distinct identity for both NASAA and NCO to ensure customers were still able to recognise the NASAA brand, but also distinguish between the different parts of the organisation.

In developing these identities it was important that the brands reflected the history, heritage and integrity of NASAA as the first Australian organic certification provider.

In line with these values and building on our well established and widely recognised identity, you will now see NASAA represented by the NASAA 'organisational' logo and the NCO represented by the NASAA Certified Organic 'stamp' logo.

Look out for these NASAA logos



The new NASAA 'organisational' logo



The NASAA Certified Organic 'stamp' logo

Marketplace

Have organic goods or produce you need to sell or buy...try Marketplace

FOR SALE

70 large round bales of organic pasture hay with clover, just cut
For cattle, horses & farm animals

Contact Carl Engel

Rivermist Organic Olive Grove

242 Goulburn Valley Highway, Eildon, VIC

Tel: 0419 337790

Like to advertise in Marketplace?

See your advert here... list today to buy or sell

Contact David Silkstone at NASAA

companysecretary@nasaa.com.au

Read all about it

A round up of some of the latest publications in the organic world

Ahead of their Time

A History of the Organic Gardening and Farming Society of Tasmania

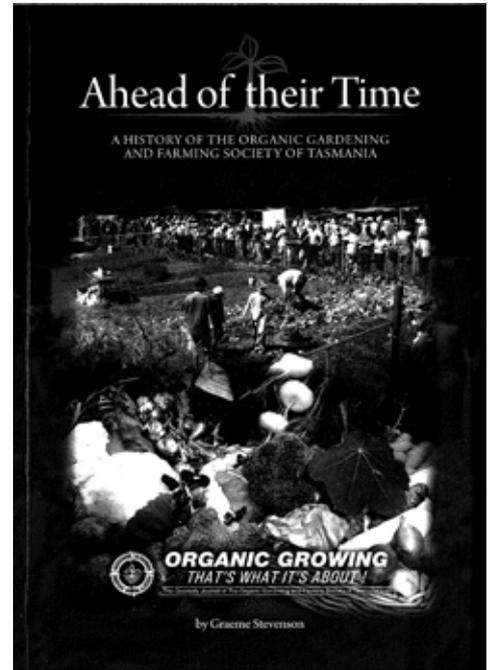
A new book covering the history of the Organic Gardening and Farming Society of Tasmania is Ahead of their Time written by Graeme Stevenson.

Since resigning from his position as senior research officer, Graeme has worked to develop and manage Landcare Projects, organic farm certification, consulting on soil capability and selling dung beetles.

This book is about the Organic Gardening and Farming Society of Tasmania (OGFS) formed in Hobart Tasmania in 1972.

In many ways, the members of the OGFS were the 'shock troops' in a war with professional agriculture.

If you're interested in the history of Organics in Tasmania, this may be the book for you.



Australia's first organic certification organisation



International IFOAM accredited certification services*

- International accreditation by **NASAA Certified Organic (NCO)** covers production, processing and retail operations across Australian and Asia-Pacific regions
- Founded in 1984 and commenced organic certification in 1986 by delivering the industry leading and internationally recognised **NASAA Organic Standard**
- The **first** Australian certification body to achieve accreditation through the **International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)**
- **NASAA - the natural choice for organic integrity and certification services**

*The most recognised organic label in Australia (Newspoll Survey conducted by OFA Oct 2008)

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