

ORGANIC INSIGHTS

SUMMER EDITION - 2017

WALKING NEW PATHS AT THE 2017 INTO ORGANICS SEMINAR

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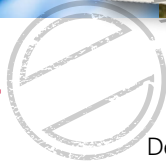
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POSTCARD FROM NEW DELHI



IN THIS HIGHLY NETWORKED AGE, IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE A PART OF AN ORGANIC COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE THAT HAS, AT ITS HEART, A PHILOSOPHY OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE INDUSTRY.

I was fortunate to be a part of three major organic events during November; bringing our own IntoOrganics Seminar this year to Mt Macedon in Victoria, taking part in the tri-annual IFOAM Organic World Congress held in Delhi, India, and fulfilling a guest speaker spot at the Territory Natural Resource Management annual conference held in Darwin.

All three have resonance, present connections and opportunity, and contribute global best practice insights from a socio-political, policy, environmental and practical perspective.

For me, the events served as a strong reminder that for every point of contention or disagreement that we may have as individuals in the way we think about and practice organic management, there are a thousand strong linkages that bind us collectively around the world.

NOTHING LIKE FEELING YOU ARE PART OF A MOVEMENT TO GIVE YOU MORE ENERGY FOR THE JOB AHEAD!

Into Organics was an absolute festival of ideas. It made me realise how deep a pool of knowledge organics presents and how much more we have to explore. In particular, and a focus of the conference, the connections between microbes and health – whether in a goat's guts or in the soil under our feet – was fascinating and so well presented. We were particularly fortunate this year to welcome International guest speakers' Dr Bruno Giboudeau, from France, and Korean Rei Yoon to the event to share their perspectives.

Delhi was a chance to meet with the like-minded from around the globe and to test ideas about taking the movement forward at an international scale. The event plays hosts to the best thinkers, researchers, policymakers and practitioners from around the World, providing a shared platform for the exchange of ideas on a whole range of issues impacting organic agriculture. As first-time hosts, the event also underlined the importance of the sector to India's agricultural productivity with the event officiated by the Agricultural Minister of India himself.

And the Territory – a place I love and a place where I was able to present to the NRM community the concept of connecting organic actions more decisively with measurable environmental outcomes.

They say that things don't exist unless you measure them. When we don't collect and distribute data on the biodiversity and sustainability outcomes of organic agriculture we are missing a great opportunity to show decision makers the 'value add' when it comes to broader environmental goals. Organic agriculture has a great impact on these issues, but unless we measure and report these things, it can largely go unnoticed.

The time has come to stand up and be counted, literally. The link between organic practise and environmental outcomes is vital – even central – to the success of our endeavours in the long term. The organic story is big, optimistic and essential to our future. We need to make sure it is told in all its glory.

Wherever we are in the World!

Mark Anderson
General Manager

A man with a balding head and a red sweater is crouching in a field, looking at a white goat. The goat has a blue tag on its collar. In the background, there are trees and a clear blue sky. The man is holding a pair of glasses in his hand.

"LISTEN TO WHAT THE HERD IS TELLING YOU" WAS THE MAIN TAKE-OUT FROM A PRESENTATION BY DR BRUNO GIBOUDEAU, WHOSE OBSALIM METHOD PROVIDES A DIAGNOSTIC AND FEED ADJUSTMENT TOOL BASED ON THE OBSERVATION OF CATTLE, SHEEP AND GOATS.

TIME FOR OBSERVATION... **AND A LITTLE RUMINATION**

AND IT ALL STARTS WITH SOME RUMINATION.

The OBSALIM method aims to promote positive herd outcomes encouraging better digestion, better utilisation, less wastage, optimal feed rations and mix; and for milking herds, more solids in the milk and better cheese.

Like the 'Gut Revolution' that has been sweeping the human health and nutrition world, "It's all about understanding the rumens working; the feeding and rumination cycle," says Dr Giboudeu, a practicing vet in France who has spent 20 years observing farm animals.

"Achieving rumen stability is the key and forms the foundation for a nutritionally balanced, happy and productive herd."

Employing observation techniques daily, both morning and night, the herd "becomes your working partner in identifying any health issues," according to Dr Giboudeau.

UNDER THE METHOD, HERD OBSERVATION SHOULD IDENTIFY ANY SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF POTENTIAL FEEDING PROBLEMS, INCLUDING:

Physical	Eyes (protruding, swelling, pale, black crusts), nose, foot, skin, hair (lack of structure in the coat, hairy crest, hairs in swirls), spine, changes in the cow pat, changes in the urine, weight loss.
Behavioural	Slowness
Milk cond.	Optimal milk solid content
General	Overall picture of the herd

In general, "the more problems there are, the more signs will be seen," says Dr Giboudeau, "and, the more serious the problems, the more obvious the signs."

"Farmers should be looking for what is changing in their herd with respect to an observed baseline."

OBSALIM MEASUREMENT & ANALYSIS

The OBSALIM method involves using observational data on a range of measures as the basis for identifying any excesses, deficiencies or dysfunction, and to make appropriate adjustments.

In this sense, OBSALIM provides a measure that allows farmers to implement preventative action before diseases appear.

Criteria have been developed to measure levels of:

fE	fermentable Energy
gE	global Energy
fP	fermentable Protein
gP	global Protein
fF	fine Fibres
sF	structural Fibres
Rs	Rumen stability

Values are assigned against these measurements dependent on observational data recorded via a card system (made up of 60 cards in total describing identifiable symptoms).

The 'scorecard' system provides an easy tool to assist in understanding where any issues lie.

Observational data is further supported by physical tests including the analysis of 'poo cakes' and the testing of milk quality through development of micro-cheeses to determine the whey content and milk solids component.

Using the OBSALIM method, "we can then identify the appropriate treatment method to employ, regularity of feeding, feed rations and mix, and any requirement for increased fibres or proteins," says Dr Giboudeau.

"The main aim [under the OBSALIM system] is for farmers to have confidence in their observations, says Dr Giboudeau, "and... the confidence to make the necessary changes."





Ann-Marie and Carla of Holy Goat Cheese at their Sutton Grange Organic Farm

HOLY GOAT BENEFITS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF OBSALIM

Certified organic dairy goat farmers, Ann-Marie Monda and Carla Meurs of Holy Goat Cheese (Sutton Grange Organic Farm) in Victoria first saw the OBSALIM system in action while visiting a goat dairy and cheese maker in France.

“The farmer was using the OBSALIM method on a daily basis to catch the early indicators of a possible imbalance in the diet of the goats,” says Carla.

“The farmer, and his partnering cheesemaker, had found great success with the method, the goats were well and the milk was balanced, producing some great cheeses.”

Bruno’s most recent visit has helped the Holy Goat team to work together to monitor the goats, share observations, make small changes to grazing times, rumination time and feed amendments.

“It’s wonderful to have so many observational tools that will enable us to move into the dry summer months, whilst maintaining optimum herd health and balanced cheese making milk,” says Carla.

“We look forward to working with other organic dairy farmers to support and encourage each other in using OBSALIM.”

Dr Giboudeau conducted several workshops across Victoria during his stay in Australia, facilitated by Ann-Marie and Carla. 50 keen people were involved in a hands-on, highly relevant series of demonstrations involving several participating ‘case study’ farms from the local area.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Find out more about the OBSALIM method

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Visit Holy Goat

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THE JADAM SYSTEM

SIMPLY GETTING BACK TO NATURE



Rei Yoon presenting at the
2017 INTO ORGANICS Seminar

IS THE JADAM SYSTEM POSSIBLY THE MOST RELAXED AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM IN THE WORLD?

It would seem so in listening to Korean-born Rei Yoon at the recent IntoOrganics conference.

"MODERN FARMERS ARE GETTING A LITTLE TOO TECHNICALLY ANXIOUS," HE SAYS, AND "IT'S TIME FOR US ALL TO JUST RELAX AND GET BACK TO BASICS."

Established in Korea in 1991, the JADAM group of organic farmers represented a collective action group that sought to combat the (negative) effects of modern agriculture and to promote farming practices more in harmony with nature.

Understanding that high costs and perceived difficulty can be a significant barrier in promoting organic farming practices, the group set about to develop a unique, ultra-low-cost method of farming. The resulting 'JADAM system' is simple and intuitive to implement, with a root philosophy of SESE (Simple, Easy, Scientific, Effective).

This simple approach and a commitment to collaboration and the open sharing of knowledge has since seen the JADAM 'movement' extend to over 60,000 members worldwide.

"Very often, the good and bad message translates to commercial benefit for promoters of specific product interests, contributing to the rising cost of farming."

NATURE'S TRUE DIY SYSTEM

Rei Yoon used his presentation to dispel some commonly held myths and claims from the outset; starting with a quick test of what he termed 'Dangerous' ideas:

Sweet smell is good, bad smell is bad

Aerobic is good, anaerobic is bad


White is good, black fungus is bad

Worms are good, maggots are bad

Certain microbes are good, some are bad

Monocrop is bad, crop rotation is good

According to Rei Yoon, however, we should all stop getting hung up on these concepts as, "the only fundamental thing in the bigger picture is whether all things together are working in harmony."



"MODERN FARMING HAS MADE IT VERY CONFUSING FOR FARMERS, WITH SO MUCH INFORMATION – AND MIS-INFORMATION – ON WHAT IS GOOD AND BAD, ADVICE ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE MANAGED AND WHERE AND HOW IT NEEDS TO BE MANAGED."



TAKING THIS PHILOSOPHY AT ITS HEART, THE JADAM SYSTEM SIMPLY SEEKS TO MIMIC THE CYCLES OF NATURE, APPLYING SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES:

- > Observe nature, simple is often best.
- > Good soil = successful farming.
- > Embrace microbes, particularly indigenous microbes = they are your workers (your feeders, soldiers, builders) creating plant food
- > When it comes to fertiliser, the best plant food is plant itself
- > Make your own natural pesticides that are easy, cheap, and effective, e.g. wetting agent, liquefied sulphur, insecticidal herbal juice, etc.

Rei Yoon, in particular, pointed to modern farming's (negative) impact on soil organic matter and soil structure.

"For fertiliser, there are really two simple questions that should be asked," he says.

"What was removed from the soil? And how do I bring it back?"

Under the JADAM 'closed-loop' system, Rei Yoon discussed just how simple it is to create your own fertiliser - including employing the 'Three Bucket Toilet Revolution'; soil conditioner, natural pesticides and compost, and to propagate indigenous microbe colonies.

THE SCIENCE OF POOPOLOGY.

Through his entertaining presentation, Rei Yoon introduced a few new concepts into the Australian lexicon with his unique science of Poopology (otherwise known as the Food-Poop-Soil Cycle):

Food comes from soil

Poop comes from food

Soil comes from poop

"Farming," according to Rei Yoon "should simulate this cycle." And, in a society that advocates sterile hygiene, disinfection and eradication of bacteria, Rei Yoon advocates "Bringing poop back!"

"Poop is full of microbes, is more decomposable, utilises less energy, and provides holistic plant nutrients," he says, even (controversially) calling for the end of the human lavatory.



NO NEED TO OVERTHINK IT.

From poop recycling to composting methods that involve no piling, no turning, no transporting, and no fermentation, the JADAM system provides a simple, intuitive approach based on "letting nature do the work."

"That," he says, "will ultimately bring farming back to the farmers and out of the hands of commercial interests."

Describing JADAM system as the easiest farming in the World, Rei Yoon advocates that we all "just do it, it works....and...don't worry too much!"

FURTHER INFORMATION

View Rei Yoon's full presentation

[CLICK HERE](#)

Find out more about the JADAM system

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ALL ROADS LEAD TO CHINA...

BUT WHICH ROUTE TO TAKE?

WHEN IT COMES TO ENTERING THE CHINESE MARKET, "WHAT'S EXCITING IS ALSO TERRIFYING AT THE SAME TIME," ACCORDING TO CINDY LEE, DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER OF BELLAMY'S ORGANIC IN CHINA.





"BEYOND ITS SHEER SIZE, THE MARKET IS FRAGMENTED AND CHANGES CONSTANTLY, "SHE SAYS, AND "BRANDS MUST KNOW HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS SHIFTING LANDSCAPE."

China is the 4th largest market in the World in dollar terms for organic product.

Sales of organic product have trebled in volume since 2007 with the market forecast to grow at a rate of 15% per annum on the back of a rising middle-class.

Whilst opportunities abound for Australian exporters, China can be one of the hardest markets to break into, particularly for small to medium producers.

China is geographically huge, with multiple channels comprising traditional supermarkets, hypermarkets and speciality stores and a growing 'grey market' of e-commerce and daigou, or personal shoppers.

SO, WHERE TO START?

"First, and above all else, is to stay true to your brand's DNA," says Cindy, who has spent the last four years based in Shanghai.

"Brand Australia is highly regarded in the Chinese market and seen as high quality and authentic, clean and green," says Cindy.

"Australia's brand heritage immediately builds trust with the consumer, with organic seen as a more premium and natural option - safer, purer and of better quality," she says.

"For Bellamy's, our [brand] heritage as Australian organic producers meant that consumers immediately connected us with these qualities as a trusted brand."

Promoting your brand values is fundamentally important, but "your market approach needs to be strategic" says Cindy.

"And, more than that, it needs to be sustainable."

"Many, for example, believe that they should be tackling the super-tier cities, such as Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou," she says.

"Your research may show, however, that the cost of entry to these markets may outweigh the returns, and that targeting the second and third tier smaller cities may present better options."

According to Cindy, it's important to start from a strong foundation and build reputation and credibility – and not to mention, experience.

As the market continues to expand, Cindy sees huge opportunities for Australian organic product, particularly for "organic coffee, infant milk formula, fruit and vegetables and organic skincare."



E-COMMERCE CHANNELS ARE GROWING

"CROSS BORDER E-COMMERCE PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL COMPANIES TO SELL INTO CHINA WITH MINIMAL INFRASTRUCTURE," SAYS CINDY.



CBEC (or Cross Border e-Commerce) provides significant advantages for Australian SME producers of prescribed products – primarily food and beverage, cosmetics, infant products, electronics and apparel suppliers and manufacturers – providing direct access to consumer markets through popular Chinese e-commerce platforms including Tmall (owned by Alibaba), Jingdong, Dangdang, Yihaodian, QQbuy and Amazon.

According to McKinsey & Co*, CBEC amounted to an estimated USD40 billion in 2015, more than 6 percent of China's total consumer e-commerce, and it's growing at upward of 50 percent annually. China currently has 10 pilot cities for CBEC including Shanghai, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Zhengzhou, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Fuzhou and Pingtan.

But the channel is not without its challenges, according to Cindy.

"Utilising CBEC channels means companies are competing in a repertoire set beyond geography," she says.

"Brands face added pressure to differentiate their offerings – creating value to woo new consumers – and at the same time nurture relationships with the existing customer base to retain loyalty."

Changing rules around the import of product also means that all exporters will require formal China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) registration for all Chinese labelled product by January 2018.

In addition, stricter quarantine and inspection procedures – and the introduction of import tariffs, a Value Added Tax and consumption tax will be applied to goods sold through this channel.

THE DAIGOU PHENOMENON

THE GROWING ARMY OF PERSONAL SHOPPERS, KNOWN AS 'DAIGOU', REPRESENT A SERIOUS INFLUENCE ON THE BRAND CHOICES OF CHINESE CONSUMERS.

Daigou are Chinese shoppers living abroad who buy product 'on behalf of others' to send back to [usually] middle-class Chinese, earning a commission in the process. It is estimated that there are now 40,000 daigous in Australia and that 80% of Chinese people living in Australia act as daigous from time to time.*

Food producers can't ignore the influence of the daigou as a potential distribution channel with the market for Australian products estimated to be about \$600 million.

THE DAIGOU RETAIL MODEL IS HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL AND ONE BUILT ON ABSOLUTE CONSUMER TRUST.

"Daigous is social e-commerce in the most nascent form," says Cindy.

"Daigous are incredibly powerful and have enriched the global retail landscape with interesting complexity."

It's estimated that 27% of infant formula in Australia, for example, is sold through the daigou channel – and

up to 15% for wine. In many cases, the daigou channel is the only exposure to the Chinese market with individual daigou serving to 'make or break' an Australian brand.

However, producers are cautioned to 'spread the risk' as the daigou model may be a perilous one should the Chinese Government step in to impose bans or regulation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Catch our interview with Cindy Lee, Digital Marketing Manager, as she gives some tips on entering the Chinese market

[CLICK HERE](#)



BELLAMY'S CONTINUES TO FLY THE FLAG

TASMANIAN INFANT FORMULA PRODUCER BELLAMY'S HAS ENDURED ITS TOUGHEST YEAR – AND IS BOUNCING BACK STRONGLY.

Tasmanian infant formula producer Bellamy's has endured its toughest year – and is bouncing back strongly.

An early organic innovator, ASX listed Bellamy's enjoyed growth rates of almost 25% a year as it worked to establish its presence in the Chinese market. Success had been driven largely on the back of sales through the daigou channel, with product flying off the supermarket shelves in the wake of a string of food safety scares in the country.

The company's fortunes took a hit in 2016, however, with changing Chinese import regulations and a slump in forecast sales growth. Saddled with forward contracts with supply chain partners and a stockpile of product, the company's shares were suspended.

The turnaround has been impressive over the last 9 months, although the company continues to work



through issues. The suspension of its newly acquired Camperdown cannery facility by Chinese authorities was a further hit to the business, although the ban was subsequently lifted in August of this year.

The company has since bounced back strongly, with a remarkable share price increase of 58% over the last month (November) with shares in the company trading at \$12.57. *

The company has renegotiated its supply contracts, and according to new CEO Andrew Cohen "sales have now stabilised, the company [is] debt free, the operating cost base has been reset and Bellamy's [is] well positioned to reinvest." *

[* FURTHER INFORMATION](#)

[CLICK HERE](#)

BIOFACH CHINA: THE MEETING PLACE FOR AUSTRALIAN EXPORTERS

BIOFACH CHINA IS THE LARGEST ORGANIC TRADE EXHIBITION IN ASIA, WITH LAST YEAR'S EVENT ATTRACTING OVER 17,000 TRADE VISITORS AND 471 EXHIBITORS.

The event provides benefit in connecting producers, particularly small to medium producers, directly with potential Chinese trade customers.

James Chen, who represented Avonmore Estate Biodynamic Wines at last year's event, sees the value of the event in developing trade networks.

"I believe that Australia is a very important and good quality provider [to the Chinese market]," he says.



James Chen at BIOFACH CHINA

"The organic market is developing quickly in China, with the emergence of new export categories, some of which I have never seen before, people are requesting more and more safe food, and healthy food."

NASAA is currently negotiating to increase the presence of an 'Australian Organic Pavilion' at next year's event. Keep an ear out for information on the 2018 event, or contact the office to find out more.

See James Chen in action
at BioFach China 2016.

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ROD MAY IFOAM WORLD CONGRESS BURSARY



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INSIGHTS FROM THE 2017 IFOAM WORLD CONGRESS

Held every three years, the Congress provides a meeting place for the international 'organic community' to discuss issues and exchange ideas.

DR VAN KIEN NGUYEN, A RESEARCH FELLOW ON AGRO-ECOLOGY AT THE ANU, WAS THE INAUGURAL RECIPIENT OF THE AWARD. HERE, DR NGUYEN PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTS INTO HIS EXPERIENCE.

As a recipient of the Rob May Bursary Award, I have learnt much and been inspired by the organic community; by the organic farmers around the world, research scientists, NGOs, business sector and governmental bodies who shared their excellent perspectives of organic agriculture.

A common thread throughout the Congress was the assertion that organic agriculture is the pathway to promote sustainable agriculture and food security in its truest sense.

The traditional perception is that organic product serves a niche, catering to well-off consumers with a willingness to pay a premium price. However, it was evident in listening to some of the producer representatives at the event, that small-scale organic farmers can achieve self-sufficiency for their own consumption, resulting in food security at a household level.

With organic production systems requiring certification to recognized international standards, the associated fees can be particularly onerous for small-scale farmers in developing countries where households typically own less than one hectare of land.

Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) are a proven model that can help resolve this difficulty, with evidence of success in many developing countries. However, there is a difficulty to scale up and scale out this approach because of (1) cultural barriers, (2) socioeconomic conditions of each country and community, and (3) institutional factors.



Dr Van Kien Nguyen, far right, with the Australia team at the IFOAM World Congress

Also discussed at the conference and promoted by IFOAM was the concept of 'Organic 3.0', a next phase of development, which promises to bring organic agriculture out of its current niche.

This represents a big challenge for conventional farmers who are used to a high input of agricultural chemicals. There is a strong need to educate the younger generation of farmers and to reeducate smallholder farmers about the benefits and techniques of organic agriculture.

The role of civil society and state is very important to provide education on organic agriculture, diet, and nutrition at every level globally. IFOAM's promotion of Organic 3.0 should integrate organic education as an essential part of formal education. There is a need to increase awareness at all levels of society about organic agriculture in the long-run and this should be a first priority for achieving Organic 3.0.

I have been inspired in my chosen field by the work of Rod May and the Congress event has further fueled my desire to develop my R&D career in sustainable agriculture.

I would like to give my special thanks to Rod's family and to NASAA for providing me with this wonderful opportunity!

TIM TAKES A TRIP

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY ORGANIC RESEARCH CENTRE

Tim Marshall is well known within the industry as an organic writer, trainer and consultant. Tim was co-founder of NASAA and served on the Board for 11 years. He has also worked on organic standards and trade issues for IFOAM.

This month we take a trip with Tim to the north coast of NSW, where the unveiling of a new organic research centre promises to deliver benefits to the wider industry.

THIS MONTH I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ATTEND THE OPENING IN LISMORE OF THE NEW \$4 MILLION SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY ORGANIC RESEARCH CENTRE.

The Centre has been established as a partnership between Southern Cross University and the NSW Department of Agriculture. The official opening and workshop, held November 9th, provided the opportunity for industry members to meet with the newly appointed head of the Centre and to discuss priority issues and future research activity.

The Centre will be led by Professor Carlo Liefert, whose expertise draws from his work within organic production, retail (Tesco) and nutrition in the UK, Cyprus and Australia.

Carlo is also a current Professor of organic agriculture at the Newcastle University in the UK, where he will continue to work part time.

Carlo presented some of his own research and identified his objectives for the research centre, and I was impressed by the level of commitment of SCU staff to the Centre from all disciplines, with representation from

both the social sciences and environmental sciences. Staff at the nearby NSW Department of Agriculture Wollongbar Research Centre, who have been involved in several organic trial programs, will also be involved with Centre research programs.

The workshop sessions held as part of the Centre opening provided a platform for discussion covering social license, environmental impact, agricultural systems and technology, agribusiness and business development and health and nutrition.

The Centre is aware that it is in a location that is well represented with organic growers, but will need to focus on dryland agriculture as well as warm-temperate and sub-tropical if it is to be relevant to the Australian organic industry.

It will be interesting to observe the Centre's approach to the unique challenges faced by organic producers in Australia, given the geographical extent and climatic range.

All in all, it was an impressive opening and a welcome introductory to the aims of the Centre in supporting the organic Industry.



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DEDICATION

IFOAM BOARD MEMBER, LAURA MONTENEGRO

THIS EDITION WE MARK THE PASSING OF GLOBAL ORGANIC AMBASSADOR AND IFOAM BOARD MEMBER, LAURA MONTENEGRO.

Laura played a strong part in the growth of Argentina's organic industry, as a producer, educator, and Director of Argentinian certification bodies CERTIBIONET and ARGENCERT S.A. She was also co-organiser of the IFOAM World Congress in Argentina in 1998.

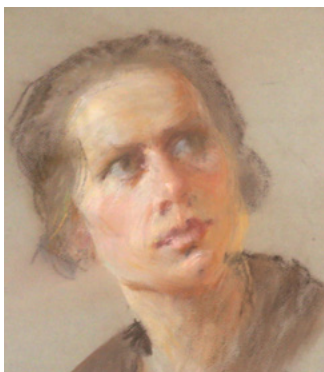
She has been an active participant in IFOAM committee programs since 2003, particularly in global market access projects promoting harmonization and equivalence.

In 2011, Laura was honoured with an award recognising her long-term collaboration with IFOAM.



Laura also had a deep connection and affection for Australia, where she married local farmer, Steve Bartolo and from 2014, purchased and managed an organic avocado and mango farm at Upper Kandanga in Queensland.

Laura passed away in late October of this year in her native Buenos Aires.



A TRIBUTE

AUSTRALIAN ORGANIC PIONEER, ILEEN MACPHERSON

PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL OF ORGANICS IN APRIL WAS AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF PIONEERING BIODYNAMIC FARMER, ILEEN MACPHERSON (1898-1984).

Written by John Paull from the University of Tasmania.

Drawing on archival materials from Switzerland and Australia, handwritten accounts from her husband, Ernesto Genoni, interviews with people who knew the couple and other published material, the report looks at Ileen's life and contribution to the promotion of Anthroposophy in Australia.

Both Ileen and Ernesto were among a handful of members of Rudolf Steiner's Experimental Circle of Anthroposophic Farmers and Gardeners in Australia. The terms 'biodynamic farming' and 'organic farming' grew out of the efforts of the Experimental Circle, a group that essentially represented the world's first organic farming research organization.

Putting into practice what they had learnt, Ileen and her husband co-founded the original Demeter Biological Farm in Dandenong, Victoria. From 1934, the couple practiced biodynamic farming on the 40-acre property – producing milk, fruit and vegetables.

Illness later intruded, however, and Ileen was confined to a wheelchair for much of her life.

She remained dedicated to promoting the teachings of Steiner throughout her lifetime. Following her death, the Ileen Macpherson Trust was established in 1987 to support the Anthroposophical movement in Australia.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

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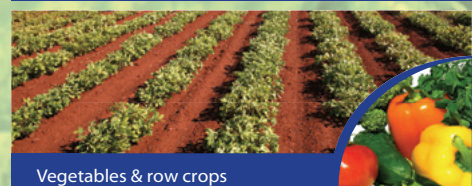
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WITH INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO DECLARE 2020 AS THE UN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE RANGELANDS, WHERE BETTER TO START THAN AUSTRALIA!

Around 75% of Australia is classed as rangeland, and most of the area under certified organic management in the country is in the rangeland or pastoral zones. Some of the greatest success stories in organic agriculture capitalise on the uniqueness of this environment.

Mark Anderson was recently invited to present at the Territory NRM Conference on the compatibility of organic systems and rangeland management. Organic management, with its focus on sustainable production, encourages both productivity and ecological outcomes.

Pastoralism carried out under organic management enhances biodiversity, minimises soil and nutrient loss and ensures measured standards of animal welfare.

The NT makes a strong case for organic management, with 45% of the Territory being grazing native vegetation, and with cattle stations predominantly remaining in the hands of family operators. Importantly, cattle from the Outback stations of the NT may already be produced with largely organic techniques, with less intervention and chemical use than intensive farming, thus making the transition somewhat easier.

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT IS THE KEY, HOWEVER - ORGANIC MANAGEMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT, IS ONLY POSSIBLE WHERE FARM INCOMES ARE SUSTAINABLE.

Organic management is no silver bullet, but, with an insatiable demand for product and a healthy price premium, it offers the opportunity for a sustainable future – both economically and ecologically.

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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.

HARCOURT ORGANIC FARMING ALLIANCE A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY FARMING

Central Victorian organic orchardists Katie and Hugh Finlay (Mount Alexander Fruit Gardens) have opened their property to co-investment as a unique farming cooperative. The alliance will enable other like-minded people to enter small-scale organic production without the high cost of acquiring agricultural land. A vermouth maker, a micro-dairy and market gardeners are amongst the first to join the farming co-operative.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

US ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION SUES FEDERAL AG DEPARTMENT

The US Organic Trade Association has sued the Federal Ag Department over its failure to advance organic livestock standards. The agency has delayed implementing the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) regulation, more commonly known as the organic animal welfare regulation, that was developed by industry, following the Trump Administration's Regulatory freeze order in January.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE PRESS RELEASE](#)

USDA'S 2016 CERTIFIED ORGANIC SURVEY

New data released from the USDA's 2016 Certified Organic Survey shows that sales of organic product reached \$7.6 billion (an increase of 23% from 2015); the number of organic farms increased 11% to 14,217, with the number of acres farmed increasing by 15% to \$5 million.

[CLICK HERE MORE HIGHLIGHTS](#)

BUBS AUSTRALIA CONTINUE TO BLAZE A TRAIL

ASX listed organic infant food and goat's formula company Bubs Australia continues to blaze a trail with stocks in the company increasing 8-fold on the back of its successful push into China. The company recently acquired NuLac Foods, owners of Australia's largest goat milking herd and producers of a range of goat milk products. [Note: the goat milk is not certified organic]

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

LIFELINE FOR VICTORIAN DAIRY FARMERS

Organic offers a lifeline to fourth-generation Victorian dairy farmers Luke Ritchie and Tamara Bateman. With the milk price wars eroding any hope of profit, the couple were faced with the decision to find an alternate way, or to sell up. The decision to convert to organic has helped the couple to reinvent the farm to aver the dairy industry crisis.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

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Grants of between \$250,000 and \$4 million will be available for experienced and skilled organisations working in partnership to undertake projects to develop, trial and implement new and innovative tools that support the uptake of sustainable practices across our agricultural industries. These projects will protect and improve the condition of our important resources of soil, water, plants and animals which underpin productive and profitable primary industries.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 21 DECEMBER 2017.

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UP TO \$8,000 FUNDING FOR FARMING/AGRICULTURE SECTOR WOMEN AVAILABLE

Women & Leadership Australia is administering a national initiative to support the development of female leaders across Australia's farming and agriculture sector. The initiative is providing women with grants of between \$3,000 and \$8,000 to enable participation in a range of leadership development programs.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)