

MEDIA RELEASE



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Organic farmers 'pile it on' during International Compost Awareness Week

Organic farmers know better than most the true value of compost and take every opportunity to enrich soils naturally—free from synthetic chemicals—according to the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia (NASAA).

“Organic growing systems always start with the soil,” said NASAA General Manager, Mark Anderson during International Composting Awareness Week. “Optimum soil fertility, structure and biological activity are fundamental aims of organic farming with composting a basic soil improving technique used by most certified organic growers in crop production.”

Compost, as defined in the NASAA Organic & Biodynamic Standard, is the product of a managed process through which micro-organisms break down plant and animal materials into a more available form suitable for application to the soil.

Mr Anderson said that composting was beneficial for a diverse range of operations at varying levels of application:

- At low levels it can add significantly to soil microbial activity
- At moderate levels it can provide important nutrients
- At higher levels it can improve soil structure and cation exchange capacity

“The best part of composting is everyone can do it—from a tiny organic rooftop garden to a large horticultural operation,” said Mr Anderson. “The result can lead to higher quality produce with bigger yields and of course better texture, colour taste.”

“Consumers are looking for produce that has come from “clean and green” soils whether that be certified organic fruit and vegetables or meat from livestock which graze on organic pastures,” he said. “The quality and capability of the soil directly influences the quality of the produce and compost can play a major role in that equation.”

Matthew Quinn, Director of SA Composters Pty Ltd which is NASAA Certified Organic, said that the demand for organic compost had grown significantly over the past decade.

“When we started as commercial vegetation composters in 1990 the demand for organic compost was just starting to emerge,” Mr Quinn said. “Now we can barely keep up with demand. Today our business is one of the leading recyclers of organic vegetation in the state and we are helping to reduce landfill dumping, and at the same time, improving the quality of South Australian soils.”

The Australian organics industry is expected to be worth \$2.4 billion by the end of 2018 with over 2000 certified organic producers.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, AUSTRALIA

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

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, AUSTRALIA LTD

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