

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## CERTAINTY AND ASSURANCE RIPE WITH NEW AUSTRALIAN STANDARD FOR ORGANIC AND BIODYNAMIC PRODUCTS

Australian consumers looking to buy organic products can soon be confident that the goods they choose are truly organic with the publication today of the first Australian Standard for organic and biodynamic products.

*AS 6000-2009 Organic and biodynamic products* outlines the minimum requirements to be met by growers and manufacturers wishing to label their products 'organic' and 'biodynamic'. It establishes an agreed set of procedures to be followed for the production, preparation, transportation, marketing and labelling of organic and biodynamic products including food and processed food.

The decision to develop the Australian Standard originated from the need to standardise practices within the organic industry because of the growing use of unsubstantiated claims on product labels. It was supported by a survey of organic growers, industry bodies, certifiers, associations, consumer groups, retailers and government organisations.

Mr John Tucker, CEO of Standards Australia said the publication of the Organic and Biodynamic Products Australian Standard was a significant step forward for Australia's burgeoning organic industry.

"The Australian Standard establishes a uniform framework for how to grow, produce, distribute, market and label organic and biodynamic products. Consumers can be sure that products complying with this Standard have been produced following natural, sustainable, ethical and environmentally-responsible farming practices," he said.

"Consumers are currently faced with up to eight different organic certification schemes all of which impose different requirements on growers and producers, as well as many non-certified products that claim to be 'organic'. It's hardly surprising how difficult it is to know what is actually organic," Mr Tucker said.

"With a consistent and national approach to organic production now provided by the Australian Standard, shoppers should look for certified organic or biodynamic products labelled as complying with AS 6000 to be confident they have been produced in line with strict organic and biodynamic practices," he said.

Mr Tucker said the Australian Standard requires that operators must keep thorough records of their farming and production practices throughout all stages and verify their organic claims through a process of independent, third party certification.

"This will help protect consumers and operators from unsubstantiated claims, misleading labelling and misinterpretation of organic agricultural practices," he said.

The Standard also requires:

- practices stipulated in the Standard be applied to the land for no less than three years before any products can be labelled organic or biodynamic;
- the almost absolute restriction of pesticides and fertilisers produced from the synthetic chemicals;
- a complete ban on the use of genetically modified products;
- operators have a farm biodiversity and landscape management plan as part of their organic management plan; and
- the use of organic and biodynamic livestock feed for livestock products labelled 'organic' or 'biodynamic'.

In addition, the appendix includes a list of permitted materials for soil fertilisers and plant and livestock pest and disease control.

The Australian Standard, which is currently voluntary, is based on the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce, Edition 3.3, which governs the export industry. Certifiers and operators are not expected to have difficulty aligning with the Australian Standard because of its close alignment to the AQIS Standard.

AS 6000 is supported by a publication outlining the procedures for certification, also developed by Standards Australia's Committee. *MP 100 Procedures for certification of organic and biodynamic products* is designed to assist certifiers, operators and accreditors wishing to comply with the Standard.

Both publications were developed by Standards Australia's Committee FT-032 Organic and Biodynamic Products, comprising representatives from:

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Food and Grocery Council
- Australian National Retailers Association
- Bio-Dynamic Research Institute
- Biodynamic Agriculture Australia
- Biological Farmers of Australia
- CHOICE
- Consumers' Federation of Australia
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Tasmania
- Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand
- National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia
- Organic Dairy Farmers Cooperative
- Organic Federation of Australia
- Organic Growers Association of Western Australia
- Organic Industry Export Consultative Committee
- Organic Traders and Consumers Network
- Safe Food Queensland

Other parties involved in the development of the Australian Standard include:

- Aus-Qual
- Australian Certified Organic
- Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers
- The Organic Food Chain

*AS 6000-2009 Organic and Biodynamic Products* and *MP 100 Procedures for certification of organic and biodynamic products* are now available from Standards Australia's distributor, SAI Global ([www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com)).

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