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News from Australia

OFA receives AUS\$216,000 fine money

The Organic Federation of Australia (OFA) was recently awarded Aus \$216,000 by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for support towards the ongoing development and promotion of the Australian Standards for Organic and Biodynamic Products.

The award is part of a fine settlement for misleading labelling of organic produce collected by ACCC. The case involved GO Drew Pty. Ltd. who admitted to labelling free range eggs as NASAA certified free range organic products over a period of time. A total of Aus\$270,000 was collected, with A\$54,000 to go to NASAA.

The ACCC action and its intend-

ed purpose sends a clear message that certifying products to the new Australian Standard can be an effective way of ensuring the integrity of organic products. It demonstrates ACCC is prepared to put resources into prosecuting fraud and protecting the Australian consumers.

The Australian organic standard is currently under development. Once completed it is expected to provide the industry with a uniform national benchmark for domestic production and marketing. ■

Source: FarmOnline.com and TMOrganic

For more information see <http://fw.farmonline.com>

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New organic CB in Australia

AUS-QUAL, an Australian based certification body (CB), is reportedly now providing organic certification. AUS-QUAL, formed in 1998 as a CB accredited by Joint Accreditation System-Australia New Zealand (JAS-ANZ), provides conformity assessment services for quality management and food safety (HACCP) based systems as well as Product Certification services for the Australian and New Zealand Agricultural, Horticultural and Secondary Processing sectors.

With the introduction of its organic certification programme, AUS-QUAL claims to now offer a one-stop shop for organic certification together

or separate from other Food Safety Programmes under one certification and licensing agreement. Other Food Safety Programmes available include BRC, SQF 1000, SQF 2000, EurepGAP, LPA QA.

AUS-QUAL says it will recognise existing organic certification through other CBs and its organic certification does not include levies and royalties that may be charged by other CBs. ■

Source: AUS-QUAL

For more information see www.ausqual.com.au

