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Australian standard draft released

In July 2008, Standards Australia released the draft of Australian Standards for Organic and Biodynamic Products.

The standards are expected to:

1. Provide clear definitions about what is organic and what is not.
2. Protect consumers against unsubstantiated claims and misleading labelling.
3. Protect growers against misinterpretation and misleading use of organic agricultural practices and the term 'organic'.
4. Provide guidance to farmers considering conversion to organic farming.

Standards Australia says the draft is meant to establish minimum

requirements to be met by producers and processors for products that can be labelled 'organic' or 'biodynamic' in order to create a level playing field for growers, retailers and consumers.

Growers and certifiers already adhering to the National Standards set by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) are not expected to make major changes to their practices to comply with the voluntary standard as the AQIS standards form the basis of the Australian Standard draft. ■

Source: *The Land*

For more information please see <http://theland.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/niche/general/article/811329.aspx>

BFA wants control

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) recently restated the need for organic industry stakeholders to remain engaged in the development of the new organic standards introduced in Australia.

On 21 July 2008 Standards Australia released a draft base standard for comments. It is planned that they will be finalised by end of 2008. BFA stated that there are many pressures to hand over the control of standards setting to those with little interest or without sufficient expertise to manage the organic movement. BFA felt that this could lead to watering down of the standards core technical requirements and the stringent high quality and internationally recognised organic self-regulated certification processes

built up by the industry over decades.

BFA is awaiting legal advice from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to confirm the additional benefits that this new draft standard may bring to the industry. However, BFA maintains that regardless of the outcome of the discussion on the draft standard, organic certification bodies will continue to operate with their own private standards, building upon the base standard. In other words consumers should still look for private organic CBs' certification logos for assurance. ■

To see the BFA Australian Organic Standard please check www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=135 for a free download.

Source: BFA