

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

September 20, 2005



## **IFOAM Congress Opening Ceremony includes welcome from Prince Charles**

The world's best-known organic farmer Prince Charles, will today officially welcome delegates to the 15<sup>th</sup> IFOAM World Organic Congress in Adelaide.

The Congress brings together the best brains in organic farming, viticulture and science and will set the agenda for the next decade under the theme of 'Shaping Sustainable Systems'.

"Australia produces \$140 million of organic produce and the IFOAM Congress will focus the world's attention on Australia's significant potential to increase that figure," Andre Leu, Chair of the Organic Federation of Australia (OFA) said.

Organic farming is growing quickly in Europe, the US and Asia.

"Organic agriculture is the fastest growing agricultural sector in the world and while currently valued at more than AUD \$35 billion, it should to grow to AUD \$130 billion in the next ten years," Gunnar Rundgren, IFOAM's President said.

"Organic farming is moving from the niche to the mainstream and the worldwide potential is enormous," Gunnar Rundgren said.

"There are 17,000 organic farmers in Germany, 45,000 in Italy and 19% of Swedish farmland is certified organic. Organic food in Switzerland is now more than 10% of the total food market and if you want to buy baby food in Germany which isn't organic, you'll have a hard time finding it in supermarkets," Gunnar Rundgren said.

"Mothers say they want the very best for their babies and they believe that organic food is the best - now we have to convince everyone that what's good for children is good for them," Gunnar Rundgren said.

Mr. Rundgren told the IFOAM Press Conference that industry analysts forecast growth rates of between 10 and 30 percent a year.

In Australian dollars, that's worth \$130 billion worldwide over the next 10 years, with the major growth in the US, Europe and Japan.

It's the first time the IFOAM Congress has been held in Australia and it brings together organic, biodynamic and permaculture experts from around the world.

The Congress theme of *Shaping Sustainable Systems* has attracted 300 papers from many of the 760 IFOAM member organisations in one hundred and four countries.

The 15th IFOAM Organic World Congress and Organic World Exhibition are being held at the Adelaide Convention Centre from 20-23 September and the *Go Organic Festival* is in the Victoria Park Racecourse on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

The *Go Organic Festival* will include Australia's largest Farmers' Market. It's a free entry, family friendly two-day celebration of organic food and drink and includes great music, useful information and practical sustainable living demonstrations.

"We're delighted 891 ABC Adelaide and Radio 5AA will be broadcasting from the event and we expect the Festival to attract up to 20,000 people - *Tasting Australia's* Ian Parmenter will be cooking up a storm at the event," *Go Organic Festival* Coordinator Gerry Butler said.

The four key speakers at the IFOAM press conference this morning are

- IFOAM President, Gunnar Rundgren
- Organic Federation of Australia Chair, Andre Leu
- New Zealand Greens MP and Congress Keynote Speaker, Sue Kedgley
- Samoan Organic Farmers Association (SOFA) and Keynote Speaker, Adi Tafuna'I

The 15<sup>th</sup> IFOAM World Organic Congress is being hosted by the National Association of Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA).

Major sponsors include the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), Horticulture Australia, the Great Southern Group of Companies and Kailis Organic Olive Groves.

**MEDIA PLEASE NOTE:**

**A Betacam SP tape of the Prince Charles video message to the IFOAM Congress will be available at the IFOAM Press Conference at 11.00 am Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> in the Glenroy Room of the Mercure Grosvenor Hotel, 125 North Terrace Adelaide.**

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**For further information about the Congress website at [www.ifoam2005.info](http://www.ifoam2005.info)**