



BFA PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release Tuesday, November 15, 2005

Healthy Soils? Healthier Habits!

The Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms Program, launched by Minister McGauran recently, is very welcome but is neglecting a key component of farm productivity, according to Biological Farmers of Australia CEO, Paul Dargusch.

Mr Dargusch said that conventional fertilizers and pesticides are used to boost farm productivity, but some habits, such as over fertilizing, can have an impact on soil health.

"The issues of salinity, sodicity and acidification have been identified through numerous scientific sources, and in part these are caused by bad habits when it comes to fertilizer and pesticide use," Mr Dargusch said.

"Growers need to be undertaking regular soil and leaf tissue tests, and considering using more biological fertilizers and pesticides, to ensure that the physical, chemical and biological components of the soil are brought into balance, therefore making them healthier.

"The Healthy Soils for Sustainable Farms Program has neglected to take into account the importance of applying a balanced nutrient regime."

The Program aims to build the health of Australian farming soils and the Australian Government is committing more than \$5 million over four years through the National Heritage Trust.

The communication from Minister McGauran's office indicates that the program outcomes will include 'practices like crop rotations, nitrogen-fixing crops, raised-bed farming, remote sensing and radiometrics.'

"It is great to see the government committing funding to such an important issue as the health of our farming soils, but I hope we will see some of the funding allocated to projects that examine fertilizer and pesticide use," Mr Dargusch said.

"The BFA will be watching the development of the Program through our newly formed bionutrients sub committee that is focused on soil health and the use of biological nutrition products."

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For more comment:

Paul Dargusch, CEO ph. 07 3350 5716, mob. 0418 464 350
Holly Vyner, Media Officer, ph. 07 3350 5716

BFA Head Office:

Web: www.bfa.com.au

Email: info@bfa.com.au

Ph: 07 3350 5716

Fax: 07 3350 5996

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**BIOLOGICAL FARMERS OF
AUSTRALIA CO-OP LTD**
ABN 75 699 664 781

HEAD OFFICE - BRISBANE

PO Box 530 L1 766 Gympie Rd
CHERMSIDE QLD 4032
Ph: +61 (0)7 3350 5716
Fax: +61 (0)7 3350 5996
info@bfa.com.au

SOUTHERN DIVISION OFFICE

PO Box 503 1 Gawler St
NURIOOTPA SA 5355
Ph: +61 (0)8 8562 2769
Fax: +61 (0)8 8562 3034
info@bfa.com.au

www.bfa.com.au