WINTER 2021 |

NASAA organic EST 1986

organic

featuring

30+YEARS AND COUNTING
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ORGANIC INSIGHTS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AUSTRALIA

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MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Welcome to Winter! As we head into the middle of the year, and the days shorten, it is an opportunity for many of us in business to start planning for the next 12 months, and what Spring and Summer will bring. It is no different for NASAA Organic, and we have been engaged in the many forums which are happening around Australia in the agribusiness/food sectors, in addition to providing regional support through targeted information sessions.

Alex Mitchell
/ NASAA GM

As part of our outreach programs, during May we hosted in Kempsey NSW a ***Recover – Restore – Regenerate*** free community event on post-disaster management and recovery. This is to assist the affected community located in the Mid-north coast following the bushfires and floods over the last 18 months. The event was supported by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and the North Coast Local Land Services (LLS). Keynote speaker for the event was Kim Deans, who was joined by Rob Edwards from Rural Recovery Support Service, and Sarah Mason from Farm Gate counsellor. While the focus of the session was on post disaster recovery, there is most definitely a growing interest from people looking to effectively design their property to be more resilient for future climate extremes, with an interest in water management, increasing biodiversity and soil health.

There was great interest in this event, and with the success of our past bushfire recovery event held in Hahndorf, South Australia, and through our many partnerships with regional services, we will be delivering more sessions around the country. This can only happen with the generous support of sponsorship and grants. Our learning and development package has been created to provide a balanced program, that includes information on tools for farm management in recovery, and showcases the many business support services available to landholders and rural and regional communities.

It is also the season for conferences and expos. There has been a cascade of industry events including ***BEEF WEEK 2021*** (Rockhampton), ***NT Future Foods Forum*** (Darwin), ***Naturally Good*** (Sydney) and ***Hort Connections*** (Brisbane). All of these events play an important role in exploring innovations in technology and R&D, providing avenues for business development and critical information for all businesses in navigating change and opportunities. A central theme coming through is the importance of embracing technologies and data information services to improve services and operations. With the advent of the "App" world on mobiles and tablets, agribusinesses now have a range of tools that deliver real outcomes from R&D-

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providing “simple” ways to adopt technology that feeds into real-time information for decision making. Whether it is monitoring cows for calving time or a carton of goods through cool chain, we now have access to programs on personal devices to track their progress.

International policies move on and it is wonderful to see that the European Commission has approved the European Organic Action Plan 2021-2027, committing to a target of 25% organic production by 2030. Great vision and forward thinking that our own Australian Government might take heed of.

Whilst we all contemplate the bigger issues whilst hunkered down in the warmth of our homes, I encourage you to reflect on the connected theme of the Circular Economy. With an estimated potential value of $23B to the Australian economy, adopting a ‘whole of life approach’ is just common sense.

Environmental sustainability is central to an organic agricultural production system, but how sustainable are the broader systems in which we operate? As continual improvement is always a good paradigm, this issue explores some of the innovations supporting ‘whole of system’ sustainability. If you are aware of other innovations touching on your operation (and lives) please let us know!

On a personal note, I will be undertaking a personal challenge taking part in the ‘Ration for Challenge’ campaign actforpeace.rationchallenge.org.au to raise awareness and funds for a great cause of providing ration packs to the many displaced refugees around the world . I recommend that everyone take a moment to consider whether they could get by ‘on rations’. Food for thought (pun intended).

30 years & (still) counting...

ONCE AGAIN, WE LOOK AT WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE A SUSTAINABLE OPERATION OVER THREE DECADES OF CERTIFIED ORGANIC MANAGEMENT.

Nadine / Unsplash

We are excited by just how many organic 'long timers' there are for you all to meet! While producers fall out of conventional agriculture for many common reasons, it is unusual to find an organic farmer who has decided to 'go conventional'. Once in organic, it would seem there is no turning back!

MAL DEVESON

"After 30 years, I'm probably even more passionate about organic," says certified blueberry farmer, Mal Deveson.

"Certainly, the effects of climate change, water security...these issues have brought into focus the need to manage the land for future generations," he says.

Mal originally gave up a trucking business in 1976 with the purchase of his 160-acre farm at Moondarra in Gippsland. Having freshly invested in the property, Mal was open and looking for a productive means that would occupy his full-time input.

"The land we had inherited was running cattle at the time, and had previously been used for dairy cows," he says.

"It really wasn't that suitable for livestock though, as there is lots of native vegetation, and I was looking for a more intensive production that would be a better use for the cleared land, while enhancing ecological values on the remainder, and focusing on tree planting and management of degraded areas."

Today, the farm has around 15 acres under blueberry production, with produce marketed under the Moonblue brand, sold direct to selected retailers and via farmers markets.

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Mal first became interested in the idea of organic after reading the seminal book *Louis Bromfield and his Mallabar Farm* in the 1970's.

Whilst not strictly a book on organic farm management, the book was an introduction to better soil and water management, following Louis' observations of the degradation of soils on his own Mallabar farm in the Pleasant Valley, New York State, and efforts to restore its health.

"That book sparked an interest for me, but finding more information in Australia was a challenge at the time," says Mal.

His interest led him to some early organic workshops that were run by Geoff Wallace in the Kiewa Valley, N.E. Victoria.

"Geoff ran what was called an Easter organic farming school, where you would camp on site," says Mal.

"We would take the 2 children and listen to presentations on organic and biodynamic principles," he says.

"I remember one of the early sessions we went to featured Els Wynen and Sandy Fritz, who first discussed the principles of an organic certification scheme in Australia, which I guess was the precursor to NASAA and the like."

"These sessions, along with linking with other growers in a similar situation, such as Liz Clay and Phil Rowe.... were really valued and gave me confidence in what we were doing."

It was a local agronomist that recommended Mal look at one of the newer industries with potential in Australia, and suggested blueberries.

"I contacted the berry extension office at the DPI, but when I said that I was considering organic blueberry production, his response was "why would you want to do that?" says Mal.

"We've probably been lucky in that we have evolved as the industry has evolved."

Produce was initially distributed through the wholesale network, but Mal made the decision to change the business model to direct supply, providing greater control and price stability - and ultimately, better cash flow.

The farm now supplies to farmers markets weekly, as well as select produce and grocery stores each week.

"We have a very loyal group of customers, and it's a model that works well," he says.

Harvest has remained stable over the years, and Mal is "more interested in improved production methods utilizing new superior varieties rather than just expansion."

"Since the very start, the nursery has been part of operations and demand has only increased, particularly over the last 10 years."

"It sort of morphed into its own business."

The nursery provides a testing ground for new varieties, and those suitable for organic management are utilized on the farm.

Mal's two children have grown up in the business, with son Joel now the Farm Manager and daughter Kate taking on responsibilities for Management and Marketing.

"I have photos of the kids at 4, 5 years of age planting our first blueberry plants. Some of those plants are still in production today," says Mal.

"It was important to me that we not just hand something to the kids, that they had to want it," he says.

"It was when Joel was in his late teens that we attended a succession planning workshop sponsored by the Victorian Government and he told me that this was something that he wanted."

"Now we have an equal partnership, between myself, Kate and Joel."

"Kate's husband Rob also works in the business and manages both fruit and plant deliveries to our network of retail stores, nursery outlets and to other commercial growers."

There is enormous potential in organic, according to Mal.

For those starting out, he recommends meeting with like-minded people and getting involved with organic groups.

"It's important to glean all the information you can!"

Further Information

moonblue.com.au/our-story

DAVID ROBY

Concern for the future and a deep-rooted philosophy of 'sustainability first' was a key driver for David Roby, a vegetable grower in Northern NSW, to 'go organic'.

David has been farming his 20-hectare property at Lynwood, located South-East of Alstonville, for the last 45 years. Starting out as a conventional farmer, David was originally motivated to change, by concerns over the hole in the ozone layer.

"I felt that I needed to consider what I was doing more holistically, both upstream, and downstream," says David.

It was at this point that he stumbled upon David Forrest's teachings in sustainability at the local Lismore TAFE, which was the catalyst for moving into organic.

"It was exactly what I was looking for at the time," he says.

"In those days, though, organic only accounted for less than 1% of farm production."

"There was no information out there, and I had to work things out for myself."

"There was no support from the Ag department, so having David Forrest there was invaluable."

> I felt that I needed to consider what I was doing more holistically, both upstream, and downstream.
>
> David Roby

Today, David produces certified organic beetroot, avocados, and rhubarb that he has been selling primarily through the weekly Lismore Organic Market, which he helped to found over 20 years ago.

"Originally we sent everything away to the markets in Sydney and Melbourne."

"We set up the markets initially to give farmers the opportunity to sell their produce locally and directly," he says.

Selling direct has enabled David to get to know his customers, as well as providing a better fit in terms of sustainable 'food miles'."

"We have only just taken a step back from the markets in the last 2 years to supply direct to customers."

While many of his customers want the convenience of local produce, David finds it interesting that they are not necessarily looking for organic.

"I find it interesting that a lot of consumers are willing to pay a premium for organic 'luxury items', things like wine and chocolate, and premium pet products....but still look for lowest costs for everyday food items," he says.

David believes that farmers will increasingly look to organic practices though, and that the future is in small farming, offering greater agility with lower input costs. He believes there is a limited future for large-scale farming with its reliance on cheap fuel, fertilisers, and other inputs, to deliver lower and lower costs to the consumer.

With this in mind, David would encourage anyone looking to get into organic to "start small."

"Make small mistakes, grow what you can grow well in your area, learn about your market, and how to make money from it," David says.

He acknowledges that there can be a barrier between the initial excitement and inspiration to adopt a more sustainable approach, and actual practical take-up on farm.

"Unfortunately, people find it too hard and drop it," he says.

David believes this is in part due to the lack of support and information available to assist farmers to make the transition.

"We need to educate people on how to do it," he says.

As a self-described pessimist, David is ambivalent about a future for collective action amidst the backdrop of climate change.

"The way people have come together over the COVID virus should give us some hope for what can be achieved, but I'm afraid things will go back to a 'state of normal'" he says.

"The solutions are all quite easy. We just need to stop being stupid."

Sustainability remains central to David's philosophy, something that he integrates into his day-to-day living.

"The property is run on solar power; we are doing further regeneration of the rainforest and bushland and we utilise our own resources where possible," he says.

a circular economy is a growth economy

> In 2014, the World Economic Forum estimated that the global material cost savings of adopting a more restorative economy could be over US$1 trillion per year by 2025.
>
> KPMG Report

A circular economy is a growth economy, according to a recent KPMG report, and one which could give Australia a $23 billion GDP boost by 2025. This is expected to grow to $210 billion in GDP, supporting 17,000 full-time equivalent jobs by 2047-48.

Commissioned by the CSIRO, the 2020 report "*Potential economic pay-off of a circular economy for Australia*" looks purely at economic value, in terms of impacts on GDP and employment. This startling amount is without also factoring in the significant environmental and social benefits to be realised in monetary terms.

The report examines 8 different opportunities for circular action across 3 main areas of *Food, Transport,* and the *Built Environment* as a proxy to estimate economy-wide impacts for Australia. Initiatives from the report include greater efficiency of water use, food waste, biogas from organic waste, nutrient recovery, recycling, transport electrification, car sharing and more compact, energy efficient dwellings.

Further Information

Assets.kpmg/content

Robert Wiedemann / Unsplash

Food and organic waste recycling is the exemplar of the Circular Economy, according to AORA Executive Officer Peter Olah.

"And we are only touching the surface in talking about transforming post-consumer waste to valuable input products, without even considering waste from production," he says.

Nutrient recovery and recycling are the focus for the Australian Organic Recycling Association (AORA) as the peak body for organics recycling in Australia, who represent the wider resource recovery and organics management industry.

The Association works on behalf of its Members to advocate and raise awareness of the benefits of recycling organic resources.

Last year, the Association released a report, undertaken by Australian Economic Advocacy Solutions, which looked at "*The Economic Contribution of the Australian Organics Recycling Industry.*"

It found that in 2018-19, Australia produced 14.6 million tonnes of organic waste, of which 5.6 million tonnes went to landfill; 7.5 million tonnes were recycled at an overall national organic recycling rate of 51.5%, with South Australia having the highest organics material recycling rate at 78.9%.

"If we achieved an organics recycling rate of 80% nationally, this would generate an extra $1.5 billion in sales, providing an additional $1.4 billion in supply chain opportunity, with an extra $542 million in industry value add towards the Australian economy," says Peter.

"An extra 2.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions would be saved, which is equivalent to 4.2 million trees planted or 656,356 cars taken off the road each year."

So, how to get there?

AORA recently released a 10-year national strategy, which provides an ambitious target to get to 80% recycling of organics by 2025, and 95% by 2030.

The strategy seeks to overcome major impediments to industry growth, which are seen as regulatory policy uncertainty; contamination of input material; Government policy (such as waste and recycling strategies); business licensing and operating permits; development applications (time, cost and politicisation); Government procurement failing to support organic recycling products; and short council contract periods.

"Put simply, the major obstacles to growth – the biggest roadblocks to achieving the economic and environmental benefits available – are external to the industry and within the control of one or more tiers of government," says Peter.

"The best thing that could be done to support the industry would be to ensure consistency across States and Territories, and local Government authorities across the board," he says.

"From waste levies to city and regional planning, we need all arms of Government getting behind consistent Government waste management policy targets."

"Nothing is more important than consistency."

The recently announced Federal Budget spend of $67.0 million to be invested in new food organic and garden organic waste (FOGO) initiatives has been a huge positive for the industry.

"This is the first alignment with industry that we have seen at a Federal level, and it's an important step," says Peter.

"In terms of developed nations, Australia performs in the top half of recycling rates globally," he says.

"With our dry, poor soils, there is strong interest in end product and a strong imperative to support and value organics recycling."

Peter says that the COVID lockdown has seen lots of demand for recycling and end-product.

"We have seen waste and productive capacity at full utilisation," he says.

"Our future challenge will be to manage the growth cycle; the alignment of interest with how it is delivered."

"With support for our strategic roadmap from Government, we would like to see Australia take its place as a global leader in waste recycling."

"We are more hopeful than ever before that we are on a path to achieve this."

Further Information

aora.org.au/resources

2021 AORA CONFERENCE

2021 AORA Conference 'Pathways to sustainable growth'

Under the banner of "Pathways to sustainable growth", the Australian Organic Recycling Association (AORA) conference is to be held this year 15th – 17th June at the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley.

The conference combines an expo with exhibitors and practical demonstrations, the latest information on soil web research; global developments and policy perspectives in organic recycling, and updates on FOGO programs across Australia. The conference also features a keynote presentation from Jeff Lowenfels, Author of The *Teaming Series Books on Organic Growing* (USA). jefflowenfels.com

NASAA members have been offered the AORA member rate to attend the conference, representing a 10% discount on standard rates.

Further information

aoraconference.com.au

INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK

The conference follows closely on the heels of the recent International Compost Awareness Week (2 – 8 May 2021), the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the compost industry that has been running since 1995.

This year's week was run under the banner of "Grow, Eat...Compost...Repeat" based on the circular movement of the organics recycling process, flowing from farm to table, to farm again.

The initiative aims to raise awareness of the benefits of compost, in building high quality soil, growing healthy plants, reducing fertilizer and pesticide use, improving water quality, and protecting the environment.

Check out this winning entrant in the public video competition:
Youtube.com

Max Saeling / Unsplash

the circular economy

RECYCLABLE (AND COMPOSTABLE) FARM PRODUCTS

The benefits of compost application on farm have been acknowledged for decades, but circular thinking extends to other farm inputs and infrastructure. We look at a few exciting developments - released and in the pipeline - that have wide application for organic farming and the broader Food sector.

Uma Preston lives and breathes a philosophy of applying circular thinking, helping industries to reengineer their supply chain, through identifying waste streams and supporting commercial adoption of recycling innovation.

A chemical engineer by training, and current South Australian Secretary and Policy Officer with AORA, Uma set up the **Sustaining Endeavour** initiative in 2016 with the objective to identify and reduce waste streams in agriculture.

The initiative supported the successful introduction of the Closed Loop Dripperline Recycling Service, now in its fifth year of operation.

The Dripperline Recycling Service facilitates the delivery of used plastic dripper lines and pipes from South Australian farmers to Adelaide plastics recycler, Recycling Plastics Australia (**RPA),** for conversion into Sustaining Endeavour Post-Agri Resin, SE PAR. The SE

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PAR resin is then used by irrigation solutions company, **Netafim Australia** to manufacture Netafim LDPE Pipe.

Dripper lines are part of essential infrastructure for growers, and are a long-lasting product that farmers only replace when they become blocked and start to leak. With good operation and maintenance, dripperlines last anywhere from between ten and twenty years.

Dripperlines are replaced on reaching a point where they can no longer be repaired or keep up with plant water requirements leading to inconsistent watering across a farmed area.

Hence the need for recycling end-of-life dripperlines is infrequently required by growers in various agricultural sectors, including viticulture. As recycling dripperline is only required infrequently, Uma observed that farmers weren't receiving guidance on recycling and consequently incorrectly recoiled their dripperline for recycling. For example, growers recoiled dripperline with vine wire attached; or recoiled it into loose bundles that fell apart on handling. These errors make recycling difficult and costly, leading to stockpiling of the waste on farms, or being disposed to regional landfills, which are a waste of the plastic resource embedded in the waste.

At the same time, the irrigation industry in general has not been prepared to view its own end-of-life products as a source of feedstock. With a reluctance to do so, this fails to create demand for the industry's own products to be recycled on reaching end-of-life. This failure also reinforces the continued consumption rate by the industry of virgin (fossil fuel derived) resins, which are far more greenhouse gas intensive than post-agricultural resins.

Above all, without any disclosure on post-agricultural resin content, growers have not been able to recognise and preferentially choose a product containing Post-Agricultural resin, to drive the recycling of other irrigation products once they reach end-of-life.

Sustaining Endeavour facilitates the collection of dripper lines, educates farmers on how best to recoil used dripper lines, matches supply to the recycler's capacity and ensures the resulting resin matches the needs of exclusive sponsor, Netafim Australia in manufacturing Netafim LDPE Pipe at their factory in Melbourne. Sustaining Endeavour also issues a Certificate of Regional Plastic Clean Up and Recycling to each grower using the service.

According to Uma, "There is an educational challenge to ensure that farmers are aware of how best to recoil and store their used pipeline to ensure that it can be managed and processed at the recycling end. Recently, RPA have advised us that due to limited space in their yard, they will only accept dripperline on pallets in large bundles."

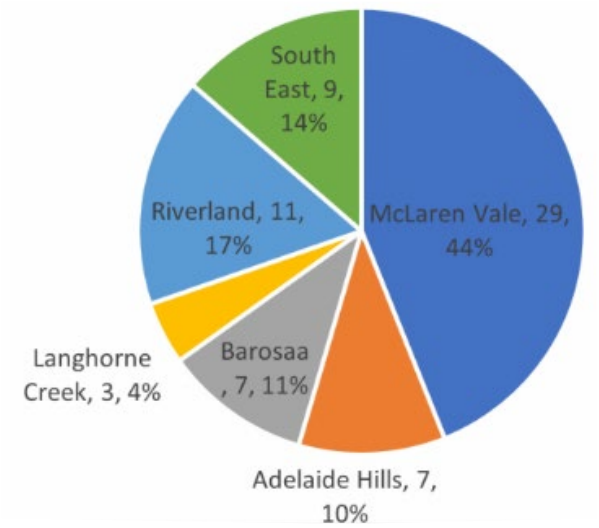
"We are talking about ginormous bundles comprising up to 2km of dripperline!

"These large, recoiled bundles of dripperline are generated using a particular type of recoiling machine, which we've partnered with three regional stores to ensure growers can access."

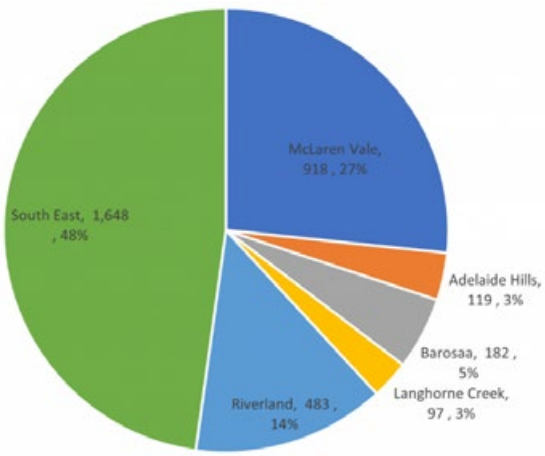
"These large bundles can be double stacked on a pallet and allow for dripperline to be safely handled and transported cost effectively."

"There have been some excellent initiatives in the purchase of recoiling machines based in regional irrigation stores, which funding from Netafim and the South Australian Government have made possible.

"What I like is this type of cooperation and the linking of resources to address the never-ending challenges of storage and transportation."



Breakdown of growers using Sustaining Endeavour's Dripperline Recycling Service since Dec 2018 (Total 66 growers)



Breakdown of dripperline recycled by RPA since Dec 2018 (Total 3,446km)

Uma says that the commitment of Netafim as a commercial partner cannot be overstated in adapting to continuing challenges within the circular economy business model.

"Initial grant funding from Green Industries SA meant that we could assure the highest quality of the SE-PAR resin through investing in testing R&D by Netafim," she says.

"This was fundamental to promoting the business case for commercial uptake by Netafim, so that growers purchasing the resulting Netafim LDPE Pipe would be assured that it continued to meet Netafim's stringent quality controls. Every coil of the product undergoes a battery of tests and over 30 quality checks before leaving the factory - assuring the highest quality manufacturing standards, delivering the industry's best products."

"It means that 100% of the post-agricultural resin product from the recycler is used as part of manufacturing new Netafim LDPE Pipe in Australia within a true 'closed loop' system."

"We are also looking to examine various applications of Netafim LDPE Pipe across other agri-sectors and raise awareness amongst growers, that by continuing to support this quality Australian made product, they also help continue to drive Sustaining Endeavour's Closed Loop Dripperline Recycling Service."

One emerging new application of Netafim LDPE Pipe is in vineyard canopy cooling, using sprinkler or misting systems as part of keeping grapes cool through extreme temperatures during heat waves.

According to Uma "Now that's incredibly exciting to me, as through our Closed Loop service, vineyards can now have their dripperline recycled locally AND buy back a product containing their old dripperlines that helps them adapt to climate change."

"The overriding objective of the closed loop service now is to continue adapting and innovating, to be an exemplar of product stewardship and the circular economy," she says.

In recent years, Sustaining Endeavour has also partnered with the Northern Adelaide Plains Food Cluster in leading a review of waste streams, resulting from horticultural production and the devising of circular or waste avoidance solutions. As part of this work, Uma has leveraged her knowledge of bioplastics and compost, which she has gained working part time for the Australian Organics Recycling Association. Uma facilitated the introduction of bioplastic mulch film into the Northern Adelaide Plains, as a way of eliminating problematic plastic mulch film waste. Resources from this work are available from the NAP Food Cluster website here. northernadelaideplains.com.au/waronwaste

The NAP Food Cluster has been announced as a finalist in the Hort Connections National Award for Excellence, with the winner to be announced 9 June.

Further Information

sustainingendeavour.com.au

netafim.com.au

northernadelaideplains.com.au

BIOBAG WORLD AUSTRALIA

One product trialled and showcased as part of the Northern Adelaide Plains Food Cluster initiative was an agricultural bio-mulch product, *BioAgri*, from BioBag World Australia.

BioAgri is a fully compostable and biodegradable agricultural film for use in horticulture. The product is ideally recommended for vegetable produce having a lifespan of 3-6 months, with the rate of degradation dependent on climate and temperatures. The biofilm can be ploughed directly into the soil at the end of harvest, and will break down to organic matter, leaving no toxic residues. The film can also be laid with the same equipment used for traditional plastic mulching films.

An informal field trial facilitated by Sustaining Endeavour and conducted by a commercial zucchini farmer in the Northern Adelaide Plains, found that the performance of BioAgri was equivalent to traditional plastic film product over two cropping cycles. Overall, the farmer involved, Md Nuruzzaman (Zaman) of Natural Fresh Produce, considered plastic mulch film and BioAgri to be equivalent in terms of quality and yield. However, at the end of the second cropping cycle, Zaman saved significantly on labour for collection.

He also avoided costs for disposing plastic mulch film to landfill – representing BioAgri as a viable alternative in growing crops such as zucchini. Earlier comparative research undertaken by the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Horticulture Australia in 2012 found similar results.

"We are providing an alternative that doesn't contribute to landfill, one that provides real cost benefit to farmers in terms of savings on disposal costs and labour," says BioBag World Australia Managing Director, Scott Morton.

"If a small farmer uses 50km of plastic film in a 12-week growing season, that would equate to a semi-trailer worth of scrap plastic that's too contaminated to recycle and too expensive to transport to a recycler," he says.

It's a win all round, as bioplastic mulch film can allow crop residues to be ploughed back into soil, increasing soil carbon levels, and soil health for the next crop.

Credit / BioBag World Australia

Credit / BioBag World Australia

Biobag World Australia is part of the global BioBag International group, a world leader in biofilm innovation. In 2019, BioBag World Australia established manufacturing facilities in South Australia, supplying biofilm product direct to local government, consumers, retailers, and farmers.

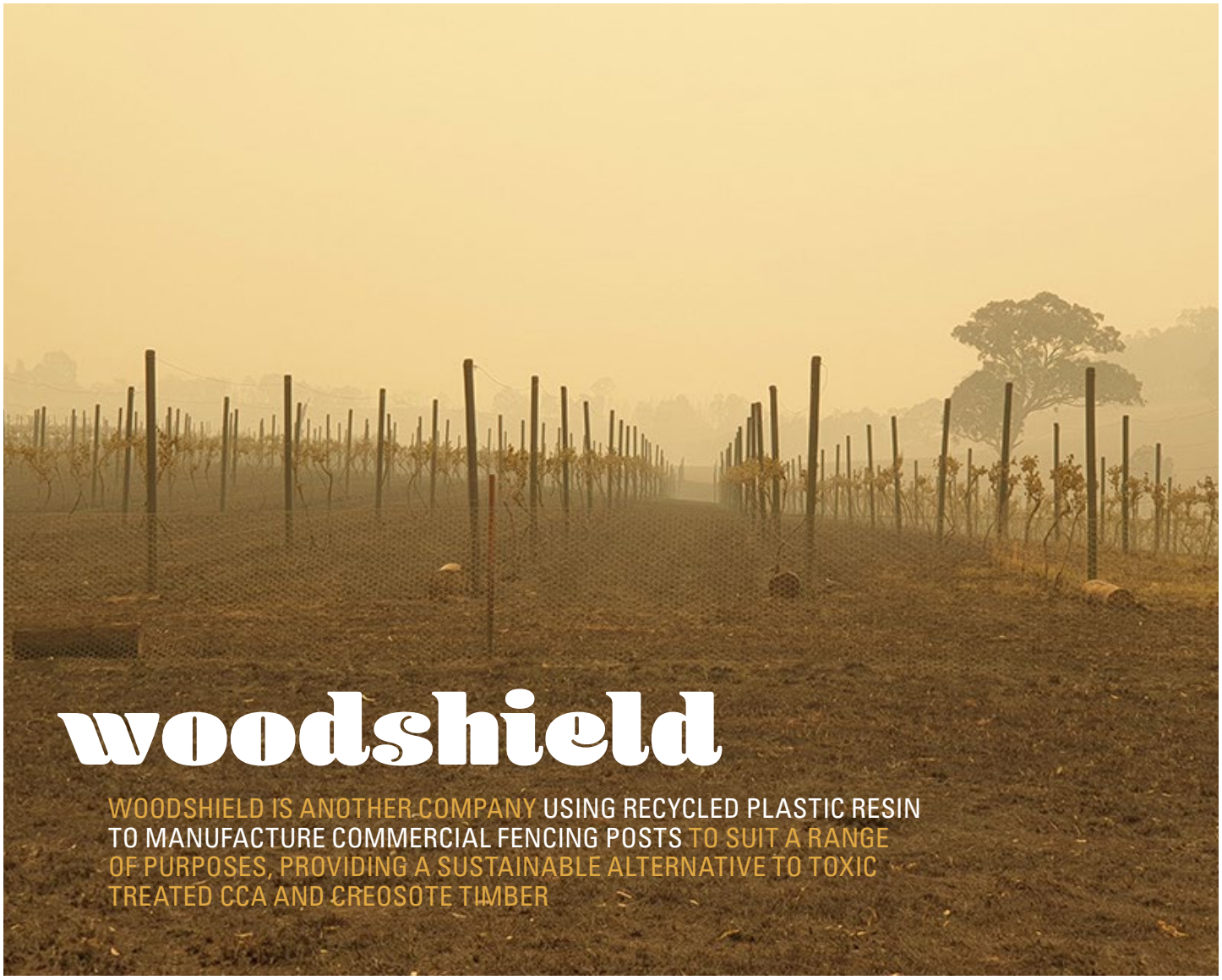
"We are passionate about manufacturing innovation and working with our clients to develop compostable film products that meet a range of packaging challenges," says Scott.

Best known for its household waste 'Bio Bags', recent innovations have included the development of a compostable film casing for cucumbers for Drake's Supermarkets; delivering tubular compostable bags for the removal of coffee grounds, and bio-film casings for magazines and other forms of direct mail. The company is now also delivering biofilm overwrap for a range of produce applications.

Further Information

drive.google.com

ausveg.com.au



woodshield

WOODSHIELD IS ANOTHER COMPANY USING RECYCLED PLASTIC RESIN TO MANUFACTURE COMMERCIAL FENCING POSTS TO SUIT A RANGE OF PURPOSES, PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE TO TOXIC TREATED CCA AND CREOSOTE TIMBER

"In around 2004, a group of plastic engineers from Victoria got together over a glass [several glasses] of wine and came up with the idea to solve the issue of post breakages and end of life disposal. It has proven to be a winner!!" says Sales Manager Ashley Davidson, who has been with the company for over 10 years.

Woodshield posts are made up of chemically free timber, fully encased in a layer of plastic resin coating. This provides additional strength, extended life, heat and weather resistance with protection from pests such as termites. The posts are chemically inert, which means they won't leach chemicals into the soil. They are long lasting, and at end of life, the polymer coating can be stripped and recycled. The untreated timber, cut for firewood or shredded for mulch.

These properties make it an ideal substitute for treated timber on farm.

Woodshield's award winning posts were first taken up by the viticulture industry; and the company now supplies product for use in aquaculture, orchards, equestrian pursuits, general farm fencing and public infrastructure, with posts being exported to New Zealand, the US, and Japan. Ashley has just got back from a recent trip to New Zealand, where the company has a very established presence in the Marlborough wine region, and continues to supply some of the leading horse studs in the southern hemisphere.

While interest has been strong, Ashley has found some barriers in overcoming farmer perceptions in switching to a new product.

"I find there's two types of mindsets at play; the old mindset that wants to keep doing things the way they've always been done, and the mindset of 'We need to look at the future, let's give it a go!" he says.

"I've literally stood at field days while the children and wives of farmers have been debating with Dad to try the product and look after the planet."

Established timber supply chains in other countries have also been difficult to break.

"You are talking about very established industries in some countries, supplying construction and housing and the like. We are only a very small player," says Ashley.

"I sometimes think that timber people should never meet polymer people!" he laughs.

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Dog Fence / Woodshield

"It's a completely different way of thinking and having to explain what we are about has been challenging at times."

Where the product has proven itself, however, is in the field.

Ashley was surprised to receive an enquiry from a farmer and customer in Cobargo, shortly after the December 2019 bushfires had decimated the region.

"He said he wanted more of the posts, because they were the only thing left standing," he says.

Ashley says that because it is so distinctive, it just takes a single person to trial the product and the word gets around.

"We have our posts installed at South Australian winery, d'Arenberg, for example and the amount of enquiries that this has generated, has been amazing."

"One KI farmer installed the posts after the 2020 bushfires – and now we have several others contacting us."

"People seeing our product, its word of mouth, its innovation, it's the vibe of our times .... This is our greatest form of marketing," he says.

Posts are made at Woodshield's factory in Melbourne and sold direct to market, which means our "price remains on par with standard fencing in Australia," according to Ashley. The company now has 4 different post profiles for various applications.

Demonstrating its flexibility, the company was recently awarded a contract to supply posts to the DPI in NSW and Queensland Department for Agriculture and Fisheries to support both States' wild dog and rabbit fencing.

Following this, the company was also awarded an innovation award at the 2020 Australian Fencing Awards, and is growing from strength to strength across multiple sectors.

With their circular economy product utilising Agri-waste and giving an old school farm application an extended life span and answer to product end disposal (without having to break the bank); This simple post is one to look out for!

Further Information

Woodshield products are certified for use on organic farms across Australia and New Zealand

woodshield.com.au

PETER HISLOP SPEERS

Peter Hislop Speers has been involved in the FMCG sector for many years, having worked in global procurement for Japanese supermarket chain DAIEI Japan, Dairy Farm Group (Hong Kong) (Jardine Matheson).

Peter has spent the last four years developing a fully compostable product packaging solution for Australia's largest certified organic apple grower, sold under the Woolworths 'Macro' brand. Trials of the packaging were completed in December 2020 with commercial roll-out in store from March of this year.

Solving supply chain challenges is Peter's speciality, and the backbone of his consultancy Palotus, which focuses on achieving commercial outcomes for supplier customers that typically work with the larger retailers.

Peter was drawn to organic production in the early 90s, with an early foray into the industry helping a certified banana producer export product to Japan. Since 2006, he has worked extensively with certified apple grower R&R Smith in Tasmania, helping to develop its supply chain with Woolworths. In 2018, the company was the inaugural recipient of the $30 million Woolworths Organic Growth Fund.

More recently, Peter has helped the company – and Woolworths – deliver a bespoke, compostable product packaging solution marketed under the Macro brand.

Consumer feedback is driving the push for innovation in product packaging, according to Peter.

"The organic consumer wants food to be safe, nutritious, wants suppliers to be paid appropriately, value sustainability and wants to be kind to the planet," he says.

"They are the consumer that is going to be challenging the most in terms of packaging and will be pushing for change."

Peter's search for a solution was an exhaustive learning process.

"For the punnet, it was apparent that recyclable content was unreliable in terms of being compostable according to Standards Australia AS5810, which requires absence of contaminants," he says.

"The solution needed to remove inks, glues, bleach and varnishes - which ruled out a number of recyclable options."

It was clear that fibre from virgin sustainable plantations was the only viable option, and at the moment in Australia, Biopak provides the best solution.

The film wrap overlay proved challenging also.

"It was challenging to find a certified compostable film with the required clarity, thickness and tensile strength to run through an existing high speed film wrapper," says Peter.

"And, finding printing dyes to accommodate the intensity of the Macro colour branding on packaging was another issue, as the only edible dyes available in Australia at the time, were black."

"Today the printing is done in Europe, and we are hoping to move to full colour edible ink printing in Australia as soon as possible."

Peter worked with European supplier TIPA, whose home compostable film product could perform to high-speed flow wrapping requirements, and is made from certified Home Compostable materials that are certified to ABA & AS5810 Standards, the standard for home composability in Australia.

"At each stage of the project, we engaged with our supply partners and with our customers, to gain ongoing support to reach our end goal of a truly sustainable packaging solution for apples, and while there are still more improvements to make, we can say that we have achieved significant milestones so far," says Peter.

"There are increasingly more compostable packaging options available, however, I believe that this is the first applied to punneted product at commercial scale in Australia," he says.

He believes the successful roll-out will pave the way for others.

Further Information

palotus.com

NATASHA SHIELDS

Someone who has seen recent innovations in food packaging, including bio-film products, is certified organic vegetable grower Natasha Shields from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, who was a 2019 Nuffield Scholarship recipient.

Her research program examined a range of plastic packaging alternatives, and pathways to retail and consumer adoption.

The scholarship enabled Natasha to travel to Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America to see the latest innovations in plastic substitution, and to observe government and retail programs in place for the promotion of a transition from plastic packaging.

Her report findings, released in April this year, identify the need for cooperation from all levels – Government, retailers, packaging companies and consumers – to win the 'war on waste'. She believes that there needs to be more education support from a public policy perspective, and that consumer improvements in packaging need to driven by retailers and packaging companies.

Further Information

Read the full report at nuffieldscholar.org

Call me Fred / Unsplash

Gabriel Gurrola / Unsplash

carbon neutral food myth or reality?

This was the central question at the heart of a recent webinar hosted by the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering.

The webinar featured Dr Michele Allan, former Chair of Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and current Chair of Wine Australia, and climate scientist Professor Richard Eckert from the University of Melbourne, who was recently named as one of the 1,000 influential climate change scientists by Reuters.

The webinar discussed the drivers to achieve carbon neutrality, what industry is doing and the technology available to achieve targets.

While acknowledging that Government policy settings are lacking, every State Government has adopted targets of carbon neutrality by 2050; and the National Farmers Federation (NFF) has adopted a target of carbon neutrality by 2050 as an aspiration for farming.

Dr Michele Allan is intimately involved in innovation directions for the agricultural and food industry. She spoke specifically about the journey taken by the MLA to promote carbon neutrality for livestock farming, which contributes to the greatest proportion of emissions in agriculture.

Michele said that measuring carbon footprint is becoming an increasing issue in customer markets, and that Australia needs to be ahead of its competitors, and turn environmental criticism directed toward the industry, on its head.

In November 2017, the MLA set targets for carbon neutrality by 2030 and established projects with the CSIRO that provided an initial industry baseline looking at innovations and farm management techniques, encompassing use of feed supplements, genetic supplements, vaccines, and selective savannah burning among other things. The R&D and rate of adoption has seen the industry well on its way to meet targets.

Michele said the focus on carbon neutrality has been less of a focus for the wine sector, but is tied more generally to the industry's focus on sustainability and global best practice aligned with UN sustainability goals. She says that the actual bottle in which the wine is packaged would currently be the biggest contributor to carbon emissions, presenting issues from a public policy perspective in terms of energy use.

Professor Richard Eckert (University of Melbourne) spoke of the technological pathways that are possible for reduced emissions in Agriculture. As an advisor to various Governments and UNESCO on climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, he highlighted the significant global program that is going on, and the need for Australia to collaborate, and 'tie in'.

Richard talked about specific programs that looked at typical farm GHG profiles, breaking down the contribution to emissions in terms of methane (predominantly ruminants), nitrous oxide (fertilizer, excreta, waste, legumes), and carbon dioxide emissions, highlighting some emerging solutions; as well as looking at carbon sequestration measures.

He acknowledged that carbon offsets currently predominated, but that this had to be thought of as a short-term practice that would not bring the quantum change required in the long term through change in practice. He believes the concept of offset emissions sends an unfortunate signal that we can continue business as usual.

Richard said that building soil organic matter is very important for adaptation to climate change, and that the future of agriculture depends on healthy soils, and management systems that are maintained in perpetuity.

Further Information

Keep an eye out for further webinars on the ATSE website

Evie S / Unsplash

EU releases ambitious targets for adoption of organic

The European Commission has unveiled an ambitious Organic Action Plan, which aims to support a target of 25% agricultural land dedicated to organic farming across the EU by 2030.

Launched in March 2021, the Organic Action Plan is a key plank at the heart of the European Green Deal's farm to fork strategy. The Plan identifies 23 actions grouped into 3 major themes (Axes) designed to help the organic sector reach its full potential and support target conversion.

AXIS 1: STIMULATE DEMAND AND ENSURE CONSUMER TRUST.

- promote organic farming and the EU logo;
- Encourage organic canteens and increase the use of green public procurement;
- reinforce organic school schemes;
- prevent food fraud and strengthen consumer trust;
- improve traceability;
- facilitate contribution of private sector.

AXIS 2: STIMULATE CONVERSION AND REINFORCE THE ENTIRE VALUE CHAIN

- encourage conversion, investments and exchanges of best practices;
- develop sector analysis to increase market transparency;
- support the organisation of the food chain;
- reinforce local and small-value processing and fostering short trade circuit;
- improve animal nutrition in accordance with organic rules;
- reinforce organic aquaculture.

AXIS 3: ORGANICS LEADING BY EXAMPLE: IMPROVE THE CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANIC FARMING TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- reducing climate and environmental footprint;
- enhancing genetic biodiversity and increasing yields;
- developing alternatives to contentious inputs and other plant protection products;
- Improving animal welfare;
- making more efficient use of resources.

The Action Plan is complemented by forthcoming changes to the EU legislative framework governing organic product, which will come into effect from January 1, 2022.

These changes will include an increase in products covered by existing legislation, an introduction of tighter precautionary measures and robust checks along the entire supply chain, and a simplification of regulations through the phasing out of a number of exceptions and opt outs.

Further Information

ec.europa.eu

bioecoactual.com

Felipe Galvan / Unsplash

A 2020 report from consulting firm McKinsey, 'Fashion on Climate' found that the sector was responsible for some 2.1 billion metric tons of greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions in 2018 (approx. 4% of total global emissions).

The report concludes that the industry is likely to miss target reductions by 2030 unless action is taken to reduce emissions from upstream operations (material production and processing), and from garment manufacturing. The report also points to the need to encourage sustainable consumer behaviour.

WHAT WE CAN DO...

Choose Wisely, Choose Well.

In a report 'A new textiles economy: *Redesigning fashion's future*', the Ellen MacArthur Foundation estimates that more than $500 billion is wasted annually due to clothing being 'barely worn and rarely recycled.'

Simply buying higher quality, longer lasting clothing and investing in 'timeless' fashion will go a long way to increasing garment lifecycle.

Recycle and Upcycle.

Shop second hand. Visit your local Salvos and bag a bargain!

Look for brands that are committed to post-consumer recycling and upcycling – such as Patagonia and other lifestyle brands that have

even the clothes on your back...

embraced the concept of total lifecycle design.

Explore the range of businesses now offering rental clothing for that special occasion.

Take heart that a revolution is taking place! According to a recent National Geographic report, factories in Prato, Italy are now recycling mountains of wool and cast-off clothes for reuse.

Buy Products made with Certified Organic Fibre.

Certified Organic cotton, wool and bamboo are now widely available across a range of everyday clothing items. Food (or Fibre) miles are a consideration here, however, as the main production countries include India, China, Turkey, Tanzania and the United States. If purchasing certified organic garments, you need to ensure they are manufactured with organic and eco-friendly materials and dyes.

As well as the environmental and sustainability benefits, uniquely, traceability through the organic food assurance system provides a guarantee of provenance, and sets a benchmark for other fibre industries.

Check out Marie Claire's list of the best organic brands in Australia. marieclaire.com.au

Wear your Pineapples on your Sleeves.

Biomaterials – also known as 'biobased', 'biosynthetic', 'biofabricated', and 'bioassembled' materials – are a sustainable alternative to petroleum-based finishes and synthetic microfibres.

A range of Biomaterials are entering the market that have been developed from plant material or recycled food and industrial waste material, including from orange and pineapple fibres waste (juicing process), recycled plastic bottles, kelp, mushrooms, mycelium, and synthetic spider silk.

Expect future innovation in this area!

Know your Brands.

Search for brands whose values mirror your own.

Proving 'Sustainability' credentials may now be its own fashion trend, but there are many examples of labels that are going the extra mile to ensure equity through the supply chain – from sourcing of materials, to ensuring traceability through the supply chain; accounting for carbon emissions through production and supply, to the wages paid to workers.

NZ based merino wool brand Sheep Inc uses fibre sourced from regenerative farms, and its knitwear is produced using solar powered, zero waste knitting machines. Tag traceability provides the customer with information on the fibre source and total carbon footprint. Company revenue of 5% is invested in renewables projects.

This is just one example. There are now many!

Take the One Dress Challenge...!

Come on! Are you up to the challenge?

journal.wooland.com

get some heat this winter with my kimchi

mandy hall

There's no doubt, picking a favourite ferment is as hard as admitting out loud that you have a favourite child, but this traditional Korean ferment is definitely right up there with something I would choose for my last meal.

This recipe is a simple one, but perhaps the most recognised version of Kimchi. There are well over 100 varieties of this classic Korean dish, it's versatile, bursting with salty, spicy flavour and of course, very good for you.

I love the kick you get from that incredible Kimchi paste, and the fact that it's a very short ferment, makes it super appealing. Some people don't ferment it at all, they eat it straight from being made and keep it in the fridge.

If fermenting you can do this from 24 hours to 7 days, totally up to you and the level of lacto funk you enjoy, for me, the funkier the better! Try this simple fermentation recipe, you won't look back!

Kimchi

½ large or 1 small to medium Wombok cabbage

2% salt – if your cabbage weighs 500g, you will need 10g sea salt (500 x 2% = 10g)

3 x spring onions – washed and chopped

1 x Small daikon radish – grated

1 carrot grated

½ bunch garlic chives chopped

Kimchi Paste

10 cloves of garlic peeled

¼ cup of gochugaru - Korean chilli flakes

1TB fish sauce

150g fresh ginger

3 spring onions

3 TB soy sauce or tamari

2 TB sugar

Method

Make sure all your jars and equipment are sterilised – to do this wash in very hot soapy water, rinse in very hot water or run through the dishwasher.

Wash your cabbage and discard any damaged leaves, do not throw them out, they can be used later on in the recipe.

Cut the cabbage in half lengthways, then into quarters lengthways again, pop the cabbage into a large bowl or on a tray, sprinkle cabbage evenly with salt (get into all the leaves) and let sit for a few hours.

Chop your spring onion, grate or julienne your carrot and daikon, chop your garlic chives into very small pieces and set all aside.

Now make the kimchi paste, place all ingredients into a food processor and blend to a smooth paste.

Once your cabbage has been sitting for at least two hours, drain off some of the liquid and keep aside (it may be used later). Chop the cabbage into large bite sized pieces and place into a large clean bowl. Add all other vegetables to the bowl.

Now add your paste a spoonful at a time, as this recipe may yield more than you need. You can keep any leftovers in a jar in the fridge and use on many things, meats, veggies, in sauces etc. Mix all ingredients well, ensuring that everything is covered in the paste, before you start to pack your jar.

To pack your jar, do this a handful at a time, pushing down the mixture firmly and tightly as you go. Leave approx. 2-3cms headroom gap from the top and use your leftover cabbage leaves, folded as wedges, to push everything down and keep your ingredients underneath the brine.

Wipe the inside and externals of the jar with a clean piece of absorbent paper, as we want to keep any surfaces that are exposed to air very clean to prevent any unwanted bacterial growth or mould.

Leave the jar to ferment out of direct sunlight in a cooler spot.

Kimchi is a very short ferment – you will see activity quite quickly, after day 1 or 2, it will be important for you to 'burp' (gently open your jar slightly) each day. If you see a lot of activity, 'burp' twice per day.

After day 4, taste your kimchi with a very clean spoon or fork, if you are happy with the flavour, place your jar into the fridge for consuming straight away. If the Kimchi is not sour enough, leave for longer, up to another 3-4 days but remember to keep burping.

Once refrigerated, Kimchi will last at least 2 months in the fridge.

Once your kimchi is good to go, why not try incorporating it into some dishes, to give them a bit of a kick?

Kimchi Fried Rice (Serves 4)
Prep time 10 mins
Cook time 15 mins

Ingredients

2 -3 cups of cooked rice – white rice, brown rice, jasmine rice all are fine
1 cup of kimchi – chopped into bite size pieces
3TB of kimchi juice
1TB olive oil
1 small onion diced
1-2 TB Gochujang
1 TB sesame oil
2TB soy sauce
150g chopped Shitake mushroom (if using dried Shitake, use 80g and rehydrate per instructions on package)
½ bunch kale – washed and chopped *optional
4 fried eggs
2 spring onions sliced finely

Method

In a bowl mix together kimchi juice, soy sauce, gochujang and sesame oil – set aside.

Heat a large Frypan over a medium heat and add olive oil, warm slightly then add onion and cook for 3-5 minutes, add chopped kimchi & mushrooms, cook for a further 5 minutes, stir in kimchi juice, soy sauce and sesame oil mix, add cooked rice, chopped kale and mix thoroughly, keeping over heat for 5 mins.

Whilst Kimchi rice is cooking and heating through, cook four fried eggs in a separate pan.

Serve Kimchi rice, topped with fried egg & chopped spring onion.

lovefermentsandfood.com.au
@mandyhallfood

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- Build topsoil and organic matter
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SOIL & GARDEN SUPPLIES

Michelle Henderson / Unsplash

follow the money

The global investment community is backing sustainable food production.

Investment by Institutional and High Net Wealth individuals in farming has only increased post the global financial crisis, according to a recent report in the Financial Times.

The report recognises the global investment potential in existing farmland and in "looking for degraded land assets and converting them to higher environmental status, whether through organic farming, land regeneration or agri-forestry."

Market forces are shaping change to value sustainable farming practices, with tangible emissions targets driving large companies scrambling to offset carbon emissions.

A separate report in The Australian poses the question of whether "Australian farming can help meet the market for carbon offsets in the 21st?"

The report provides commentary on the recent landmark deal, which saw the sale of $500,000 worth of soil carbon credits to Microsoft by the Wilmot Cattle Company (which has links to the Murdoch family) in northern NSW.

The farm operation spans two properties that adopt regenerative practices, with a holistic management system employing rotational grazing practices.

It's not the only investment that Bill Gates is making. He is now one of the largest private agricultural landowners in the US, with around 250,000 acres under management.

And, he is not the only one. Climate abatement is top of mind for many.

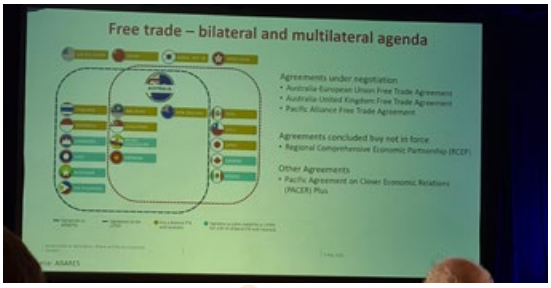
An amount of $5.7bn was raised by farmland funds in 2019, with investment particularly in crop growing operations that produce lower emissions than livestock farming, and with regenerative agriculture techniques cutting emissions even further.

As many countries grapple with frameworks for environmental and social accounting, the investment community, it would seem, can see the writing on the wall.

Food for thought?

NASAA Organic & NCO out & about

OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS, WE HAVE BEEN ZIPPING AROUND THE COUNTRY, HERE'S A SNAP SHOT OF WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



BEEF WEEK

2-8 May 2021, Rockhampton, QLD

The beef industry is an important sector for the greater organic industry, and provides many opportunities for dedicated beef producers, and those who integrate cattle and beef production as part of the mixed farming systems. NCO and NASAA Organic attended the core part of this week, to listen to the key presentations on the challenges, innovations and marketing opportunities for this sector. Many of the current R&D and innovations are directly relevant to our certified organic producers, and in attending this event, we had the opportunity to liaise with the R&D leaders, peak industry bodies and export companies to make sure that organics is on their agenda.





Top left: Dean Pinsak, Kiwi Down Under Farm. NCO #2688

Top right: Shane Bargh, Collombatti Tea Tree. NCO #2579 with Alex Mitchell, NASAA Organic GM.

Centre left: Stephen & Lee Hart, Rosewood River Organics. NCO #2360 with Alex Mitchell.

Centre right: John Martin & Judy Dodd, Forever Farm. NCO #2485 with Alex Mitchell.

Bottom right: L to R: Sarah Mason, Rural Community/ Farmgate Counsellor, Mid North Coast Health District, Kim Deans, Alex Mitchell.

RECOVER, RESTORE AND REGENERAGTE

Kempsey NSW

On May the 13th, NASAA Organic held a free community event for all land managers and food producers in the Kempsey region. This event was to support individuals with properties directly impacted by the bushfires, recent flood or those considering the opportunity on how to effectively design their property to be more resilient for future climate extremes.

Our keynote speaker Kim Deans, who is a regenerative agriculture coach with Integrity Soils, shared her recovery journey, as she had personally been affected by the Tingha Fires in 2019.

Participants were well informed about how practising regenerative agriculture principles would help improve their resilience and recovery and had a chance to speak to Counsellors from Rural Financial Counselling Service and Mid -North Coast Local Health District.

We had a mixture of Organic and Conventional Land Managers, and all took away more knowledge to help bring their next steps forward.

NASAA Organic would like to thank MLA, Mid -Coast Local Land Services, Kempsey RSL, who supported our event and a massive thank-you to Kim Deans for sharing her knowledge in recovering from natural disasters.




Top left: Vasse Felix vineyard. NCO #6398

Centre left: Rob Read, Director, Marine Solutions WA. NCO #6161M

Left: Woodlands Vineyard showing their brand new property sign. NCO #6392

NCO IN WA

It was fantastic to be able to head over to WA for the first time since pre-COVID19.

We attended the Margaret River Wine Association (MRWA) inaugural sustainability sundowner hosted at the beautiful Evans & Tate winery. MRWA have appointed a sustainability sub-committee and Sustainability Officer to drive one of their key priorities of increasing the number of vineyards and wineries certified to the Freshcare Sustainable Viticulture (AWISSP-VIT1) and Winery (AWISSP-WIN1) standards. NCO is an approved certifier for these programs and is able to assist with audits at a competitive price.

We also visited several operators in the region from vineyards to input manufacturers. It is always so inspiring to catch up with our operators on their home turf and see the amazing things they are achieving through innovation and a great affinity with the environment they are working with.

The South West has had very high rainfall through Autumn with almost sub-tropical conditions. This has been of great benefit to some sectors, and created challenges for others. All in all, the region looks beautiful and lush.

/ Continued from previous page

Jaikishan Patel / Unsplash

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA FOOD FUTURES CONFERENCE 2021

17-21 May, Darwin, NT

Theme: Balancing Agri-development and the Environment in Northern Australia

This event is a premier industry event that shapes agricultural development for northern Australia. The region has over 50% of Australia irrigation water and 1.4 million hectares of arable soils. The challenges the region faces in agribusiness supply chains are vastly different to those in the more southern States, and many of these themes were explored in the sessions of biological opportunity versus logistical reality of product to market. All of the presentations acknowledged the careful balance between development and environment, and the NT Farmers Association had provided a balanced program that allowed all points of view to be presented. Field visits included visits to melon and mango farms, and the export Hubs and Darwin Port. The event was equally supported by QLD, NT and WA State Governments, acknowledging that in the region, it was the unique environment that required a collaborative development approach – not state borders that determined the level of support given to industries.

NATURALLY GOOD EXPO

6-7 JUN 2021, ICC Sydney, Darling Harbour, NSW

Naturally Good provides a space for natural, organic and healthy brands to meet with retail buyers, distributors and wholesalers. NCO and NASAA Organic supported the expo by having a stand at the forum, and we were proud to be able to provide the opportunity to showcase a number of our certified services, NCO products and businesses.
Our staff love to support our certified operators by talking to the public about the importance of certification, and the integrity of the products and services provided by businesses who undertake the certification pathway. NASAA Organic and NCO staff were kept busy for the full two days, and all who stopped by were extremely excited to see us, and thankful for the time our staff took to talk about products and certification processes. We heard first-hand from the people who buy and use the services and products, that certified organic certification is their way of knowing the product has true integrity and is what they look for in all their purchases.

Above: Lee Mastus (L) and Alex Mitchell (R) NASAA Organic with Tomas and Charmaine, Desert Shadow. NCO #6368P

NEWS WRAP UP

OISCC APPOINTS INDEPENDENT PRESIDENT

Current CEO of the Australian Macadamia Society and Director of the Australian Nut Industry Council Jolyon Burnett will take on the role of Independent President of the Organic Industry Standards and Certification Council (OISCC), the industry's key advisory Council protecting the integrity of organic food production in Australia.

Jolyon brings 40 years' experience in Horticulture, as an industry executive, researcher, academic, consultant and journalist.

Having held the role of CEO of the Australian Macadamia Society since 2008, Jolyon is a Director and past Chair of the Australian Nut Industry Council, and current Chair of the International Macadamia R&D Committee. He is also a member of the Sustainable Development Committee of the NFF and a Government-appointed Board member of the NSW North Coast Local Land Services.

Jolyon has degrees in Agricultural and Environmental Science and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

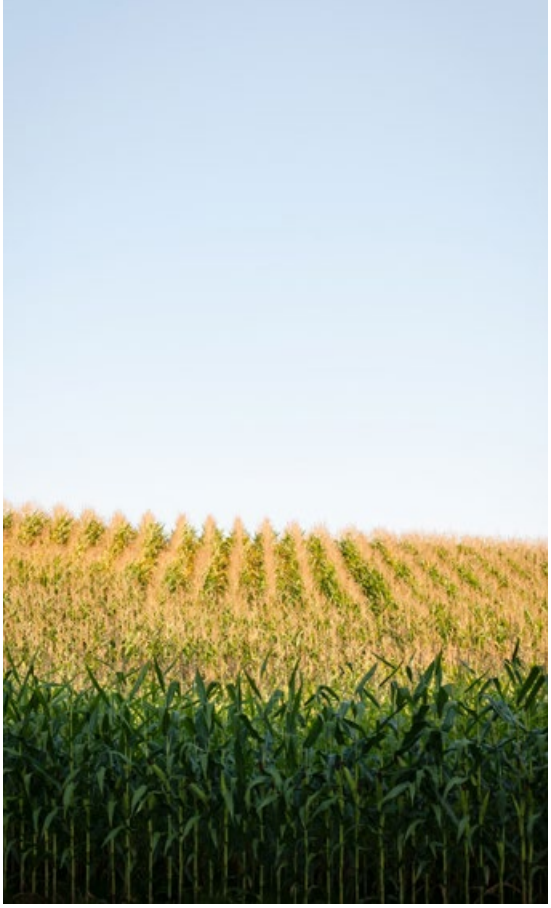
Outgoing President Jan Denham says, "the Council's processes underpin our entire quality system, and ultimately, consumer confidence in organic product."

Jan says that "Long-serving members of the organic industry have taken on much of the 'heavy lifting' when it comes to industry representation at a Government level."

"With Jolyon's appointment, it's time to introduce some fresh thinking to the committee and to ensure ongoing fair and independent representation for industry."

One long serving member who will be departing the Council is Marg Will, who has held the role of OISCC Secretary for the last 11 years.

Marg helped lead the team that has overseen the development of OISCC since its inception in 2009, and successful accreditation to ISO9001:2015.



Bannon Morrissy / Unsplash

NSW LIFTS BAN ON GM CROPS

Sobering news for organic farmers in NSW with the announcement that the 18-year moratorium on the use of GM crops set to lapse on 1 July 2021.

Genetically modified canola, cotton and safflower has been grown in NSW since 2008 under an exemption for these crops.

Tim Marshall, chairman of the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia, was interviewed by *The Guardian Australia* and comments:

"We simply don't think that GM technology is necessary."

"Organic farmers will now have the problem of contamination of their fields by windblown seed and pollen from GM crops that threatens their viability as organic farmers."

"We are very concerned organic farmers will lose markets and they will have to pay for the wind breaks and lack of cropping boundaries that they need to protect their own crops.

"If [GM technology] is going to be used, there needs to be some protection for organic farmers."

"We know the organic market is growing very, very fast and the only limitation on the market is supply. This won't make it easier for organic farmers to produce."

Following the recent decision by the SA Government to lift its GM Ban, Tasmania will now be the only state with a moratorium in place on growing GM crops.

/ Continued from previous page

PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO PUSH TREND TO BACKYARD FARMING

Moving one step further than the Community Garden, Backyard Farmers is an urban regenerative farming initiative that has started up in Melbourne, linking passionate home gardeners with owners willing to dedicate their backyards to organic food production.

The program provides benefits for those who may not have the time and energy to stay on top of their gardens, and net benefit for the landowner and community in the production of nutritious food.

Home and Market gardens have always been a feature of Melbourne with its rich heritage of migrants from Italy and Greece, and the Middle East, and the initiative is seeking to introduce a whole new generation to community, as food -provenance consciousness has grown through the pandemic.

Therapeutic aspects of gardening are clear.

Of the more than 9,000 Australians who took part in Sustain's Pandemic Gardening Survey, 62 per cent said gardening meant a great deal to them during the crisis. Another 20 per cent said "they could not have made it through the pandemic" without it.

Find out more about Backyard Farmers.

2022 NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN FOR AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY PRODUCERS

The latest round of Nuffield Scholarships is now open!

For over 70 years, Nuffield Australia has been one of the most influential agricultural networks, providing the opportunity for hundreds of passionate people to explore the boundaries of possibilities in various agricultural fields – and to bring that knowledge home.

Read the inspiring stories of previous Nuffield Scholarship recipients Celia Leverton, Dave Reilly and Dr Cathie Harvey in previous editions of Organic Insights.

Our own NCO certified operator, Josh McIntosh from Border Park Organics was announced as a 2021 Scholarship recipient (supported by GRDC). Josh plans to explore how to promote and maintain a healthy, profitable soil microbiome in low rainfall, broadacre and organic mixed farming systems, through studying systems in Central America, arid regions of Africa and Israel, as well as Australia.

Are you ready for the challenge?

Find out more at nuffield.com.au

HALL OF FAMERS!

Congratulations to Tom Montalto, owner of Floridia Cheese, (who have been certified with NCO for 5 years) for their induction into the Family Business Australia Chapter Hall of Fame.

Tom's parents started making cheese in their backyard for their family, that led to the establishment of Floridia Cheese, a successful and highly respected business spanning more than 65 years.

floridiacheese.com.au

UPCOMING EVENTS AT HOME & AROUND THE GLOBE

HORT CONNECTIONS EXPO

Date: 7 – 9 June 2021

Location: Brisbane Convention Centre

The conference theme Sustaining the Future of Fresh, will look at the many ways we as an industry can help producers to grow more, with less. Whether it is through technology, labour solutions, or just general financial and environmental sustainability.

EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS 2021

Date: 16 – 18 June 2021

Online: Live from Lisbon

This year's Congress, with the title "Organic's contribution to the European Green Deal" aims to inspire the participants by focusing on how the agri-food sector's initiatives enhance the transition towards a more sustainable food system, through the aid of leading examples from representatives and experts amidst the organic sector.

FRUIT GROWERS VICTORIA CONFERENCE

Date: 4 – 5 August 2021

Location: Shepparton Victoria

The conference will feature an array of notable guest speakers and aims to be the premier networking event for the region, attracting growers, industry representatives and service providers from not only Victoria but Australia wide.

The aim of the conference is to allow growers to share their views and ideas and create a platform for the exchange of information on technological developments and new industry innovations from around the globe.

ORGANIC WORLD CONGRESS – FRANCE – SEPT 2021

Date: 6 – 10 September 2021

Location: Rennes, France

The organic sector assembles every three years to host the Organic World Congress (OWC), the world's largest organic gathering, but in light of recent developments around COVID-19 this event has been postponed until 2021.

EVOKE AG – PERTH – FEBRUARY 2022

Date: 15 – 16 February 2022

Location: Claremont, Perth, Western Australia

evokeAG. is the Asia Pacific's premier agrifood tech event. It allows delegates to explore what's next in the agrifood tech space, covering three main themes; food – farm – future. This exclusive event is an immersive experience delivering diverse topics and cutting-edge innovation from across the region and around the world, bringing people together to connect, collaborate and evolve all things agriculture.

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