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MEDIA RELEASE

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Organic Sector Welcomes Australian Standard

'The organic sector welcomes the announcement by Standards Australia to develop an Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce. This will guarantee the integrity of organic products' Andre Leu, Chair of the Organic Federation of Australia (OFA), stated.

The OFA submitted an application to develop an Australian organic standard with Standards Australia. Over 30 national organic sector stakeholder organisations were surveyed by Standards Australia before they made a final decision. This application has the support of the Australian Government and the majority of the organic sector stakeholders.

'An Australian organic standard will provide the organic industry with a uniform national benchmark for the production and the marketing of organic produce on the domestic market. Once developed, the standard can be used by government authorities such as the Australian Competition and Consumers Commission (ACCC), Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and State regulatory agencies to ensure compliance for organic products' Mr Leu stated.

The OFA welcomes the statement by the ACCC in the Sydney Morning Herald on Nov 24 that the Australian Standard is the 'way to go'. The ACCC spokesperson said that 'producers who flouted it would be exposed to action by the ACCC'.

Uncertified products or products labeled under standards that do not comply with the Australian organic standard can be prosecuted for fraud and misrepresentation.

An Australian Standard will close the regulatory gap with the National Standard, which is legally binding for the export market only. This standard has become a de-facto domestic standard. However, it has limited regulatory authority in stopping fraud and misrepresentation in the domestic market and cannot be used to regulate imported organic products.

Consumers can be assured that products certified by the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia (NASAA), the Organic Food Chain (OFC) and Safe Food Queensland (SFC) comply with the National Standard, whether destined for the export or the domestic market.

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