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MEDIA RELEASE

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Ministerial Announcement on Australian Standard Welcomed by Organic Sector

The organic sector welcomes the latest media release from the office of the Hon. Peter McGauran MP, Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry regarding the Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce.

Primary Industries Ministers from across Australia met in Brisbane on Friday 20 April 2007 to consider issues impacting on Australia's primary production sectors. As a result, a Primary Industries Ministerial Council communiqué now states *"Council noted that the development of an Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce by Standards Australia will provide greater certainty and credibility for the industry and consumers and will help the industry maintain its recent strong rate of growth. Council agreed to consider the need for a regulatory framework once the Australian Standard is developed and agreed to consult the organic sector as part of this process."*

'As the peak industry body for the Australian organic and biodynamic sector, the Organic Federation of Australia (OFA) welcomes the opportunity to work with governments on developing an appropriate regulatory frame work when the Australian Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce is published by Standards Australia.' Andre Leu, Chair of the Organic Federation of Australia has stated. 'The OFA has spent over two years working in partnership with the government and the Australian organic and biodynamic sector on this project. The OFA greatly appreciates the contribution this sector has received from the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, AQIS and the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry'.

'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, this standard can be used by government agencies to ensure compliance against misleading and deceptive practices for organic products sold on the domestic market', Mr Leu also stated.

The inaugural meeting of a new technical committee for organic and biodynamic produce will be held at Standards Australia premises in Sydney on May 7 2007.

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