



The Peak Body for the Australian Organic
Sector

From the desk of:

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Organic Federation of Australia Chairman at Copenhagen

Organic Agriculture has the potential to sequester nearly all the Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) that is generated by human activities

Organic Federation of Australia, Chairman, Andre Leu, will be at Copenhagen as part of a delegation that will include some of the best scientists and researchers into organic systems.

'Organic agriculture has the potential to sequester nearly all the carbon dioxide that is generated by human activities. It has the ability to sequester 37 gigatonnes of the 38 gigatonnes CO₂ produced every year.' Andre Stated

'Most importantly organic agriculture can help reduce poverty by increasing yields for small holders in the developing world and through extra income by paying farmers for the CO₂ that they sequester.'

'The International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) has organised a series of events at Copenhagen to promote the mitigation and adaptation benefits of organic agriculture to the governments and media of the world.' stated Andre, who is a Vice President of IFOAM.

CO₂ is the main greenhouse gas (GHG) that scientists believe is responsible for climate change.

According to the latest technical report (AR 4 Synthesis Report) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 'Its [CO₂] annual emissions have grown between 1970 and 2004 by about 80%, from 21 to 38 gigatonnes (Gt), and represented 77% of total anthropogenic GHG emissions in 2004.'

Long term studies by the Rodale institute show that organic agriculture can sequester 7.4 tonnes CO₂ per Hectare per year. 'During the 1990s, results from the Compost Utilization Trial (CUT) at Rodale Institute ...a 10-year study ...show that the use of composted manure with crop rotations in organic systems can result in carbon sequestration of up to 2,000 lbs/ac/year.[2,000 kgs/hectare/year] (LaSalle, T. and Hepperly, P. 2008)

Soil carbon is multiplied by 3.7 to get the amount of CO₂ that is sequestered from the atmosphere. This means that the 2,000 kgs of carbon in the soil has sequestered 7,400 kgs (7.4 t) of CO₂ from the atmosphere

'If these organic systems were applied to the 5.0 billion hectares of global agricultural land, it gives the potential to sequester 37 gigatonnes of CO₂ per year – nearly all of the world's CO₂ output.' Andre said

'Paying farmers for the carbon that they sequester into the soil can be one of the most effective ways to alleviate poverty.' Mr Leu stated

'The long term Rodale farming comparison trials showed that organic systems sequestered an average of 7.4 tonnes of CO₂ per hectare per year into the soil.'

'The current price per tonne of CO₂ on the European Climate Exchange is around \$21.50. Good organic farmers could earn around \$160 per hectare per year on top of the money they earn from their crops. This would be a significant income boost for most farmers, especially for the millions of smallholders in the developing world who live on less than \$400 a year.'

'Currently only farm forestry is included in the Kyoto carbon trading protocols. This ties up good agricultural land from food production and prevents farmers from receiving an income from a wide variety of crops.'

Andre Leu, Chairman, OFA

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'By including soil carbon, farmers can earn money from both their crops and the carbon they sequester. Very importantly the land can be used for food production.' Andre said

'No other industry has the potential of Organic Agriculture to significantly reduce Greenhouse Gases, increase productivity and alleviate poverty for the world's poorest farmers.'

'Governments around the world need include organic agriculture in their climate change policies and actively promote its adoption. Furthermore, after years of neglect there serious funding is needed into organic Research and Development to improve on the current best practices. This will improve on the amount of CO₂ that can be sequestered into the soil and improve on the yields of food and fibre.' Mr Leu Stated

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The Organic Federation of Australia is the peak body and the largest representative organic organisation in Australia. For further information please visit www.ofa.org.au

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