



The Peak Body for the Australian Organic Sector

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From the desk of:

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Organic Rice –High Value Sustainable Industry for Tropical Australia The organic rice industry will set the benchmark for sustainability in tropical agriculture.

Trials of rice varieties suited to organic production will start in Far North Queensland.

“This will be a new environmentally sustainable industry for Far North Queensland. Best practice organic systems are high yielding with the added advantage that there will be no damaging pesticide, herbicide or fertiliser runoff into sensitive eco systems like the Great Barrier Reef.” stated Andre Leu, Chair of the Organic Federation of Australia

“The world currently has a shortage of rice, and now that Australia’s main rice growing area in the Murray Darling basin has stopped production due lack of water, there is tremendous potential for this new high value industry.”

The Rural Industries Research Development Corporation will fund Soil Systems Australia to trial upland rice varieties in Far North QLD. This project focuses on developing varieties and the most suitable organic management systems to generate high yields.

“Upland rice is different from Lowland rice. Lowland requires flood irrigation and is generally grown with bagged nitrogen fertilisers. Upland rice varieties are drought resistant, don’t require large amounts of water and are ideally suited to organic nutritional programmes. There is no need for flood irrigation. Upland rice can be grown in the same manner as other grains such as sorghum or corn.” Adam Willson, Director of Soil Systems Australia said.

This new organic rice industry has enormous potential to generate jobs and income for Far North Queensland. It can be grown in nearly every area in Northern Australia that receives reliable summer monsoon rain

“Food and water security throughout the world is a serious issue” Adam Willson stated. “Australia is well placed to export high quality rice as we have the soils and the water. With over 85% of Australia’s rainfall falling in Northern Australia, it is important that we develop upland rice varieties suited to this region”.

The Organic Federation of Australia is pleased to be a contributor to this important project.

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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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