



MEDIA RELEASE

30 April

Oil company benefits from cheap tricks

Adulteration in the essential oil industry has boosted interest in certified organic tea tree oil in Australia.

Essential oil buyers are finding that products are being mixed with cheaper oils but still being sold as a pure essential oil.

This is the experience of New South Wales' tea tree oil grower and retailer Jenbrook, which recently returned home from the United State's largest natural product expo and was overwhelmed with buyer interest in its products.

The company's Robyn Ingersole says buyers in the essential oil industry are starting to test products because adulteration is becoming more common; buyers are also less likely to buy from distributors because they don't trust them.

Robyn says, "We're finding that they're interested in us because we grow and distribute the product.

"A lot of essential oils are being adulterated. Distributors are bringing in tea tree oil from China and blending it with Australian tea tree oil.

"Chinese tea tree oil is not really an essential oil. A Certificate of Analysis reveals all the compounds of the Australian tea tree oil but upon further analysis the compounds are synthetics and the base oil used is maybe a palm oil or something else."

Jenbrook set up a processing outlet in California in 2013 as a stepping stone to the European market; however they've found there is enough demand in the region to satisfy supply without looking further afield.

Robyn says there was strong interest from Europe, the US, France, The Netherlands and Norway in their certified organic tea tree oil products at the Natural Product East Expo.

Some of its products are certified with the largest organic certifying group in Australia, Australian Certified Organic. The biggest difference between a certified organic tea tree product and a conventional one is the lack of synthetic chemical fertilisers and pesticides in the farming process. Jenbrook hand harvests from over 800 hectares in the Northern Rivers region for its 'wild harvested oil' and is planting more seedlings to expand this category.

The price difference between conventional and organic tea tree has come down to 25 per cent now that there is more tea tree oil on the market.

Jenbrook says when it began in the industry tea tree was a product for hippies. Now it's competing in the mainstream market because the oil is widely accepted as a solution for anything from acne and head lice to fungicide control on farms.

Media: Kathy Cogo, Australian Organic, kathy.cogo@austorganic.com, 07 4771 3714 | 0466 015 183.
Images available.