

## Media Release

19 June 2012

### Organic farmers helped by new mining guidelines

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) is releasing guidelines for organic producers and mining companies endorsed by the Queensland Government.

Unlike conventional properties, organic certified producers are afforded some protection under a number of Acts.

Petroleum and gas activity on an organic or biodynamic property is described as an advanced activity under Acts including the *Mineral Resources Act 1989* and the *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009*.

This means energy companies need an agreement with the landholder before they can go onto an organic or biodynamic property.

BFA's Greg Paynter says the *Dealing with resource development activities: Guidelines for organic producers and resource development companies* has been a long time in the making.

He says, "The Guidelines will help organic producers and mining companies understand their rights and responsibilities.

"Some of the greatest threats mining poses to organic and biodynamic properties are chemical contamination and altered public perception.

"The materials used to extract or explore wouldn't be compliant with the requirements of an organic standard."

Hydraulic fracturing, or fraccing, for coal seam gas uses a host of chemicals; however this type of mining operation has operated on organic farms where the farmer and company have been able to negotiate suitable arrangements and not compromised the organic integrity of the property.

Australia has 12 million hectares of organic farmland; most of it is in states where mining and exploration is taking place.

Resource companies contributed to the development of the Guidelines and you can see the latest issue of *Australian Organic Producer* for more details.

Greg says, "At a recent meeting to finalise *Dealing with resource development activities* the Queensland Government showed genuine interest and understanding about the constraints organic producers are faced with due to standards.

The Guidelines will be available on the BFA website.

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