



MEDIA RELEASE

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Changes to organic labels

Over the last six months Australian Certified Organic has been reviewing how its widely recognised Bud logo is applied to imported organic products.

For 26 years the Bud logo has been used on products to denote their organic status.

For the past 14 years it has also been used with the words Australian Certified Organic – the name of the government accredited certification group that audits, tests and approves organic products.

It is the most recognised organic certification mark amongst Australian consumers (as shown by the *Australian Organic Market Report 2014*) and appears on the majority of organic products in the Australian marketplace.

The logo is not a country of origin logo, but a confirmation of organic status, which complies with the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*.

In the absence of clear imported food labelling requirements in Australia, Australian Organic Ltd has lobbied for truth in labelling for years, including a submission to the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) review of food labelling law and policy, headed by Dr Neal Blewett, in 2009.

Australian Certified Organic is a subsidiary of the not for profit group Australian Organic Ltd.

Australian Organic's chair Dr Andrew Monk says it's disappointing it's taken this long to strengthen food labelling import laws but we are heartened by the recent announcements by the Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, that suggest clearer labelling is now imminent.

He says, "The Australian Certified Organic logo was always intended to exist alongside transparent labelling information made available by manufacturers and importers.

"We wish to maintain and protect the Australian moniker for Australian producers and Australian manufactured product."

Imported products and products using imported ingredients must show evidence that they meet the strict organic standards that domestically produced ingredients and products do.

In the absence of domestic organic regulation, the presence of the Bud on imported products has enabled consumers to have confidence that such products claiming organic status are indeed organic.

Given the fledgling size of the organic industry in Australia, it's difficult for manufacturers to source all the certified organic ingredients needed within Australia.

Some products are simply not produced here. Australia also has a rising export trade particularly in beef, wine and horticulture.

The review of the Australian Certified Organic logo is scheduled to conclude in late April with recommendations to be put forward to clients and other related parties for comment.

Images available.

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