



**MEDIA RELEASE - Organic farming goes online** 19 January 2010

A recent report\* predicts that Organic Farming will be one of Australia's **fastest growing business** sectors. Driven principally by consumer demand, the study has highlighted growth expectations of nearly 15% for next year, with double digit growth every year for the next 5 years.

The report says the switch to organic farming will produce **higher returns for farmers** and also indicates employment opportunities in the organic sector will increase significantly as a result of increase in demand and production.

This represents a **great opportunity for farmers** to convert to organic production.

Many farmers know that organic growing relies on soil improvement and increased organic matter (carbon) and accept that it would be better for their land, family health and the planet. However the lack of reliable sources of information on organic production methods and how certification works represents a significant barrier to change.

An **innovative online course** about what is involved in converting to organic production has now been released by organic specialist training providers TM Organics ([www.tmorganics.com](http://www.tmorganics.com)), in order to make the conversion to organic easier for farmers.

The course is approved under the Farmready program ([www.farmready.gov.au](http://www.farmready.gov.au)), which means that eligible **farmers and land managers are fully reimbursed** for the full cost of the course once completed.

It is also the **first online course approved for Farmready** reimbursement.

The course is designed to overcome the information hurdles when it comes to considering organic production and provide farmers with a practical understanding of what needs to be done to convert their farming operation to organic. It also de-mystifies many of the steps that take place when a farmer decides to become certified organic. Importantly, it helps farmers to develop an Organic Management Plan (OMP) which is the cornerstone of organic certification.

TM Organics director Tim Marshall says "We have applied our long-term involvement with organic standards and certification, and the experience of visiting many organic producers, to present reliable information and set out the necessary steps to becoming an organic producer. The online course is available anytime and is relevant to all producers".

\*Refer to Ibisworld report "Organic Farming in Australia"

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