



Dear Members,

It is with much pleasure that we present to you this 2024 annual report from the Board.

Chairman's Report

The work of ORICoop has been marked over the past year with many environmental and climate based challenges, as well as mixed commercial opportunities in a difficult economic year for many.

The ORICoop board is extremely grateful for the tireless and focused leadership of Its Executive Director, Carolyn Suggate, which has effectively dealt with many issues and opportunities encountered during the year.

A number of key initiatives have been led by ORICoop to enhance the performance of the sector including-

- Increase in enquiries for organic grain products for both livestock and premium grade organic grains
- Identification of strategic storage and processing facilities to further expand the existing supply chain across Southern Australia
- Providing due diligence of key assets and businesses as future investment projects
- Exploration of strategic investment and debt capital pathways in support of vital expansion opportunities in the sector
- Organic Grower representations to the Organic Development Group, Organic Operators Australia and the Federal Government

The Board welcomes you to our AGM!

ORICoop Market Feedback

1. Through the ORICoop grain project the broad opportunities and key barriers for organic grain producers for the market to expand require investment, strategic increased growth of products and continued support in development for the sector. These opportunities take time to fully understand the supply chain barriers and opportunities to capture and grow these markets. The ORICoop Board is confident of these markets expanding into



the coming year, with an increase in processing capacity across the grain sector, together with innovative storage and finance options available for our grower members.

2. Through the development of the organic grain project further investment and strategic alliances have been identified which are likely to be expanded upon into the coming year. These opportunities are member led, for the benefit of our producer members to increase the capacity for organic grains to enter and flow through to better end markets. This includes whole and processed livestock products including our initial poultry stockfeed trial, plus higher end premium products for the brewing sector and for premium organic grain and legume products. Many of these have been impacted in the past by the lack of processing capacity that ORICoop has sought to overcome in small but strategic steps over the past year.
3. As our ORICoop members know, ORICoop did not proceed with the 4LM acquisition as planned last year, due to unforeseen circumstances. However the Board is currently reviewing a number of strategic investment projects that will utilise our investor share option via the EOI mechanism. The initial details are soon to be released to our members with full details of how you can participate. These investments include important farmland assets of existing organic farms together with infrastructure projects that assist the supply chain efficiency and an innovative finance option for organic grain producers
4. ORICoop has slightly increased its membership this year to 284 current members. The Cooperative has moved towards two types of membership:-
 - a. Active contributing member - \$50/year
 - b. Basic observer member only - no ongoing contribution

The Cooperative funds from our member fees provide for our basic website development and ongoing maintenance, together with member advocacy and knowledge development. We encourage all our members to consider contributing in this way. The Board intends to develop higher value grower memberships in the coming year, with capacity to develop and your Member Profile with sustainability reporting and other grower benefits. Our investor members will also have capacity to participate more in the Cooperative in the coming year, via our EOI and funding pathways.



5. ORICoop has been involved in the Organic Development Group and has committed significant resources to being present as part of the Organic Development Group (ODG). The ODG was formed in 2021 out of a need for a united representative voice for the organic sector to Government. This group is mostly representative of the existing organic industry bodies, all organic certifiers together with COBWA and ORICoop both representing the business of organic producers outside of certification. A significant development was made public this week, with Bridget McKenzie releasing the details of the [Organic Bill](#) in Parliament. This has been a long process with the National Party and will continue into early next year pending a vote in February on the Bill.
 - a. Second to the Bill - ORICoop has been strategically supporting Organic Operators in their [Single Standard](#) strategy that was presented to the Department this week.
 - b. ORICoop understands these significant barriers and complex pathways in navigating the best solution that is not tainted by conflicts of interest or monetary gains for certain organisations. The Board would like to acknowledge the time and expertise contributed by both Greg Paynter and Carolyn Suggate in these discussions and contributions. ORICoop is also involved directly with the Department regarding Market Access and identifying the barriers and opportunities in future export/import markets beyond certification and equivalency that is sought with each of the identified markets.

6. Organic Operators had their AGM yesterday and provided these market insights.
 - a. Weekly retail sales at Woolworths are at all time highs
 - i. Related to increased health conscious and concern around food safety
 - ii. Millennial may be eating more at home due to high costs of eating out
 - b. See below more details on the latest market report.

7. This year ORICoop has provided submissions for the following on behalf of our members this year.
 - a. APVMA - objecting to the continued use of Paraquat
 - b. FSANZ - objecting to the proposed changes to the GE/GM definition
 - c. Livestock Submission - objecting to the proposed changes in the National Organic Standard regarding antibiotic use and state based 'eradication schemes'.



ORGANIC AND
REGENERATIVE
INVESTMENT
COOPERATIVE

8. The Resilience Fund will support our in-person event planned at Tall Poppy Farm early in 2024. This will be an opportunity to connect with other members, learn from Paola & Andrew's enterprise and to engage further in the opportunities in the organic sector. This 'fund' is designed to provide support and knowledge sharing amongst our membership and we look forward to enabling more knowledge and educational outcomes amongst our membership.
9. The ORICOOP Sustainability Bond (previously the Eco-Credit) is planned to be re-activated and renewed early next year. With a particular focus on the environmental and sustainability reporting and outcomes that many growers are seeking, and that markets are demanding. This will include an update to our website that will provide capacity for growers to demonstrate their farm practices, product integrity and story. We look forward to sharing more details of this with our members early in the year.
10. The ORICOOP Board has agreed to pay a dividend to all Investor members equivalent to the amount paid in interest from monies invested. This is a good step for our investor members and the Board looks forward to further investment opportunities in this year to come. All Investor Members have received an email to confirm their intentions, with three options being provided, these include:-
 - a. Receive dividend cash payment
 - b. Rollover dividend payment to existing investment
 - c. Donate dividend payment to Resilience Fund
11. The Australian Organic Industry awaits the decision at the IFOAM conference in December regarding the Pacifika/Oceania bid to host the next IFOAM Conference in Brisbane in 2027. We encourage all operators to be involved in this event!

Current Organic Market Report:-

The Organic market update for the East Coast is looking very good for most Fruit and Vegetables. General sales have been strong in organics with more farmer and buyer confidence after the interest rates stabilised. It's been a good season with not much oversupply and good prices overall.

The hot and dry weather has been favorable for Asparagus with high yields of product available.



Greens have had a consistent supply from Victoria. Naval oranges have had a long season and with Valencias starting now, it has been a good season for orange supplies.

Limes have been in short supply and getting very good prices. Bananas have also been in good supply. Blackberries will go for a few months and cherries are having a strong season with no hail in most areas. Stone fruit has a larger supply than last year. Mangoes have a large crop and the hot and dry weather has been favourable. There was a short supply of cabbage this year because of the oversupply last year and less grown this season. Strawberries have been in low supply being in smaller numbers grown in QLD. Two large blueberry farms are for sale in Coffs Harbour. Driscoll is exiting the organic blueberry market. The organic tomato market has been affected by the tomato Brown Rugose fruit virus. This has affected the South Australian conventional tomato market by 30% which is a significant blow.

There is going to be stock shortages from growers for carrots, potatoes and pumpkins because of weather events during planting and now too wet for harvesting carrots and potatoes. These conditions will change and the farmers may be able to get on the paddocks to harvest the carrots and potatoes. Avocado supply has been consistent although most organic growers are having a smaller crop this season with only a couple of farms supplying the organic market at this time.

The Board has agreed to provide strong focus on these key areas into the coming year:-

- Growth of the organic market and throughput of supply for our member base
- Enable strategic investment pathways into key assets that enhance organic industry
- Provide industry and grower feedback to industry bodies

In summary, your board understands this has been a complex, heavy lifting year for ORICoop. The organic industry is facing headwinds across the board, but there is much opportunity for the future of the organic and regenerative agriculture sector beyond this period. We believe that with domestic regulation in motion, improved supply chain efficiency, a stronger consumer demand for more transparency in food and farming choices, strategic investment and increased grower knowledge and capacity there is a strong future ahead for the sector. With a unique Co-operative model ORICoop is well placed to capture this opportunity with our members' support.

Thank you
The ORICoop Board