



BioAg celebrates 25 years

BioAg was founded in March 1999 as a vehicle to commercialise the IP that Jep Gates had been developing in the Mississippi Valley over the prior ten year period.

Initially we built a pilot liquid fermentation plant in a farm shed at Ballandry Station, north of Yenda in the Riverina. In 2001 we outgrew this pilot facility and bought a green fields site in Red Hill Industrial Estate. By April 2002 we were in production in our new world class fermentation facility here in Narrandera and producing our range of soil and plant enhancing fermented biostimulants, along with our range of digesters: phosphate rock; stubble; and effluent.



Early days at the Red Hill Narrandera Liquids Plant. Founders Jep Gates (left) and Anton Barton.



BioAg has evolved to the point where we now have an experienced and qualified team of six sales agronomists that service our various geographic territories across south eastern Australia, led by GM Sales and Marketing, Darren Free. These customer facing people are supported by a very stable, dedicated and experienced group of production and administration staff, all of whom I am very proud. We have a small, dynamic team that is ready to deal with the company's growing pains as they arise.

- Anton Barton, BioAg Executive Chairman



In 2001 we commenced importing our own RPR, originally from Egypt that was used to make *BioAgPhos* by mixing it with our proprietary phosphate rock digester. Ten years ago we switched from Egyptian RPR to Algerian as the Egyptian product was too dusty to continue to import into Australia, given heightened environmental restrictions being enforced by ports and EPA. The Algerian product proved to be far less dusty and problematic as well as being a superior raw material with which to make *BioAgPhos*.

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Earthworks in preparation for the BioAg Liquids Plant in Narrandera, March 2002.



Stockpiling a cargo of Algerian RPR at our Solid Products Plant, Batesford, Vic.

What about P!

It's that time of year where broadacre growers are looking at the cost of their fertilisers, and in particular phosphate fertilisers.

The cost to ship product to Australia this season looks to be the same or slightly higher than last season.

While predictions are difficult, with most raw materials and finished fertilisers for the 2024-2025 phosphate season contracted by the end of December, the indications are that prices will be similar to last year.

We appreciate fertiliser is an expensive input, and this reinforces the two key principles:

1. Soil test and apply what is needed and ensure it is there when the growing season starts. Trying to apply phosphate fertilisers after the break is a risky proposition and if not applied will lead to a loss in production.
2. Buy early. Avoid risks and potential freight and/or spreading delays or increases, get your product delivered and applied early. This year in particular prices look like they will remain flat to firm.

BioAg has just received its latest shipment of reactive phosphate rock (RPR) from Algeria and is steadily producing *BioAgPhos*[®].

As a long lasting phosphate fertiliser, *BioAgPhos* and its blends are ideal for early application, providing P as soon as crops germinate or pastures kick off. In any scenario where lime, gypsum or compost is applied, *BioAgPhos* is ideal for blending with one or all on farm and spreading together, removing a need to spread P fertiliser separately.

Contact a BioAg distributor or representative to discuss how *BioAgPhos*[®] or one of its blends fits into your nutrient program.



The latest shipment of RPR landed first week of December 2024.



BioAgPhos[®] in production, and the new BioAg screening plant in operation, at our solid products facility in Batesford, Victoria.

“**Avoid risks ... get your product delivered and applied early.**”



INTRODUCING

Darren Free | General Manager in Sales & Marketing

We've been very pleased to welcome Darren Free to the BioAg team as the General Manager in Sales and Marketing as of July this year.

Over the past few months, Darren has been settling into his new role and has travelled far and wide, meeting with customers, distributors, and industry professionals across New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland.

Darren is well known among growers and resellers after 30 years in the horticulture industry. He began his career as a flower grower before he worked for several small horticultural suppliers, mainly in sales and technical support roles.

During his 12 years at Seazol International, Darren led the company's sales team as National Commercial Sales Manager, and then headed up Seazol's international business, taking the company's products onto the global stage, developing export market strategies for biostimulants around the world.

More recently Darren has fulfilled a lifelong dream to grow stud sheep and lambs at his property at Nagambie in Victoria's Goulburn Valley, using his knowledge of regenerative agriculture to increase soil fertility to grow productive pastures.

Darren brings to BioAg a wealth of industry knowledge and experience, which will aid BioAg's reseller relations and help better serve our customers.

An early start and a few curious locals on Darren's property in Nagambie, Victoria.



Zucchini mid-season update: *Unlocking potential with a tailored BioAg Agronomic Program*

It has been another fruitful season of zucchini cultivation in Shepparton, Victoria, in collaboration with GV Roo's Director, Dhama Singh, and his dedicated team. As mentioned in our previous Newsletter, this year Dhama has implemented a customised BioAg program with the active support of Dr Parmjit Singh Randhawa, BioAg's Extension Area Manager.



The program includes:

- BioAg solid blend application based on soil test results (ameliorants, macro, and micronutrients).
- Tactical Biostimulant applications aimed at stress mitigation and enhancing nutrient use efficiency.

Dhama's partnership with BioAg and his adherence to the program meant he hit the ground running early this season, and the zucchinis are off to a fantastic start.

Building on last season's insights, the agronomic processes have been fine-tuned to enhance quality, flavour, and yield. One key improvement has been the use of occasional tissue testing to steer crop management, especially during periods of high market demand.

The plants are thriving, with vibrant green leaves and steady growth, supported by daily harvesting. Despite Shepparton's challenging weather—excessively cold temperatures in early to mid-spring, a few days over 30°C, and significant rainfall in late November—the crops are performing well.

The BioAg Biostimulant *Soil & Seed*[®] (applied via drip irrigation), along with *Balance & Grow*[®] and *Fruit & Balance*[®] (foliar spray applications), have been instrumental in:

- enhancing plant metabolism;
- improving nutrient uptake; and
- strengthening stress tolerance, especially under cold, hot, and wet conditions.

While the final harvest for the first sown batch is still a few weeks away, early data suggests a strong yield and excellent quality, with a reduction in nitrogen use compared to last year's crop.

Expanding Horizons

Dhama Singh and the GV Roo's team are expanding the business by introducing sweet corn, eggplants, chillies, and capsicums to the portfolio, all under the tailored BioAg program.

This kind of diversification lays the foundation for a resilient and successful farm operation.



Scan for the related article:

Getting the soil balance right



BioAg's Biostimulant product range

A critical time to address nutrient deficiencies

Benefits of adding HydraSea 50® and Fruit & Balance® to the mix



As fruit and nuts near maturity and harvest, the critical processes for perennial tree crops and vines are the accumulation of sugars, the maintenance of the sugar-to-acid ratio, and the development of colour, and for vines, an increase in anthocyanins (dark pigments).

Leaf test analysis is important during this time, to ensure there are no nutrient deficiencies that will impact fruit ripening.

While macronutrients (N, P, K, S and Ca) are important so too are micronutrients. Micronutrients play an important role in plant metabolism and work as activators and co-factors in critical processes like photosynthesis, the synthesis of sugars and pigments (anthocyanins), and the formation of woody tissues. For instance, boron improves fruit quality, size and colour; zinc and iron increase sugars; manganese improves cell wall lignification.

When macro and micronutrient deficiencies are identified it is critical to act. Using biostimulants in a tank mix with fertilisers or other treatments provides chelating properties, enhancing the uptake of salt-based macro or micronutrients. This is good news for growers as salt-based products are more readily available and lower in cost than chelated alternatives. Biostimulants can provide additional benefits, including tolerance to heat, salinity or water stress.

BioAg's *Fruit & Balance* and *HydraSea 50* in a tank mix with fertilisers provide these benefits. These biostimulants are natural chelating agents, enhancing plant bioavailability of deficient minerals as well as limiting losses. They contain bioactive complexes such as amino acids, enzymes, unique polysaccharides and plant hormone-like compounds. >>

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... application of these immediately active biological compounds allows plants to save energy and increase the pace of their development – especially critical during maturation.

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New Science Presented

Back in September Anton and Darren attended the Australian Fertiliser Conference in Cairns. Dr Peter Espie, the researcher who has undertaken the replicated pasture trials in the Mackenzie Basin at Twizel in New Zealand for several years, was asked to present the new science that his trial work has discovered.

Peter's trial work has been peer reviewed and published internationally so it was nice to see it presented to the Australian fertiliser industry.

These trials demonstrated large and statistically significant growth, composition and yield responses – making important reading for those interested in superior fertilisation practices and the future of agronomy.



Scan for the Trial details



Scan for news and resources re: Dr Peter Espie's USA presentation



Distributor Spotlight

– Squires Product Applicators

Noel Squires and his team have been supplying BioAg solid fertilisers and biostimulants to the local grazing and cropping industry for many years.



With *BioAgPhos*, we can offer our customers a low chemical input product that is value for money with minimal negative environmental impact, aligning with the farmer's vision of growing clean, green sustainable produce.

- Noel Squires, Business Owner,
Squires Product Applicators



The application of these immediately active biological compounds allows plants to save energy and increase the pace of their development – especially critical during maturation, as delayed growth due to nutrient deficiencies will negatively impact fruit weight, firmness, colour, total soluble solids, and storage quality.

Contact us if you need assistance in tissue (leaf) sampling and test analysis and/or advice on foliar applications, and nutrient combination at fruit maturation.

The family business, based in South Werribee, Vic has been operating for over 20 years.

Squires Product Applicators provides fertiliser distribution, supply, and spreading to many agricultural areas right across the state.

Some customers in greater Melbourne, and central and western Victoria have been with Noel for almost 36 years.

Noel treats every job he is doing as a service, and no job is too big or too small for his team.



Scan for more information on:

Fruit & Balance®



HydraSea 50®



BioAg's resources:
Viticulture



BioAg's resources:
Tree Nuts

Griffith's Sikh Games



Held over the June long weekend, the **Griffith Shaheedi Tournament**, known as the Sikh Games, has grown to be a huge event for the region, with over 25,000 people enjoying the athleticism of the participants, as well as the community spirit and generosity of the Sikh people who have made this region their home.

BioAg's Parmjit Singh Randhawa, Extension and Area Manager for western Victoria, was in attendance to talk soil health with the farmers in the crowd. Many wanted to chat, as Parmjit's PhD in Soil Science and years of field and research experience make him an invaluable resource for those in agriculture.

Landfall Angus | Farming for five generations

Tamar Valley, Northern Tasmania



Yards at 'Landfall', in Dilston, Tasmania



Since 2013, brothers Ed and Frank Archer have been managing the Landfall Angus team.

Situated along the Tamar River in Northern Tasmania, Landfall Angus has been integral to Australian agriculture since the Archer family settled there in 1876. Starting with 1,000 acres for cropping, wool production, and cattle, the family established the Landfall Angus Stud in 1948. Beginning with twelve foundation females and procuring sires from Victoria, the herd gained recognition for its fertility and growth performance.

Fourth-generation family member Gerald Archer made significant strides in genetic improvement. He travelled extensively to source top-tier genetics and introduced performance recording systems, becoming an early adopter of Breedplan. This innovation allowed **Landfall Angus** to benchmark its genetics against industry standards, cementing its reputation.

Today, the fourth and fifth Archer generations manage over 2,650 registered Angus females. They focus on producing fertile, structurally sound, low-maintenance cattle that excel in growth and carcass performance.

With a commitment to sustainability and innovation, Landfall Angus continues to lead Australian beef production, blending a proud heritage with forward-thinking practices to uphold its legacy of excellence.

Landfall Angus follows a practical philosophy, with cattle managed under commercial conditions to ensure their genetics are suited to the beef industry, meeting the needs of modern farmers. This approach, passed down through the generations, focuses on breeding high-performance cattle that deliver real-world results. With over 500 bulls marketed annually across Australia, Landfall Angus' breeding program maximises genetic gain, adding value to the beef supply chain. The herd now exceeds 5,000 registered animals, thanks in part to innovations like irrigation and intensive rotational grazing.

"To run our operation means we are predominantly a grazing business, with ryegrass pastures, about 700ml rainfall annually, and an intensive rotational system on dry and irrigated land," says Frank Archer, son of Gerald, and current director of Landfall Angus. Alongside his father, brother Ed and a committed and competent team of people, they manage the cattle and grazing operation. "Currently the total effective area is about 3,000 hectares over the two Landfall properties in the Tamar Valley and another in the north west of Tasmania. We do grow other crops, but the majority of the annual cropping program is fodder, being winter feed for cattle."



Landfall Angus yearling heifers enjoying the northern Tasmanian spring sunshine.

The breeding herd consists of a majority of young animals with high genetic merit, requiring a large quantity of high quality feed to produce the desired results.

"Our approach to our fertiliser program is the same as anything should be in life, which is endeavouring to achieve a healthy balance, for sustainability," Frank explains.

Soil nutrition is vital for consistent delivery in a high stocking rate/high input production system such as Landfall. The team works with a range of inputs, including conventional and synthetic fertilisers, and for over a decade have been incorporating **BioAgPhos**[®] into their program.

"It wasn't that we were looking for the organic product, but a sustainable system was desirable, and **BioAgPhos** was well suited to this. Using a mix of soluble and sustained release inputs means we get the best of both worlds. All the parts need to work together, and soil nutrition influences these decisions."

Annual soil testing has been standard practice for many years at Landfall. Used to provide the 'scorecard' on how the team are managing the soil, testing gives them a very useful snapshot for measuring the nutrient status as well as other aspects such as pH levels and organic matter. The results influence the upcoming fertiliser application plan, and Frank believes this to be the best measure of product performance.



A common trait among the best farm managers is not to be an expert in anything, they're good at surrounding themselves with experts and being well educated to make informed decisions. We have the right people who understand soil to give us the information we need to make the best decisions at the time.

- Frank Archer, Landfall Angus



BioAgPhos is the primary source of phosphorus used at Landfall, thanks to sound advice from a trusted Victorian associate.

"We make our own custom blend on farm based on soil testing, and incorporate the *BioAg* product, or use as is, applying via a broad cast application. In the early days, the transition from previous practices to *BioAgPhos* meant avoiding any lag in the short term, as this is a slower release product option, but that wasn't a challenge, and it was a good decision."

"While we do have to freight it in from Victoria, *BioAgPhos* is the right product for our business," Frank said. "It's easy to source, always consistent, and pricing is competitive. Certainly one of the big benefits is we haven't seen the acidifying of the soil that can happen with more conventional fertilisers. We are putting on a high rate of phosphorus to match our high stocking rate. Correcting the acidifying effect with lime is something we no longer have to deal with."

"My intention is to leave this land in a better condition than when I took on the responsibility of looking after it. This is not an easy task, as it has always been well looked after. That standard has been set high, and we continue to set high standards for how we look after the land and the environment around us, not just our own micro-environment. There is pressure on those in agriculture to consider the way we operate, and whether that is right or wrong, I do believe there is a lot that can be improved to ensure we can continue to feed the population with less and less land available to do so."

When considering the next generation to inherit the responsibility of caring for land and legacy, Frank states, "Cost efficiencies are important, but managing the land and the health of the soil, prioritising a sustainable and healthy balance, and having the right people around that you can trust and products you can rely on – those are the things that matter the most."



Landfall Angus have been presenting annual on-farm Bull Sales during Autumn for 46 years, adding an annual Spring sale to the mix in 2003. These popular sales events are also accessible online via AuctionsPlus.

Cheers to our CEO



It is with some sadness that we announce that Martin Metz is retiring from BioAg in December, having spent almost nine years leading Team BioAg through a myriad of environmental and market based shocks.

Martin joined BioAg in an executive role in early 2016. Prior to that he had held many high-powered corporate responsibilities in his career – firstly at Pivot and subsequently at Incitec Pivot.

Initially Martin's role at BioAg was Chief Operating Officer but in 2018 he was elevated to Chief Executive Officer and has capably filled this role since.

During Martin's time we endured drought from 2017 to early 2020, Covid from 2020 to 2022, market shocks with soaring fertiliser prices in 2021 and into 2022, falling market prices in 2022 and 2023.

There was also the threat of El Nino through the spring of 2023 and actual drought in parts of our addressable market, all of which resulted in a state of pretty constant volatility in terms of demand and pricing, as well as the competitive landscape.

Looking back through the 20/20 hindsight lens, we haven't always gotten everything right.

That having been said, through a difficult period that has resulted in much of the commodity fertiliser market being for sale (IPF and Wengfu), under Martin's leadership BioAg has come through in pretty robust good health.

Whilst we're sad to say goodbye to Martin we're excited about the future and the direction that the company is headed.



Wishing you all the best in your retirement

BioAg celebrates 25 years

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Over the years we have accumulated a significant evidentiary body of scientific evidence that proved the efficacy of BioAg's products and programs. So much so that this year in September, BioAg's multi year independent pasture trials that have been running near Twizel in the Mackenzie Basin of the South Island of New Zealand, were presented to the Australian Fertiliser Conference in Cairns, by the researcher, Dr Peter Espie. Our science is now peer reviewed, published and is gaining wide acceptance by the industry.

2024 is the year of the 25th anniversary of BioAg's beginnings and we are proud of what we've achieved over the journey. Quite a number of our customers have been with us for the entire duration and we've had a lot of fun helping producers achieve better outcomes along the way.

– Anton Barton, BioAg Executive Chairman



Signing of the share sale, March 2014. Zada and Jep Gates (left), with Trudi and Anton Barton. And below, the Narrandera Plant, in the early days.



Christmas break

The BioAg team, our Narrandera head office and plant staff, and the Geelong Quarry site, will be taking a break over Christmas and the New Year.

The quarry will close on Friday 20 December, our head office and Narrandera plant will close on Christmas Eve, both reopening on Monday 6 January 2025.

Please contact 0418 367 326 for emergencies or urgent product collections during this time.

Thank you for your continued support during 2024. We wish you and your families a safe and happy festive season and look forward to our continued association in the New Year.

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