



# Media Release

Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011

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## FARMERS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN SOIL HEALTH WEEK

A number of events will be held in northern Tasmania next week to promote soil health and farm sustainability.

NRM North is sponsoring seven soil health events including workshops and lectures on topics including on-farm composting, managing soil biology in cropping soils and biodynamics.

NRM North's Regional Landcare Facilitator, Adrian James, said the week had attracted some key note speakers from around the country and overseas.

"We are lucky to have a high calibre of speakers including Professor Richard Thornton Smith, who was Professor of Geography, Soil Science, Environment and Conservation at the University of Leeds, UK." Mr James said.

"Farmers will have a choice of three different topics and seven locations. That will make it easy for farmers to get some practical information on using soil biology more productively."

Speaker Rhonda Daly will deliver workshops on how farmers can reduce chemical usage while increasing production and profitability, while Joel Williams will give farmers an introduction to soil biology and methods of managing it on-farm for sustainable production and carbon sequestration.

The cost of attending the biodynamic lectures is \$50. All the other events are free.

The project partners are Serve-Ag, Tas Agronomy Plus and Southern Farming Systems and funding has been made available through the Caring for our Country and Regional Landcare Facilitators initiatives.

Anyone wanting a program of events or more information should contact NRM North on 6333 7777.

Ends

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For more information contact:  
Melissa Lewarn, Manager – Community Engagement & Communications, NRM North, 6333 7776 or 0427 354 058

## Week of soil health and farm sustainability events

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>RSVP</b>
Humus Composting on Farms	Rhonda Daly	Mountain View Motor Inn, 144 Emu Bay Rd, Deloraine	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> 9:30am-4pm	Peter Heading on 0408 006 315 or email: pheading@serve-ag.com.au
Humus Composting on Farms	Rhonda Daly	Pipers Brook Fire Station, corner of Hall & Sipton Rd	Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> 9:30am-4pm	Peter Heading on 0408 006 315 or email: pheading@serve-ag.com.au
Humus Composting on Farms	Rhonda Daly	The New Grange, Campbell Town	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> 8:30am-2:30pm	Peter Heading on 0408 006 315 or email: pheading@serve-ag.com.au
Biodynamic Agriculture Lectures	Richard Thornton Smith	Launceston Aquatic Centre function room	Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> 8:30am-4pm	Ute Mueller 6445 4286 or email utemueller@skymesh.com.au
Understanding Soil Biology	Joel Williams	Anabels of Scottsdale, 46 King St Scottsdale	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> 10am-3pm	Seona Findlay 0428 922106 or seona.findlay@gmail.com
Humus Composting on Farms	Rhonda Daly	Flinders Arts & Entertainment Centre, Whitemark	Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> 9:30am-4pm	Peter Heading on 0408 006 315 or email: pheading@serve-ag.com.au
Understanding Soil Biology	Joel Williams	The Happy Chef, 3 William St Longford	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> 10am-3pm	Seona Findlay 0428 922106 or seona.findlay@gmail.com

## **Details on speakers and topics**

### **Rhonda Daly**

A farm girl all her life, Rhonda is passionate about farming, human health and food quality, human behaviour and the environment.

In 2001 during a serious illness with meningitis, Rhonda was guided to heal the soils. During her recovery period Rhonda realised the quality of our food is directly related to the health and nutritional balance of the soil. Toxic chemical poisoning was the cause of her illness so Rhonda certainly advocates reducing toxins in agriculture.

Extensive study and attending workshops both in Australia and overseas has prepared Rhonda for advising customers on the best programs and biological products to improve soil health and productivity.

Providing educational opportunities is a high priority because with increased knowledge of the soil, farmers feel empowered to return to a more sustainable method of farming, reducing chemical usage while increasing production and profitability.

The workshops will cover topics including:

- Humus Compost Production Overview
- Incorporating Biological Fertilisers into Farm Programs
- Balancing Soils for Optimum Plant Growth Production
- Pasture Fertilisation & Animal Health
- Foliar Applications & Fertigation
- The Science Behind Composting
- Extracted Compost Tea - Liquid Injection
- What makes Humus Compost Valuable
- Trial Results

### **Joel Williams**

Joel Williams graduated from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science specialising in crop and soil sciences. He worked for five years as a consultant on conventional and organic farms improving biological farming practices in Australia. He has a keen interest in managing soil microbial balance and plant and soil nutrition to optimize crop production. Joel spent the last three years working at Laverstoke Park in Hampshire promoting the soil foodweb laboratory services and investigating the application of compost tea technology under UK conditions. He has a passion for educating growers on sustainable farming practices and has travelled throughout Australia, South Africa, US and Europe speaking at various conferences and seminars.

Each one day course will be a thorough introduction to the fascinating world of soil biology and why this invisible but intriguing underground ecosystem is of vital importance for the future of farming. The format for the day will consist of introductory principles focusing on foundational knowledge of soil life and where some of the latest science is heading. The sessions will link research and practical information on soil carbon cycling and sequestration emphasising how to build and manage organic matter over the long term. The second part of the day will focus on the practical realm and how to manage soil biology on farm and implement successful biological farming strategies.

**Richard Thornton Smith**

Richard was Professor of Geography, Soil Science, Environment and Conservation at the University of Leeds, UK, before he decided to support Biodynamics full time, doing Biodynamic Extension Programs in Sri Lanka and being a Board member of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association, UK. He also is the author of several books on the subject.

Richard will deliver 2 lectures on biodynamics:

- Biodynamics – the working of light into soil and life processes
- Biodynamics – insights into human nutrition and contemporary diseases