## Farmers know best

By Rachelle Maddock

COSTS of farming keep increasing at the same rate as productivity gains or faster!

Not only are fuel prices pushing farmer's production costs higher, but many farmers are also tiring of the rising levels and costs of inputs going onto their land.

More artificial nutrients, more pesticides, more herbicides yet production increasing... are our soils improving?

Are we getting the balance right... are we going to leave the land to the next generation in as good or better state than when we started farming it?

As food producers, are we taking responsibility for the quality and safety of what we produce?

Graham Maddock of Yackandandah has been a pioneer farmer in this area having used only vermiculture (worm) based products made on the family farm for over 12 years.

No conventional fertilizers or pesticides have been applied in this period.

He has spent many vears perfecting

development of vermiculture-based product called land. NutriSoil.

He has NutriSoil marketing approximately eight years and has found an appreciative market among fellow farmers where good yields and quality are farming desired.

family The business has grown considerably since humble beginnings eight years ago.

A field day held the property recently attracted over farmers from across NSW and VIC.

Existing clients are spoke using of NutriSoil in place of nitrogen fertilisers.

They reported being able to maintain productivity and save money while improving soil health.

In so many areas of life, we can see the benefits of scientific advancement, however in agriculture it seems that the common direction of scientific research is telling us to become more reliant result has

better inputs on the

However, farmers been still see inexplicable differences in response between paddocks and with years, farmers rejecting conventional advice and returned to natural techniques cycles of supporting nature (biological farming).

> In biological farming, more attention is being turned to the health of soil and soil biology (life in the soil) rather than just looking at plants as an indicator.

> The farmers I refer to not necessarily certifying themselves organic.

> They are finding that working with nature to increase the diversity of organisms actually increase yields pasture/crop in and improve stock health and quality.

> These results are helping to eradicate ideas that natural farming methods result in decreased production.

> Another surprising been the

a on increasing so-called decrease in pest attack and improvement in weed control when adequate numbers and diversity of species are supported, and added to soils if needed.

> The list of benefits goes on, associated with more carbon entering the soil better soil structure as micro-organisms help to build aggregates, better root growth and water retention due to naturally aerated soils by these organisms.

> There has been a groundswell amongst farmers to educate themselves on soil biology and biological farming and a handful of brave scientists are willing to challenge conventional science and work with farmers to help them understand the amazing results they are getting when attending to soil health.

> For information on biological farming and NutriSoil check out the website nutrisoil.com.au contact via email or enquiries@NutriSoil.com. au or phone 02 6020 9676.