

# 2006 OrganicFarmNZ Annual Report



## MARKETING

Marketing and promotion of OrganicFarmNZ is a sporadic process. OrganicFarmNZ is seen as one of the “four” main certifiers. I believe most in the organic community understand the place of OFNZ within the sector.

The more specific marketing efforts have been:

- The **website** is the single biggest marketing tool that we have. To this end promotion of the website address is central to our marketing efforts in the short term. See viewer stats below.
- The most significant marketing OFNZ received was a 4-page story in **Lifestyle Block** magazine in July. It was well written and very positive. The story resulted from a writer driving past an OFNZ member with a farm gate sign.
- Other **print media** coverage included stories in *Coast to Coast* and the *Australian Women's Weekly*.
- **Farm Gate signs** – 75 members have ordered farm gate signs since mid-July 2005. These have also generated a few extra dollars as well.
- **Tshirts & Aprons** – 10 members have purchased this type of merchandise. This has not been as successful as hoped.
- **Advertising** – a quarter page advert appears in each issue of Organic NZ. This is part of the agreement between OFNZ and Soil & Health.
- **Shows** – the agreement with Soil & Health encourages joint promotion, where practical. The two significant shows are the Mystery Creek fielddays and the Ellerslie Flower Show. This year a seminar spot was secured at MC and about a dozen people turned up.
- **Regional efforts** – promotion of OFNZ is carried out at regional level through various means such as word-of-mouth, fielddays, meetings, newsletters, local print media, and growers promoting themselves as OFNZ certified. Display material for shows was sent to Central Northland, Hawkes Bay, Horowhenua and Auckland over the last year.

The more specific marketing efforts to happen:

- **Billboards** – shortly 4 billboards will be erected around the country to promote a new website promoting organics. These billboards will carry the logos of the four main certifiers – obviously including the OrganicFarmNZ logo.
- **Produce labels** – these have been investigated and priced. The problem is that OFNZ cannot afford to cover the cost of purchasing these up front. We need to find a generous member to pay for these up front, which will be repaid as other members purchase them.
- **Pamphlets** – a good clear, simple attractive pamphlet is required. Again the cost of doing this is the determining factor. We need to find a means of funding this – perhaps about \$1000.
- **Display materials** – again well presented and easy to transport and use display material is required. Cost again is the factor. Many regions have requested display materials.
- **Advertising** – we will be seeking free advertising (in the form of sponsorship) in other publications in the coming months.
- **E-newsletter** needs to be developed and circulated on a regular basis.
- **Support of the regions** is required. The biggest cheerleaders are our own members and regional bodies. If they are not excited/inspired by OFNZ – this is a major (and cheapest) means of promotion lost.

## WEBSITE

The website was launched on 2 November 2005. I believe it to be a credit to the organisation. It receives regular compliments.

There is still work to be completed to make it more useful, this includes:

- Making completed paperwork available.
- Explanatory notes about completing the paperwork.
- Encourage the regions to utilise their own pages more effectively
- Develop a (bi)monthly newsletter that complements the website.
- Make the website very useful and user-friendly for new growers.

### Unique Visitors / Month

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
05/06					107	102	131	173	216	244	257	295
06/07	338	286	224*									

\* to 21/9/06

## DOCUMENTATION

- Most of the **official documentation** can now be downloaded from the website. This has significantly improved the consistency of usage of the Property Management Plans.
- An **electronic PMP** is now downloadable as well. This was requested by many and no adverse reports have been received to date.
- Both the **Operational Guidelines** and the **Compliances** require major **rewrites** – and then to be made available on the website.
- Other **supporting documentation** – things like compost diaries – will be developed (or provided by the regions) and put onto the website.

## EXCHANGING PAPERWORK / EXTERNAL AUDITING

- The idea of exchanging paperwork between regions to encourage greater consistency has been agreed in principle by the NCC. The process and policy is in the process of being written up.
- The idea of exchanging paperwork is partly in response to the need for OFNZ to be 'externally' audited. The reality is that current funding levels will not support an external audit for sometime to come. Exchanging paperwork between the regions was seen as an interim option.
- Exchanging paperwork is not about re-litigating a growers certification status. It is about reviewing a regions process and interpretation. With feedback overtime a greater consistency is expected. The thinking is that the National Office will nominate two growers in each region for their paperwork to be sent to another.

## STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL PLANS

- These have been developed over the last few months to help guide and focus the organisation on agreed tasks. Essentially the operational plan is a large 'to do' list.
- Obviously the list is large. Without funding or extra resource many things will unlikely be achieved. However it is important for the organisation to be aspirational. Ideas on how the NCC can achieve its stated goals are being discussed.

## REGIONAL BODIES

- In the opinion of the author the majority of the regional bodies are struggling with maintaining the status quo let alone progressing.
- Some may argue that forces beyond our control (such as organic education and interest) are the main reasons why the numbers becoming certified are not growing as hoped. They cite other certifiers also struggling with growth as supporting evidence. However this obscures the

struggle and frustration that most regions are facing simply administrating the system and being motivated.

- No region has experienced significant growth over the last 12 months.
- Central Northland was established in the last 6 months. This region sits between the Far North and Auckland. Several members of each of these regions have been transferred to Central Northland. A quality group of individuals have established the group, in what is a significant lifestyle block area.
- Gisborne – the first three growers were certified from this region recently. There is no regional body established, however, there is a support person who OFNZ has been liaising with. The Hawkes Bay provides administration to this region.
- Horowhenua – a regional body had been established. Unfortunately it was unable to function sufficiently for it to continue. The Wairarapa is now providing administration to this area for the foreseeable future.
- Canterbury continues to provide administration to the top of the South Island – namely the Nelson Bays area.
- Wairarapa administers Wellington, the Horowhenua and potentially the Manawatu.
- Hawkes Bay administers Gisborne and Wanganui.
- The regions functioning in their own right are: Far North, Central Northland, Auckland, Coromandel, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa, Canterbury and Otago.

## MEMBERSHIP

- See the stats below.
- Over the last three and a half years we have **lost 60 members** (or members listed as 'ceased' in the database). This figure is slightly misleading as it also includes those who have transferred to Central Northland. The figure might more accurately be 45 'ceased' members.
- These ceased members can be broken down into **broad categories**. In order of importance: selling the property; marital/health issues; difficulty with organics/process/OFNZ; transferring to another certifier and random reasons.
- The **average** property size is **11** hectares – representing approximately **2,200** hectares being certified by OFNZ.

## NCC & SUB-COMMITTEES

- The **NCC** is now meeting **monthly** by phone – usually for about 1-1.5 hours. For the most part this system is working well.
- The **sub-committees** highlighted in last years report have not met as designed. There is agreement that they are a good idea. The issue is finding the time to make these meetings happen and then resourcing and actioning agreed ideas. The sub-committees are Marketing, Standards, and Finance & Strategy. It is hoped they will function as hoped in the coming year.

## COMMUNICATION

- There is an inconsistency to the quality and level of communication throughout the system.
- The advent of the website has assisted with communication in some ways. Much of the organisational information is on the website.
- However the single biggest improvement would be the advent of an electronic newsletter to summarise key happenings, changes, advice, events etc.

## CONCLUSION

- OFNZ is at an interesting time in its development. It appears the initial enthusiasm and excitement has worn off to some degree and the hard reality of developing the organisation – nationally and regionally – on such thin resources and volunteers – is a big challenge. In saying this, there is still a tremendous amount of goodwill from individuals towards OFNZ.
- We have to think smart and act together. The NCC will be discussing ideas over the course of the weekend with progressing OFNZ the focus.

