

# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of **OrganicFarmNZ**

Held at Unitec, Carrington Road, Auckland  
21st July 2007



Meeting opened at 10.45 am.

Present: Peter Downard (chair), Dennis Enright, Jill Whitmore, Robyn Patchett, Tony Henderson, Dyan Downard, John Fawkner, Gwenyth Wright, Brendan Hoare, Colin Broadley, Julia Geljon, Chris May, Paul Hamilton, Bill Bedford, Linda Christianson, Jim Bennett, Heather Atkinson, Richard Main, Colin Walker, Carol Knutson, Judy Pyle (minute taker)

Apologies: Betsy Kettle, Chris McIvor, Eric Zwaan, Gail Atkin, Terry Higginson, John Palmer, Mary Zajkowski.

Moved Tony Henderson/Paul Hamilton that the apologies be accepted. Carried.

Attendees introduced themselves.

## **Minutes of 2006 AGM**

Had been circulated, the chairman read the main points.

Moved Jim Bennett/Heather Atkinson that they be taken as a true and correct record. Carried.

## **Matters arising**

### **Certification fees**

Robyn enquired about progress on the guidelines for regional certification fees. While information had been collected on regional variations, a suitable national fee had not been established and could only be a recommendation. There were problems in some regions unable to find Certification Managers leaving pod leaders to cover a lot of the work. Ideally certification managers should be bringing on others who could take over in a couple of years, but some managers not sufficiently well trained. Managers covering several regions not been successful. NCC could look at assisting in training.

Moved Paul Hamilton/Colin Broadley that the meeting recommend that certification managers get a minimum \$50 per property. Carried.

It was hoped that NCC action this at regional level to ensure the matter did not arise again.

### **Standards**

The constitution had been amended to allow changes to be implemented. To allow all members to vote on the changes they need to go to an AGM or Special General Meeting. The Standards are still those of BioGro.

## **Chairman's report**

This had been circulated and was read by the Chairman.

Moved Colin Walker/Julia Gegrin that the report be accepted with special thanks for the work done. Carried.

## **National Office report**

Carol explained officially she worked one day a week for OFNZ and three for Soil & Health. While generally work balanced out over weekly variations she felt Soil & Health were subsidising her work through provision of overheads like rent, computer use, stationery, postage and the website. She is endeavouring to co-ordinate data input and certificate production to allow more time for fundraising and promotions to raise the profile of OFNZ and increase funding to cover administrative costs. Overall she feels positive and is enjoying the work.

Moved Chris May/Dennis Enright that the report be accepted. Carried.

## **Annual Accounts**

### **Un-audited accounts**

Concern was expressed that the accounts, again, were un-audited. Carol explained Soil & Health member, Edith Stacey, had spent several hours checking them and an Accountant in an adjoining office had been consulted. The accounting system is very simple but in the past correct procedures had not been followed and a number of mis-entries had come to light.

It was felt audited accounts were necessary to reassure members things were done correctly and would be required to gain public funding.

Carol asked that a Treasurer be found. Paul Hamilton offered to be Treasurer if an Auditor were found. Carol was asked to approach the Accountant in her adjoining office. Jim Bennett thanked Carol for her work to applause.

### **Income from certification**

It was noted that this was down from last year. Carol explained that it would vary from year to year because the Certification process – and hence payment to the office – was not always consistent.

### **Accounts payable**

The bulk of this was due to Soil & Health, being now three months behind. A recent payment had been made since the accounts were drawn up.

Moved Brendan Hoare/Bill Bedford that the financial accounts be accepted.

Moved Robyn Patchett/Dennis Enright that the accounts be independently audited annually. This to be actioned by NCC. Carried.

## **Membership Fees**

There are currently 203 paid and certified members, with a few more in the pipeline paying \$80 plus GST. A fee of \$30 for regional associate members to go towards OFNZ was suggested, but not all regions have associate members.

Brendan wanted the big picture in relationship with Soil & Health to be looked at; expenses vs. what OFNZ offering. Gaining Soil & Health membership would enable all to receive Organic NZ with the increased fee, so more acceptable. Opinions expressed were that action was needed now to balance the books; paying money owing to Soil & Health would not increase Carol's pay; there was a danger of pushing growers towards joining BioGro's small growers scheme.

Moved Bill Bedford/Tony Henderson that the fees be raised from \$80 to \$100 plus GST for the 2007/8 year. Carried.

## **NCC Confirmation**

The Chairman announced that Tony Henderson, Northland and Paul Hamilton, Waikato were new NCC members, joining Heather Atkinson, Wairarapa; Jim Bennett, Bay of Plenty; Richard Main, Auckland; Dennis Enright, Otago; Robyn Patchett, Canterbury.

Paul pointed out he no longer had property and hoped this would not be a problem. There was discussion on the advisability of an official representative on Soil & Health's National Council. Peter felt this was not necessary and there were several unofficial representatives there now. NCC would arrange its own Chairperson. The Secretary could be a separate person or the Manager.

## **Regional Reports**

Were not circulated, some only just having been received. Carol may send them out with the minutes, or will make them available on request. It was agreed to hold this agenda item for now and move on.

## **Guest speaker**

Colin Walker agreed to delay his presentation to allow other business to proceed.

## **General Business**

### **Communications between members, NCC and regional bodies**

Peter admitted this could have been better. Receiving Organic NZ would improve this as not all have access to email and websites.

Carol is working on a yearly calendar so events can be promoted in correct time frame and asked for input on what information was required. Reports on NCC and OFNZ activities needed. Organic NZ would be externally promotional. The new editor is happy to get OFNZ information. Regional communications are in place and need to get operating well, although not always easy if widespread. Organization does rely on volunteers with businesses to run and limited spare time. A report back to Regions from OFNZ NCC meetings would be helpful.

### **Relationship with Soil & Health**

There was discussion on just what form a closer relationship with Soil & Health would take. Could work as the Soil Association in Britain does, a separate organization not owned by, merely helped by Soil & Health. Cannot expect Soil & Health to provide help at a loss. Carol asked what help was required. A question of governance, who owns the standards, what give up to get a gain, the future of the constitution and representation. Robyn felt there was growth and more funds would come from workshops. However growth was in cosmetics and manufacturing not farms.

Membership in organizations everywhere are in decline. Growth had not been as good as originally anticipated, so is what being provided what is wanted? There is huge potential for organics, farmers markets are selling as organic without certification, but OFNZ is not in a position to cope with a big growth.

Moved Tony Henderson/Brendan Hoare that NCC be directed to form a working party, before the end of the year, to negotiate a closer working relationship with Soil & Health. Carried.

### **Pru Broughton**

Pru was introduced by Richard. She is looking for franchisees to help with growing vegetable and herb seedlings for selling to garden centres in their areas. There is a big demand. Growers would need to be certificated and provide paper trail to point of sale.

### **Field Days support**

Julia asked for financial support to attend the Dargaville Field Day. OANZ was already considering going to Dargaville and Colin Walker said they may be able to help. It is sometimes possible to get stands for free if for educational purposes.

### **Presentations**

Heather made a presentation to Peter and Dyne and thanked Peter for the support and help he had provided during his term of office.

Jim made a presentation to Terry Higginson for his past work, and in his absence asked Tony Henderson to pass this on to him.

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm.