

ORGANICFARMNZ
2005 Annual General Meeting
Minutes

**Held in the Awatea Park Motel, Fitzherbert Ave,
Palmerston North.**

Saturday, 27 August 2005



Present: Hamish Hopkinson – National Office Manager, Peter Downard – Chair, Waikato, Marion Thomson – NCC Hawkes Bay, Linda Lee – NCC Auckland, Scott Titheridge – NCC Canterbury, Terry Higginson – NCC Far North, Jim Bennett – NCC BOP, John Gadd – NCC Otago, Eric Zwan – Coromandel, Annie Wilson – Auckland, Peter Wilson – Auckland, Jenny Cornell – Auckland, Derek & Ros Broadmore – Wairarapa, Bill Quinn, Heather Atkinson – CM Wairarapa, Ian Atkinson – Wairarapa, Don Baskerville – Wairarapa, Phil Tarr – Taranaki, Dyan Downard – CM Waikato, Julia Geljon – Far North/Auckland, Chris Mclvor – Far North/Auckland, Dave Treadwell – Wellington, Doug Voss – BioGro.

Apologies: Kris Khaine – CM Far North, John Ridout – Auditor Hawkes Bay, Chris & Jenny May – Coromandel, Axel Mikosch – BOP, John Palmer – BOP, Brendan Hoare – Auckland, Richard Main – Auckland, Betsy Kettle – Auckland, Steffan Browning – Soil & Health, Peggy Duncan - Wairarapa, Sarah Dittmer – Wairarapa, Steve & Carol White – Wairarapa, Harry Emms – Wairarapa, Rhys Morgan – Wairarapa, Jeremy Howden – Wairarapa, Mary Beckett – Wairarapa, Mary Zajkowski – Wairarapa, Cedar Corban – Far North, Allan Baker – Far North.

The meeting opened at 1.30pm with Peter Downard chairing.

1. APOLOGIES & PROXIES

Moved: Terry 2 nd : Scott	Carried	That the apologies be accepted.
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Proxies

Heather Atkinson is carrying proxies for Butterfield and Duncan from the Wairarapa. Scott Titheridge is carrying 2 proxies for Nathan Davis' Otago & Canterbury properties.

2. CALL FOR GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Electorate Boundaries - Auckland
2. OANZ launch – Heather Atkinson
3. Product list – Phil Tarr
4. New regional body – Julia Geljon / Chris Mclvor

3. MINUTES OF THE 2004 AGM

Moved: Marion 2 nd : Terry	Carried	That the minutes of the 2004 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record.
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4. MATTERS ARISING

1. It was asked whether the job descriptions had been put together for the NCC as discussed at last year's AGM. The expanded JDs had not but a basic JD exists within the Operational Guidelines.
2. Regional reports – not all regions have submitted a report. Several said they did not know that one was due. It was signalled through the NCC minutes but not specifically requested by the National Office or NCC reps. *It was agreed that a written report should be circulated in advance of the AGM each year.*

5. ANNUAL REPORT

1. Peter read the annual report. Topics covered by the report were: a summary of the year, highlighting key issues facing the organisation, communication, the website, Funding, Constitution, the NCC, Marketing, Finance & Strategy, Standards Committee, Certification Managers, Auditors, Documentation, Auditing the accounts, an external audit, Regional Bodies, and the Standards.
2. Action points have been highlighted in a number of key areas.
3. Membership was up around 50% to 180 members over the course of the year.
4. Communication with whom within regions is an issue. The website will go some way towards changing this but further efforts will be required to effectively communicate throughout the organisation.
5. Constitution – requires updating, was hurriedly put together. Peter would like to see a small group convene to review and recommend changes. Eric suggested a generic constitution for each region might also be useful.
6. Hamish spoke briefly to the statistics that were attached. The pattern of when certificates were issued made it difficult to pay all its bills at certain times. All bills were currently up to date. This was a seasonal issue that the organisation needed to be conscious of.

Moved: Marion 2 nd : Terry Carried.	That the 2004/2005 Annual Report be accepted.
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6. REGIONAL REPORTS

Written reports were received from Far North, Canterbury, Otago, Auckland, Hawkes Bay.

- Jim Bennett provided a verbal report on behalf of BOP.
- Scott Titheridge read out Canterbury's report.
- Marion Thomson spoke to the Hawkes Bay report.
- Eric Zwan provided a verbal report on behalf of Coromandel.
- Phil Tarr provided a verbal report on behalf of Taranaki.

7. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

1. Hamish spoke to the Annual Accounts. He explained that a high proportion of 'surplus' showing in the accounts are unspent funds carried forward from the T&E grant. Most has been paid out since balance date and the rest is allocated.
2. Eric questioned funding and asked whether the fee to the National Office should be increased.
3. Don said that regions could best contribute through increasing membership and the energy within the regions.
4. Jim pointed out that the grant was designed to be used to complete the setup of OrganicFarmNZ through the various projects that have either been completed or on track to be completed.
5. Hamish pointed out that the accounts had not been audited but were compiled by a professional accountant. The accounts were not audited due to the lack of funds.
6. There was a question over the requirements for the Incorporated Societies Office. They require annual accounts that have been approved by the membership. It is the membership who may or may not require the accounts to be audited.

Moved: Eric	That the 2004/2005 Annual Accounts be accepted with an
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2 nd : Don Carried	understanding that they have not been audited.
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8. CONFIRMATION OF THE NCC

- The results of the NCC elections was announced:
 - Heather Atkinson was elected to represent the lower North Island.
 - Jim Bennett was elected to represent the BOP/Gisborne region.
 - Peter Downard was elected to represent the central North Island.
 - Linda Lee was elected to represent the Auckland / Far North region.
- John Gadd questioned how the elections would be conducted for the South Island reps next year. Hamish responded as per the constitution. This requires the National Office to conduct an election prior to the AGM. However given that there is currently only two regional bodies in the South Island it is likely that the responsibility for the election would be delegated to the region – unless another regional body is established. Matters to be confirmed closer to the time by the NCC.

9. CONFIRMATION OF AUDITORS

As per the Constitution, an auditor is required to be appointed by the AGM. In light of the lack of funds available to the organisation, the membership agreed that the NCC be delegated the responsibility to appoint an Auditor for the accounts – subject to the financial situation in twelve months time.

10. ORGANICFARMNZ STANDARDS

- The meeting agreed to appoint Bill Quin to act as scrutineer for the voting.
- A question was raised about appropriateness of the vote given the late delivery of voting forms. The meeting was happy to continue.
- Voting rights are reserved to only those who are currently certified or within 2 months of their certification having expired.
- The NCC had endorsed the Chairs right to allow full speaking rights to those actively involved in the administration of OrganicFarmNZ and limited speaking rights to observers and invited guests.
- It was noted that Doug Voss, current chair of BioGro, was invited to speak to the meeting to present BioGro’s views.

Moved: Terry Higginson 2 nd : Jenny Cornell	That OrganicFarmNZ adopt its own production rules/standards as drafted.
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- Peter gave an introduction to some of the motivations for writing our own production rules/standards. These reasons, as previously stated, include: creating greater certainty and security for ONFZ; remove the onus on OFNZ to be externally audited by BioGro at an estimated cost of \$8k; to create simpler and easier to use Standards – better suited to our situation ie not export orientated; to develop and ensure our independence.
- John said there were two issues – whether OrganicFarmNZ should have their own Standard and, if so, what that Standard should be.
- Doug Voss spoke. Doug emphasised that our commonality is that we are all organic growers. Doug acknowledged that there may have been past hurts inflicted by BioGro but he wants to move past that. BioGro has agreed that OrganicFarmNZ can use the BioGro production rules free of charge. The key is about growing organics in NZ. BioGro does not believe OFNZ is bludging off it. A lot of the complexity in the BioGro Standard is to meet with international requirements. Integrity and credibility of the certification process. The BioGro Standard can offer this but an external audit was also important. This costs BioGro \$35k per annum. Any scheme needs integrity through external audit. The more uniformity that we can have, the easier it will be to transfer.
- Eric asked about whether there could be differences between international and domestic requirements. Hamish pointed out that there will always be a ‘page full of differences between the Standards’.

4. A lot more complicated to transfer with a different Standard. This point was challenged saying that the differences in the Standard were so few that transferring should be no more complicated than it is now.
5. Heather thought that historical issues not that relevant here, we all have suspicions but we need to deal with these.
6. Jim said that differences between the standards were minimal and that simple solutions could be found to any perceived difficulties of the OFNZ Standard.
7. Jenny Cornell read out an email from a member from Auckland in support of the OrganicFarmNZ Standard.
8. Heather Atkinson read out a letter from John Ridout, auditor for the lower North Island, urging OrganicFarmNZ to continue to use the BioGro Standards.
9. Derek said he was dismayed at the level of tension between the two organisations. We lag behind in international comparisons with the amount of certified land here. Seamless transition is what is wanted. The enemy is outside the room not inside.
10. Don Baskerville acknowledged that clearly Peter and Terry had been given rough treatment by representatives of BioGro in the past. He suggested that the decision to adopt the OrganicFarmNZ Standards should be delayed for 12 months in order to allow time for OrganicFarmNZ and BioGro to work through any issues. If these issues could not be resolved then he would urge OrganicFarmNZ to use its own Standards.
11. As the meeting was preparing to vote, scrutineer Bill Quinn asked to speak to the NCC. The meeting briefly adjourned.

Moved: Heather 2 nd : Terry Carried	Point of Order: That the issue of OrganicFarmNZ Standards be left to lie on the table until the 2006 AGM.
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12. Bill explained the reasons why this point of order was needed. Essentially the OrganicFarmNZ Constitution does not have a general provision for postal voting (only for the NCC elections). Yet postal votes had been received for this issue. Bill said that he was not prepared to count those votes. Hence only those votes cast at the meeting would be counted. If all votes were counted this would leave the organisation open to legal challenge by a disgruntled member.
13. There was general agreement that letting the issue lie on the table was a wise idea given the clear split in opinion on the issue of the Standards.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

Electoral boundaries – Auckland submitted a change to the electoral boundaries. They proposed that given the number of members in those regions it was unfair to have only 1 person representing around 40% of the current membership. Given the vacancy of a regional body in the upper South Island – it was proposed that this position be replaced by splitting the upper North Island electorate.

Moved: Jenny Cornell 2 nd : Chris Mclvor Carried	That the upper North Island electorate be divided along the Northland and Auckland Regional Council boundaries – replacing the upper South Island electorate which would be incorporated into the Canterbury electorate.
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It was agreed that Terry Higginson, both as the previous rep and the runner up in today's election, would represent the 'Northland' electorate on the NCC.

A new regional body has been proposed for the area between the Far North and Auckland. This issue will be worked through between those regions, the NCC and the members affected.

OANZ launch – Heather asked whether OrganicFarmNZ would be represented at the launch of the new sector body. Hamish said that Soil & Health have an agreement to share promotional opportunities whenever possible. Therefore OrganicFarmNZ would be represented.

Meeting Closed 5pm.