

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of OrganicFarmNZ

Saturday 2nd August 2008

Civic Centre, Mosgiel (Dunedin), Otago



Meeting opened at 11.25am

Present: Dennis Enright (Chair), Tony Henderson (NCC Rep Far North/Central North), Sean Wilson (NCC Rep Auckland), Paul Hamilton (NCC Rep Coromandel/Taranaki/Waikato & Treasurer), Jim Bennett (NCC Rep BOP), Robyn Patchett (NCC Rep Canterbury).
Local licensees/members: Nathan Davis, Andy & Sue Barrett (Secretary Otago Organics), Kim Simpson, Alice Beard, Peter Archer, Bob Burton (Otago Auditor), John Gadd, Annie Broadfoot, Carol Knutson (National Office).

Apologies: Chris McIvor, Julia Geljon, Jason Ross, Shaun McVicar and Pia Dickhaut, Cath Belsey, Jim & Elenor Jolly, Dave Treadwell, Rayna & Mark Dickson.

Moved Dennis/Robyn that the apologies be accepted. Carried.

Dennis welcomed everyone and attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes of 2007 AGM

Minutes were circulated and people given time to read through.

Moved Tony Henderson/Paul Hamilton, that the minutes be taken as a true and correct record. Carried.

Matters Arising

Spelling error – Change Julia's surname to 'Geljon'

Relationship with Soil & Health – Dennis noted that the relationship is good. Have had positive communication with Co-Chairs Steffan Browning & Philippa Jamieson through the year. Monthly payments arranged to pay back arrears on contract – these started last November. Jim raised point about last year's discussion of possibly merging more with Soil & Health. General agreement that OFNZ is 'holding its own' and does not need to merge more at this stage.

Acknowledged by the meeting that the relationship was beneficial to Organic Farm. Thanks extended to Soil & Health for their flexibility to pay arrears and for their support of Organic Farm NZ.

Chairman's Report

Dennis's report was circulated and Dennis spoke to it.

Moved Robyn Patchett/Bob Burton that the report be accepted with special thanks for the work done. Carried.

Regional Reports

Representatives spoke to written reports: Tony, Far North & Central North (from Julia's notes); Sean, Auckland; Robyn, Canterbury/Nelson Bays; Jim, Bay of Plenty; Paul, Coromandel/Waikato/Taranaki; Dennis, Otago; Carol spoke to Wairarapa/Wellington report.

Moved Jim Bennett/Andy Barrett that the reports be accepted. Carried.

Carol will send regional reports out with the minutes.

NCC Confirmation

The Chairman announced that:

- This year the South Island Representatives were due to be nominated/elected. Both Dennis Enright (Otago) and Robyn Patchett (Canterbury/Nelson Bays) were re-elected in their regions.
- In the North Island Paul Hamilton (Central North), Jim Bennett (BOP) and Tony Henderson (Central/Far North) remain in their posts.
- In Auckland, Richard Main has resigned and Sean Wilson has been elected.
- In Wairarapa, Heather Atkinson resigned and Dave Treadwell (Ecoseeds) has been elected.

Note: NCC positions will be decided within the NCC meeting, and members advised.

Special thanks to both Heather and Richard for the energy and time they gave to Organic Farm.

Annual Accounts

The accounts were prepared and presented by Carol Knutson. Comments to the accounts:

1. This year the accounts have been presented in a new format – it is a more practical format for OFNZ, easier to prepare and follow.
2. Certificate fees are up on last year, this is mostly because some certificate payments run early or late, so sometimes 2 lots of certificate fees are received within one financial year at the National Office.
3. The sale of aprons and t-shirts has been excellent – thanks to members.
4. Some regions/members have made donations – thank you for this support for National funds.
5. Bank charges significantly reduced since asking bank to move us to a 'not-for-profit' account.
6. Majority of marketing expenses was on reprint of OFNZ flyer – available to regions/members.
7. Overall, we have gone from a working capital in 06/07 of negative \$2547, to positive \$2921 in 07/08.

Payments to Soil & Health

Last year it was recognised that OFNZ was three contract month payments behind in paying Soil & Health. The Chair's of both organisations agreed in 2007 to arrears payments. These started in November 2007 and are continuing during 2008.

Question from meeting: Why not pay Soil & Health back in full now if we have funds? Answer from Carol and Dennis: there's no hurry, we have an agreed amount, and this plan allows OFNZ to leave money in the bank and not draw all available funds.

There was a vote of thanks to Soil & Health for their support during the year.

Funding

Last year an application was put to the Scottwood Trust for money to create educational/marketing material, unfortunately this was not successful. The meeting agreed that more applications needed to be submitted to receive funds to grow OFNZ.

Auditing

Carol was happy to inform the meeting that this year the accounts had been audited. Sonja Brown, Chartered Accountant, offered to audit the books in a voluntary capacity. The meeting was pleased the accounts had been audited and agreed that Sonja be thanked with a bottle of organic wine.

The meeting would be very glad to have Sonja audit the accounts next year if she is willing.

Treasurer

Vote of thanks to Paul Hamilton, who has held the treasurer position.

Moved Dennis Enright/Robyn Patchett that the financial accounts be accepted. Carried.

Standards

The papers for voting on the OFNZ standards had been circulated to all members and forms had been returned to Carol at the National Office. Those attending the meeting had their voting forms with them.

Error in Remit 1

Before the voting was completed Dennis spoke to the meeting about an error in the motion from Canterbury. The error had been recognised by members from the Far North.

The Remit had been written and unanimously agreed at the Canterbury/Otago. Unfortunately however, Hugh Mingard was recorded as moving the acceptance of the Remit in the paper sent to members for voting. Hugh is not a member/licensee of OFNZ, he is a member of the Canterbury Committee and therefore cannot create motions and remits or vote at a National level.

Tony Henderson put the motion: That Remit 1 is not valid due to not following due process and should not be accepted/retained. Seconded: Paul Hamilton. Voting by a show of hands. Motion lost.

Request from Tony – That the reason for this issue being raised by Far North be explained. Carol confirmed that it would appear in the minutes, which would be circulated to members.

Voting

- The meeting nominated Robyn Patchett to confirm the count of votes with Carol Knutson. They adjourned the meeting and returned with the confirmed votes.
- There were a total of 69 papers returned, including those from people at the meeting. 170 forms were distributed to members.
- Disappointment about number of forms returned. General agreement to work on encouraging members to engage and participate in issues, discussion and decision making.

Motion:

That OrganicFarmNZ adopt its own production rules/standards as drafted.

From the 2005 AGM minutes

Moved: Terry Higginson. Seconded: Jenny Cornell.

Motion:

Support – 12

Oppose – 53

Abstain – 4

Remit One:

Should the OFNZ members vote in favour of OFNZ's own standards these will only be accepted when the following conditions have been met:

1. The current draft OFNZ standards must be revised, taking into account the views of members and regional bodies.
2. The revised standards must be circulated for approval by the OFNZ membership with a 2/3 majority required for their adoption.
3. Adequate funding must be available to the OFNZ NCC to provide for this revision and for ongoing updating of the standards in subsequent years.

From Otago Organics and Canterbury Organic

Moved: Hugh Mingard. Seconded: Dennis Enright.

Remit One:

Support – 44

Oppose – 21

Abstain – 4

Remit Two:

To remain with the BioGro standards, but that OFNZ review the decision every 3 to 5 years to re-evaluate the decision considering the current situation at that future time.

From the Taranaki Region of OFNZ

Moved: Richard Sheldrake. Seconded: John Earney.

Remit Two:

Support – 55

Oppose – 9

Abstain – 5

Region-by-region Audit

Dennis spoke to the process so far: The recommendations from the Standards Committee had been circulated to CMs from Carol and the NCC have had several discussions about implementing recommendations.

Discussion

There is a need for proper questions for processors in the PMP. Some work has already been done by regions – Paul agreed to collate this.

Tony commented that CMs should be encouraged to include comments when completing certification process.

Huge vote of thanks to Standards Committee – Peter Downard, Terry Higginson and John Fawkner.

General Business

Organic Vegetable and Mixed Farming Association (OVMFA)

- Paul spoke about this newish group, and that there are funds available. The focus of the funds will be to get conventional farmers to convert to organics. Paul had attended a meeting of the OVMFA at Annie Wilson's.
- Nathan Davis said a meeting of the Southern group had also been held at Aroha Organics (the property he manages). There had been several ideas put forward for funding, eg. From berry growers.
- Dennis has been asked to be the South Island rep.
- Jim and Dennis attended a meeting last December. The group needs members and it is important OFNZ members belong, in some capacity.

Questions were raised around membership to OVMFA: who can become members; should individual growers join or OFNZ? Suggestion put that OFNZ regional groups join.

From Paul: Funding (\$50,000) from the OANZ UDP program has been given to the Organic Vegetable and Mixed Farming Association to support and encourage more organic production. This includes small growers and we need to take advantage of this opportunity. There would appear to be some advantages in regions making their own applications but to also collaborate so that we can share resources where appropriate.

General support for OFNZ to apply for funds from the group to raise the profile of OFNZ – perhaps to receive funds so OFNZ regions can attend shows, field days.

Carbon Footprint

From Andy - Auditing our Carbon footprint and energy use - Andy spoke briefly about this topic and asked that the NCC give some thought to where OFNZ stood in regards to these issues.

National Fielddays, Mystery Creek

Carol reported that it was a very successful event, organised by the OANZ team. The shared marquee was well organised and presented a positive/united front for the organic sector.

Unitec Hortecology Sanctuary

The meeting discussed the sanctuary and expressed their concern and disappointment at the eminent closure of the Unitec organic gardens/teaching department.

Thanks

Reiterated thanks to:

- Sonja Brown for auditing accounts
- Brian Scrafton for his volunteer help in the National Office
- The Standards Committee
- Heather Atkinson and Richard Main

Also thanks to Annie and Alice from the Otago group for helping organise the AGM logistics and food.

And recognition for all members and Regional Committee members for their time and energy during the year.

The meeting broke for lunch 1.30-2pm

Meeting closed at 2.35pm