

Organic Farm NZ 2008 AGM – OANZ Report

Prepared by Heather Atkinson

Membership: With my resignation as the regional representative for OFNZ on OANZ there is an opportunity for someone else to take up the challenge to participate and contribute at National level. I will be continuing as an Organic Dairy and Pastoral Group (ODPG) representative which is probably a better fit for me currently. OANZ is a very important forum and it is essential that we continue to have our voice heard on this organisation.

Finances: It was announced just last week that OANZ has been successful in receiving funding support from the Government to support its activities for the next three years:

2008/09 year \$500,000.00

2009/10 year \$400,000.00

2010/11 year \$140,000.00

It was not as much as was sought and it will not fund our existing operations. It is evident that the Government expects the organic sector to become self funding in the very near future - effectively from 2009/10. Immediate work will be done to develop and implement a self funding strategy.

Further to this all member organisations were asked to consult their members to ask what they could contribute to resource OANZ into the future. As we are not financial ourselves this is a question that requires careful consideration.

Task teams: Work continues within the 3 task teams - areas of OANZ being Education, Extension and Research, Communication and Advocacy and Market and Market Access.

Note the **Organic Sector Awards** are accepting nominations as from next week. There are three awards currently, being the NZ Trade and Enterprise Organic exporter of the year award, the Jon Manhire award and the Organic Enterprise award. In addition there is likely to be an 'organic producer of the year award' commencing this year. Details of these on the OANZ website or by contacting the OANZ office. If you know a worthy recipient of any of these awards get a nomination form completed and sent in. There is no reason why a smaller grower could not be represented here.

2009 Conference is likely to be held on 5-7th June 2009 somewhere in Waikato. The last one in Christchurch was great and I urge you to attend if you are able.

0800 FUTURE toll free number was launched for World Environment Day. This is the first point of call for anyone wishing to access smart start consultations, advisors, mentoring and OAP coordinators.

Federated Farmers High Country Committee Meeting: I was invited to attend this meeting with Dr John Tanner in Wanaka a month or so ago. Jon outlined OANZ role and I presented a commercial organic production system to the attendees there. It is very heartening when organisations such as this are at last getting their blinkers off and having a serious look at what organics can offer them. Hopefully the first of many such enquiries that OANZ can respond to.

National Organic Field Days were again a great success for the collective OANZ family of which OFNZ was one. Feedback is positive and a large number of enquiries were fielded.