

OrganicFarmNZ

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday 8th August 2009

Hamilton City Gardens



Meeting opened at: 1.45pm

Dennis welcomed everyone.

Present: Dennis Enright (Chair, NCC Otago), Alvina Murphy (NCC Canterbury), Sean Wilson (NCC Auckland), Paul Hamilton (NCC Coromandel/Waikato), Jim Bennett (NCC BOP), Dave Treadwell (NCC Wellington/Wairarapa), Julia Geljon (NCC Central/Far North), Derina Turner, Gwenyth Wright, Sue Pilkington, Tim Newton, Dyan & Peter Downard, Annie Wilson, Meriel Watts & Jo Davies, Nancy & Eric Zwaan, Chris Mclvor, Peter & Gill Bacchus, Judy Chrystall, Nick & Ros Empson, John Palmer, Carol Knutson.

Apologies: Tony Henderson, Jan Arie Kamsteeg, Kris Khaine and Terry Higginson, Rob Downing, Betsy Kettle, Jenny Cornell, Peter Wilson, Chris & Jenny May, Colin Broadly, Claire Bleakley, John Fawkner (NCC Taranaki), Robyn Patchett, Mark Levick, Marion Thomson, Steffan Browning.

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

Call for General Business

- Marketing, Paperwork, Certification Issues, Region-by-Region Audit, Nickel, National/Remote Certification Manager, Non-certified organic producers selling as 'organic'.

Minutes of 2008 AGM

Minutes were circulated and people given time to read through.

Moved Jim/Sean, that the minutes be taken as a true and correct record. Carried.

Matters Arising

No matters arising.

Chair's Report

Dennis Enright read his report. No questions from the meeting.

Moved Dennis/Alvina that the report be accepted. Carried.

Regional Reports

Far North & Central North: Julia Geljon (Certification Manager & new NCC Rep) read the written report from Tony Henderson from the Far North and read her written report for Central North.

Auckland: Sean Wilson (NCC Rep) read his written report, and added that Peter Wilson, who is their remote Certification Manager, used to live in the Auckland area and was previously a Cert Manager and Auditor.

Coromandel: Paul Hamilton (NCC Rep) read his written report and added that all Coromandel members were going to be helped to get their PMPs into electronic copies during the coming year.

Waikato: Peter Downard (Regional Chair) spoke for the Region – there are 4 current members and 5/6 Associate Members. They are holding regular meetings. Biggest problem is that all the work has to be done on a voluntary basis. Fortunate to have a good financial statement. They have had opposition from

a problem person in the Waikato Region, who is issuing organic certification of her own. Waikato Region would like help to attend shows to increase membership.

Bay of Plenty: John Palmer spoke to his written report – Looking for opportunities to increase membership, the Region hasn't increased numbers since starting due to attrition. Focus for past year has been on improving quality of documentation. Positive step to now have national Restricted Input Form. Want to see robust system that stands-up to external audit.

Hawkes Bay/Gisborne: Marion Thomson's (Certification Manager) report not received before the AGM.

Wairarapa/Wellington: Dave Treadwell (NCC Rep) spoke to his report – Wairarapa/Wellington has gone from being an almost exemplary Region to on the brink of collapse due to lack of member involvement and some unfortunate personality problems. However, number of certificates about the same. AGM coming up at the end of the month and hoping for growth/improvement. Special acknowledgement to Mary Zajkowski and Claire Bleakley for keeping the Region going.

Taranaki: Dee Tuner (Certification Manager) read her written report. Taranaki changed around some pods with positive results of new energy and people working together better. Dee has attended some Peer Reviews to help with paperwork. Also took on Whanganui pod last year (previously with Hawkes Bay), and that is running well now. Workshops have been held at Dee's property and they participated at the Sustainability Fair, getting a free stall in exchange for doing a presentation. Overall the Region is in a positive place.

Canterbury/Nelson Bays: Alvina Murphy (new NCC Rep) read the written report from Robyn Patchett, Certification Manager and former NCC Rep.

Otago: Dennis read his written report.

Moved Eric/Meriel that the reports be accepted. Carried.

Confirmation of the National Coordinating Committee

The Chairman announced that:

- This year the South Island Representatives were due for rotation, so nominations and elections were held. Dennis Enright (Otago) was re-elected. Robyn Patchett (Canterbury/Nelson Bays) stood down and Alvina Murphy was elected.
- In the North Island Paul Hamilton (Coromandel/Waikato), Jim Bennett (BOP), Sean Wilson (Auckland), Dave Treadwell (Wellington/Wairarapa) and John Fawkner (Taranaki) remain in their posts.
- Tony Henderson (Central/Far North) resigned and Julia Geljon was elected.

Note: Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer positions will be decided within the NCC meeting.

Special thanks to both Robyn and Tony for the energy and time they gave to the NCC.

Message from Tony; "Hope all goes well with the AGM. I've really enjoyed working with you and the team. I felt we really achieved things this past year. All the best."

Financial Report

Accounts presented were prepared by Carol Knutson, National Office Manager, and checked by Paul Hamilton, Treasurer.

Auditing: Carol mentioned that this year we did not have the accounts audited. Last year we were very fortunate to have an accountant do this for free.

Treasurer: Paul outlined his role as treasurer, and that he receives monthly information from Carol. Vote of thanks to Paul Hamilton, who has held the treasurer position.

Honourarium/Membership/Funding: Eric Zwaan suggested that the NCC receive an honourarium, so the commitment to the positions are sustainable. Realise there are limited funds, but by paying people there is more incentive to work for the organisation – chicken and egg scenario to grow scheme. This comment flowed on to discussion about membership – retaining members and growing the organisation. The meeting agreed to continue marketing/growth discussion in General Business.

Moved Paul/Dennis that the financial accounts be accepted. Carried.

OANZ Report

Dennis confirmed that OFNZ had contributed financially to OANZ ("Member contribution fee"). General agreement that being member of OANZ is important, but that OFNZ/small growers don't get much support from OANZ. General agreement that it's important to have small-grower representation at meetings. Meeting also acknowledged support and work of Soil & Health (namely Steffan Browning) for small-growers.

Rob Downing attends OANZ Council meeting as an OFNZ representative. Dave Treadwell (lives in Wellington) has agreed to attend meetings as OFNZ Rep. the next meeting will be the day before the OANZ Conference in November.

Remits / Voting

Chair tabled the postal votes – 7 received, of these one was invalid as it had no name.

There were three Remits posted/emailed to members to vote on.

Remit One:

That Clause 24.2 of the OFNZ Constitution be changed to include the word "charitable" in the first sentence to meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2005, section 13(10)(b)(ii).

Moved: Dennis Enright. Seconded: Tony Henderson.

Reason for remit: The Charities Commission has recommended that OFNZ include the word "charitable" in the first sentence of Clause 24.2 of our Constitution: "Your winding up clause does not meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2005, section 13(10)(b)(ii). Section 13(10)(b)(ii) states that a society or institution will only qualify for registration if it "is not carried on for the private pecuniary of any individual"".

Remit Two:

That Clause 10.1 of the OFNZ Constitution be changed to read "60 days" rather than "90 days" in the last sentence.

Moved: Dennis Enright. Seconded: Sean Wilson.

Reason for remit: The 90 days notice period sets an unrealistic expectation of notice, which has not been met over the past few years. We ask that the membership support the change to 60 days as a more practical time frame.

Remit Three:

That Clause 4 of the OFNZ Constitution be changed to the wording provided to reflect the charitable purpose of the organisation, and to meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2005.

Moved: Dennis Enright. Seconded: Jim Bennett.

Reason for remit: The National Coordinating Committee asks OFNZ members to support changes to the wording of Clause 4 for two reasons:

1. That the emphasis of the OBJECTS in our Constitution be placed on organic production for the benefit of all. With those OBJECTS being fulfilled through education, advocacy and providing a low-cost certification program.
2. To meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2005, as advised by the Charities Commission. The Charities Commission has advised that:
"The purposes set out in Clause 4 do not satisfy the charitable purpose requirements of the Charities Act 2005.
Section 13(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2005 provides that a society or institution will only qualify for registration if the society or institution "is established and maintained exclusively for charitable purpose". In order for a purpose to be charitable, it must fall within one of the charitable purposes set out in section 5(1) of the Charities Act and it must provide a public benefit.

The Commission is of the view that while the promotion of agriculture generally is recognised in New Zealand law as being a charitable purpose, the Society's primary purposes of establishing and administering a certification programme for the benefit of certified members of the Society is not charitable. This is because the necessary public benefit is lacking."

Chair asked for discussion/comments.

Motion That spelling mistake and grammatical error in “Objects” Clause 4.2 be corrected. Change “practise” to “practice” and change “...the communities understanding...” to “...the community’s understanding...”

Moved Dennis/Sean that these changes be made. Carried.

The Chair asked the meeting to vote on the Remits.

All three remits were carried unanimously by the meeting.

Carol Knutson will make the changes to the Constitution and send it to the Charities Commission.

Thanks

Reiterated thanks to:

- Brian Scrafton for his volunteer help in the National Office
- The Standards Committee: Peter Downard, John Fawkner, Terry Higginson.
- Special thanks to both Robyn and Tony for the energy and time they gave to the NCC
- Huge thanks to members of the Waikato Region for organising this weekend. Particularly Tim Newton, Clare Jackson for their coordination role and organising the speakers, and the team of workers organising & preparing food.
- The meeting also recognises all members and Regional Committee members who give their time and energy during the year.
- Also thanks to Ceres (dry goods) and Fresh Direct (fruit & veg) who provided discounted and free food for the weekend. Their support is greatly appreciated.

General Business & Discussions

Marketing

Promoting OFNZ

Members expressed concern over lack of overall growth of OFNZ membership. While there are new members coming onboard there isn’t overall growth. Lots of ideas were put forward for promotion to increase the profile of OFNZ, so the OFNZ label has brand recognition, and to increase members/licensees, including:

- All members should be advocates and promoters of OFNZ
- Want to increase profile at Farmer’s Markets – signage/brochures/members
- Get articles about organic growers and OFNZ in local papers
- Need some professional signs made and willing people to help at shows, eg. A&P Shows
- Promote OFNZ to Community Gardens
- Encourage Wwoofing farms to get certified
- OFNZ stickers for members

Motion That everyone at the meeting goes back to their regions and gathers marketing ideas to promote OFNZ. These need to be sent in to Carol for the NCC to discuss before the end of September.

Moved Julia Geljon/Dennis. Carried.

National Fielddays, Mystery Creek

Carol reported that it was not as successful as the previous years. Again organised by the OANZ team. The shared marquee is still a sound idea, presents a positive/united front for the organic sector.

Signs

We still have gate signs for ‘Fully Certified’ and ‘Under Conversion’ properties and now have a sign for members to use at Farmer’s Markets. Carol will prepare new order form to send out to members.

OFNZ Fabric Patches

Carol showed an example of aprons made-up for Fieldays. Had ordinary apron and sewed on OFNZ logo (cut from Otago tote bag). Suggested that we have fabric patches printed on organic fabric that members/supporters can sew on to aprons/t-shirts/bags/etc. This is a more cost effective than having to invest in more aprons/t-shirts. Carol also showed aprons that had been purchased at op-shops for a few dollars that would be good to use. Meeting agreed that Carol could go ahead and find organic fabric and have some printed.

Paperwork

Off-Farm Inputs Declaration Form

Sean Wilson showed an example and requested OFNZ have a standard form. Form is to be signed by the supplier. Meeting agreed that it would be good to have a standard form. Carol to make and send out.

PMP

It is recognised that this is due for a general update, which the NCC will follow-up.

PMP – Cover page for renewing certification

Peter Downard raised the topic of having a cover sheet for PMPs for members to use when they are renewing certification. Rather than having to re-write the whole PMP, they can confirm details on the cover sheet and identify specific pages in the PMP where updates have been made. A faster and more efficient process for all.

Sean Wilson and Dennis Enright were pleased to confirm that the NCC had been discussing the same idea and that Sean had drafted a cover sheet. Work on it needed to be completed and sent to the regions to use.

PMP for Processors

Annie Wilson, Paul Hamilton and John Fawkner have put time in to developing a new PMP for Processors. It is being used already in the Auckland area and will have some final editing before being available for all regions shortly. Annie is creating an Auditors checklist document to go with the new PMP. Thanks to Annie, Paul and John for making this happen.

There was some discussion about how regions deal with processors: Do they need to be individual members or could they be in a pod? Regions had different experiences with this and agreed it should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and according to the size/type of operations. If Regions are unsure about how to deal with processors they can seek assistance from the NCC.

Compliance Procedures

Also due for a general update. Paul Hamilton has started this process, which will be followed-up and completed in line with other document updates.

Certification Issues

Region-by-region Audit

The Region-by-region Audit had been conducted again this year. The regions randomly chosen were Coromandel, Canterbury and Wairarapa. The Standards Committee have reviewed the papers and sent their recommendations to the NCC.

Peter Downard commented that their had been improvements since last year, which was pleasing. Huge vote of thanks to Standards Committee – Peter Downard, Terry Higginson and John Fawkner.

Certification Committees

Peter Downard (Standards Committee) requested that Certification Committees keep minutes from their meetings, so if there are any queries about certification decisions there is a record to refer to. Meeting agreed this is a sound idea, and that at this stage it could be voluntarily adopted by committees.

Nickel

Dennis outlined a problem a member was facing with nickel and the meeting discussed ways to alleviate heavy metals problems; Look into ways of reducing the 'mobility' of heavy metals so they were not taken-up; plant willows to remediate problem; investigate use of fungi. Peter Downard suggested contacting Seager Mason (BioGro Technical Advisor) to discuss this problem.

Updated BG Standards

BioGro have recently updated their standards and they are now available on their website, or to purchase on CD or hard copy.

National/Remote Certification Manager

Auckland have a new Certification Manager (CM) who lives in Canterbury; Peter Wilson, previously lived in Auckland and has been a CM and Auditor. Annie (AK Auditor) and Sean Wilson (NCC) find that this is working very well and invite/encourage other regions to take-on Peter as their CM if needed. They believe there are benefits to OFNZ to have a National CM.

Members of the meeting generally agreed that they could see benefits for consistency, continuity and reliability, and if regions are struggling to find someone to fill the role, it is entirely possible to have a remote CM.

Members also generally agreed that, where possible, it is good to have the CM be local for contact with growers, however, another person could help with 'first contact' for members and the paperwork could then go to a remote CM.

Recognised by the meeting that this issue does not need to be pushed-on any regions and that keeping scheme local is important to most members. However, it is food for thought and good to have a positive example with the Auckland Region working well.

[NB. To avoid confusion, Annie & Sean are married, and not related to Peter.]

Organic vs Uncertified Organic

Dennis opened the discussion about 'organic' – that when produce/products are being sold as 'organic' it should mean certified organic. A number of members had approached Dennis with concerns about this issue, which was echoed by the meeting.

There needs to be clarification for the public, and people selling 'organic' produce need to be legitimate – they should not be able to receive a premium for their produce on the work of others.

The meeting agreed that something needs to be done about this at a national level. NCC are to follow-up with the Soil & Health Association and OANZ.

Meeting broke for afternoon tea at 3:15 before General Business

Meeting closed: 5.30pm

Reports accompanying AGM Minutes 2009:

Chair Report – Dennis Enright, Otago

Regional Reports – Written reports received

AGM Training Weekend Report – Written by Dennis Enright & Carol Knutson