

OrganicFarmNZ

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday 28th August 2010

Silverdale Scout Hall, Masters Ave, Hamilton



Meeting opened: 1.45pm

Dennis welcomed everyone.

Present:

Far North/Central North: Julia Geljon (NCC), Jan Arie Kamsteeg, Rob Downing, Tony Henderson, Chris McIvor.

Auckland: Sean Wilson (NCC), Annie Wilson, Peter Wilson, Celia Wilson, Jonathan Walker, Brendan Hoare, David Alexander, Terry Shaw-Toomey, Kharlene Shaw-Toomey.

Coromandel/Waikato: Paul Hamilton (NCC), Chris May, Eric Zwaan, Nancy Zwaan. Tim Newton, Peter Downard, Judy Chrystall, John Stanley.

Bay of Plenty: Jim Bennett (NCC), John Palmer.

Hawkes Bay / Gisborne: Marion Thomson, Mark Levick, Peter Alexander, Mike Irving.

Taranaki: John Fawkner (NCC), Derina Turner

Wellington/Wairarapa: Claire Bleakley (NCC), Dave Treadwell.

Canterbury: Alvina Murphy (NCC).

Otago: Dennis Enright (Chair, NCC), Robin Mitchell, Peta Hudson.

National office: Carol Knutson, Brian Scrafton.

Visitors: Steffan Browning (Soil & Health Assn), Michelle Glogau (BioGro CEO).

Apologies (members):

Far North/Central North: Terry Higginson, Kris Khaine, Linda Henderson, Diane and Graeme Jay, Kevin & Pat Hartung.

Auckland: Buntly Condon, Betsy Kettle, Meriel Watts, Jo Davies, Heike Sonnenschein, Paul Lagerstedt, Sarah Robinson.

Coromandel/Waikato: Brian & Sue Pilkington, Bill Bedford, John and Pauline Van Groenedaal, Gwenyth Wright, Colin Broadley, Jenny May, Audrey Stanley, Dyan Downard, Nick & Ros Empson.

Bay of Plenty: Te Hoori Rikirangi, Andrea Clough, Thelma and John Williams

Hawkes Bay/Gisborne: Steve and Carol Ring

Wairarapa/Wellington: Steve & Pipa Hart

Taranaki: John Earney, Patricia and Richard Blatti.

Canterbury/Nelson Bays: Sue and Bill Sedgwick, Sue and Neville Sinclair, Michelle and John Cherry, Ian and Trisha Brennan, Klaus Thoma, Gianni Prencipe & Loraine Liddle.

Otago: Alice Baird, Ann Broadfoot.

Apologies (supporters): Nathan and Steph Davis, Jim Kebbell (Common Sense Organic & OANZ)

Moved Dennis/Sean taken as read, and that the apologies be accepted. Carried.

Call for General Business

- No items raised at this time.

Minutes of 2009 AGM

Minutes were circulated and people given time to read through.

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

Matters Arising

Claire Bleakley asked what follow-up has there been re: organic vs non-certified issue?

Dennis answered that John Fawkner had done some work on this, including inviting Greg Allan from the Commerce Commission to this meeting, so the topic would be covered during the weekend discussions.

Chair Report

Dennis Enright read his report.

No matters arising.

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

Regional Reports

Far North: Jan Arie Kamsteeg (Chair). Have active committee, need a secretary, and there is a need to keep committee members motivated when not getting paid; organise field days, which are positive events where current members can talk with prospective members; lose some members each year but generally the numbers are replaced with new members and hope to continue to grow; started to work with Taitokerau Organic Producers and Transition Towns groups up north.

Central North: Julia Geljon (Certification Manager & NCC Rep). Read from prepared report.

The Central North Region at present consists of 15 certified members, plus another request for paperwork.

Crops and products produced cover a wide range including; avocados, macadamia nuts, subtropical fruits, olives, fruit trees, wine, vegetables, poultry, eggs, goats, cattle and seeds.

Our members stretch from west Whangarei to west of Puhoi with enquiries coming from even further afield.

It is encouraging to see people making tentative enquiries before they buy a new property to make sure they will not compromise their chances of becoming certified.

A couple of members have changed track, either moving to another certifier (to bring in a dairy farm), or discontinuing their business and we are currently processing a new application so numbers remain relatively stable over the years.

This year has seen only one field day at Mamaki Eco Village, where members enjoyed a wonderful shared lunch and learning about biodynamic preparations.

Our newly volunteered secretary rang around all certified members asking if they were prepared to contribute to the running of CNO in some way. The general response, with a few exceptions, was that people just wanted to get their certificates and have nothing more to do with the organisation. Hence we operate at a very low level, just maintaining certifications and running Pod trainings where necessary.

One highlight of the year was to see 'Kaiwaka Organics', formally Koanga Gardens, become a fully certified business under the direction of Romin Curl.

We look forward to other similar success stories in the coming year, with Lothlorien planning to certify their winery.

Auckland: Sean Wilson (NCC Rep). Read from prepared report. Have good committee and office holders, ideally would like to have committee and membership more involved with maintaining and developing region.

As of August 2010 the Auckland region has 27 members with 8 of these being individual audits as opposed to pod members. This compares with 22 members last year. We have had 2 members drop off in the last year: one due to the drought and another switched to BioGro; there was one member we had to let go because of abnormally high heavy metal residues in their soil; and there are 3 individual members yet to return paperwork.

Central Auckland 4; West Auckland 3; South Auckland 3; Kumeu 3; Wainui 2; Waiheke Island 2; Hokianga 2; Individual members 8.

'Dual' members (producers and processors): 1, with another awaiting confirmation.

There are three pods with only 2 members, and this is concerning. Some re-arrangement may be appropriate, but given the scope of the region it may not be feasible. Between 3 and 5 is the optimal pod size.

The Auckland region is doing well financially, largely due to the number of members who we audit on an individual basis. However, we could be doing more to grow our membership.

Bay of Plenty: John Palmer (Chair, Auditor). Read from prepared report.

The BOP region operates from two centres, the Western BOP branch in Tauranga and the Eastern BOP branch in Opotiki.

The Western BOP branch currently has 11 licensees in three pods. The 2010 round of peer reviews is about to start with the addition of one new member but with the likelihood of two existing members returning to BioGro because of uneconomic returns on the local market.

The focus in the past year in the Western BOP has been on continuing improvement in the standard of management plans and peer reviews. This has involved an education process stressing the importance of ensuring that all the paperwork is complete before the peer review is undertaken. The new forms for farm inputs and restricted inputs are a step forward step in improving our systems. Our objective is to ensure that the paperwork is sufficiently robust to satisfy an audit from external party.

The Eastern BOP Branch remains on hold as they consider how best to regroup either through the pod system or as individual members.

Finding sufficient people prepared to commit the time and energy to sustain and grow the organisation remains a challenge. I would like to recognise the excellent job that Andrea Clough has done as our Certification Manager and Secretary in providing support services to members and ensuring that the administration is dealt with in a professional and timely manner.

Coromandel: Paul Hamilton (NCC Rep).

This year has been one of change in the Coromandel Region – some of these changes are for the better, unfortunately some not.

On the good side we have had 2 new producers join in the Coromandel area allowing us to form another Pod. On the debit side we have had one producer leave us and another 3 that are taking a short break from production. Hopefully they will be back next year.

We have had a small change in executive with the regional manager now being Nancy Zwaan – Bill Bedford taking a break after serving us well for a long period. Miriam & Paul have remained as Secretary and Treasurer respectively and certification manager Chris May hopefully will be able to afford us more of his time from the project in SE Asia he is involved with.

We moved into the IT world this year with all of our members having been loaded onto computerized PMP's. Whilst this helps with management of the paperwork, the groundwork is our main focus. To outsiders Coromandel may seem to be ambling along but the great work being done by our members is appreciated by our customers, locals and OFNZ executive alike.

Our focus this year will be trying to involve our members in the social aspects of Organics and we will be holding some lunchtime meetings/gatherings around the region with the aim of attracting new members. To this end we have resolved to make entry into Organics even less expensive with a \$100 year 1 and \$200 year 2 subscription. Also we have a membership fee of \$20 for consumers and friends of OFNZ who are not producing at present.

We are looking forward to a more Organic year in 2010/11.

Waikato: Tim Newton (Chair). Membership small, 8 members, including a few new members coming on soon, want to have better system for managing membership; also have 'fringe' supporters, challenge also to get members along to mtgs, and want to grow group and get new certified members. Ran training day at the Hamilton 'green space' house, had reasonable turnout (about 16). Wanting to run workshops where someone volunteers their property and the group runs through a PMP and audit during the day, and get property up to C0/C1 on the day. Peter Downard has also spoken to the Hamilton Organic Gardeners group to network and informed them about OFNZ and working together.

Hawkes Bay/Gisborne: Marion Thomson (Certification Manager). Increased the number of certifiers by five, partly due to Peter Alexander who is working to get new members through his connections as a wholesaler (Chantal). Have 3 auditors, cert committee, don't have an administrative body – was running

through the environment centre where Marion was working but now looking at setting up an independent regional body for HB.

Wairarapa/Wellington: Claire Bleakley (NCC Rep & CM). 18 people who have submitted plans and with auditor; thanks to Chantal for referring asparagus grower recently. Members in Horowhenua (4), Wellington (3), Wairarapa (9). Have an OFNZ producer stall in Greytown, and at another market; and have bigger producer supplying Common Sense. Wairarapa Organics (regional body) suffering from lack of members and no nominations, having extra-ordinary meeting to resolve.

Taranaki: John Fawkner (Chair, NCC Rep). Strong regional body, good management committee. Concern about non-certified being sold as organic; and marketing sheep and beef products; 10 FC, 2 in conversion, lost one, losing another due to not keeping up with paperwork; 3 pods, 1 individual; large pod in WH5 and possibly one more coming on, so will split to two pods; one new pod coming Okato; full attendance at AGM; good regular meetings; looking at registered kitchen stuff; applying for funding to run courses; 3 members are teacher-type; all sorts of courses, eg. Chickens.

Also written report from Derina Turner (Cert Manager),

All good in the region. 2 pods in Taranaki and 1 individual, and 1 pod in Whanganui – 10 fully certified producers out of 12. At least 1 enquiry a month from prospective members. In the process of getting another pod on board in Okato – surf highway 45.

Pods all working well together. Good turnout to AGM and getting together for interim meetings as well. Looking at HACCP for small processors as alternative to registered kitchens. Also looking at raising OFNZ Taranaki profile by applying for some funding from a local trust to run courses in composting, seed raising, chicken keeping etc, as our members have a range of teaching and facilitating skills.

At the last AGM concerns were raised by all members concerning the ‘organic’ and ‘certified organic’ debate – especially as ‘spray free’ and ‘produced organically’ products are appearing in the local organic shops as well as the farmer’s market.

Canterbury/Nelson Bays: Alvina Murphy (NCC Rep): Read from written report.

This is my second year as the Canterbury Rep. on the OFNZ National Council. This involves representing the opinions of growers and our Committee within the region when any new or difficult issues or discussion points arise and feeding back to the local committee the minutes of our monthly phone tree meetings for distribution to you all.

This year has been one that I would describe as a consolidation year though the following are all topics that have been debated, sometimes at length.

-OFNZ numbering system change to a national system. As there was no decision reached on this topic it is decided to take this to the AGM where wider discussion and perhaps agreement can be reached.

-Biogro Standards and their interpretation discussed. Clarification does need to be sorted on some things e.g. the use of treated posts, available replacements etc. The Workshops and AGM will look at whether a data base needs to be kept when specific decisions are reached for future reference.

-OFNZ members going outside their region for Certification. After a lot of discussion it was decided that where conflicts occurred, and they have, that each case would be looked at on an individual basis by a special committee set up from the Executive Council to address such issues.

-OFNZ paper work e.g. Management plans, Input Schedules etc. Many of these are being updated streamlined and improved with Carol in the National Office able to access additional help for this. Many of these forms have been discussed at length via email to ensure that they are both functional and easily understood.

- Finances were seen as being in a healthy state and the present costs are not increasing.

-The need for a forum for sharing ideas, news, solutions etc via the computer was suggested by Hugh. This will be discussed further at the AGM to see if this idea can become a reality.

-Issuing an OFNZ Certificate to new growers as an encouragement. I did not support this proposal arguing that a Certificate should be issued after one year.

Many topics have been raised over the year. I have learnt a lot and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. If you wish to contact me to seek clarification on items reported in the minutes or have issues that you wish me to raise at a national level I am more than willing to do so.

Otago: Dennis Enright (NCC Rep): Read from report.

Otago Organics has continued in a similar fashion to that of last year. The committee has met regularly and has been involved in facilitating a number of field visits and discussions.

Once again we found ourselves without a CM, and since have appointed Peta Hudson. We now have established a pod in Riverton with interest from some others in the region. We have continued to connect with interested people in the Wanaka region but have not been able to get a pod established. Membership remains similar to previous years. Many thanks are due to the efforts made by Andy Barratt who chairs the group along with being the liaison person, Sue Barratt for her work as secretary and John Gadd for treasury work.

Moved Judy/Jim. thanks to all those reporting and that the reports be accepted. Carried. With applause

Confirmation of the National Coordinating Committee

The Chair announced that:

- This year the South Island Representatives were due for rotation. Dennis Enright (Otago) and Alvina Murphy (Canterbury/Nelson Bays) were re-elected.
- In the North Island Sean Wilson (Auckland), Julia Geljon (Central/Far North), Paul Hamilton (Coromandel/Waikato), Jim Bennett (BOP), and John Fawkner (Taranaki) remain in their posts.
- Dave Treadwell (Wellington/Wairarapa) had been replaced during the year by Claire Bleakley who now takes on the NCC rep for the region.

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

Financial Report

Accounts presented were prepared by Carol Knutson, National Office Manager, and checked by Paul Hamilton, Treasurer. Thanks to Paul for his work as treasurer.

Auditing: Carol mentioned that this year we did not have the accounts audited, due to the prohibitive cost. The records are kept to a high standard and Paul receives monthly information from Carol during the year.

Questions from members: How do we address situation of wanting more done at national office, if Carol's time is full already? Has there been a negotiation of addressing a pay-rise or more hours? Agreed that this needed to be addressed outside the AGM by the NCC.

Sean raised the issue of needing to know if members who are producers and processors pay one or two fees? There was no definitive answer to this, as it may depend on the scale and complexity of the operation/land. This will need to be addressed by the NCC.

Licensee fee to National Office: The member licensee fee is to be agreed/confirmed at each AGM.

Moved Paul/Julia that cert fee to office remains at \$100 plus GST. Carried.

Action: Meeting requested that Carol advise all Committees and members that the licensee fee remains the same, but the GST will increase from 1st October, so the fee to pay the office will be \$115, rather than \$112.50.

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

OANZ Report

Steffan Browning presented work being done on the future of OANZ. Steffan is a member of the Organic Working Group for OANZ tasked with developing the future operating models.

OANZ is undergoing a review of its structure and functionality due to the end of government funding being in sight. Jon Tanner has resigned as OANZ CEO, and as with previous CEO Ken Shirley, did not achieve the goal of sourcing future funding.

OFNZ members are invited to participate; if members want information about the working group or have ideas or feedback they can contact Steffan.

Dennis thanked Steffan for attending the meeting and presenting this information, and encouraged members to participate in this process.

Michelle Glogau, CEO, BioGro

Michelle addressed the meeting, giving a summary of things BioGro:

Appreciate the need for low-cost, small-scale certification scheme to get growers on board with organic growing and then to possibly 'grow-up' to certification with BG; using the same Standards is complementary as growers are familiar with rules in this case; BG have been active in promoting organics mandate of BG as a not-for-profit) have attended events such as the Food Show in Auckland and Fieldays and supporting the visit of Katherine DiMatteo (IFOAM president); Continue to develop & maintain the BG Standards which is an essential and expensive activity, with major update completed in 2009, and still working on revising sections – members are welcome to send comments about the Standards; BG have also created an 'Input Directory' which available for purchase from the Wellington office.

Dennis thanked Michelle for speaking and for making the effort to attend the meeting.

Thanks

Reiterated thanks to:

- Thanks to all members helping with AGM: Particularly Tim Newton, Sean and Annie Wilson, Nancy Zwaan, Coromandel cooks.
- Brian Scrafton for his volunteer help in the National Office
- Thanks to Carol for her work in keeping the administration working efficiently and supporting the NCC so well
- The Standards Committee: Peter Downard, John Fawkner, Terry Higginson
- Special thanks to current NCC and past NCC rep Dave Treadwell
- The meeting also recognises all members and Regional Committee members who give their time and energy during the year. All member and supporter help is greatly appreciated.

AGM 2011

The question was asked; where will we hold the next AGM? There was no location confirmed.

General Business & Discussions

No general business raised.

Meeting closed: 3.30pm

Reports accompanying AGM Minutes:

Chair Report, Dennis Enright, Otago

AGM weekend presentation notes

SPECIAL NOTE:

During the NCC meeting held after the AGM, the office holders were agreed:

Present: Dennis Enright, John Fawkner, Sean Wilson, Jim Bennett, Claire Bleakley, Alvina Murphy, Paul Hamilton, Julia Geljon, Carol Knutson

NCC Positions Elected

Chair: Dennis Enright nominated by Julia/Jim. No other nominations. Carried.

Vice-chair: Sean Wilson nominated by Jim/Paul. No other nominations. Carried.

Treasurer: Paul Hamilton nominated by Sean/Dennis. No other nominations. Carried.

Secretary: Carol Knutson nominated by Dennis/Paul. No other nominations. Carried.

All positions were agreed upon unanimously by the NCC meeting.