

OrganicFarmNZ

Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday 24 August 2013
Te Rito Gardens – Porirua, Wellington



Agenda:

1. Apologies: Valda Muller, Brian & Heather Mould, Jo Duff, Jen Stiger, Carol Greenslade, Pete Vink, Jan Arie Kamsteeg, Mark Levick, Paul Hamilton, Peggy Duncan, Clare Bleakley, John Palmer, Annie and Danny Hope

2. Attendees: Sean Wilson, Linda Samways, Jos Paans, Annie Stone, Alvina Murphy, Jim Bennett, Dave Treadwell, Steve Wilson, Ray Butler, Marion Thomson, Brian Opie, Annie Opie, Dennis Enright, Stella Bridge

3. Minutes of 2012 AGM accepted as a true and accurate record. Moved by Sean Wilson seconded by Dennis Enright

Request made to have a summary of the minutes put up on the website.

4. Chairman's Report – written report from Sean Wilson, Chairperson, OrganicFarmNZ NCC

I would like to start by thanking Dave Treadwell, the local committee and the Wellington region for hosting this event. It was dropped in their lap without much consultation, largely because we have never held an AGM in the Capital, but also in the hope it would create something for the local members to muster behind. They've done a tremendous job assembling a variety of interesting speakers to help keep us informed and focussed on relevant matters.

I would like to recognise the contribution Sandra Donley made to OFNZ during her tenure as office manager for Soil and Health. She was capable and efficient and an asset to our organisation. That said, I'd also like to welcome Linda Samways, our new office manager. In the short time she's been with us she has already demonstrated an efficiency never before witnessed. I hope she gets all the support, encouragement, and appreciation she deserves.

Thanks to Paul Hamilton, our Treasurer. Paul continues to be worth his weight in gold keeping an eye on our finances, and he and Linda have done a sterling job with the financial report.

Thanks too to the National Co-ordinating Committee for the time and energy they have committed to the mutual benefit of us all.

Thanks to Tim Newton for his time representing the Waikato and Coromandel regions on the NCC, and a warm welcome to Annie Stone who will be replacing him.

The past year has largely been a case of business as usual for the NCC, which is a good thing insofar as there hasn't been anything major to rock the boat, but a bad thing in that we have done nothing concrete to address the real and present dangers affecting the organisation – most pressingly membership, which affects the both the financial health of the regions and the NCC, but also the physical health of the nation when more producers aren't certifying as organic. Perhaps if OANZ is successful in spearheading the formulation of legislation around the use of the term 'organic' we might see a flush of new members, but it would be negligent to rely on this without being more pro-active. To this I would add the related issues of community and volunteerism. Part of our ability to attract and retain new members must revolve around our pod system and its inherent ability – unique among certifying agencies – to create communities of like-minded individuals, propagating up from the pod level to regions and the wider country. I would identify the volunteer nature of OFNZ as a weakness, where regions struggle to find capable people to fill key roles, and the difficulty in replacing people who are under-performing in some of those roles, doing the organisation a disservice, and holding us back by not stepping aside.

Finally, I am stepping down as Chair of the NCC. Whilst I am reluctant to do this in the face of the issues I just outlined, I do so in the hope that whomever takes on the position can make some headway.

5. Treasurer's Report (presented by Linda Samways and Sean Wilson)

Running at a loss nationally because OFNZ are not retaining members.

Jim Bennett asked the question as to whether OFNZ are paying S&H enough for their share of the monthly office overheads and one staff member.

It was voiced and noted that the figure for S&H Contract was not sufficiently broken out to the degree people would like to see the detail.

Action: Linda to look for the original contract between S&H and OFNZ which outlines the costs and clarify to NCC. In future, the S&H contracted rate will be broken out further on the annual Financial Statement.

Financial Report for year ended 30 June 2012 accepted as a true and accurate record. Moved by Sean Wilson seconded by Stella, Two against

6. Regional Reports

Far North Region - from J.A.W. Kamsteeg – written report read out:

Far north organics growers have had a decent year. We have currently 14 OFNZ certified properties. All are individual certified. Although the members are given the opportunity to form pods, all chose to remain individually certified. The cause is probably the wide distribution over the Far north, making it unpractical to meet up to work as a POD. We have two new OFNZ certified properties, one of which came over from a FNOG certified property. We lost two properties, because of personal reasons of the owners. In general the number of certified properties hardly changes.

Besides the OFNZ certified properties there are 7 properties certified under the FNOG scheme. This is for people who want to work in accordance with standards, but are not selling any produce outside the region.

FNOG has become more active over the last year again, with an upgrade of the website, where all historic issues of the Networker are available. The Networker is issued 3 times a year and distributed electronically. Hard copies are sent to a few members who are not connected to the internet.

News items are now sent by e-mail by our website manager to all members. .

The field days are being organised 3 times a year. Last year we had a spring field day in cooperation with BD growers. One field day in combination with our AGM in March.

The well attended Autumn field day was held in May.

Central Northland Region - from Clive Craymer – written report read out

2012-2013 has been a year of change for the local organisation, primarily as the result of the departure to Australia of two members Julia Geljon and Chris McIvor.

The new committee had a lot of learning to do but have been keen to grow the organic sector in this part of the country.

Two of the members volunteered to take over the audit component of OFNZ. Emma became the Certification manager and Jackie undertook the training to become the Auditor. Thank you both for volunteering your time and effort.

The number of properties that have certification has been maintained over the past twelve months, and we have gained one extra member, David Colley of Parua Bay.

The spread of membership is a difficulty for the organisation. Although the majority of members live in the Mangawhai/Tara area, the distances to the other members means there are problems in arranging pods and drives up the cost of the audit process for individual members

There is currently one pod – Tara Pod – with five members. Three other members have indicated that they would like to belong to a pod so I would recommend that a second pod be established. This leaves 4 members on individual audits. This will also mean that some thought needs to be given to payment for individual audits that reflect travel costs of audits.

The members are producing a variety of products – both horticultural and pastoral - for sale either in Farmer's markets or commercially.

Certification is as follows: {as of 1 January 2013}

Certification	Number
C0	1
C1	1
C2	1
Full	12

There is also one processor with full certification.

Areas of concern have been expressed at the lack of contact and information from the central body of OFNZ. Recently, we have received copies of minutes from Jan Arie Kamsteeg, a committee member of NCC that has provided some information. Similarly we have asked the OFNZ office Northcote for information but have had little or no response. One of our requests was for the OFNZ's constitution which we still have not received.

There has been discussion regarding the need for closer links with BioGro, especially as they provide the standards that OFNZ follows. The cost differential between the two organisations has reduced markedly so there is some interest in the benefit of changing from OFNZ to BioGro.

Recently, it has been pointed out that the official website [www.organicfarmnz.org.nz] is not being updated ie Julia still mentioned as the NCC representative for the Far North and Central Northland] and provides little useful information for members.

Thank you all for your contributions this year. Hopefully 2013-2014 will not bring another drought but conditions that provide optimum conditions for agricultural production.

Auckland Region - from Sean Wilson – written report read out

The Auckland region wishes to thank our outgoing certification manager – Peter Wilson – for all his help. He was co-opted and coerced into the role when we found ourselves in need of a thorough, capable, organised and reliable person to fulfil this crucial duty, and he performed it flawlessly. As outgoing chair of the regional committee I regret not providing Peter with more support when a collective decision was questioned at the NCC level.

I want to welcome in a new chair, committee and certification manager for the region, and to thank Sarah Robinson for continuing as our Treasurer. Bronwyn Blair – from the Coromandel – has kindly offered to step in as certification manager until such time as Auckland can source someone from within the region. Therefore one of Victor Grbic's most important jobs, as chairperson of the regional committee, will be to strengthen the region so that it is self-reliant once again.

The issues that Auckland faces is a reflection of the issues that the organisation as a whole faces: a need to increase membership (and thereby enable fees to drop); a need to improve communication and foster the sense of belonging to a wider community, with the glue of shared goals and ideals; and the need to support the volunteer nature of the organisation by spreading the burden and shouldering the load, and drawing in fresh blood to replenish the well.

Exact numbers aren't clear due to the hand-over in certification managers, but at a rough count there are 11 pod members and 6 or 7 individual members giving us a total of around 18.

We have been running at a financial loss for the last couple of years – due to the membership decline – so fees at this year's AGM were raised to \$230 for pod members and \$460 for individual members.

Hawkes Bay / Gisborne Region – as read out by Marion Thomson

The Committee for this region continues to be quite loose, with no formal organisation and no meetings. The Certification Manager continues to be Marion with a Committee, two Treasurers and an Auditor. This may all be going back to sit at the Environment Centre. Membership has kept at a steady level with five in the Hawkes Bay area, one in Nuhaka and three in Gisborne. There have been three new enquiries recently, one of which is from a producer with sheep.

The region continues to have a great spread of produce.
License Fees are \$395 + GST (individual) and \$250 + GST (Pod)
Have had some attrition and there is a feeling to build community within the branch.

Taranaki / Whanganui from Dee Turner – written report read out:

None of the member of the Whanganui group have decided to stay certificated this year. We are now down to just 2 pods in Taranaki - 1 pod of 2 members, and 1 pod of 3 members.

All 5 members are fully certified.

Although we've had a few enquiries regarding certification, none of them have materialized into anything solid and none of them have had their soil tests done. A previous certifier has also been in contact - he has now retired and wants to start up organic certification again – I have suggested that he does all the paperwork and gets in contact when he is ready.

I gave a talk in Marton, along with Dave Aislabie (a Whanganui producer) to a group of interested growers to help boost up the numbers in the Whanganui region to hopefully help them separate off into their own region. There has not been any further interest.

We have discussed running some more self-sufficiency courses through OFNZ but we have yet to apply for an alternative source of funding. The last round of courses 18 months ago were very successful.

All in all a quiet year. Peter Downard has been a great auditor and we've had very positive feedback from him about the producers, and vice versa.... Peter has done 3 years auditing here so we will be looking for a new auditor for next year.

Canterbury/Nelson Bays Region from Alvina Murphy – written report read out:

The Canterbury/Nelson Bays Branch of OFNZ is in good heart with a stable core of producer groups, individuals and supporter members.

Canterbury has 17 Producer Members with one new member in the process of applying. Of the 17 members we have both individuals and pods; a North Waimakariri, a South Waimakariri, a Peninsula/Plains and South Canterbury pod. We also have a few supporter members.

Encouragement is provided through a free mentoring system on the Certification Process for all potential new Producer members. This provides support for those starting the process of understanding the certification system. This is provided by volunteer producer members.

The Canterbury/Nelson Bays Branch has a dedicated committee of 10 members. It has been a challenging year for Committee Members with some shifting home/properties, others having EQC issues - in general, earthquake affects are still being felt. These members have a diverse range of talents and expertise. The Committee is supported by an excellent Office Administrator who oversees the day to day running of the Branch and our Branch monthly Newsletter, Canterbury Organics. Present projects for the group includes; stimulating new membership (a focus for 2013), having more farm visit style field days (which we achieved successfully with our Field Day on Raising Stock Organically in North Canterbury) and both marketing and promotion (which will need further discussion with suggestions implemented).

Branch funds for the year are expected to balance with a balance as of the 31s March 2013 of \$9,511.22. In the past year Producer members have decreased with supporter members also decreasing. The branch is looking at initiatives for encouraging more members.

With widespread membership regular email contact has been vital. This allows all to be kept up to date, consulted and informed of the many issues and various undertakings as necessary in a very efficient way. The success of this communication system has been demonstrated and culminated in the running of the successful OFNZ Conference last year.

It is a pleasure representing such a supportive group of people on the National Council.

COROMANDEL OFNZ REPORT TO NATIONAL AGM 2013

We are pleased to report that Coromandel Branch is going along nicely, although our net number of members is down one to 16 we joined one new member this year and the 2 that dropped off will probably be back again in the near future.

Our AGM was held recently in Papa Aroha and was well attended. What was most pleasing was the fact that 5 members put their hands up to take on extra duties to keep the region going forward.

We now have a new Secretary – Marie Bedford; a new treasurer- Peter Poeschl and three members who wish to train as Certification Managers – Bronwyn Blair, Eric Zwaan and Annie Stone (who also offered to be the NCC rep for the Coromandel/Waikato region) This has taken the pressure off those few who have done most of the work in the past years and is most appreciated. We also have some younger members who are keen to progress the organic status of the area and who of course have plenty of enthusiasm, which is great for the future.

We have been trialing a new quicker way of completing the forms at Peer review days so that more time may be spent actually checking the properties rather than time spent form filling. This has been successful and with some refinements over the next year we will be in a position to approach the NCC with an improved form and method, which hopefully will become the way of the future.

We, at Coromandel, are looking forward to a better season weather wise next year and will continue to promote Organics in our region.

Western Bay of Plenty from John Palmer – written report read out:

Minutes of meeting of Saturday 16th June 2012 as circulated with the agenda were adopted.

Financial Report from Treasurer: Statement of Income/expenditure for 2012/13 as circulated with agenda was discussed and adopted. The last three financial years have produced surpluses of \$27.73, \$379.65 and \$277.55 respectively. The closing bank balance as at 31 March 2013 was \$2,382.35.

The Chairperson moved that the Certification Fees for 2013/14 remain the same. The fee for pod members is \$240, for members requiring any individual property audit \$295, and for a processor audit \$350.

It was proposed that where a member was facing financial hardship that their certification could be placed on hold provided they updated their management plan and participated in the peer review process. They would pay a reduced fee of \$120. They would not receive a certificate from OFNZ. They would not be able to sell any products as OFNZ certified while their certification was on hold.

Membership: Jacqui Hughes & Alan Gaustad are not renewing for 2013/14 as they have sold their property and are moving to the USA. Jim advised of 3 potential new members from the Opotiki area. Stuart & Weili Leong and Ewen & Jan Wills have prepared their management plans. Jim is working with Clare Belcik to try and get her plan ready for the July per reviews. Follow-up required with Keith Hayman and Rosita Young on their intentions for 2013/14.

Report from Auditor on 2012 peer reviews and audits: John explained that a site audit is a check of the Pod Peer Review process. If the paperwork is all in order and there are no conflicts between the Property Management Plan and the Peer Review report the audit can be completed relatively quickly. Incomplete or conflicting information causes delays in the process. John also stressed the importance of the Pod leader checking the completeness of the documents before the Peer Review is carried out. If there are any minor amendments or omissions in the Property Management Plans these can be corrected at the time of the Peer Review. He stressed that it is important that when the Peer Review is finished the Pod Leader retains the completed Management Plans and forwards all the documentation to the Certification Manager. He stressed that the Peer Review Form must be signed by everyone present, including the property owner.

The problem of OFNZ members not being able to access the BioGro Production Modules on their website has now been resolved. The link is:

<http://www.biogro.co.nz/index.php/register/login/3051f0810a7db34dc1e22d5d5422badaee3be2d8>

Pods and Peer Reviews for 2013: With loss of one member and another one 'on hold' the proposal circulated with the agenda is to reduce the number of pods in the Western BOP to two. With the increase

in membership in the Eastern BOP BOP there is to be a new pod established for Opotiki area members. Some other Eastern BOP members may choose to remain as individual members because of travel distances.

The target is to have the 2013 Peer Review round completed by the end of July followed by the site audits in August. Members need to update their Property Management Plans and send them to their Pod leader as soon as possible. New members are to send their Property Management Plans to the Certification Manager.

OFNZ National Office: Jim Bennett (BOP Representative on National Coordinating Committee of OFNZ) provided an overview of developments at the national level. The following were raised and discussed:

The National OFNZ AGM will be held 24 & 25 August 2013 at Porirua in Wellington. All OFNZ members are invited to attend. The AGM is rotated each year between the North Island and South Island.

Linda Samways has replaced Sandra Donley as OFNZ National Office Manager. She is employed by Soil & Health Association and works 8 hours a week for OFNZ.

OFNZ is going through a transformation. The website is being updated as resources allow.

Communication is to be improved with possibly a regular e-newsletter with updates and profiles of members.

The AGM will be discussing a possible increase in the fee paid to the National Office so that a higher level of service can be provided to members. The increase being suggested is \$20 plus GST. Any increase would not come into effect until 2014.

Election/Appointment of Positions:

The meeting elected the following persons to fill the necessary positions for 2013/14:

Chairperson:	John Palmer
Certification Manager	Andrea Clough
Certification Committee	Andrea Clough, Thelma Williams, Jan Dubler, Bill Sedgwick, Harry Lagocki, John Palmer, Jim Bennett.
Treasurer	Andrea Clough
NCC Representative	Jim Bennett

General Business: Harry Logicki moved a motion that the officers be thanked for their hard work. The motion was passed. A field day, shared lunch and a tour of a member's property to be organized for when the weather is warmer.

Wellington / Wairarapa Regional Report from Dave Treadwell – written report read out:

This last year has seen some positive steps within the Board of Wai Organics and the maintenance of OFNZ License holders.

Given only two years ago there was no Board, we now have a reliable number of members who are willing to step into the positions required to effectively run Wai Organics. So far the Board has held the Organisation for OFNZ Certification purposes and there is also a view to start a wider range of activities for the Region.

Numbers of OFNZ License Holders has remained the same as last year, 7 members in three pods and 2 as independent. This could be seen almost as growth as two existing members did not renew their licenses due to personal reasons. Wai Organics sees a good future for OFNZ Certification and expect the numbers to grow next year.

Waikato Regional Report from Tony Banks – written report read out:

The group very kindly sponsored me to the OFNZ National AGM and conference at Lincoln in August. Reports from OFNZ groups around New Zealand indicated that the strength of groups is quite variable.

A trip to Biofert in Pokeno and Tanya Cumberland and Charmain Pountney's property at Awhitu was made in October – both our members attended along with those from other groups.

Meeting formats were changed during the year, starting with each meeting including a presentation/discussion about aspects of organic farming/gardening. At the last AGM, some members presented what they were doing on their property, and at subsequent meetings Peter presented on understanding soil reports, Judy on her experience with WOOFERS, Tony led a discussion on water, and members shared their successes/failures during the last season.

Meeting venues were changed from April, so that meetings were held at member's places. This provides an opportunity to tour their property and well as to enjoy each other's hospitality.

From last year, three memberships have withdrawn from certification, with only three properties being certified for the 2013/2014 year. This continues to be a concern.

Thanks to Peter and Dyan for their continued role in the certification process and to everyone else who has contributed to the group over the last year.

Otago / Southland Regional Report – Dennis to email through to me

The current Auditor and CM has been replaced.

There is concern about local membership numbers.

Regional Reports year ended 30 June 2012 accepted as a true and accurate record. Moved by Annie Stone seconded by Dave. Carried (Sean)

7. Matters Arising:

Pod Numbers: Concern voiced (Jim Bennett) that there is a pod with only two members. This raising the question of who is auditing who is this situation.

Pointed out that the Operational Guidelines / Procedures deals with these issues and everyone is encouraged to consult these in the first instance.

It was noted that credibility does rely on this and it is imperative that the guidelines are adhered to.

When Members take a break: A suggestion was made for a process whereby members who take a break for say a year – do they come back as fully certified or C2 – ie: one farmer's land is fallow at the moment.

Revision of Constitution required: which will cover off such concerns voiced as NCC – who is Hawkes Bay Rep? (13.1 covers this off). Flagged the needed for revision of the Constitution for next AGM, especially with regards to Regional Electorates – cull the Regional Electorates and review.

Five or six years ago was the last time the review was completed, therefore this needs to be made into a formal process. Action: NCC to discuss how.

Moved Sean / Seconded by Dennis. Carried

At a later date we have boundaries included in the Constitution.

Moved Sean / Seconded by Annie. Carried

Fees Structure to Head Office

Jim – shall we review the fees from \$100 to \$120 (plus GST) from 1 January 2014 and a review of these fees will be carried out in one year's time

Moved by Sean / Seconded by Alvina. NCC will enact this.

8. Confirmation of NCC Members:

Tim Newton has stepped out and been replaced by Annie Stone for the Coromandel / Waikato region.

Dennis moves all other NCC members be reinstated. Seconded by Sean. Carried

9. Any Other Business

PMP Forms – currently forms are in Word format. There is a view that if they are in Excel it makes the process easier. Action: Jos Paans to email excel form through to Linda for circulation – the format he is currently using for all inputs which simplifies his own process for annual filing and PMP

Alvina assumed we had got to the agreement of filling the PMP form our once and it is then changed year on year.

Sean moves that nothing is changed regarding PMP under the premise that it is not onerous to fill it out and change. Seconded by Annie. Carried

Online Documentation:

Sean would like all documentation available on the OFNZ website and maintained online which only that particular member has the rights to do, with the exception of the Land Use Map and other hard copy documents.

Certifying Domestic Packhouses: Jim moves the certifying domestic packhouses report to be received and trusts NCC will decide upon this, but in the meantime requests this is taken back to the regions and any feedback given back to NCC. Seconded Sean. Carried.

Question arose from Annie around who pays for the license / auditors

Sustainable Farming Fund: trying to track this to use as Auditor training. Will have application in by November NCC

Meeting Closed: 6.25pm