



AGM Special

Guest speaker Colin Walker

Colin will share some of the stories of our heritage plants and explain their importance to us in terms of their “nutritional value”. He will then outline a new project, supported by the Delphi Institute, to develop a breeding programme that will allow these plants to be evolved further, so that they will be better able to nourish and sustain us through the 21st century and beyond.

Colin Walker - Background

Colin has been involved in organic growing since his childhood, helping on his grandfather’s “traditional” market garden growing flowers. Since returning to New Zealand in 2000, he has been involved in growing vegetable, herb & flower seed, with a focus on heritage cultivars.

From acting as an advisor to (2001-2004) and more recently as a director (2005-2006) of Koanga Institute (formerly Koanga Gardens Trust); establishing and managing Homestead Gardens on the Coromandel, an organic community garden, producing vegetables & seed as well as operating as a research centre (2001 – 2005); to setting up a seed company, “Heritage Farms”, in 2004 to distribute organic heritage seed to NZ home gardeners nationally, Colin has been focused on the survival of our heritage seed so that these plants are able to come out of “seed banks” and become part of our everyday lives again.

He was also Project Manager for the Organic Seed NZ Project, a MAF Sustainable Farming Fund supported project (2002 -2005) investigating the practical issues involved with producing organic seed and the potential for developing an organic seed industry in New Zealand (see www.organicseed.co.nz). Most recently, he has helped in the establishment of the Delphi Institute, which will have its national office in the Wairarapa.

Wairarapa Organics AGM

Saturday 12 August 2006

4 pm, St. Marks Church Hall, Carterton

Guest Speaker:

Colin Walker

Board Member of Koanga Gardens and Organic Seed NZ

Shared meal to follow AGM, Please bring a plate

Child minding can be organized for the meeting

Please contact Esther if you would like to use this service

Annual Report to Wairarapa Organics from Heather Atkinson

(Certification Manager Period 1 July 2005 to 7 May 2006)

Achievements in the working period:

Certification continued to be my focus over the period. I am happy to report that all targets in relation to certification were met or exceeded. At the time that I left the position (7 May 2006) we had the following licensees:

Wairarapa – 31 of which 28 were pod members and 3 were individuals

Wellington – 3 members in one pod

Horowhenua – 7 members of which 4 were in a pod

Total: 41. 1 member was lost from the scheme in the period of my employment only.

Note: The Wairarapa are undertaking the administration for Wellington and Horowhenua until they are really to undertake it for themselves.

Wairarapa Branded produce at the local market. After initial feasibility studies and exploration of the concept, the Wairarapa Organics 'little red shed' was launched at the Essex St Sunday market in spring of 2005. This has since evolved and thanks to the dedication to the concept, two couples have adopted this and continue to support the market regularly. The plan being to move to the Farmers market when it launches at the Solway Showground in October. I am delighted to see growers take responsibility for this initiative as this is where the ownership should lie rather than with an organization. I wish them and other participants every success at the Farmers market.

Communication network. I maintained monthly e-newsletters with OFNZ members over this period, was always available via email or phone and provided a report for all Wairarapa Organics newsletters and Board meetings. In addition a number of Field days benefited all Wairarapa Organics members.

Promotional material. I was able to secure funding from the boards budget for quality promotional material which you will all, I hope, be familiar with. This has received extremely positive feedback wherever they have been shown and has resulted in requests from two other regions and head office to utilize them. I also made a PowerPoint display that has been very useful on a number of occasions.

Media articles or releases over the period maintained a strong profile at National level with a total of 5 Wairarapa Organics articles and 4 associated ones (members etc)

I facilitated the provision of **OFNZ farm gate signage** to our region with uptake of 22 of the total 23 licensee's at the time.

OFNZ launch. Wairarapa Organics had a fantastic weekend here, thanks to our wonderful new display material and the willing support of all the members that came and helped man the stand.

We gained widespread recognition via the stand, our PowerPoint display showing on the stadium walls 24/7 and the presentation so ably given by Brent to over 40 people.

Education. I maintained a regular presence at the UCOL 'professional development for teachers' courses and various other short courses and opportunities as they arose.

And I saved the best till last. **The Good Life Trail.** This was a wonderful inaugural event for our region showcasing our lifestyle choices. Thanks to the generous hosts of the day we were able to entertain around 90 attendees, culminating in a fabulous meal at Salute in Greytown. Feedback was definitely positive and we made around \$3500.00 in the process. Big thank you to those who were so willing to assist, be in on the committee, as a helper on the day, preparing the lunches, on the board or behind the scenes. Without your contribution the day could not happen!

I have a huge vision for this event and am confident that in the future it can meet the funding needs of the organization. **I would like to recommend to the incoming board that they use the profit from the day as 'seed money' for the next Good Life event.**

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 'two-and-a-bit' years as your certification manager. I have delighted with the successes of the organization and the growth of organics in our region.

I have had the privilege to work with some great people, particularly the (past and present) board members and other staff who have (mostly) humored my bursts of enthusiasm and lack of patience.

To all of you who have watched me learn and develop in the role and have shared your properties and your dreams for your properties with me.....it has been a privilege and is undoubtedly the best part of the position (as it stood).

Be assured the Wairarapa are perceived nationally as a very strong organic region. Please do what you can to strengthen that perception and move Wairarapa to a centre of organic excellence and growth. I would love to see Wairarapa Organics rise above the current challenges and move forward with strength to build on the strengths that are inherent in the organization and the region.

Warm regards

Heather Atkinson

(ex Certification Manager Wairarapa Organics.....

and now Merchandising Manager Organic Essentials/Dan's Organics)

Report from the Chair— Peggy Duncan

Since the AGM in July 2005, 3 people have held the position of chair for Wairarapa Organics. Don Baskerville was elected to the chair at the AGM, but after a short tenure he had to give up the position which was taken over by Mary Becket. She too, was unable to continue as the Chair office bearer. Following a special meeting of Wairarapa Organics in April 2006, and a subsequent meeting of the interim board, I took over the position of chair. Thanks to both Don and Mary for offering to doing the work when the future of Wairarapa Organics was unclear.

The changes in the person holding the position of chair has meant that there has been a lack of continuity with the progress of the organization. This has been accentuated by Wairarapa Organics not receiving a third year of funding through a CEGs grant as the criteria for these funds has been changed.

At the end of March Heather Atkinson's contract came to an end and as we did not have the funding, we were not able to renew Heather's contract. We thank her for the great amount of work that she did for the organization and her enthusiasm that she brought to the work.

Josje Neerinx, responsible for a lot of administrative work was not able to continue as she gave birth to a boy. We thank Josje for the valuable work that she did for the organization and congratulate her and Frank on the birth of their son.

Esther Dijkstra is still continuing with the newsletter, membership and subscriptions which we really appreciate. Without her continued input into the running of the organization, things would be much harder to accomplish. A big Thank You to Esther.

Steve White has taken over the role of Certification Manager which was only one of the strands of work that Heather did. The job of Certification Manager is vital to our organisation as many members of Wairarapa Organics are gaining organic certification under OFNZ both as individuals and as members of pods. Steve has written a separate report.

However, despite the difficulties outlined above, we have had some successes. The Good Life Trail, involving many members, was successful and we were so glad to have such a perfect day to showcase the four properties that made up the trail. Thank you to all people involved in this venture – it really was one that many contributed to in various ways.

Last spring, Wairarapa Organics started with the presence of the "Red Shed" at the Essex Street market in Masterton on Sunday mornings. This venture was a new one for the

I have presented on behalf of Wairarapa Organics on three days occasions. The first was at Solway Park at the Garden day. This was very successful and I did a small demonstration on Compost Making. Helen Dew, Glenys and Rob Cole and I set up the WO stall and proudly sold Organic goods from various OFNZ properties, wonderful jams, veges and sourdough bread surrounded by the WO banners. It was a good and fun day and WO was very well received.

The second day I presented to the final AGM of Small Farmers - Glenys and Rob attended, on behalf of WO, a lovely dinner and held the stall on the previous night. On the Sunday morning I used a modified power point and added a little bit on compost making. Many of the small farmers came and asked about OFNZ to take back to other regions.

The third day was great fun talking to the teachers on Why Organics at U-col. I did this with Jeremy Howden with a quick rustle up of show case produce from Andrew Wright (apple juice) Don and Hillary Baskerville (sourdough bread and Bollies Bread) and an assorted array of Jeremy's veges. The talk went down very well and Jeremy convinced us all on why we should eat Organics.

I have had two Featherston enquiries on how to join OFNZ which I have sent on to Steve White. - Claire Bleakley

organization, and has received a lot of attention from people who frequent the market. After running for a couple of months, it became apparent that there was not the support of the wider membership to supplying the stall with produce. This resulted in Glenis and Ron Cole, Hilary and Don Baskerville taking on the responsibility for the stall and for making sure that there was a continued presence of organic produce at the market. Although this is now their own private business, they continue to sell organic produce on behalf of Wairarapa organics members who can supply them and they continue to profile our organization. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of these two families as they have given us a public face to people who would not otherwise be aware.

We also have a public face in the number of talks and exhibitions in other events held in the Wairarapa, as well as at the launch of OANZ in Wellington last November. Since April Claire Bleakley has taken on the responsibility to talk about, and to showcase, Wairarapa Organics and organics in general. She has co-opted other members of the organization with their specialist skills to assist her in this work. Thank you Claire.

We also have made progress on a website which is www.Wairarapaorganics.org.nz. At this stage it is a fledgling endeavour and we are expecting that it will expand and grow over the next few months. As many people have been involved in this, I want to thank you for progressing it to this stage.

And, a big thank you to all the people who have worked on board matters and for Wairarapa Organics under conditions that have been less than ideal. As I have not been in this role for a long period of time, I must surely have left out some people who have given of their time and expertise, who I have not mentioned in person. For this I apologise as it is not my intention to omit people who give so readily.

I am finding that in the role of chair that we do need someone to do secretarial/administrative work for which there is some monetary rewards. There is too much to expect someone to be able to manage in a voluntary capacity.

However, I have visions for where we can go as an organization and as individual organics producers and I am sure that with the will and the growing experience of many people that we will progress to a much healthier state over the next year.

Wairarapa Organics Incorporated aims to promote and support activities to increase the level of organic production and consumption of organic produce in the Wairarapa region. The vision of Wairarapa Organics is to support sustainable producers and consumers of safe, natural, quality produce and services. We are actively stimulating the production of organic produce and livestock within the Wairarapa.

Enjoyed the newsletter? Become a member of Wairarapa Organics and receive this newsletter six times per year. Annual Subscription to Wairarapa Organics: \$30.00 and \$15.00 for beneficiaries and students (inclusive of GST).

**Wairarapa Organics Inc.
PO Box 34 Carterton**

Treasurer's report to the members for the year ended 31 March 2006

Mary E Zajkowski - Hon Treasurer

The year to 31 March 2006 has been a good one in that we made a profit from the largest entrepreneurial activity that Wairarapa Organics has ever organised – The Good Life Trail tour. A surplus of over \$2,000 resulted from this very successful activity. It is appropriate here to mention that this result was possible only because of the large number of members who gave many hours of voluntary work to make the Trail such a success. It was cheering to see so many people all working with the same aim in mind. If we had had to pay for all this time the end result would have been very different. \$2,000 of this money is currently on term deposit as seed money for the next Good Life Trail.

We also earned a small amount of interest from term deposits of some Community Employment Grant Scheme (CEGS) money not needed immediately. Two thousand dollars is currently on term deposit as seed money set aside for the next Good Life Trail.

Another first is that we have acquired the set of promotional banners that are so useful for display purposes to help get our organic message across. These are a long-term asset, and so we have 'depreciation expense' for the first time, to spread the cost of this asset over several years. Full financial statements will be available at the AGM.

In the year to 31.3.2005 Wairarapa Organics spent less money than came in to the organization, with a surplus of \$8,800. However in 2006 expenditure was greater than income by approximately this amount, despite our efforts to make money from the Good Life Trail and other activities. Receipts from bokashi sales are down this year as this activity is in a relatively 'steady-state' situation with sales of mostly bran refills.

We had hoped to receive CEGS money for a third year, but because of the different grant objectives of WINZ, who is now administering these grants, our approach was not successful. Continuing to 'build capacity' in the local organic sector is too general an objective for a department aiming to increase the number of people employed. This meant we no longer had the resources to continue to employ our previous Certification Manager on the same basis as the past 2 years. It is intended to apply for an Organic Association of New Zealand (OANZ) grant when applications open.

At 31 March we were unsure of our obligations in regard to the residue of funds (c.\$5,500) left over from the first year's payment of the CEGS grant, and this sum needed to be kept aside for possible repayment. Since then we have been able to confirm with WINZ that we will not have to repay this sum as long as we continue working towards the objectives for which the grant was made.

Certification Report - Steve White

With our funding for Heather sadly coming to an end and no immediate prospect for more money the Certification Managers Role has been scaled back to a bare minimum. Thank you Heather for the magnificent job over the past year, you are and will be sorely missed. I am filling in doing a couple of hours a week while we seek more funding.

Pod - Audits

John Ridout was down on the 24 July to audit pod 5 and the Ditmers. From all accounts John was happy with what he saw.

New Pods

I couple of enquires and have sent out information but have not set up any new pods. - with pod 2 having some space I thought it would make sense to put them here. I will need to arrange a get together with them some time soon.

Horowhenua

I have very little contract with the Horowhenua Pods other than to chase up the certificates from last year that they had not received for them. I eventually got hold of Hamish at OFNZ head office and got the certs for those that had paid sent to me and forwarded them on the growers with letters of introduction.

Wellington - no contract.

I have had a number of emails regarding restricted products - all solved by using the Bio-gro web site inputs lists.

I general I would say that I have not been as proactive as I would have like to be - something I will have to change.



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