

Issue twenty-one

June July
2005



Wairarapa Organics

PO Box 34
Carterton

THE GOOD LIFE TRAIL

The first ever 'Good Life Trail' (as it has now been named) is to take place on 11th March 2006. As described in the last newsletter the plan is to entice a broad cross section of people including tourists, Wellington and local people, to travel along a predetermined trail to several of our Organic properties.

At each property there will be the theme represented such as eco house design, alternative energy systems, livestock management, growing stuff, permaculture etc. The property visited will showcase the concept and will be supported by trade displays, produce sales, demonstrations, information, speakers and whatever else is appropriate.

To culminate the day we hope to have a black tie dinner show-casing local organic food and wine at one of our local venues. This will feature a celebrity of some description and also live music.

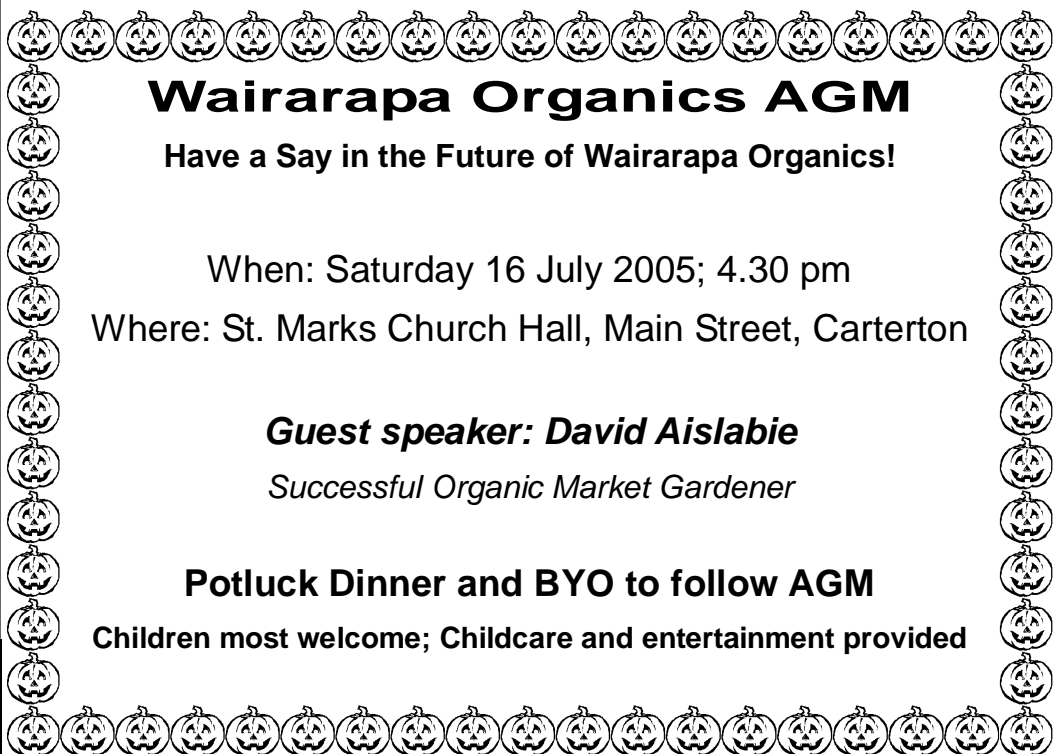
We sincerely hope to build this event into an annual event that will turn into a revenue building event for Wairarapa Organics...watch out Toast Martinborough!

We have a group that have volunteered to assist us toward this ambitious project and are keen to co-opt others who would like to assist at the planning stages.

The likelihood is that you will all be approached to assist on and around the day. We will be requiring all the practical support we can muster to assist in this major undertaking.

We have formed several subcommittees (or interest areas) which include sponsorship, finance, ticketing, food, sites, produce, publicity, etc.

We next meet at the end of the month. If you have some great ideas to share or are willing to put your hand up and assist please contact Joseph ph 06 3048116.



Wairarapa Organics AGM
Have a Say in the Future of Wairarapa Organics!

When: Saturday 16 July 2005; 4.30 pm
Where: St. Marks Church Hall, Main Street, Carterton

Guest speaker: David Aislable
Successful Organic Market Gardener

Potluck Dinner and BYO to follow AGM
Children most welcome; Childcare and entertainment provided

Chairperson's Report

Don Baskerville

Earlier this year, Hilary and I went on a GO Wairarapa sponsored course on "Building a Business Vision". Our homework between the two sessions was to come up with a BHAG (a Big Hairy Audacious Goal).

Like Pooh, I had a long think.

What I came up with was a vision of the Wairarapa I would be content to live in (say in 20 years time). A region that has

- A farming sector that is wholly organic
- Self sufficiency in liquid fuels and electricity
- Full employment with several business clusters
- No drugs culture and reduced number of court sittings

With the constant encouragement of Heather Atkinson, our certification manager, I think we are on the way there.

Oil is currently \$US62 a barrel and when it hits \$US74 it will be at the same price in real terms that it was in the 1970's during the oil shocks. Remember car-less days?

As those times approach again, the price of agrochemicals will climb with the price of petroleum and our farming neighbours to whom I refer as "chemical farmers" (I think we are the conventional farmers) will be under more and more financial pressure.

Our task is to have proven methodologies available for them to appropriate and to lend a friendly helping hand as they convert to organics out of sheer financial necessity. By reading the signs ahead of time we will have established the habits of local markets and have certified land and seed and be running our cars on biodiesel. In doing that we will have been stewards of the communities we live in as well as stewards of the land we till. We won't be saying "I told you so" but rather "Come on in, the water is warm".

Thank you for all that you do during the year for Wairarapa Organics whether you serve on the Board or just pay your annual subscription. We are all part of a community with a righteous mission and I'm looking forward to sharing notes with you all in 20 years time on what progress we have made.

Don Baskerville

The Board of Wairarapa Organics have appointed **Josje Neerincx van Steensel** as the new administrator for Wairarapa Organics. Josje will assist the board and Heather Atkinson with the day to day management of the organisation. She will focuss on attracting more members and the GOOD LIFE Trail. Josje has been involved in Wairarapa Organics from the start. Her knowledge of the organic sector and her administration skills will be of great benefit to Wairarapa Organics!

Annual Report from the Certification Manager

Heather Atkinson

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to once again report on progress made since the last AGM.

Being well settled into the Certification Managers role within your organisation, I am finding the key role of managing the Organic Farm New Zealand (OFNZ) certification process is definitely becoming easier, with all those contributing to the process (including the producers) feeling a lot more comfortable with it.

Towards the end of 2004 Esther and I created a Background Report to assist the Board with Strategic Planning that culminated in a fantastic Business Plan written by Brent Skinnon, securing our funding for another year.

Our 2004 calendar year ended with a total of 18 producers registered with the OFNZ scheme. This has now been bolstered with a further 5 growers (pod 5) who have joined this year, bringing our total to 23 (well on track to 30 by the end of the year). I am happy to report that we have retained all OFNZ members in the small growers scheme to date.

An early frustration, which has impacted on progress against objectives, was the late start to the 2005 year due to the delay in securing funding (due to CEG's demise), consequently I only started work in late February.

Support for OFNZ members continues with regular newsletters, email and phone contact and grower focused activities (midwinter events, Field days, guest speakers, producers meetings etc).

I am able to report on a number of key initiatives that I have furthered:

'The Good-Life Trail' is planned for 11th March 2006 encompassing all that the Wairarapa is able to offer with organic food and wine, farm visits, plant and livestock management, eco-living, alternative energy and a bevy of wonderful experiences. This will culminate in an organic food and wine event with a celebrity guest in the evening. We now have a strong team on board to progress this. Hopefully this will become an annual event that we can build on...watch out 'Toast Martinborough'!

Essex Street Market. We have planned our entry here for the Spring when the produce comes on line after the winter months. We have purchased and created a self contained (on a trailer) "Little Red Shed" which we hope to fill with locally produced fresh organic produce. This takes place on Sunday mornings at 9.00am – be there to support our local producers.

Food Coop. This was an initiative started by Lianne Earles who created Wairarapa Wholefood Group which Wairarapa Organics (WO) have taken over (at her request). We collectively source certified organic food from Chantals Organic Wholesalers, which we then freight down on a regular, two weekly basis. We are in a trial stage at present to gauge interest and if you want to know more see me. To ensure the continuation of this initiative we need your support. Chantals offer a 38 page price list so the range of produce is exhaustive! This also may include Tofu products and I'm thinking about adding chickens in the near future.

Farm Gate Logo's. These should be appearing on OFNZ certified farm gates in the Wairarapa shortly and will serve to raise awareness of organics and remind spray contractors and the like of the need to keep these areas a spray free zone.

Promotional material. This is currently being developed and includes a PowerPoint presentation, proposed documentary style video clip, WebPages and 3 large promotional boards to present our organisation in a professional and attractive manner at market days, educational institutions and Field Days.

Liaison with other regional areas. We have this year been able to form strong links with the Horowhenua region assisting with OFNZ set up in the region, workshops and Certification Manager support. We hope build on this positive start for the betterment of both organisations.

Educational opportunities. WO are regularly asked to represent our organisation at various groups and educational institutions in the course of the year. The most exciting upcoming speaking opportunity being at UCOL (next week) where a Professional Development course for Home Economic's teachers is being undertaken to showcase the Wairarapa as a Food and Wine region. Two of our WO properties are being visited and I will be speaking also. Hopefully this will become a regular event with courses run 4 times throughout the year.

Many thanks to Barbara Turner and Kim Walton for their great work on the Certification Committee, John Ridout for his auditing assistance, Esther for her support with the newsletter and to the Board for their ongoing energy and enthusiasm for the betterment of organics in the region. Also a warm welcome to Josje who's assistance with administrative tasks will be warmly welcomed.

I look forward with much enthusiasm to the rest of the year.

Wairarapa Organics: Numbers and Facts

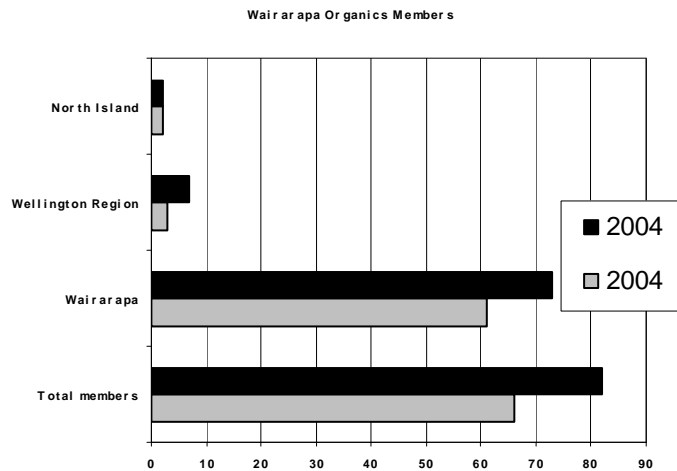
Esther Dijkstra

Wairarapa Organics members

Wairarapa Organics has increased its membership by 16 members since June 2004.

June 2004 ended with 66 members. In June 2005, Wairarapa Organics has 82 members. The organisation has the goal to raise the membership by another 50 members by the end of this year.

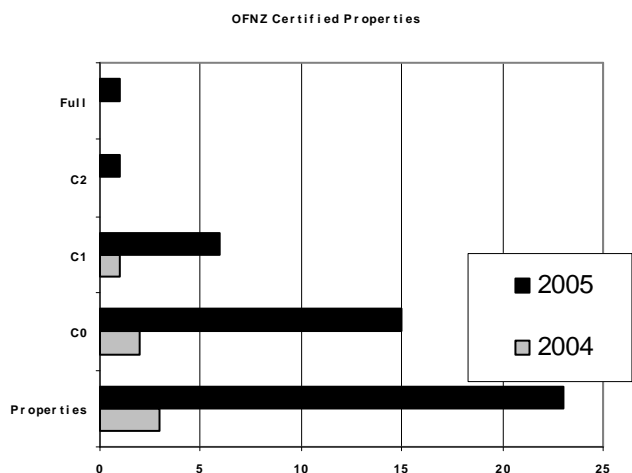
While the majority of the members are living in the Wairarapa, membership from Wellington is increasing. Most of the Wellington members own property in the Wairarapa.



Organic Farm New Zealand

Since the introduction of the Organic Farm New Zealand (OFNZ) small growers' scheme in 2003, 23 properties are now certified under the OFNZ scheme. Wairarapa Organics started with only 3 properties and approximately 100 ha of land in organic production that were OFNZ certified in 2004.

In 2005, 20 properties and approximately another 100 ha of land has been added. This makes the Wairarapa the fastest growing organic region in New Zealand. The average size of the properties is 10 Ha.



Bokashi Sales

Since the start of the bokashi venture in April 2004 Wairarapa organics made a gross profit of **\$1,224.88**. This is many through sales of buckets and bokashi refills. We get enquiries from as far as Cambridge and we are regular suppliers to the Wellington Botanic Gardens. We don't actively promote bokashi and bokashi composting systems, apart from ads in the WO Newsletter and OrganicNZ.

EM1, the liquid biological stimulant is selling at a slower pace. This will improve when promoted to home growers and the farming community.

WAIRARAPA ORGANICS AGM MINUTES 18 JULY 2004 HELD AT THE FIRE STATION MARTINBOROUGH

Present

Heather and Ian Atkinson, Don and Hilary Baskerville, Mary Beckett, Claire Bleakley, Boly Bolliger, Deborah Butterfield, Ron and Glenis Cole, Sonia Corbett, Helen Dew, Esther Dijkstra, Kim Walton, Margaret Enright, Ron and Maureen Sadler, Beryl Shakes, Barbara Turner, Michael Woodcock, Gaye Sutton, Dez Martin, Mary Zajkowski, Mike Grace

Apologies

Jeremy Howden, Gill Greathead, Nina Selwood, Jonathon Hooker, Judith Stehr, James Walker.

Minutes of the previous AGM were read and moved by Deborah B. and seconded by Glennis Cole.

Guest Speaker

Marion Wood from Common Sense Organics spoke on her experiences of growing and retailing organic produce.

Wairarapa Organics speakers

Esther Dijkstra, Organics in the Wairarapa and beyond
Heather Atkinson, OFNZ certification
Kim Walton, Wairarapa Organics Logo
Brent Skinnon, The Keys to my success

A fabulous afternoon tea was created by Boly Bolliger. Thank you Boly!

AGM

Minutes of the previous AGM were read and moved by Deborah B, and seconded by Glennis Cole
Chairpersons report was read by Deborah, seconded by Heather A.
Treasurers report read by Esther. Full details will be provided when accountant has finished with the books. Seconded by Dez Martin

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Resignations during the year

Claire Bleakley, Josje Neerinx-van Steensel, Carol White
Esther Dijkstra to resign off board this coming year

New Board members

Name	Moved	Seconded
Deborah Butterfield	Kim Walton	Heather Atkinson
Jeremy Howden	Deborah B	Kim W
Barbara Turner	Kim W	Gaye Sutton
Gaye Sutton	Barbara T	Brent Skinnon
Michael Woodcock	Barbara T	Gaye Sutton
Mary Zajkowski	Deborah B	Kim W

GENERAL BUSINESS

Michael Woodcock asked if we were affiliated with Soil and Health. Heather looking into connections with OFNZ at her next meeting with Hamish Hopkinson

Barbara Turner asked about the \$2 million grant application. Deborah updated on WO's application.

Meeting closed at 4.00pm

Organic Food Buying Group – Wairarapa Organics

This buying group took off where Lianne Earles started with the Wairarapa Wholefoods Group. Heather Atkinson now organises a Wairarapa Organics order to go off to Chantals every two weeks.

Chantals is the largest Wholesaler of organic produce in New Zealand and has an exhaustive list (38 pages) of produce. This includes fresh and dried produce.

This ordering day has also been combined with a Tofu order to another company and Heather is considering purchasing pre-ordered organic chicken if there is some interest.

To reach optimal savings with regard to freight we are targeting an order weight of 100+kg.

Once we get to this weight we pay less than 23c per kg to get produce here. We have a limited time to reach this target as this was set up on a trial basis only.

Many of us have voiced our frustration at not being able to source organic food in the Wairarapa. This opportunity was developed to make this easier for you and your family. Also to purchase at wholesale prices therefore make it cheaper also.

Perhaps you'd like a Vege Box, which Chantal's are now doing.

\$32 for small box (2 people for one week)

\$43 for std box (4 + people for one week)

(includes GST and freight) extra charge for rural delivery.

I would like to encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity now to ensure its future success.

You need to complete a credit application form and request a price list. Contact Chantals direct on 06 8357898. Fax 06 8358784 or via email orders@chantal.co.nz

Tell them you are a member of Wairarapa Organics buying group. They will send it out to you.

Please give some consideration to participating in this worthwhile opportunity.

Wairarapa Organics AGM **Have a Say in the Future of Wairarapa Organics!**

Wairarapa Organics AGM will be held at St. Marks Church Hall this year. The hall is situated behind the historic Anglican Church along High Street in Carterton. The hall will be open from 4.30 pm. The AMG will start at 5 pm sharp. One of the topics on the agenda is the Wairarapa Organics membership fee increase.

A potluck dinner will follow the AGM. Please bring enough food and drinks to provide for yourself and somebody else! Wairarapa Organics will serve coffee and teas and Boly Bollinger of the organic Watermill Bakery, Norfolk Road Carterton, will provide delicious baking to go with the coffee and teas!

David Aislabie will be the guest speaker of the evening. David is a successful market gardener of Wanganui. He owns 15 acres of land, of which 3 acres is raised beds in. For 5 years, he provided over 80 families with fresh vegetables. He now coordinates the production of vegetables for regular markets, using other growers to meet the need.

David also teaches human biology and horticulture and is finishing a Masters degree in sustainable farming systems.

Children are most welcome. We have arranged for childcare and there will be entertainment for children in a separate room!

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

HOW TO BE A SUCCESS IN ORGANICS

This popular workshop is back!

This **FREE** workshop will give individual producers the technical and business planning skills they need to manage their properties for profitable, long-term growth.

This will be run on two Saturdays: **6 August** and **13 August 2005**

Are you an existing or aspiring organic producer and you'd like to participate in this **FREE** workshop, please contact Esther on esther.dijkstra@ecoagrilogic.co.nz or phone (06) 379 5622.

Some comments from previous participants:

Inspiring, reassuring, networking, valuable information, not to be missed!

Following on from the "How to be a Success in Organics workshop, run by EcoAgriLogic over two weekends in April/May, Wairarapa Organics has arranged to have a workshop to investigate how organic growers can organize their marketing efforts. GoWairarapa has organized this workshop for Saturday 6 August. Chris Elphick, a well known business coach, will facilitate the workshop.

It will be fun!

On 20 August 2005, GoWairarapa have organised a Branding workshop. This workshop will provide vital knowledge for growers wanting to market their produce.

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: \$20.00 and \$10.00 for beneficiaries and students.

Contacts @ Wairarapa Organics

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