



Wairarapa Organic's OFNZ Newsletter
Issue 12: August 2005

Dear Pod and Individual OFNZ members,

Well it's been two months since I got this newsletter out. Didn't manage one last month as was scurrying around trying to get everything done before the school holidays. That (sort of) achieved I managed a two week break at the farm. Limited technology there – no fax or computer so I donned my gumboots instead.

We managed to further an objective or two that were competing with our time.

All my blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, blackcurrants and raspberries had their winter maintenance completed. This was a steep learning curve for me. With the berry patch being only two seasons old this was my first big pruning session. I found some wonderful sites on the internet that were very helpful. That achieved I moved outside the garden and into the area opposite the sheds where we made a start on a long held dream of establishing an orchard.

Up to now we have been trying to plant out new fruit trees in the old orchard where they are competing with the pigs and the pet deer. You can guess who was winning despite tree protectors. So we 'saved' these existing trees to a spot in the veggie garden where they are heeled in waiting their final planting spot. Very exciting buying trees for the orchard, but also very pricey with most being around the \$25.00 mark. I found Judy Blank of Garden Innovations to be very helpful and knowledgeable about the stock she carries. She also has an interest in the older disease resistant varieties.

Whats been happening out there...?

UCOL Cuisine for Teachers. This was held in the second week of the holidays. Wairarapa UCOL hosted Home Economics teachers NZ wide to this professional Development course showcasing the Wairarapa as a premium Wine and Food region. Wairarapa Organics had a 4-hour contribution over the two-day experience including a presentation to the teachers and visits to Murdoch James Vineyard and Jeremy Howdens properties. We received positive feedback from our involvement.

Wholesale Organic Order:

This is currently under review. To date this has been a regular fortnightly event.

I would love to see this continued however there are a few restraints that have been placed on us. Minimum order needs to be \$250.00, which is certainly achievable if we had a few more people on board. Also we will need to have one collective order that we are responsible for breaking down into smaller invoices and collecting the money for. This adds more difficulty and potentially becomes much more time consuming for somebody..!

On a positive note this can also turn delivery day into a very positive social day with heaps of networking being done.

Also we have been offered the opportunity to order certified chicken and portions from our Horowhenua neighbours which I think would be great!

Do you have any thoughts around this – why are you not using this service? Your feedback would be appreciated.

OFNZ: Regional News

Progress in the year to date.....

Pod 5 are now registered with OFNZ.

Pod 2 have all renewed and re registered, as has one of our individual properties.

Pod 3 are awaiting the physical audit to be completed on one of their properties. This is due on the 17th of this month.

All the renewal documents for Pods 1, 4 and the remaining individual properties have gone out with the expectation that these be completed within 4 weeks allowing time for the rest of the process to be completed before expiry.

I am going to certify another group of new producers before the end of the year.

At this stage I am looking for any interested people to come forward and join this group. If you have any contacts that may be interested in OFNZ certification this year please contact me urgently. I would appreciate your assistance.

The two renewal dates that we are using this year are working really well for the region and has certainly simplified this area of my work.

OFNZ: National News:

Been a lot happening at National level of OFNZ of late....may have something to do with the upcoming AGM! Here I have copied some information of interest.

Statistics

- *195 Producers have so far being certified by OrganicFarmNZ. 11 Regional Bodies provide administration for 15 different provinces.*
- *Of those certified Producers, 29 have withdrawn from certification. For those that have withdrawn, around half were for reasons of selling the property or a personal crisis.*
- *At any one time between 10-40% of certificates are expired.*
- *The average OrganicFarmNZ certified property is 10 hectares. (This makes the Wairarapa right on average). Properties range in size from being less than a hectare up to 87 hectares. Several 'simple' Processors are also OrganicFarmNZ certified.*

Documentation

Updated Property Management Plans, the Pod Peer Review Checklist, Guidelines, CM Templates and Audit Checklists have all been updated to make them more user friendly, efficient and modern. As stated below, the next goal is to make them more computer friendly.

Sub-Committees

Recently 3 sub-committees of the NCC were established to bring focus to specific areas of the organisations work. More importantly they were established to progress the organisation in those specific areas and assist with decision making. The committees also assist in involving more people and Regions in the functioning of OrganicFarmNZ.

The NCC retains the right to add and remove members on these Committees and the NCC also has the final decision making power.

The 3 sub-committees and their key purpose are as follows:

Marketing

Key Purpose 1: market, promote and brand OrganicFarmNZ to Producers.

Key Purpose 2: market, promote and brand OrganicFarmNZ to retailers and consumers.

Finance & Strategy

Key Purpose 1: oversee and develop the organisation's finances.

Key Purpose 2: plan and guide the organisation's future through developing strategies to assist its development.

Key Focus: development of regional bodies with a particular emphasis on developing resources/strategies to assist them.

Standards

Key Purpose 1: Review and update the OrganicFarmNZ Standards and Compliances.

Key Purpose 2: act as an appeal body.

Key Purpose 3: oversee the work of the Auditors and ensure consistency of the certification process across the Regional Bodies.

(The Wairarapa Region hopes to have representation on each of these committees in the future).

AGM:

OFNZ to be held Saturday 27th August 05...in a couple of weeks!

I have put my name forward to stand on the NCC (National Coordinating Committee) to represent our region. At this stage I don't believe that anyone else has put their hand up to stand but a 'confidence' vote is required at the AGM in order for me to be elected.

Adoption of the new OFNZ standards will be voted on at the AGM. Currently as you know we use the well-respected BioGro rules, a position that the WO Board and most of the membership that I have spoken to seem to strongly favour. This is an issue that we would like to get strong support from our membership. Therefore your vote may be crucial.

The Board is keen to see as many members as possible attend the AGM in Palmerston to ensure the status quo remains. Please put this date in your diary. Along with the AGM will be a visit to a certified organic property (hopefully) and Margaret from 'Organic Living' a successful organic retail outlet in Palmerston North will be speaking. I suggest that we car pool from my Masterton address and plan a day around the AGM-perhaps we could visit Margaret's shop on the way in and stop somewhere for lunch.

Hopefully you all saw the wonderful new promotional display boards, shown at the AGM, that we got developed to promote ourselves. The Board is thrilled with these and looks forward to them getting heaps of use.

Well that's quite enough from me for now.
Good Growing and Healthy Eating

Heather Atkinson
Certification Manager Wairarapa Organics Inc
42 Kuripuni Street
Masterton
06 3703909
06 3703907
Email: organic.essentials@xtra.co.nz

'A single rose can be my garden, a single friend my world'
Leo Busgalia