

# The Organics

No 36 Autumn 2008



## FIELD DAY SUNDAY MAY 18TH

### GUEST SPEAKERS:

Don and Rosemary Cave of Grow Healthy from Kaiwaka. They will be speaking on EM (Effective Micro-organisms) which is an effective growing tool for home gardeners and commercial growers alike and GEM which uses the Japanese EM-Bokashi system of using your kitchen waste to make compost and organic fertilizers.

### VENUE

#### **“TAHEKE FALLS TREE FARM” 3264 STATE HIGHWAY 12, TAHEKE.**

Taheke Falls Tree Farm was purchased by Miriam Tyler and her late husband Jim in 1981. The property was set up on permaculture principles for growing avocados and persimmons. This property has approximately 10,000 trees planted on the 13ha block. It includes mature woodlots of Black Walnut and Chestnut trees. The eco-friendly passive solar house has been built with local materials and natural products. Taheke Falls Tree Farm was previously Bio-Gro certified and also used for instruction in Permaculture workshops. Today Miriam and partner Kevin Booth are moving the property into conversion with **OrganicFarmNZ**. They are propagating and grafting avocado seedlings which are for sale. Their grafted seedlings and avocados are sold through the local markets. The property is on the boundary of the Punakitere River which features 2 waterfalls which are worth seeing.

**Directions to Taheke Falls Tree Farm:** Travel west from Kaikohe (towards Opononi) approximately 17kms. Slow down once past the Taheke Road to Horeke (on your right) and 3264 is on your left. If you pass the Taheke Tavern you have gone too far!

- 9.30am** Refreshments & Mingle  
**10 am** prompt start for a hopefully short meeting.  
**11.15am** a quick cuppa !  
**11.30 am** Speakers, continuing after lunch
- 12 noon** **BRING SOMETHING YUMMY FOR A SHARED LUNCH**  
**always a great success.**  
**tea, coffee and juice supplied.**
- 1pm** speakers continued.....

#### **Don't forget**

#### **SEED SAVING!**

Bring your seeds, and buy others for same-species cross-pollination to keep the genes healthy.

#### **TRADING TABLE**

Share your bounty  
with others??

***Introducing Donna and Jess – two of our newest members. Jess is one of our most welcome two new female members onto the committee. Lovely to have new faces and energy to join us!***

After making many trips to the Far North we finally decided last year to make the **HOKIANGA HERB FARM** our home. We were lucky enough to find this amazing property earlier in the year. We first saw it on the internet when we about to leave for Thailand, it sounded just what we had dreamed of, so I went about persuading Donna to come and see it. She is much more sensible and practical than I am, and she insisted that we go to Thailand first. "Well if we are meant to be there we will be".

Months later we went looking, Donna arranged a circular trip around Northland to look at *everything* but somehow I knew we were meant to come here even before we saw it. Finally after almost convincing ourselves that a property across the harbor was home, we came to see the **HOKIANGA HERB FARM**. We knew from the first step that this was it, this is where we needed to be, we needed the land, and it needed us!

The absentee owner told us that the "The Hokianga Herb Farm" has four orchards and three dams amongst the 42 acres of regenerating bush and gardens. Well it took us a while to find them. We found two old fruit orchards, apples, pears, persimmons, figs etc. We also found some of the 50 Macadamia trees amongst the bush and lots of other wonderful treasures that we were not expecting - like beautiful Ginkgo trees and huge lemon verbena, leftovers from the original herb gardens. It took us several efforts to find the citrus orchard; it was underneath huge honeysuckle vines and even longer to find the dams! We felt like we had come to whole new world not a section! At the top of the hill the view of the harbour is stunning.

Probably one of the greatest treasures is that this place was developed by a dedicated herbalist very much loved by the community. He died too early. Drew also did some research into growing tea in Northland and the trees are still here.

The place feels very well loved; the two cottages provide cosy accommodation for us, our friends, family and the occasional WOOFERS.

Our plans are to redevelop the orchards and herb gardens as well as grow our own crops for market. We are also fortunate to have got to know a neighbor who builds with clay brick and has passed on many skills. We have a clay brick press ready to be used as soon as there are enough of us around and the local contractor has dug out the clay. We intend to use the clay bricks along with sculptures to develop herb gardens and a studio.

Meantime it's back to the huge pest and weed control project, weed-eating, and composting, creating raised beds with corrugated iron sides to keep the pigs at bay and getting back into the organic and biodynamic practices that have made our gardens so successful in the past. The geese are already in the orchard and the first garlic has been planted, the lavender is awaiting a bed...

Blissful growing and blessing for an amazing season!

Donna and Jess

## ***WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS***

Christine Machanek  
John and Robyn Dance



## **AGM & FIELD DAY 2008**

Once again Far North Organic Growers & Producers Soc (Inc.) held a very successful February AGM field-day, despite the wide-spread flooding the day before. This time at Ross & Raewyn Pennell's ostrich and emu farm at Kaimaumau, attended by 22 FNOG members & interested parties. Unfortunately our speakers, John & Gail Aikens, didn't make it due to the flooding; John is a woodcraftsman & charcoal maker, Gail is the manager of Northern Seed Savers. Hopefully we can arrange for them to inform us about their interesting activities at a later date.

The meeting discussions included the importance of seed-saving with Wener Krieger and our curator Peter Harrison; the Te Rarawa involvement in fluoride free water, Organic Aotearoa NZ news, the upcoming homeopathic workshop for treatment of animals and the successful workshops completed - including trapping on organic properties, organic gardening and organic cattle management.

We have also been represented at the recent hui in Whangarei concerning transgenic cattle on Maori lease land. Public notice will be out June/July for submissions to ERMA.

The present & long-standing chair Terry Higginson stood down for the election process, but was re-elected, as was our very competent secretary/treasurer, Helen Guthrie.

We now have a committee with new members, representing areas further south as well as local. We could do with assistance from our certificated members in many aspects of our activities, but mostly the responsibilities continue to be filled by the same members.

A shared lunch of delicious varieties of imaginative goodies was enjoyed by all, after which a very humorous time was given by Ross as he guided us around his big birds, friendly & unfriendly. Carol, his special emu, could be touched and cuddled and allowed to run free within the domestic area. So be it, the others could have been a bit jealous !

The 100% natural Emu Oil is an incredible product, covering areas like anti-aging, arthritis, burns, hair care and a huge range of skin conditions – highly recommended also for the relief of pain & inflammation as it contains high levels of linolenic acid & oleic acid. As they stress, Emu Oil will do nothing for you if you leave it in the jar !!!

*Kris Khaine*

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### **DISPLAYING ORGANIC PRODUCE FOR SALE at markets etc.**

**Producers selling non-certified product alongside their certified goods at their market stall, or wherever, are reminded that the non-certified product must be clearly labelled as such so there is no confusion between the certified and the non-certified.**

*The committee would like to thank all FNOG members for their support and suggestions – without them we would find keeping afloat rather difficult.*

*What we would like at present is some suggestions about:*

- *what you would like to see/hear at field-days*
- *who would like to host a field-day in the future.*

*Generally there is plenty of time for anyone to ask anything about organic procedures for home gardening or certifications; so be it, most folk are sourcing their information from the organic Standards and literature.*

*Properties for field-days do not have to be certified. We are most interested in visiting anyone who has the organic ethic and who would love to share their little corner of paradise.*

*Don't forget we have a very good library, and there is plenty of information available at field-days.*



### **FEIJOA BISCUITS**

100 gms butter  
½ a cup sugar  
1 egg  
2 cups flour  
1 tsp baking pdr  
½ tsp vanilla essence  
4 feijoas

*Cream butter & sugar, beat in egg, then add sifted flour & baking powder alternately with peeled and mashed feijoas and the vanilla. Drop teaspoon lots onto a cold tray and bake for 15 – 20 mins at 180 degrees C.*

## **NO FREE LUNCHES IN ORGANIC GROWING –** *Tony Henderson, Zion Gardens*

### **ROK SOLID**

During the past 12 months I have seen very good results in 2 avocado orchards in the Kaikohe district. Both growers have spread Rok Solid around the base of their problem avocado trees. Good colour has returned to the trees through the trace elements in Rok Solid which are necessary for healthy avocado trees.

We have a feijoa shelter belt on one of our garden boundaries which has struggled for the past 8 years. Last winter I spread 3-4 handfuls of Rok Solid around the base of each tree. This autumn the trees have very good colour and an abundance of fruit for the first time. The possums have done well much to Linda's disgust!

Rok Solid is an easy way of adding trace elements to your soil and increasing worm life. Talk to Grant Fallon from Agrissentials; they have a very good deal on 500kg bags of Rok Solid. It is also available in 20kg bags for the home gardener. Rok Solid will give you "more bang for your dollar".

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF POTASSIUM**

When growers are often working their soil, especially in Northland, potassium leaches out easily as it is very mobile. It is usually the first nutrient to disappear and it is therefore necessary to replenish the levels from time to time. Low levels of potassium reduce growers' yields and quality of produce. Potassium determines thickness of stalk leaves, seed size and the number of fruit set. It is also considered important in plant health, hardiness and resistance to disease.

Patent Kali is a permitted input for certified organic growers and will raise the levels of potassium in soils. It is only available in 25kg bags at Ravensdown's depots. Contact Peter Bixley at the Kaikohe depot, phone 09 4010 415. Ravensdown also has other permitted inputs available in stock.

## **DEFINITION from BIOGRO NZ on COMPOST GUIDELINES**

BIO-GRO NZ Approved compost is the material resulting from the controlled microbiological transformation of Approved organic materials under aerobic and thermophilic conditions during which the whole mass of compost material has been subjected to at least 5 consecutive days at, or above, temperatures of 55 degrees centigrade.

In compliance with International Organic Certification Guidelines, the use of human waste is not Approved as an input for BIO-GRO NZ compost. All other inputs must not contradict the principles and precepts of the BIO-GRO Standards.

Any composting operation must ensure that leachate from the compost does not enter any waterway or contaminate any ground water.

Analysis of any approved raw materials used for composting may be required prior to production commencing, or when any additional materials are included in the compost. This analysis should include origin of the material, pesticide and heavy metal content.



**SEEDS:** It has come to our attention at the Dargaville Field-day and other occasions that the Koanga Seeds are not performing, and because there is a question re the source of this seed, members need to request documentation on the organic status of this source of seeds, as it seems that most of it is not coming from an organic certified source. **REMINDER:** Unless seed is certified organic it is a RESTRICTED INPUT.

**POULTRY:** Where stock & poultry is run on certified organic properties but are not being certified themselves, if fed bought-in feed, they must still be fed the correct certified feed as they can contaminate the certified area. It appears that some members feel that as the stock aren't being certified it doesn't matter what they are being fed.



## **Book Review**

### **Homeopathic Handbook for Dairy Farming**

Author: Tineke Verkade

*The use of Homeopathic remedies in the Dairy Industry has grown significantly over the past few years. The knowledge and understanding of this field has grown at the same rate and farmers have reported their experiences with Homeopathy to Tineke who has updated her book in response to this practical experience. The revised 2nd Edition has many changes reflecting this feedback. The animal ailments covered have increased both in number and in the depth of information provided. The chapter now includes such ailments as calving paralysis, nasal catarrh, poisoning, pneumonia, woody tongue, infectious and septic conditions and stress. The book is presented in a spiral format with a laminated cover, a fine consideration given the practical use of the book. I would not hesitate to recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in discovering and learning more about how Homeopathy can be successfully and effectively applied to a dairy farm situation. I'm going out to buy some cows!!*

Michael Dong, MPS, RCHom

*The Dutch word to "practical" should be Tineke Verkade's middle name as the Revised Second Edition of her Homeopathic Handbook for Dairy Farming comprises a brilliant blending of knowledge and "hands-on" experience. Tineke was born in Holland and immigrated to NZ in 1977. A registered General Nurse with qualifications in Nursing and Tutoring in Nursing, she worked as a senior staff nurse at the Waikato Hospital for 16 years. During that time she gained her Diplomas in Naturopathy and Medical Herbalism and a Diploma in Classical Homeopathy. She has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Homeopathy and is at present working towards a Science Degree (note from HFS - Tineke has now completed and obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree). as well as running her private practice "Homeopathic Farm Support" which provides professional Homeopathic support and assistance to farmers.*

*This second edition of her book is very user friendly. The spiral binding and wipeable "muck resistant" pages are useful and bold green markers make each chapter easily located. The table of contents sets out very clearly where to find what you are looking for. This book is almost double the size of the previous one but continues in the style of easy, quick referencing of symptoms and complaints to remedies or treatments. A new chapter dealing with Calf Rearing has been included and several new remedies and additional animal ailments such as pneumonia, ryegrass staggers, woody tongue, stress, calving, paralysis and*

*others have also been added. Chapter 11 which is also a new chapter, offers a quick reference guide for any common symptoms and problems arising along with the corresponding and mainly used remedies.*

*For the farmer who is thinking about animal sickness and health and is interested in using Homeopathy as a tool, this book offers an expert introduction with chapters covering the history of Homeopathy, caring for remedies, steps to successful prescribing and selecting the right remedy. For farmers such as ourselves who are Organic/Biodynamic and have been using Homeopathy for 20 years, the comprehensive list of animal ailments and Materia Medica is invaluable for treating those "hard to get to the bottom of" cases. "What would Tineke use" we find ourselves thinking.*

*This book is full of information relevant to today's animal welfare challenges and should become an educational tool and reference guide to all those involved in the sustainable management of farming enterprise. It's so good it could even be taken into the home and applied to family health (well parts of it anyway!). Congratulations Tineke.*

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<http://www.walnuts.org.nz/>

*for the grand NZ pickled walnut competition*

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### **Bread and Butter Pickles**

**Makes 4 quarts**

Finely slice:

8 cups telegraph cucumbers (= 4 lebanese cucumbers)  
cut fat ones in half lengthwise

4 onions peeled

3 red capsicums

Put into a non-reactive bowl (ceramic, stainless steel, glass)

Sprinkle over ½ cup salt, and "toss in".

Leave to stand for several hours. With couple of stirs in that time, the quantity of vegetables will reduce in bulk.

Rinse well in cold water and drain.

Combine:

2 cups white vinegar

2 cups sugar

2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds

1 teaspoon pickling spice

2 teaspoons turmeric

2 teaspoons celery seeds

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Add the vegetables and cover. Bring back to boil and simmer for 3 minutes.

Place pickles in hot, sterilized jars, seal and leave to cool.

Goes well with any cheese, particularly a creamy brie or camembert, and a glass of wine....

*From a long ago NZ House and Garden*

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
(abridged) held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
at Pennell's Ostrich and Emu farm, Awanui**

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**PRESENT:** 23 members: Terry Higginson (chair), Helen Guthrie (sec/tres), 7 committee members and 14 general members.

There were 9 apologies received.

**MATTERS ARISING from the previous AGM**

The Te Rarawa fluoridation issues continue. It is thought that under the new Mayor, a Public referendum will be held. Discussion followed. For members interested in following up: [cat@TeRarawa.co.nz](mailto:cat@TeRarawa.co.nz)

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Discussion ensued from upcoming homeopathic workshop to how attendees to workshops have found "us" – mainly by advertising in the paper. Which brought us to

a) Werner's reminder that the web site must be kept updated, or don't bother with an "events page".

b) Because Kris and Terry have received so much offensive spam in their mailbox from the FNOG email contact, we have deleted this and other people's email addresses from our web contacts page. We discussed having a form to print off and fax or email, plus the possibility of a special 3 digit code to validate communications through our website.

Percy Tipene: email regarding news from OANZ which comes out every Friday. We have not had this coming to us, so have not been "officially" and regularly informed of what's going on. If anyone in the society would like this information, the contact is

[Gavin.Middleton@oanz.org.nz](mailto:Gavin.Middleton@oanz.org.nz)

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

As published in the Networker #35. Terry reiterated the effort put into organizing workshops, both successful and not.

**CERTIFICATION REPORT**

Kris Khaine gave a report on the certifications during the year. There were twenty-seven, two in the process. Many are not market producers, but have certification from a sense of pride and loyalty.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

Peter Harrison represented us at a recent Hui in Whangarei on the topic of GE cattle. The area covered by attendees was from Ruakura to the far Far North. Peter was asked, as he is fluent in Te Reo, is known in this region, and is well-respected.

The purpose was to discuss where to shift the research cattle, preferably to Maori Lease Land, as Ruakura research Centre is shutting down at short notice. This was advertised to Iwi for their particular interest. GE Northland was also represented, their submission well received.

A submission must be put to ERMA and public notice given in June / July.

Members of FNOG are encouraged to write letters to newspapers to stir up public reaction to this matter. The committee will be writing a letter in the same ilk.

**THAT** we compensate Peter for his expenses, and thank him for his efforts.

Werner Krieger spoke on the Topic of Seed Saving, offering some very interesting observations.

It is easy to save seed from one's garden and re-use it. However, after 20 years he has noticed:

In-breeding occurs because there is insufficient variety in the gene pool. E.g.

- beans start to go back to a parent species.
- Sweetcorn needs a minimum of 60 plants to pollinate and sustain the general pool.
- Pumpkin need a minimum of 300 pumpkins! (Seed Saver Book – in Library).
- Carrots get pollinated by wild carrot seed and will wreck the original within 2 years

With the effort of companies like Monsanto, commercial seed is getting internally programmed to require certain chemicals to help them grow. Thus our seed saving and **Continued Breeding** is getting more and more important. We need to become "**Seed Breeders**" more than savers.

If buying seed from Koanga, ask for the suppliers certification number. The previous owners were unfortunately sold seed from non-certificated seed supplies, which when sown resulted in deformed fruit, or did not germinate. The new management may well have solved this problem.

We need to charge healthy prices for our seed. Terry added that we need to swap amongst ourselves to keep the gene pools healthy, sowing a 50/50 mix of our own and other seed.

**ELECTIONS**

Terry then stood down as chair, and Helen took nominations from the floor for position of Chairman. Terry was keen to stand down after years of work. However, talks prior to the meeting have shown that no-one was ready yet to stand for nomination. Jan Arie Kamsteeg was willing to consider it after a further year of committee work.

Ilsa Kreiger spoke to Terry of the members appreciation for all his years of work. And asked where all the young members were, who should be taking over committee duties.

**THAT** Terry be nominated as Chairman

Kris / Rob carried

Terry then resumed the Chair.

Discussion followed re positions and expectations of committee members, and lack of volunteers from general membership, especially OFNZ members who are rarely seen at our meetings.

Time was also spent on the splitting of secretary and treasurer, or the status quo. In Helen's opinion, it depended on whether or not someone actually wanted to do just one of those jobs. The duties were not onerous. The secretary was willing to stand down, remaining on the committee, but to let some-one else come forward.

As no-one came forward, Helen was reappointed secretary / treasurer by acclamation.

Tony Henderson wished to stand down from the Vice Chair, due to work commitments.

**THAT** Jan Arie be appointed Vice-Chairman  
Tony / John carried

The following resignations from 2007 committee members were received:

Ian Sizer, John Kenderdine, Marty Robinson, Andy Cuckney

Volunteers / Nominations were then taken from the floor for committee members.

Rob, Tony, Graham, Grant (in absentia), Kris, Peter, re-standing.

**THAT** Hetty McClure and Jess Summers be nominated  
Kris / Helen carried

The nominations were declared closed and those folk elected by acclamation.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

#### **MINUTES OF THE FNOG COMMITTEE MEETING**

**(abridged) held on APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup> 2008**

**At 138 Showgrounds Road, Waimate North at 2pm**

**PRESENT:** Terry Higginson, Helen Guthrie, TonyHenderson, Kris Khaine, Peter Harrison, Jesse Summers, Graham Harris

**APOLOGIES:** Rob Downing, Grant Fallon, Jan Arie Kamsteeg, Hetty McClure

#### **MATTERS ARISING from the previous minutes**

Dargaville P & I Show: Gill Bacchus came to help for 3 days.

It seemed that the COFNZ members took a bit of a 'hammering' from conventional growers. Tony volunteered some hours – and managed to "dish out feed-back" to those folk.

They also received negative feedback regarding Koanga seeds not germinating.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

- Ian Sizer Homeopathic course, Book review on homeopathics for Dairy farming (put in Networker). That we advertise it in the Northern News.
- copy of the Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> Organics NZ newsletter..OANZ – Tony says they are struggling for

future funding, and may be seriously affected by the coming NZ national elections.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Balance at 27<sup>th</sup> January

FNOG

2261.63

**Received** \$3,694.25

**Payments** 2794.85

**Balance at April 11<sup>th</sup> 2008 3804.04**

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

OANZ

**Balance as at Jan 27<sup>th</sup> 5770.19**

**Receipts** NIL

**Payments** 3792.72

**Balance at April 11<sup>th</sup> 1977.47**

Accounts for payment

Helen Guthrie 15.00 Courier costs of gazebo to CONZ

11.00 Juice purchased for AGM

26.00

Peter Harrison 57.00 Costs for attendance at Topis Hui

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

##### **Food stalls at Farmers Markets etc.**

Some OFNZ producers are selling their goods at these events, along with goods from other suppliers not certificated. The committee agreed that the certified goods need to be distinctly separated and identified from non-certified goods, as in commercial supermarkets. Discussion followed on how to get the vendors to comply with this. We will put a notice in the next Networker, and ask members to query vendors on site when it is not clear what is and isn't certified.

Re processed Home produce arose – yes this should be done in a licensed commercial kitchen. However, this is not always so.

##### **OFNZ – last meeting.**

- Tony responded to a question re additional paperwork to the Property Management Plan. They are talking about cutting out some repetitive questions that don't need to be asked each year.
- Auditor training – HQ still want to use a Bio Gro trainer for new auditors. Suggestions were one weekend in each of the islands with Peter Downard, in a central location.
- Standards are going through.
- Suggested that OFNZ join Bio Gro as an associate member for \$60 to receive all updates.

##### **GE threats**

FNOG and OFNZ, as well as individual members need to write to ERMA, MP's and anyone else re the imminently threatened introduction of GE crops and animals. It is believed that GE viral mutations are already in humans, and no medicines are active against these viruses. Also that many medicines have some component that is GE modified.

*The meeting closed at 3.30pm*

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**Helen Guthrie**

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**Waimate North**

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**Mission statement of *The Organics Networker* :**

To gather and seek information pertinent to the organics movement

To publish this information for the benefit of growers and producers of organic food and related products

To be a forum, a community and a marketplace for organic growers and producers and their supporters

To present this knowledge and information in a professional and impartial manner

The Organics Networker is usually published four times a year.

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