

The Organics Networker



No 39 Summer 2009

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, February 15th

At 60 Rotokawa Rd, Awanui

Home of Michelle Mitcalfe and Paul Barr & family,

NO DOGS, please. CHILDREN welcome

Please bring a chair or cushion to sit on.

9.30am Tea. Coffee, Juice & Mingle

10 am Prompt start. There are vacancies to be filled on this year's committee.
President, Secretary and / or treasurer. Networker editor. Publicity. Morning tea convener
Please let us know if you would like to be nominated.

12 noon **BRING SOMETHING YUMMY FOR A SHARED LUNCH**

And the Trading table

Tea, coffee and juice supplied

After lunch Walk and talk with Michelle and Paul .

DIRECTIONS TO 60 Rotokawa Rd.

We are approx 7 kms north of Awanui and left off State Highway 1, 2nd house (Kauri Villa) on left, with a lake at the front.

We lead very busy lives, so please don't expect pristine grounds.

After the meeting etc if anyone wants to jump in the lake for a swim, bring togs and towel.

Michele and Paul are supporting members of FNOG, since moving to the Far North approx 11 years ago. They had a field day there probably about 8 years ago.

They currently have the business "Kotare Krafts" in The Plaza Commerce Street, Kaitaia.

Their shop stocks Heirloom and organic seeds and seedlings. They also carry stock of Organic seed raising mix, Organic Potting mix, Bio Gro Nufert Slow Release Fertiliser and Biofeed liquid Fertilizer. Prices and information on the products we have can be found

at www.organicseeds.co.nz
and www.kotarekrafts.co.nz

MINUTES OF THE F.N.O.G. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 24th February 2008 at Pennell's Ostrich and Emu farm, Kaimaumau Rd, Awanui at 10.15am.

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

APOLOGIES: Grant Fallon, Marty Robinson, Ian Sizer, Andy Cuckney, Linda Henderson, Wendy MacPherson, Jim Valley, M/M Fergusson

THAT the apologies be accepted: Werner / Kris carried

THE MINUTES OF THE 2007 AGM were read to the meeting.

THAT the minutes be accepted: Werner / Kris carried

MATTERS ARISING

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

INTRODUCTIONS

Were then held around the group as there were some new members at the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Ian Sizer: email regarding Homeopathic workshop to be held. Delayed from February till April. We need to advertise to attract "outsiders". Can also be used on cats and dogs.... Discussion ensued on 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

THAT the correspondence be received John / Richard carried

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 to go, 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 a letter 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 swop amongst ourselves to keep the gene pools healthy, sowing a 50/50 mix of 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 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. A lot of our certificated members are not just food producers - many work off-site at other full-time jobs.

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.

AGM February 15th 2009

AGENDA

Welcome

Introductions

Apologies

Minutes of the 2008 AGM meeting

Matters Arising

- Koanga Seeds: clarified

Correspondence

Financial report for 2008

Chairman's report - herein

OANZ report – Rob Downing

OFNZ report – Tony Henderson

General Business

- Constitution changes (page 8)
- Web site
- A & P shows
- Farmers' markets
- GE Brassicas – 09 outcome of trials!!!
- DVDs on Weed & Reap, Tillage
- OFNZ AGM in August
- Trapping
- Maximising gorse and kikuyu

Short Break for refreshments?

Elections:

- Chairman
- Vice - chairman
- Secretary / Treasurer
- Committee Members
- Networker Editor
- Auditor

Guest Speaker: Jan Arie Kamsteeg:

Organic International Trade and Traceability

Lunch

Walkabout with Michelle and Paul

Use of NRC traps demonstration

Publicity convener:

putting ads in papers for our up-coming field days.
Age, N.News and the Doubtless Bay Times.
writing articles for the papers re field-days and
advertising them in the papers.
Someone with a digital camera and a computer to
email the articles to at least 3 papers.

Librarian.

Not onerous. Maybe secretary or treasurer or one of
the committee could "mind" the box.

VACANCIES

SECRETARY

Take minutes of all meetings - AGM, committee, field day. Disperse
to committee members.

Supply shortened version to Networker editor if another person.

Send out notice of AGM details by mail as per constitution
requirements.

Respond to incoming mail where appropriate (not that much).

keep list of same for recording in minutes.

Write any outgoing letters on behalf of the committee, often with
their help and expertise. (also not a lot).

Maintain correspondence and minutes files.

Help organise field days and AGM.

Help look for and contact field day speakers.

Depending on secretary's location, Kris may continue to retrieve
mail from our Kaitia box and send on to you.

TREASURER

Send out subscription notices to support members. (FNOG and
OFNZ cert members pay during year as their re-certification comes
up.

continue to send out overdue notices to same when needed.

keep a register of all members and payments.

receipt of all payments banked by you.

Kris will bank any cheques that come to her, and any in mail if she
is still retrieving it. She will receipt them and send you a copy, with
banking slip, for your records.

Pay creditors.

Make sure each payment is noted in the minutes either as an
"account for payment", or "paid since last meeting".

Maintain Excel accounts worksheets for auditor to use at end of
year.

Reconcile bank statements, cheque book, receipts at end of year
with Excel accounts.

NETWORKER EDITOR.

Keep copies in Networker file.

Produce a Networker before each AGM and field day. (Feb, May,
Oct). Dec an optional extra.

networkers contain details of field days, agenda for meeting
(sometimes), précis of minutes since last Networker, incl the last
field day minutes.

Anything else you wish to put in, along with any articles from
members / others (rare - take some chasing up).

The majority now go out by email. Rest are printed in colour on
own computer and posted out. (around 25, I think).

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

HP L1706 flat computer screen

Canon MP830 fax, copier, scanner, (with possible phone), colour
and B & W printer.

Intel Pentium processor with Office XP - Word, Excel, Access,
Powerpoint, Publisher.

additional Nero Express CD burner programme, Photoshop

Refreshments convener:

bring along the field-day requirements: urn, cups, plates, tea,
coffee, sugar, mugs, some home baking or purchased biscuits
(perhaps members could take turns to bring the home baked
biscuits for M.tea?

continued.....

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am looking forward to this coming 2009 AGM – mainly because I shall definitely be standing down as Chair after ... who knows how long !

Also it will be great to see the Committee formed, hopefully with some of the present members and new members with new ideas.

I really do feel I have been in the Chair way too long – so please get in there and support your new Chairperson and Committee.

FNOG is your organization – so, don't be shy & support where you can.

The GE issue still continues with the farce of the Brassica field trials and we all need to remain very active in the area., support GE Free Northland and Steffan Browning's superb efforts.

We also should put more pressure on OANZ for getting the term "organic" to mean "certified organic" as this organization is acting for the organic industry.

Over the years I have encountered some interesting challenges and appreciated the Committee's and FNOG's support in overcoming obstacles., e.g. the formation of OFNZ, which has been a rather long road to seeing producers certified and we have learnt so much during it's formation, now very worthwhile especially for the

smaller producer for the NZ organic market. I have met many interesting people with diverse ideas making this a meaningful experience in representing the Far North.

FNOG has progressed with the assistance of Helen Guthrie as she took on a huge workload to promote our cause and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank her, hoping she will remain a part of FNOG.

I would also like to thank the Committee and the Certification Committee, both being extremely important, plus all our support members without whom we would find it difficult to exist. Thanks also to our FNOG Auditor Peter Brake, doing the difficult job of keeping us financially on track, well done to you.

Also, a big thank you to those who have represented us at the Waimate North and Dargaville Shows – your meaningful time and effort greatly appreciated.

I shall remain on the Committee if elected as the Certification Auditor & Kris will remain as the Certification Manager for now until replaced. Enough from me, see you at the AGM.

Terry Higginson

Don't forget SEED SAVING! Peter Harrison will have his stock of seeds available for purchase. Please help their survival by planting some, and letting some to go to seed to perpetuate the species. And bring any spare you have to pass on...

TRAPS

The Northland Regional Council has supplied a limited number of traps for pest control to our FNOG members.

There are Timms Traps for possum control as well as Tunnel Traps for rats and mustelids (stoats and weasels.) They are "kill traps" so there is no need to despatch live animals.

The idea is to pass them on to members so they can take responsibility for their own pests without the use of toxins.

They are available to any financial member who needs them – so be it, there is a limited number so it'll be first come first served.

We cannot provide for large commercial operations, but for those of you who wish to try them out let Terry know and he will demonstrate how they work.

It's a good opportunity to get used to using them so you can make future pest management decisions. These traps will be available from Terry at the AGM.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2008

As you can see, the audited accounts are not yet attached. These will go out seperately, as timing has played a big part in getting them to you by now. Despite my best efforts, I wasn't able to get the books to our Auditor in time before his holiday. So I have done a small summary for you to ponder. The detailed accounts will be forwarded to you as soon as possible.

This year we have had 69 paid-up members. 36 Support, 11 FNOG certifications and 22 OFNZ certifications.

RECEIPTS					INCOME
Support	Std	36 x 20	720		
	FNOG	11 x 20	220		
	OFNZ	22 x 20	440	1380	1380
Manager fees	FNOG	11 x 30	330		
	OFNZ	22 x 30	660	990	990
OFNZ fees		22 x 112.50		2475	2475
FNOG fees	OFNZ	22 x 30	660		
	FNOG	10 x 20	200	860	860
Admin Fees		22 x 10		220	220
Donations				51	51
Documents				140	140
Trading table				97	97
Gate Stickers				246	246
DVDs				25	25
Workshops				235	235
Income OANZ	Gazebo refund			956	956
	a/c closure			1324	1324
				8999	8999

EXPENSES		
OFNZ fees		2587
OFNZ levy		200
Manager fees		750
Bank fees (chq book)		3
P O Box		135
Assets Computer		1897
Gazebo		956
Advertising		548
Travel costs for rep		138
Networker honorarium		250
Running costs: comp ink		313
Stationery		155
Postage		226
Photocopying		277
Library book box		30
Field day costs: groceries		76
Speaker		100
Farm gate Stickers		327
DVDs		34

Bank Statement	
31.12.07	\$ 2,128.03
Income 2008	\$ 8,999.24
Expenses 2008	\$ 9001.72
Bank Statement	
31.12 08	\$ 2,125.55

WAI WURRI UPDATE

What a year 2008 was, everyone seems to be finding more and more to do, and that's good too, although age does creep up and bite one in the back !! "Tis good to be still eating our own produce though AND being given some of the local "wild" pork.

The pighunting saga continues, this time on a more positive note. Terry has been involved in rounding up the hunters and organising them to get their dogs Kiwi Aversion Trained, that is, using the right tools to discourage the dogs from killing Kiwis and hopefully other birds. The hunters then get certificates to show their dogs have been through the course. Now we have pighunters who ring us and ask if they can hunt pigs on our land, no longer trespassing with unruly dogs eliminating our Kiwis. Training the dogs AND their owners to be more user-friendly, although some are still releasing their own pigs. The spinoff from that is, we get offered some of the pork, and given an abandoned piglet they found in the back of our place that had been stood on at an early age, no doubt by it's mother. She (Babe) is very black and wild looking, and been in our care now for nearly four months. Feeling sorry for her, we provided her with a KuneKune companion piglet on Nov 5th, and provided them with a fenced paradise to live in, which has one way spring-loaded gates, eucalypts to rub on, room to race around after one another and their own bach. You've guessed it – if other pigs wander through, hopefully they'll fall in love with ours and

barge into the paddock, giving us our very own pork chops !!

Won't be my job, but I'll cook and eat the goodies.

On October 28th the geese that Tony & Linda gave us successfully raised 6 goslings; and second time lucky, with one eye on the sky, they avoided the hawks. There were 6 babes, which I encouraged to eat maize close to the house for protection, unfortunately one disappeared, but we have five large goslings now, 3 boys and 2 girls, big enough now to be safe. In the meantime I was trapping all the ground vermin. The geese seemed to need trial runs to acquire the necessary skills for parenting, like nesting away from the areas that flood. Now they are proud, educated young parents without too much interference from us. A friend of mine was raising them from egg stage then releasing to the flock - and fight, oh do they fight, and way too noisy. I preferred to let our young adult geese acquire their skills naturally. Here they are up against hawks, stoats, weasels, rats, eels, cats, cormorants, so it's no wonder there are very few wild ducks around.

Our garlic crop was one of the best we've had with thanks to Agrissentials products: good size and healthy, so it's back to the Saturday market for me.

Happy gardening everyone and have a great 2009.

Krissie

Free Biodynamic Workshop HAWKES BAY (you might have friends who would like to attend.....)

Technical Workshop on Biodynamics in the principals of biodynamics. This is a workshop for consultants, facilitators and mentors and others working in the organic sector.

This workshops aims to give you the skills to provide guidance to farmers on biodynamics with confidence.

Speakers : Peter Proctor and Gareth Bodle

Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th February 2009

Please register your interested now, as places for this workshop are limited. More detailed information about this workshop will be send to you after we have received your confirmation.

**“ABRIDGED” MINUTES OF
GENERAL FIELD DAY MEETING
Held at Sweetwater Rd
on October 19th at 10 am**

PRESENT: Committee: Terry Higginson, Helen Guthrie, Kris Khaine, Tony Henderson, Rob Downing, plus at least 15 members.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF THE
PREVIOUS FIELD DAY** meeting May 18th
Farm gate Stickers : now printed, ready for sale.
Cost price around \$2.50 each. The meeting decided that we would sell them at \$2 each.

FINANCES

Balance at May 18 th	\$ 3330.56
Balance at Oct 18 th	\$ 3358.51

Less un-presented cheques \$ 740.40

New balance \$ 2618.11

The remaining funds in the OANZ cheque account were transferred to the FNOG account, and a cheque issued for the payout of the computer equipment.
The OANZ account is now closed.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Constitution paragraphs 9.3, 10.1, 12.4

The secretary pointed out that our general practice of meeting notification does not correlate to the requirements in our constitution. Because our practice is what works best for members, do we change the practice, change the constitution or leave things as they are?

DVDs from Mary Ralston.

Copies will be held in our Library. However, members are able to order their own copies from FNOG as they are on the FNOG computer. (\$3.50 each)

Trapping workshops

Due to the success of previous workshops, NRC have made a considerable investment in traps, to be used instead of toxins. If members still want to use toxins, then please could they get instruction on what and how to use, to stay within the organic certification criteria. Members should also keep a record of what's caught over the year to give NRC a good idea of what's happening. There will be only a few traps (Timms & tunnel, also Kill traps that are bolted onto a tree) per property for folk to try out. Everybody needs to take responsibility for their own property, not call on the Council to do so. Members should let Terry know if they are interested.

Transition Towns

There may be a place for FNOG to be involved, to show folk how to do organic gardening. Rather than offer we will wait to be asked. Transition Kaitia has some ideas to follow through.

OANZ funding

OANZ have requested \$500 contribution from OFNZ. The situation is considered unfair, as members are then paying a fee twice over for selling their produce. Some believe that this is an unfair burden on growers. As Rob Downing is on the OANZ Board, he explained their side of the request. At the OANZ meeting, sector groups were asked what they could contribute as a whole. It was felt that \$50,000 would be a gesture to government that the organic sector as a whole is serious about promotion and conversion of conventional farms and growers.

\$750 – 800,000 is given out each year from MAF / Govt funding / Min of Education and Development.

**Direct financial support – User Defined Packages
(Maximum totals for both funding rounds)**

Regional projects	\$ 152,500
Dairy & pastoral	\$ 294,905
Pipfruit	\$ 80,000
Vegetables	\$ 80,000
Wine	\$ 60,000
Avocados	\$ 40,000
Kiwifruit	\$ 39,500
Maori projects	\$ 38,000
Biodynamic Consortium	\$ 45,000
Experiential training project	\$ 30,000
BHU mentorship project	\$ 20,000

Communications and Promotion

- Promoting organics through a series of road shows, media interviews and regular newspaper/magazine columns
- Raising the profile and lobbying for organics within other primary sector bodies
- Providing a voice dedicated to speaking on behalf of the organic sector and a point of contact for media enquiries
- Promoting New Zealand organics at BioFach 2007 and All Things Organic 2008
- Commissioning and communicating market research into New Zealand's organic sector
- Making submissions on behalf of the organic sector about genetic modification, climate change, education, mandatory food additives and land management issues

Leadership

- Generating acceptance for organics amongst all political parties
- Providing a unified organization which represents organics in official forums
- Forming and maintaining links with organic organizations internationally
- Lobbying central and local government, researchers, education providers and international organisations to

create more favourable legislation, regulations, and export rules for New Zealand organic producers

Coordination

- Funding member representatives to attend Task Team and Board meetings
- Hosting member organisations free of charge on a Fieldays premiere site in 2007 and 2008
- Funding a coordinator under the Organic Advisory Programme specifically to deliver organic advice to Maori communities
- Assistance with drafting Sustainable Farming Fund bids
- Coordinating a cross-sector conference in 2007
- Reinstating annual organic awards which recognize organic leaders

This year much time has been taken to make sure OANZ would make it through this year. OANZ had to reapply for funding in 2008.

Growers already pay a commodity levy to Veg-Fed that should be going to OANZ, to prop up the organic industry. Veg-Fed, in effect, use the money against us with research into GE etc. Organics are now close to producing \$0.5 billion of goods a year.

THAT Tony, as our OFNZ rep, pushes the Veg-Fed commodity levy funding to be used by OANZ. That the sector groups are considering withholding this levy in a separate bank account to make their point.

The meeting closed at 11.40am.

MINUTES OF FNOG COMMITTEE DEC 19TH 2008 by teleconference

This was a short meeting to verify the income and expenses since the last meeting, so that the books could be closed and presented to the auditor.

The final balance in the bank account is \$2,125.55

MINUTES OF FNOG COMMITTEE JAN 19TH 2009 by teleconference

This was another short meeting to discuss the AGM agenda. The accounts were not yet available from the auditor.

RE:AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The following are those mentioned in a previous committee meeting.

9.3. At least 30 days written notification of each general Meeting will be given to members at the current address.....

Change to 14 days notification by mail or email.....

10.1 The AGM date will be set by the Executive Committee no less than 4 months before the meeting date.

Change to "to be set no less than 2 months before the meeting date:"

12.4 Nominations.....at least 30 days before the day fixed for the AGM. (Oral may be from the floor at the AGM).

Change or leave?

OVERSIZE COURGETTES?

Chop courgettes and onions into pieces.
Lightly cook in a pan until starting to soften.

Place into a casserole or similar type dish.

Sprinkle with chopped garlic, grated cheese, fresh herbs, sundried tomatoes, anything else you fancy.

Bake in a moderate oven till the (cheese) topping is golden.



KABAK MUCVER

3 firm courgettes

2-3 T olive oil

1 large onion chopeed

Chopped garlic to taste

3 T flour

3 beaten eggs

8 Oz feta cheese, crumbled

Fresh herbs

1 t red chilli (optional)

Or red capsicum diced small (for colour)

Seasoning



Wash the courgettes, grate, put into colander, sprinkle with salt, leave to weep for 5 mins.

Squeeze the courgettes to extract the juice.

Heal oil, sauté the courgettes, onions and garlic till they begin to colour.

Remove from heat and cool.

Make a batter fom the flour and eggs, beat in the cooled courgette mix, add the feta, herbs pepper and seasoning.

Shallow fry fritters until golden each side.

Serve warm with whatever you fancy.

N.B. Last time I made them I was so tired – did it from memory. Except that I forgot to pre-cook the veges. They still tasted great and cooked enough!

I leave out the chilli, and serve them with sweet chilli sauce / yoghurt / sour cream.

This made 3 servings for one person.

A friend's husband hate courgettes but loved these. Needless to say, he was not told what was in them!

**Soil & Health
Association of New
Zealand**

NGOs Visit GE Field Trial Site
Today

Soil & Health and GE Free NZ are calling for the closure of all Plant & Food Research* genetically engineered (GE) field trials.

The crown research institute Plant and Food Research's GE brassica trial site in Lincoln, Canterbury, has been shown to be in breach of controls imposed by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) by allowing a GE plant to flower and release pollen in the open field. Soil & Health and GE Free NZ representatives will be visiting the site today to ensure removal of illegal GE plants.

"The ten year field trial has been shown to be sloppy and environmentally dangerous following its first year of operation, just as submitters opposed to the trial had been fearful of," said Soil & Health spokesperson Steffan Browning, who discovered the flowering GE plant during a surprise private monitoring visit ahead of Christmas.

"The trial planted ahead of GE Free NZ's High Court appeal against the ERMA decision, has failed to monitor volunteer plant leaving a GE debris filled site open to the elements and a direct threat to our environment," said Claire Bleakley, president of GE Free NZ in Food and Environment, who located the 'secret' trial spot with Mr Browning in August last year.

Former Crop & Food scientist Dr Elvira Dommissie added her concern with the discovery. "Yet again, conditions of a GE field trial have been breached. GE brassica pollen is likely to have been released in the Lincoln area. If the Crop & Food (Plant &

Food) staff responsible can't manage their field trials without serious breaches of conditions, then the field trials should be stopped."

In 2006 ERMA approved a trial – GMF 06001- to genetically modify four species of Brassica – cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and kale with *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) insecticidal genes.

"These dangerous, irresponsible GE field trials must not be allowed to contaminate our horticulture land and further endanger farmer livelihood. The researcher's cavalier attitudes, shoddy research, secret locations and poor adherence to controls mean that ERMA must immediately call a halt to all trials," Ms Bleakley said.

At the December visit the 'secret' site was overgrown with weeds and littered with stalk residue from the GE kale. Plants had been cut off above ground level and not dug out as required in the controls. The re-growth from cut stalks of the buffer rows were flowering and setting seed.

Many GE brassica stalks had also re-grown with at least one kale having bolted producing a flowering stem and seed pod. The plant's label confirmed that it was a GE plant that had sprouted from the GE stem left in the soil. The seed pod is evident in the attached photograph.

There is a possibility that the buffer plants have been pollinated by the GE pollen. The GE pollen may also have been carried several kilometres by either insects or wind.

"The site is within two km of Lincoln University's organic Biological Husbandry Unit and Heinz-Wattie's certified organic Kowhai farm," said Ms Bleakley. "Neighbouring properties are privately owned farming, horticulture and lifestyle blocks, and are likely to have brassica plants. This event is not science for the benefit of New Zealanders, but is endangering New Zealand's

GE Free brand and international trading reputation."

When Plant and Food Research was rung and told of the breach the GE brassica trial, Soil & Health were told that the trial's managing scientist Mary Christey was on holiday and fellow scientist Dr Tony Conner fielded the call. When Mr Browning went down to the site a second time he found that the offending GE flower stalk and seed pod had been removed but many plants with re-growth remained.

"The level of misinformation by Plant and Food Research and auditor MAF-Biosecurity New Zealand's communications staff is very concerning," said Mr Browning. "Saying they were twisting the truth would be being kind to them. These people seem to be prepared to say anything and only admitted to a GE flowering stem when The Press presented my photograph to them."

"Still denying open flowers defies belief and a science institution presented with a fertilised seed pod appears to need a lesson about the birds and the bees. And for GE field trial auditor MAF-Biosecurity to say no breach had occurred when re-growth volunteer plants remained is disappointing and flies in the face of the trial's 'strict' conditions."

"Last year started with major monitoring compliance breaches by another crown research institute, Scion at the GE pine tree field trial site at Rotorua. This led to similar denials and misrepresentation from Scion, MAF- Biosecurity NZ and ERMA, although later led to the closure of the site and felling of all the GE trees."

"If the ERMA and Biosecurity New Zealand fail to take action to punish the culprits they will once again have proved themselves to be nothing more than facilitators for the cheap tricks turned by the rogue scientists at Plant and Food Research rather than regulators working in the national interest. The trial must be shut

down immediately and brassica seed and honey within the Lincoln area tested for adventitious GE contamination,” said Mrs Bleakley.

“GE field trials in New Zealand are becoming a real threat to the

farmer and the clean green brand. Today we will revisit the site to ensure New Zealand’s GE free status is protected,” said Bleakley and Browning.

Soil & Health shares a GE free vision with GE Free NZ in food and environment, and has a vision of an Organic 2020.

***Plant & Food Research
Needs To Drop GE***

Plant & Food's misleading statements and conflicts of interest further show the need for genetic engineering (GE) field trials to be abandoned says the Soil & Health Association of NZ.

"Plant & Food's spin shows desperation to continue its GE field trials taking Aotearoa New Zealand down a path away from its current Clean Green and 100% Pure branding," said Soil & Health spokesperson Steffan Browning.

"A revamp of the board, management and direction of this important crown research institute is required if intentional false information around risky science is to be the norm."

In an attempt to cover up failings at the institute's GE brassica field trial on National Radio yesterday Plant & Food Research's Chief Operating Officer Dr Bruce Campbell stated that only one flower was the issue, that a guard row would catch any pollen, and that no plants remained at the site.

"Dr Campbell was quite wrong to say that there was just one flower on one stem. Several flowers had opened and Dr Campbell and his staff not only have had access to my photographs of the split stem with the two flower heads that included a seed pod from a fertilised flower but have that

stem in their possession," said Mr Browning.

"Each of the opened flowers will have released pollen into the environment and GE seed pods may have resulted on non-GE brassicas in the area as a result of this negligence. A wide range of brassicas including broccoli, cabbage, forage kale and cauliflower would have been susceptible to insect or wind pollination."

"Dr Campbell was wrong to suggest that a guard row completely surrounding the site would intercept any pollen – it would not. Even if there had ever been a complete and robust guard or buffer row, it would never have been able to ensure that no pollen would go beyond the site. However the original brassica guard row had been chopped back in August and the occasional regrowth and many weeds would not miraculously scoop up all the GE pollen released. That was never the function of the so-called guard rows."

"Dr Campbell's statement that all GE plants had been removed and destroyed was also wrong. The same sloppiness by Plant & Food Research that allowed a GE plant to flower continued with at least one experimental plant and one buffer row plant still evident among the weeds at the site when we inspected following the supposed removal of all remaining live plants."

"The field trial site is another example of the lack of monitoring of GE science in New Zealand. This so-called GE research is also a huge waste of the scarce research dollar. There is no demand, locally or internationally for GE crops. There are organic growers out there who can successfully grow brassicas without harmful synthetic pesticides"

"ERMA's consent conditions for the field trial state that following the growing season monthly inspections for volunteer plants must occur and any volunteers must be removed and killed by steam (autoclaving). Dr Campbell stated on radio that monitoring

was carried out more regularly than required, yet when I inspected the site in December the dozens of plants showing regrowth were many months old and at least one had flowered. There was no evidence that anyone had been moving in the site and the principal scientist involved had started her holidays," said Mr Browning.

"This is the same type of sloppiness that occurred at the Scion GE pine tree trial which also showed very poor monitoring of consent conditions."

"Dr Campbell, Plant & Food's management and board appear to be blinded to the risks of GE and need to reassess the appropriateness of their involvement with GE and in fact any positions in the ERMA and Foundation of Research, Science and Technology (FORST) funding agency."

"Such blatant misinformation coming from a research organisation that is largely funded by the taxpayer shows a need for a major shake up and revamp of agricultural and horticultural science in this country."

"It appears that Plant & Food have strong GE intent as in a statement on the merge of the crown research institutes Crop & Food and HortResearch into a single organisation Plant & Food Research, Dr Campbell promoted the benefit of combined GE plant research and stated, *"both science companies had similar stances on the use of genetic engineering in food production, as both were using biotechnology."*

The chair of Plant & Food is a FORST director and two senior HortResearch staff were on the ERMA GE Brassica field trial committee that approved this field trial.

"Plant & Food and most of its staff have the capacity for better results if resources weren't being tied up in the dangerous, risky and unproven GE area. Plant & Food through its predecessors have



produced fantastic results in a range of non-GE areas that do not carry the risks of GE.”

Oral cancer: Mouthwashes increase risk nine times

This report is from the NZ Charter Health Charter Newsletter.
January 2009

The following series of articles is presented so as that our practitioners can view not only the published study extracts, but also the Skeptics opinion.

Alcohol-based mouthwashes may be a cause of oral cancer, researchers say. The risk increases nine-fold among smokers and drinkers. The research team, which includes dentists, says that dentists should stop recommending mouthwashes such as Listerine, and that the products should be removed from the shelves. After reviewing the data, researchers at the University of Queensland say there is “sufficient evidence” of a link between the products and oral cancer.

The study, which involved 3,200 people, found a nine-fold increase in risk among smokers, and a five-fold increased risk among drinkers. It's thought the ethanol in mouthwash helps nicotine and other cancer-causing substances to permeate the mouth. The ethanol can also cause acetaldehyde, another known carcinogen.

(Source: Australian Dental Journal, 2009; 53: 302-5).

“The fastest growing category of the international food industry is in organics and Plant& Food and FORST would be better to invest

Study Connects Mouthwash with Oral Cancer

A study headed by Professor Michael McCulloch, chairman of the Australian Dental Association's therapeutics committee and associate professor of oral medicine at Melbourne University, indicates that there is “sufficient evidence” linking mouthwashes containing alcohol with an increased risk of oral cancer. The study says that such mouthwashes should be removed from store shelves or they should have health warnings, according to the Sunday Telegraph.

The ethanol in the mouthwash permits carcinogens to penetrate the mouth's lining more easily, the scientists claim in the study, which was published in the Dental Journal of Australia. McCulloch said that the mouthwash “increases the permeability of the mucosa” to cancer-causing substances like nicotine. The professor also noted that acetaldehyde, a toxic product from the breakdown of alcohol, is a carcinogen as well and could build up in the oral cavity.

“We believe there should be warnings,” he said. “If it was a facial cream that had the effect of reducing acne but had a four-to-five-fold increased risk of skin cancer, no one would be recommending it.”

Although the research suggests that simply drinking alcohol could also be a cancer risk, such consumption “usually did not involve swishing it around the mouth,” the Telegraph writes.

However, the study has

in that exciting, proven and environmentally safe growth area.”

many detractors. Dr. Neil Hewson, of the Australian Dental Association, is one. Hewson says that the recent study is “very interesting,” but indicated that more research needed to be done on the issue. “It hasn't actually been established there is a direct relationship between mouthwashes with alcohol and oral cancer,” he said. Also, a study that appeared in an American dental journal in 2003 had a different conclusion. That research said “it was unlikely that using mouthwashes containing alcohol would increase the risk of oral cancer,” according to The New Zealand Herald.

Thousands of people each year are affected by oral cancer, and half of those afflicted die within five years of the initial diagnosis, the Telegraph reports.

Reactions: Professors, companies quarrel over mouthwash study

Sources in this Story

The Sunday Telegraph:

Mouthwash ‘can cause oral cancer’

The New Zealand Herald: Consult dentist before binning mouthwash—Ministry

The Australian: Rift over mouth rinse and cancer

The Australian: Mouthwash booster was funded by maker

Laurence Walsh, the head of the University of Queensland's School of Dentistry, questioned the results of the study, contending that mouthwash could actually prevent cancer. “There is a whole range of reasons why some mouth rinses would actually reduce the chance of the cancer because they impair the

production of molecules that do have cancer-causing effects like acetaldehyde," he said, according to The Australian in a Jan. 12 article. Walsh also said that, "There is literature which is now recommending that mouth rinses be used to reduce bacteria which produce acetaldehyde and there is a fairly strong consensus internationally that mouth rinses containing alcohol aren't linked to cancer."

But The Australian published a follow-up article in which Professor Walsh conceded that he has received funding from Listerine producer Johnson & Johnson. Professor McCullough of the mouthwash study had first pointed out Walsh's possible conflict of interest: Johnson & Johnson paid for some of his expenses but did not directly fund any of his research. McCullough also urged the Australian Dental Association to reconsider its endorsement of Listerine.

Johnson & Johnson has denied that its product could

increase the threat of cancer, claiming that the study used a "selective group of clinical data." The company's statement also said that, "All reviewers came to a similar conclusion: that evidence from at least 10 epidemiological studies published over the last three decades strongly suggests that use of alcohol-containing rinses does not increase the risk of oral cancer."

Reference: Mouthwash study; cancer guide Wiley InterScience provides the abstract for the McCullough study that was published in the Australian Dental Journal. The full article is available for registered users.

Source: Wiley InterScience: The role of alcohol in oral carcinogenesis with particular reference to alcohol-containing mouthwashes.

Editorial Comment. New Zealand Ministry of Health

Since this in depth research published in the Australian Dental Journal, the New Zealand Ministry of Health has implemented a precautionary principle to protect New Zealanders Health. They have advised New Zealanders to consult their dentists or as the

Herald headline stated
"Consult dentist before binning mouthwash-Ministry." Question did the Herald mean rubbish bin ?

Past Performance

In the past the Ministry has removed dietary supplements from the market place when in fact there has been no evidence that they were harmful. The most recent case being, the politically motivated Pan dietary supplement recall debacle. When it comes to reputable university research the Ministry appears to have implemented a double standard instead of removing a possible cancer causing agent immediately.

It is interesting to note that the mouthwash manufacturers have used epidemiological studies to back up their product.

Try presenting epidemiological studies for dietary supplements, the Ministry have in the past responded in the past with "not satisfactory science".

It is up to each practitioner to study the above and all other information that comes to hand and make precautionary recommendations to patients accordingly.

Well - here is a gap, and it's easier to put something in, rather than play with font sizes on other pages.

My rhubarb was wilting badly most days, despite some watering, so I stripped the plants fairly heavily, gathering 2kgs of "fruit" once the leaves and ends were removed. It's all bottled for the winter now. But it put me in mind of a yummy rhubarb jelly that needed wait for Christmas. It is a celebration jelly, all the same.

RHUBARB AND MUSCAT JELLY – Nigella Lawson (of course), *How to Eat*.

1 kg rhubarb
340 g caster sugar
500 ml water
Juice and zest of one orange (blood orange if you have one)
Approx 300 ml muscat wine
8 leaves gelatine



Preheat the oven to 190 degrees C.

Chop the rhubarb into 2 – 3 cm chunks and put in a large ovenproof dish. (30cm x 20 cm x 5 cm deep is perfect). Sprinkle over the sugar, add the orange juice and zest, and the water. Cover with a lid or foil. Bake for an hour. Take from oven, remove cover and cool.

Strain cooked rhubarb carefully into a measuring jug. This should give you about 700 mls fluid. Put pulp aside for use later. Add muscat to juice to make it up to 900 mls. Taste: you may want some more sugar, juice or muscat.

Remember to add more gelatine if you add more liquid.

Lightly oil (flavourless) a 2-pint jelly mould (not a ring mould – use a more interesting shape). Soak the gelatine in a dish of cold water until softened. Put two ladlefuls of rhubarb and muscat syrup into a saucepan and heat up. Take off the heat before it boils. Squeeze out gelatine leaves and whisk into the syrup. When they're dissolved, pour the contents of the pan back into the jug. Pour into the jelly mould and place in the fridge to chill and set.

To serve, turn out carefully onto the serving dish. The jelly should be a glorious clear rose colour.

HAVE YOU ANY FAVOURITE RECIPES USING YOUR ORGANIC PRODUCE?

Would you like to promote the work of your growers, free of charge, to a national and international audience? Wouldn't you love to see a sumptuous photographically rich cookbook produced that featured only New Zealand Organic growers? Hello Mandi Lynn Porta here, former OFNZ rep to OANZ Council. I am an organic blueberry farmer in the Wellington Region and I am also a professional photographer.

I am working on a project to promote the excellent work of New Zealand Organic Growers, both for the table and the environment. The project combines three of my passions, organics, photography, and writing by **creating a cookbook** of cherished recipes of the actual organic growers themselves.

I have about 4 recipes that people go mad for at parties (I have actually had a que at party 10 people deep for my barbequed blueberry buttermilk pancakes). I am sure many other growers have had similar experiences and would enjoy the benefits of having their recipes and farms featured in the book. I think it is a wonderful way to highlight all of the amazing work that we do every day.

A cookbook would reach deep in to the population and would spread the word about our organic goodness. And this one is going to be so pretty :). I have a publisher who is very keen and has given me the greenlight.

All I need from you is to spread the word to the growers and give them the opportunity to be part of it or not. It will cost them nothing but the time required to write down and send me their favourite recipes.

I thought it would be fun as well to have regional pot luck gatherings where people can bring their recipes and I can further interview the growers and take more photos of their regions and their farms. If there is anyone out there who would like to coordinate their region for this please let me know. My season begins to wind down late March and I will be available for visits after that (Except for Easter weekend as we have an annual Easter Egg hunt on the farm and the local children would be bummed if I missed a year.)

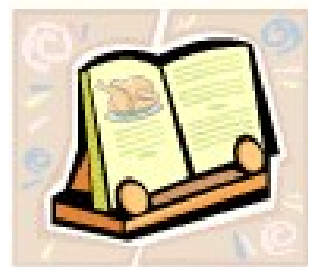
We also run an [Earth Camp](#) at our farm to help local children learn about organics. If anyone has any recipes that are dead easy and appeal to children please encourage them to send them. We will trial them on the weekends at the Earth Camp with the kids. We will let them pick the child-friendly winners and may even make a separate cookbook for kids if we get enough recipes.

Thanks in advance for your help. You can log on to [the books blog](#) to find out how the recipe trials are progressing see some of the images, as well as find out the publishing dates.

Cheers,

Mandi Lynn

Email: organiccookbooks@gmail.com



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New Zealand Plant Finder The unique where-to-buy-it list of over 46,000 plants and seeds
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This is from a [www USA site War on You](#) but I thought this particular report would interest you.

Bracketed comments are from the sender of the email which was sent to my friend.

Genetically Modified Crops Implicated in Honeybee Colony Collapse Disorder

As the disappearance of honeybees continues, researchers are trying desperately to discover the cause of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). General consensus at this point is that there is more than one cause and the latest culprit may be genetically modified crops.

This is one area of research being neglected as mainstream scientists insist GM crops are safe.

For the last 100 years, beekeepers have experienced colony losses from bacteria, (foulbrood), mites (varroa and tracheal) and other pathogens. These problems are dealt with by using antibiotics, miticides and other methods of pest management. Losses are slow and expected and beekeepers know how to limit the destruction. This new mass die-off is different in that it is virtually instantaneous with no warning of the impending collapse.

[Another key fact about CC is that it is a novel misbehaviour - the workers deserting the hive. Previously a golden rule of beekeeping had been that bees would not desert open brood (i.e. eggs or larvae in cells before they pupate). But in CC, workers fail to return to the hive in overwhelming proportion. This is almost unheard-of].

John McDonald, a bee keeper in Pennsylvania with a background in biology, speculated that genetically modified crops could play a role in CCD. Although the government

constantly reassures us that these genetic manipulations are safe for both humans and the environment, his hope is that looking more closely at these issues might raise questions about those assumptions.

The common bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) supplies the most commonly used segment of transgenic DNA. *Bt* has been used for decades by farmers and gardeners to control crop damage from butterfly larvae. Now, instead of spraying this bacterium directly on the crops, where it is eaten only by the target insects, the genes containing the insecticidal traits are incorporated into the genome of the plant itself.

[The synthetic genes used to make 'Bt' GM-plants are not from, or copied from, *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The proteins they code for do not occur naturally but are truncated versions of *B. t.* toxins. Furthermore the codons chosen by the 'engineers' who synthesize these truncated genes are systematically changed to resemble those of the plant, which differ considerably from those of the bacterium].

As the genetically modified plant grows, these *Bt* genes are replicated in every cell of the plant, including pollen. Therefore, every cell of each GM plant contains its own poison aimed to kill the target insect. The target insects consume some portion of the plant, then once ingested, the toxin produced by the *Bt* genes causes crystallization in the guts of boring larvae and thus death. The primary toxin is a protein called Cry1Ab. In the case of field corn, the targeted insects are stem and root-borers and butterfly larvae.

Although scientists “assure” us that bees (hymenopterans) are not affected, there are *Bt* variants available that target beetles, flies and mosquitoes. There is

indisputable proof that Cry1Ab is present in beehives. Beekeepers spray *Bt* under hive lids to control the wax moth because the larvae cause messy webs on the honey. Canadian beekeepers have noted the disappearance of this moth even in untreated hives, apparently the result of bees ingesting Cry1Ab while foraging in GM canola plants.

Bees forage heavily on corn flowers to obtain pollen for the rearing of young bees. These pollen grains also contain the *Bt* genes of the parent plant, because they are present in the cells from which pollen forms. Mr. McDonald believes it may be possible that while Cry1Ab has no direct lethal effect on young bees, there may be some sub-lethal effect, such as immune suppression, acting as a slow killer.

[The behavioural disorder entailed in CC is indeed, in itself, a sub-lethal effect.']

Tens of millions of acres of genetically modified crops are allowing the *Bt* genes to move off crop fields and contaminate other flowers from which bees gather flowers. "Given that nearly every bite of food that we eat has a pollinator, the seriousness of this emerging problem could dwarf all previous food disruptions". (John McDonald) He proposed an experiment to compare colony losses of bees from regions where there are no GM crops to losses of colonies where they are exposed. He wanted to put test hives where GM crops are so distant from the hives that the foraging worker bees would have no exposure to GM crops. Researches readily dismissed his ideas and no one followed through with such an experiment.

[New Zealand activists have in effect done this, in that we have kept GM crops out of NZ, so that our bees are in 'regions where there are no GM crops'. It is very disappointing that leaders of the Natl Beekeepers Assn, and the ludicrous FairyAngelPeewee (as she calls herself) who has seized control of the Auckland Beeks Club, have failed to join this activism. They don't know what's good for themselves (and for all other beeks)]

At this point, he (John) decided to do his own investigation at his own expense. He established 8 colonies in new wooden hives to ensure no possible disease transfer from old hives. The bees were fed continuously with sugar syrup until the hives were placed at the selected locations.

"At both sites the flowers of goldenrod provided ample pasturage, with the honey flow commencing in the middle of August and tapering off by the second week in October. Medium-depth empty honey storage supers (a super is the part of the beehive used to collect honey) were put on the hives at this time in addition to the three brood chambers already there. By the simple expedient of lifting the hives from behind, progress could be roughly monitored.

This monitoring showed that the hives of the farmland bees, while numerous, were not gaining weight. Meanwhile, the non-farm colonies steadily gained weight. This part of the experiment was terminated Oct. 14 with the removal of the honey storage supers, with these results: The farmland bees had not even started to work in the honey supers and will require extensive feeding before winter sets in. The non-farm bee colonies produced, in total, nearly 200 pounds of extra honey in addition to about 150 pounds per hive stored in the over-wintering brood supers. These colonies will be left in place to see whether the die-off of last season is repeated. These results should encourage new research to determine what factor or factors are present in farm country to cause such a discrepancy in honey production." John McDonald

John McDonald is a beekeeper in Pennsylvania. He welcomes comments or questions about the bee problem at mactheknife70@hotmail.com.

Another study indicating that *Bt* may be contributing to the death of honey bees was undertaken in Mexico. This study compared the effects on young adult honeybees of 2 concentrations of Cry1Ab (3 and 5000 parts per billion) to a chemical pesticide, imidacloprid. 3 different effects were evaluated by the researchers:

1. Survival of honeybees during sub- chronic exposure to Cry1Ab.

2. Feeding behavior.
3. Learning performance at the time that honeybees become foragers.

Neither test concentration of Cry1Ab had lethal effects on the honeybees; however, when exposed to the higher concentration, feeding behavior was affected. The bees spent longer ingesting the syrup which contained the Cry1Ab which could mean smaller amounts of pollen would be collected. These bees also had impaired learning performance. Honeybees normally do not continue responding to an odor when no food is present, but should be discouraged and seek other sources. These bees continued responding to the odor which again, could affect pollen gathering efficiency. This study indicates that although *Bt* is not directly lethal to honeybees, it could indirectly lead to colony death due to failure to collect enough food to sustain the hive.

These findings may be the key to the difference in honey production in Mr. McDonald's experiment. *Bt* appears to have non-lethal effects which become apparent only when the lethal effect is absent. Although not directly lethal to non-target organisms, the toxins from the '*Bt*' gene potentially put non-target insects such as honeybees at risk.

* * *

TOXIC POLLEN THREATENS MONARCHS *From the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)*
May 1999 - old but still relevant

A new scientific study published in Nature magazine has found that the pollen from transgenic *Bt* corn kills monarch butterflies in laboratory tests. The study, done by John Losey and his colleagues at Cornell University, found that nearly half of the monarch butterfly caterpillars fed on milkweed leaves dusted with *Bt* pollen died after four days compared to none of those consuming pollen from normal corn.

Also, those that survived exposure to *Bt* pollen grew more slowly than those fed non-*Bt* pollen.



Monarchs feed

exclusively on milkweed, which grows in abandoned lots, along roadside, and near agricultural fields. In the studies, the test pollen was sprinkled on the milkweed leaves at densities judged visually to be similar to those found in nature.

The study, which must be replicated and extended to the field, suggests that a portion of the monarch population that migrates through the Corn Belt every year may be at risk from wind-borne *Bt*-corn pollen. About fifty percent of the monarch population moves through the Midwest each spring and summer on its way from Mexico to southern Canada.



In one preliminary field study, Iowa State University scientists confirmed the toxicity of *Bt*-corn pollen to monarch caterpillars. Nearly twenty percent of the caterpillars fed milkweed leaves taken from *Bt*-corn fields and adjacent areas died, compared to no deaths among caterpillars exposed to normal corn pollen.

About 20 million acres of *Bt* corn were planted in the United States in 1998 and similar if not greater acreage is expected this year. Most *Bt*-corn varieties express the *Bt* toxin in their pollen.

It is not surprising that a toxin aimed at the European corn borer (moth caterpillars)

would also affect the caterpillars of the monarch butterfly. In fact other moths and butterflies found in the vicinity of *Bt* corn, including those that are endangered, may also be affected by the toxic pollen. The US endangered species list names 19 species of endangered or threatened moths and butterflies.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



failed to assess the risks of Bt-corn pollen to monarchs or any other moths or butterflies. Prior to the approval of Bt corn, the Agency required a few tests in which Bt toxin was fed to honeybees and lacewings, among other organisms, but did not require tests on any nonpest moths and butterflies.

Monarch butterflies are widely admired for their long-up to 3000-mile-migration and their spectacular habit of overwintering massed together in trees in a few isolated spots in Mexico. Although monarchs are not listed as an endangered species, scientists are concerned about threats to their limited overwintering habitat. Because of their

large size and splashy coloration, they are often used as symbols of nature and biodiversity.

Sources: John Losey, et al., "Transgenic pollen harms monarch larvae," Nature 399(6733), May 20, 1999; L. Hansen and J. Obrycki, "Non-target effects of Bt corn pollen on the Monarch butterfly (Lepidoptera: Danaidae),

" abstract of a poster presented at the North Central Branch meeting of the Entomological Society of America, March 29, 1999, available at www.ent.iastate.edu/entsoc/ncb99/prog/abs/d81.html;
other websites: www.MonarchWatch.org;
www.fws.gov/r9endspp.

ORGANIC MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

New organic farmers and growers... do you wish there was someone you could turn to for advice? someone who had been there before?

Then you might be interested in an inexpensive and valuable opportunity for learning and support: the Organic Mentorship programme. Under this scheme, new organic growers are paired with experienced organic growers in your area. You visit the mentor's property once, the mentor visits your property twice, and you are free to ring up your mentor with questions as they arise over the course of the year. The mentors are paid but this costs the new grower only \$200+GST for the year as the mentorship is subsidised by a grant from Organics Aotearoa New Zealand.

There are a limited number of spots available and we currently only have funding guaranteed for this season, so if interested contact the coordinator for more information: Rebecca Reider, on rebecca.reider@gmail.com or 03 525 6111.

We have gotten great feedback from participants from last season:

"Good: different perspective on farm, ideas, brainstorming, crop protocols, motivation, stimulation, kindling passion!"

"It was good to able to discuss specific aspects of our property in situ. Seeing what we are doing, our mentor could offer advice, relevant to the situation."

"It's always very inspiring visiting them [our mentors] and there are always many useful bits of information for us."

"The phone contact is very supportive. Great moral support and being able to ring with questions as the growing season progresses is fantastic."

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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.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information, neither *The Organics Networker* nor the Far North Organic Growers and Producers Association accepts any responsibility for errors or omissions or for any consequences arising from reliance on information published. The opinions expressed in *The Organics Networker* are not necessarily the opinions of, or endorsed by, the editor or the publisher unless otherwise specified.

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