



# The Organics Networker

## URGENT MESSAGE!!!!

Most members of the committee are resigning their office this AGM – this means that unless some other members step up to take offices, FNOG will be in danger of being wound up!!  
See details below.....

### No 43 Summer 2010

Greetings all members

As you see above most of the members of the committee are resigning their offices this AGM. This means that unless other members are able to take up the challenge and fill the offices then the Far North Organic Growers will be wound up soon after the AGM.

This is very sad to get to this stage, especially as FNOG has had such an amazing influence on organics in the Far North. Kris and Terry and others, have worked tirelessly for 20 years to make sure that the organization stays alive, it is now time for them to draw back from administration. Helen, our previous secretary /treasurer for four year is withdrawing from the committee, as are others- see the list below.

Notice of **office resignations** and **positions available**

Jan Kansteeg - **Chair person, Treasurer, Library**

Rob Downing -- **Vice Chair**

Jesse Summers - **Secretary** (but I am happy to stay on as Networker (newsletter) Coordinator)

Kris Khaine - **Certification Manager**

Helen Guthrie - **Committee member**

### More committee members are needed urgently!

Now its time for change! It is time for new people and maybe a younger generation to take over. As you can see with these people out of their positions there will be not be a working committee.

The process requires us to state this at the coming AGM and then call a special meeting to wind up the organization if we don't get support from the membership.

This is a critical time for FNOG - we must make a decision as to what we as members want to happen to the organisation.

Please seriously consider donating some of your time to helping to save FNOG!

**Come to the AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH where a further discussion** (see comments from the 20<sup>th</sup> Celebration discussion below) will be held on the future of FNOG and the position of your certification status or membership.

This is a legal process and must be followed through step by step if we are to wind up the organization or keep it!

**FAR NORTH ORGANIC  
GROWERS AGM**

**SUNDAY 21st MARCH  
10 AM to 4PM**

**At Jan Arie and Ineke's  
citrus orchard**

**Start with coffee at 10am  
followed by the AGM**

**We have speakers  
Grace Swales talking on edible weeds**

**Pruning demonstration by Jan Arie  
And a tour of the farm**

**Trade table and library and a  
SHARED LUNCH**

**Your attendance at  
this meeting (or at  
least your  
correspondence) is  
crucial.**

**Please let us know your  
thoughts and your intentions  
regarding the AGM**

Please call or contact  
Jan Arie 09 408 0448  
[jawkamsteeg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jawkamsteeg@xtra.co.nz)  
Jesse [hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com](mailto:hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com)

**PLEASE BRING YOUR  
PRECIOUS SELVES, YOUR  
ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM  
FOR ORGANICS  
AND A SOMETHING TO SHARE  
FOR LUNCH!**

**You are welcome to bring  
items to either sell or give  
away for the Trade table  
The free sharing seed bank  
will also be available**

**If you are willing or can consider taking  
on a position please call or email Jesse  
or Jan to express your interest.**

Jesse Summers Secretary and Network Co-coordinator

Please call or contact

Jan 09 408 0448 [jawkamsteeg@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jawkamsteeg@xtra.co.nz)

Jesse [hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com](mailto:hokiangaherbfarm@gmail.com)

**Directions to find Crest Lan Orchard**

We are 9 km south bound from Kaitaia on State  
Highway1

Coming from Kaitaia you pass Pamapurua school  
on the left hand side, than after 250 meter on the  
left hand side you see a small dirt road along a  
large shelterbelt of Gums and She oaks, that is  
the entrance to the property (Rapid Number  
6934)

Coming North from the Mankgamuka gorge via  
state highway 1

Coming from the gorge you come to the road  
sign Pamapurua. After 300 meters you see a sign  
for Plain Tree lodge B&B on the left hand side.  
Diagonally across the road you will find the  
entrance to our property along the a large  
shelterbelt of Gums and She oaks (Rapid  
Number 6934).

In case you get lost call Jan Arie or Ineke on  
09 408 0448

**ABOUT THE ORCHARD**



Hi all,

For the next field day, which is combined with the AGM, the committee has chosen to hold the event at our property, Crest Lane Orchard. This small citrus and persimmon orchard was established by Gordon Bibb, the first Chairman of FNOG. Gordon took the step from conventional growing to Organic management. Due to medical reasons he was forced to sell of the property in the late nineties to a couple who ran it as a lifestyle block. Consequently maintenance was a low level and the orchard was on its way to abandonment.

We bought the property three years ago and started the process of revitalizing the organic orchard. Having been trained as a tropical agronomist, I made a plan to turn the orchard into a productive organic orchard. We had to tackle the main issues nutrition, competition and tree health.

#### Nutrition:

First step was to apply a dressing with lime to quickly release part of the nutrients tied up in the relative high organic matter of the soil. The soil test, which showed a depletion of Phosphates and a low level of Potash.. These were addressed with RPR and muriate of Potash. Some Zinc was added as the leaves showed the significant intervenal yellowing.

#### Competition:

Second step has been the pruning of the shelter belt, which was side trimmed and topped. It took us 20 hours to do the trimming and three months to clear the branches. The positive side is that it supplied us with enough firewood for the next ten years. The branches smaller than 10cm (4 inches) were pulverized with the mulch mower and used to enrich the soil. The pruning was necessary to bring light into the orchard. Light is an important source of growth. The root competition from the shelter belt has been tackled by ripping them to a depth of 60 cm (2 feet)

#### Health:

The health issue is currently on the agenda. The initial application of zinc had not solved the problem, so we had a combined soil and leaf

analysis done, which showed a deficiency in Zinc, Manganese and Molybdenum. By regularly applying small doses of these metals in a chelate form, we have seen a significant improvement in the general health of the trees.

The initial planting distances of the trees in the orchard were based on conventional growing and should have been thinned to a lower density years ago. For a number of varieties we have taken out 50% of the trees already. This has resulted in a better quality fruit, easier maintenance and no significant reduction in production.

Currently we are in the process of shaping the trees to a M shape, which we hope will improve the quality as well as the total production and at the same time removes the use of picking ladders.

The free range chickens running under the trees have reduced the pressure of crickets and cicadas.

#### Future:

We have also planted new citrus varieties to expand the area under production and to be able to supply a full range of citrus to the Kaitia market over a longer period. These are growing well and started to produce small quantities. These lemons, limes and grapefruits will enable us in the future to make a wide range of certified organic marmalades, jellies, cordials and other added value products.

We hope to see you during the field day, when I will demonstrate our pruning methods on citrus and persimmons, the citrus washing machine and the mulch mower with swing arm to mow in between the trees.



## 20 YEAR CELEBRATION OF FNOG



Many thanks to all who attended this day and made it memorable, especially the previous valued members who told their stories and helped us new members to understand when FNOG came from.

Jan Arie welcomed our speakers Gordon Bibb, Alistair and Werner and welcomed the first secretary of FNOG Grace Swales to the day. The speakers talked of the first meetings in December 1989 where Werner, Isla, Gordon, Grace, Alistair, Peter (Dane), Jocelyn, Gabriel and Marilyn attended at Lucas's home in Takahue and further meetings at Grace's home. Over the years the ups and downs got sorted and members continued to work with Soil and Health and Biogro to keep the, "cracker of a little club" growing. "Quality" said Alistair is what sells organics. Werner remembers that Peter Proctor was one of the first speakers and talked of bio-dynamics. A meeting at Peter's place was so full there was nowhere to sit! The founding members were mainly home growers and they became certified growers with an organic philosophy that came from their heart. "The certification process changed the organization" according to Werner, and not everyone was happy. However, they went on to have wonderful meetings and field days with vibrant and active times. "If we don't look back" says Werner, "how can we go further, we never know what's in the future but we can spend

some time on thoughts ... we are talking about a broader base, getting tired and older - we need more younger people".

"Nothing stands still, every day is different, and we will never have a day like today ever again".



Some members of the oldest committee



Grace Swales the first secretary of FNOG talking some of our precious younger organic community Golden and baby

## Comments and questions from the 20<sup>th</sup> Celebration discussion that followed and more ...

- Are we still needed as an organization?
- If so, who is going to carry us forward in the next 5 to 10 years?
- If we want it to go we have to make it go!
- We need to encourage the small growers - we all have a place and the strength is in you guys
- Do we need to link with the Far North education Centre transition town groups?
- We need to become more localized with smaller groups
- We need to become more international



- If we are not growing as a group then is it enough?
- Let's get the fun back into organics! E.g. organic field days, organic festival, run courses
- We need to be more open, we can't build a fence and say "look, they are not coming in"
- Internet is important but personal contact is too
- Every organization reaches a critical mass - do we need to move on?
- Let's have a Far North Summer festival, music, mud ovens, schools, organics, planting, find the child in you!
- What is success?
- Make sure you have a market and make a profit - is this what FNOG is about?
- NZ could grow its own food
- Who do we want in FNOG - big farmers, small farmers, growers, family or/and make a profit focus?
- Both local and export have to be important
- Still can't get enough local organic produce
- Well now, are there enough people interested?

Meanwhile we mingled, talked and laughed and enjoyed the photos and memories.

FREE TRAPS!!!!

### **SPECIAL TRAP OFFER TO OUR FNOG FINANCIAL MEMBERS**

AT THE AGM WE WILL HAVE A RANGE OF PEST CONTROL TRAPS. IF YOU HAVE ANY OLD WORN OUT TRAPS, BRING THEM TO THE AGM AND WE WILL SWAP THEM FOR BRAND NEW ONES!

THE RANGE OF TRAPS WE HAVE ARE TIMMS TRAPS FOR POSSUMS, TUNNEL TRAPS MAINLY FOR RATS AND MUSTELIDS & EASY TO SET. DOC 200'S - THESE ARE CONTAINED IN SMALL BOXES PERFECT FOR RAT AND STOAT CONTROL. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T HAVE ANY TRAPS AND WOULD LIKE TO GET ONTO PEST CONTROL WITHOUT THE

USE OF TOXINS, THIS IS AN IDEAL OPPORTUNITY.

TURN UP AT THE AGM AND WE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WITH TRAPS AND ADVICE ☺

WE ARE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SHOW YOU HOW TO USE THESE TRAPS SAFELY.

WITH THE BLESSING OF THE NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL, WE HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY, A ONCE OFF, SO, DON'T BE SHY, COME AND ASK FOR YOUR FREE TRAPS!

**BUY SELL AND EXCHANGE  
I AM ...LOOKING FOR... I HAVE SURPLUS... I WANT TO SWAP...etc**

### **Electric soil aerator for sale**

240volt looks like a baby rotary hoe with 2 parallel shafts extending in front, rotating in the opposite directions with blades attached. I bought it second hand to mount above drums of biodynamic preparations to stir them.

Have never used it - \$20

Phone Jim Valley 09 4080361

I am looking for a reasonably priced scythe to make some hay for my 3 cows without the use of a brush cutter.

Jan Arie Kamsteeg 09 408 0448

### ***CERTIFICATION MANAGER'S REPORT 2010***

Our list of certificated producers remains fairly constant, with 6 FNOG & 18 OFNZ and another one seeking ofnz.

Once again, I put it out there to our certificated producers to look at getting trained as a certification manager.

I have been doing this job for a long time & would be happy to hand it over to someone who wishes to see this service continued to our far north organic folk.

A knowledge of the process and standards is required and no doubt OFNZ will be providing more workshops in the future.

Think about it please, I would appreciate it.  
Kris Khaine

### **The Committee members are currently as follows:**

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Chairperson            | Jan Arie Kamsteeg |
| Treasurer:             | Jan Arie Kamsteeg |
| Vice Chair:            | Rob Downing       |
| Certification Manger:  | Kris Khaine       |
| Auditors:              | Terry Higginson   |
|                        | Jan Arie Kamsteeg |
| Secretary:             | Jesse Summers     |
| Networker Coordinatro: | Jesse Summers     |
| Librarian:             | Jan Arie Kamsteeg |

|                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Financial auditor: | Peter Brake   |
| Members:           | Grant Fallon  |
|                    | Helen Guthrie |



### **SEED BANK**

Discussion re our seed bank and the continuing existence of quality and heritage seeds is an on-going topic at field days. Michelle Mitcalfe will make these available on the field days. SO

plant more seeds in now, they will stay viable only if we continue to plant and re-seed them. Even if you don't want the produce from these seeds, would you be prepared to set aside a small plot (free from contamination of other like species) to germinate some of what we have and let it go to seed again? Maybe you might like a small plot that would cross contaminate with any of your species to produce a new stronger seed for yourself?

### **OANZ NEWSLETTERS**

These are sent out every two weeks. It contains the latest news and information about what is happening in the organics sector in NZ and overseas.

You can subscribe free on-line by contacting [gavin.middleton@oanz.org.nz](mailto:gavin.middleton@oanz.org.nz) .

### **LIBRARY**

We have a small but good library. These books are available at any time, or at field days. Please contact Jan Arie on (09) 408 0448 if you would like to borrow any of the following books.

### **LIBRARY BOOKS**

- Organic Gardening, A guide by Organic NZ
- Resource Guide S & H Assn
- Wetland Restoration, A beginner's guide NRC
- Trees For the Land, Trees for Northland NRC
- Plastics are Fantastic, Using Plastic bottles for a Greenhouse, Sustainable Communities Initiative Scotland
- Seed to Seed, Suzanne Ashworth
- Organic Avocado
- Organic Pastoral
- Organic Citrus
- Organic Summerfruit
- Animal Health
- The Environment
- Natural Farming
- Practical Organic for NZ farms
- Organic Futures



### **Library rules:**

Books can be collected and returned on Field-days or the AGM.

Books can be sent after payment for the cost of mailing.

Books have to be returned within 6 months, either at a field-day or by mail to the FNOG postal address.

In case of loss the borrower will either replace the book or pay FNOG for the book.

Jan Arie

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YUM ! from Helen

1 cup cooked brown or red rice.

Add a packet of soft Tofu, mashed,  
pickled ginger cut into strips to taste,  
finely cut toasted seaweed sushi  
squares

tamari paste,

greens - e.g. mesclun, rocket, spinach  
to taste.

Serves 4 – 6 or 7 people, depending on mains or as an accompaniment.

#### **A PERSONAL COMMENT FROM PETER**

Further to the discussion entered into at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I enjoyed the event, after more than ten years of membership I finally decided to express a few ideas, which had a mixed reception. I spoke in the meeting about the exporting of food, finding markets to inspire growers to join the ranks of the organic way.

There were two main issues raised concerning this. The first was the transportation of food releasing carbon. The second, people should be eating what is ripe and grown locally; this keeps your body in tune with the season and the environment.

There are an endless variety of ways to transport food without the carbon damage. I have previously suggested ways of transporting food without causing any environmental damage, a bio fuel and this without any conflict with food production. In some counties there are no locally grown organic foods, they are unable to grow fresh produce because of the climate, and/or they cannot grow enough to feed their own population. The truth about NZ farming is that we grow enough food to feed 50 million people. We cannot be an organic nation without exporting food. We perform a great service for the world, which values our produce and will pay for it.

True sustainability requires that the people working on organic farms earn enough to meet their needs. If the workers can not afford to pay their rates etc then it is not sustainable farming. Let's make the organisation about what we are positive about - organic growing, let individuals decide if they are going to sell to an overseas market. Pointing our fingers at the immoral practices of the conventional farmer is not helping solve the problems nor bring about an increase of organic growing.

It was envisioned that FNOG could be a stepping stone for local growers to enter into organics with a minimum of cost and the support of experienced local growers. If they go on to bigger things, finding an export market, than they could move into Bio Grow certification.

This is a great service pretty much offered by the efforts of the few. These few step around the "politics" and get on with the job. Well now they are wishing to concentrate more on their own projects and we can do little but offer them our thanks and wish them the best in their endeavors.

I would like to suggest having the library in my accounting office on the main street of Awanui. Included would be any helpful information, past copies of the networker etc and a place that the public can make enquires. My personal finances are more than just stretched, so this could not be at my personal expense. It would be appreciated for instance if FNOG could supply some form of signage.

My vision for this is that existing and new farmers interested in converting to organics can come in and find the contacts and information to get them started. They would be shown the costs associated with FNOG and Bio grow and encouraged to join either. Perhaps some members would like to offer a farm advisory service, be it paid, subsidised or in any other way that they are happy to do this. A site visit and discussion would be invaluable for someone entering into organics.

Personally I find it difficult to wear another hat besides that of financial auditor, as their really needs to be separation from the daily running of the organisation to ensure some chance of an independent audit. However this function is not actually required by law and perhaps we could dispense with the audit and I could be of assistance in some other manner.

To be quite honest I feel in two minds about offering this service as I feel it could impact with my GE free activities, which have nothing to do with my being an organic grower.

In short I'm offering to take on the treasurer & librarian function or any other which seems appropriate here in my office but will retire as the financial auditor. Any and all of the above is open for discussion at the annual meeting on the 7th of March. Or you are most welcome to contact me by email.

Sincerely, Peter Brake

## **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. The author(s) of articles hold the copyright for their articles and should be approached for any other intended publishing.



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