



THE ORGANICS NETWORKER

Far North Organic Growers & Producers Society (Inc)

Issue 58 – Summer 2016

Details for the next FNOG meeting AGM :

Sunday, 28th February 2016

Alan and Fiona Rockell

72B Ironbark Road

Kerikeri

People will find us at 72B Ironbark Road, which is the second road on right up Pungaere Road. Drive to the end of the road through two pillars, drive 50 metres turn right at T intersection follow metal driveway. We will put up a sign.

Both Fiona and I work full-time, Fiona managing an orchid nursery and myself selling biological fertiliser. We brought the 7ha block 4 years ago in a run down state. We grow most of our own food, milk, meat, vegetables, fruit chooks, turkey, ducks, pigs and home made wine when time permits. We have got a young couple Nitya & Kyle to talk about their start up business making homemade natural body & home care products "Nature Body NZ Ltd".

Regards Alan Rockell.

Agenda for AGM

10:30 Cuppa

11am Welcome & Intro from the Chairman
Meeting and Election of Officers

11:30 Speakers from Nature Body NZ Ltd

12-noon Shared lunch

After lunch a chat about the property, what Alan and Fiona are doing then tour of the property.



Wai Wurri Update – February 2016

Here's to looking back a wee bit, to 7th December 1989, the date of the inaugural meeting of FNOG 27 years ago. Then, I think about when we bought our property, **1987**, and what prompted us to work the organic way. No discussion, it was what felt right.

Our Saturday marketing then progressed from: - driving the tractor through the river on a Friday night, loaded up with produce, and off-loading onto the tray of the Holden to now having a concrete culvert comfortable crossing. Very few floods now, compared to the last 29 years. We've spent quite some time flooded in or out. Now it's indoor chores out of the heat in the afternoons.

We have even taken to removing the swing bridge, as the replacement one was flood damaged and unused. The best of the macrocarpa pieces will hopefully become a raised bed for carrots and onions. The river itself has changed its structure over the years. We used to walk from the land and step down into the river. Now you have to slide down around 3m to get into it, the banks all built up with silt from the floods.

This season our water birds have had quite a time of it. Goslings found dead for no particular reason, other than being run over by the over-zealous ganders. The ducks no longer have any drakes, ooohhh. If you want ducklings you need to remove all the obstacles, (rats, stoats, weasels, pukekos, cats etc etc, etc). I'm finished with spending so much time trying to protect them, although we are still trapping. SO, now they hide their nests, in places that totally confound us. There can be up to 30 unfertilised eggs in them. I really love the ducks, which are living out their lives here, but I wish they would stop laying!!! Yes, I said it, (and sorry to those wanting their birds to lay.)

Some of the ducks are even starting to go blind but they are finding plenty to eat and know every square inch of their territory, (except when there is someone standing in it.) They all retired to the pond over the holidays due to the abnormal amount of activity around here. It took them a while before coming up and snooping through the washhouse door again, but we're all back to normal.

Plenty of fresh greens, new potatoes, honey etc, we won't need to do much shopping. 2015 wasn't a great year, so we all have to make sure 2016 is much, much better.

Krisie



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

All good things must end sooner or later, so with that in mind, it is time for a new chairperson.

New folk with new ideas is needed to put the spark back into FNOG. To anyone who is thinking about having a go, now is the time to get involved. If you think someone else would be suitable, ask him or her if they would accept a nomination.

To anyone who has a property suitable for a field day, with parking available and somewhere to hold the meeting and have lunch, great. If there is something different you may be doing that would be of interest to us all, let the secretary know you are available. The field days are February, May and October. There is always something we can learn from one another.

We have had 81 field days and they have all been brilliant and positive. Hopefully we will see a great turnout at this AGM, with plenty of enthusiasm to go onto the Committee and play a part, so that the responsibilities can be shared around.

Terry



2016 AGM Certification Manager's Report

At present we have 20 certificated members with one other making up his mind, looking promising.

Last year we didn't find too many hurdles that couldn't be overcome.

Which brings to mind the number of years Terry and I used the Kaitia Market to sell our produce. We displayed our certificate, brochures, membership forms, signage etc, and from memory only one person asked whom we were certified with. Most of the time the Certificate was left at home as everyone got to know who we were.

One of the most important parts of certification for our Producers is to have the BioGro Standards handy, as working to the Standard makes my job and that of the auditors so much easier.

The more certified organic produce we can get out there the better, as there are still those who profess to be organic or spray-free, but have no idea whatsoever about what they are using.

Please don't trust anything labelled as "organic" without checking it out thoroughly. It is so much easier to purchase certified organic inputs if you possibly can, then you are safe.

Krissie



And from Jan Arie Kamsteeg ...

Long-term continuity for FNOG as an organisation.

Dear Organic Growers and Consumers,

For the coming AGM of Far North Organic Growers & Producers, there will again be the usual items on the agenda. What happened during the past year in the region and some brain storming on what we as an organisation should do during the coming year. The general tendency during the past years is that these agenda points take less time. We as organic minded people are all getting a busier life with more connections through the internet and mobile phone networks. This all takes more time so less is available for old fashion organisations.

To run a non-profit organisation by volunteers often ends with very few people taking care of the organisation and a large group of people giving their moral support.

In the case of our Far North Organic Growers, Krissie, Terry and myself do most of the work. At the annual AGM the filling of Officer positions for the day to day running there is in general a lot of silence. This is a bit worrying with regards to the continuity of the organisation. Much knowledge is concentrated in the head of one or two persons only.

The same is happening at the National level with OrganicFarmNZ. OFNZ is in principle an organisation, which makes sure that produce of small organic growers is of a high and consistent organic quality. This is done by peer review. In many regions the peer review is organised in POD's, which is a group of producers who check on maintaining the organic standard at each participating producer. Another option is a review by an "auditor" from within the group.

The idea behind the peer review is that the organisation can be small and have a low cost basis. This low cost basis is attractive for a number of producers, especially when compared with larger commercial organisations.

However, personally I find that every certified property should be active in the whole organisation and not just be a member of Far North Organic Growers for the cheap certification only. I would rather see non-active members go to a commercial certifier than spend my volunteer time with them.

Therefore I would like to bring the following proposals to the AGM.

- 1) For certified properties there should be an obligation for the owner or day-to-day manager to attend the AGM and at least one other field day. This will be good to get people more engaged in the organisation. It will also be good for new members to be able to get advice.
- 2) I would like to introduce a rotation system by which each (OFNZ or FNOG) certified property has the obligation to host a field day. Failing to do so should in first instance result in a pecuniary fine for each year they are not able or willing to host a field day.
- 3) I would also like to propose that each certified property makes a person available for positions within the organisation. Failing to do so should in first instance result in a pecuniary fine for each year they are not able to make a person available for a position. During the AGM the members can then select from this pool of people the officers necessary to run the organisation.

I know that the above is a bit out of the box thinking, but I really think that it is one way to improve the chance on long living organisations with engaged members. From this place I would like to thank all who are active in the organisation. (Specially support members with an active role in the organisation.)

Jan Arie Kamsteeg
(Treasurer, Auditor and OFNZ NCC representative)



An Update from NatureZone

Hi everyone,

With Niwa warning of an extremely dry summer in the North and East due to an unprecedented El Nino weather pattern, those of who live upon the peninsula prepared for the worst. Upgrading our irrigation systems etc, we even replaced our tired water pump for a flash new high-pressure diesel pump!

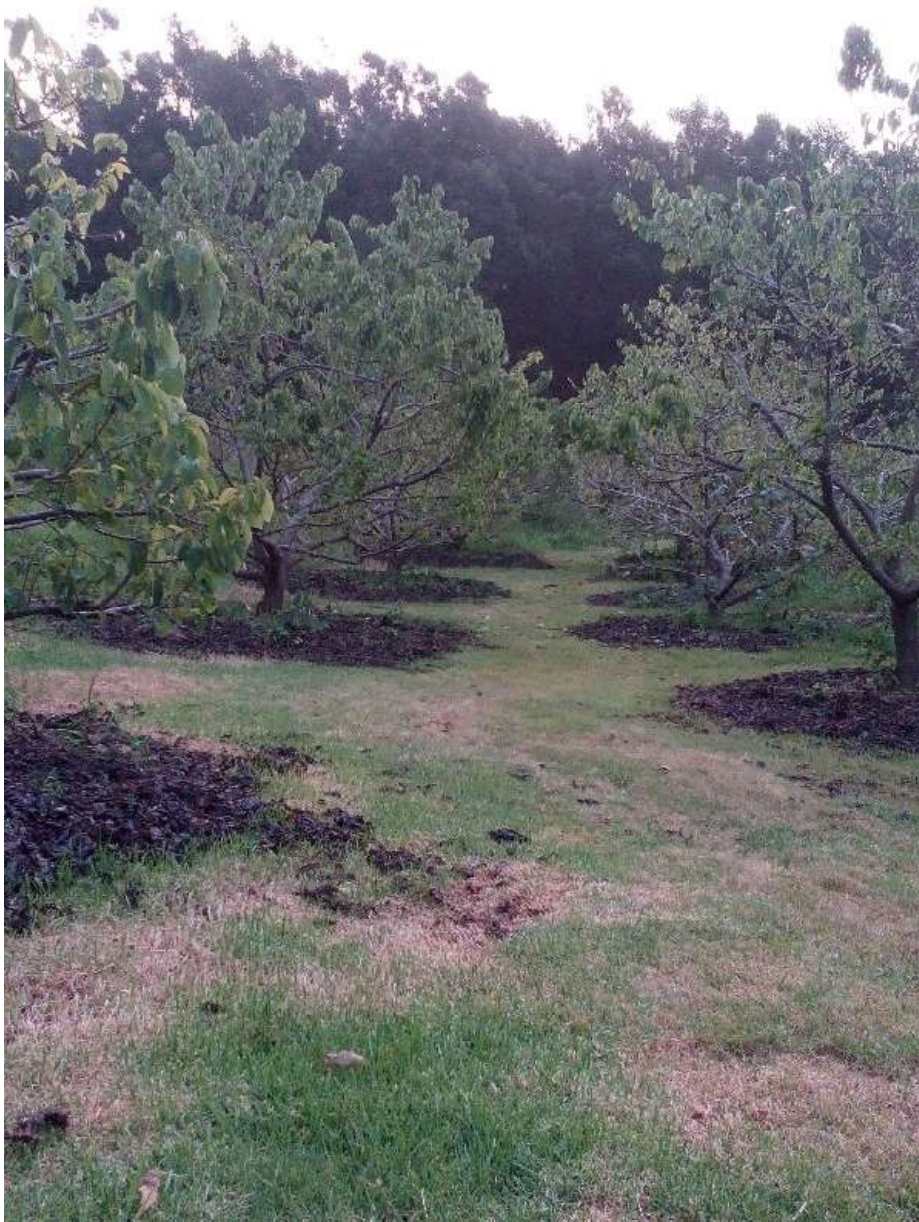
With the forecasters telling us we are in for predominant westerlies with potential drought conditions by the time the end of October into November came about it certainly seemed to be accurate. The hills around us were browning off at an alarming rate however, the water temp out on the east coast was still relatively cool at around 16 – 17 degrees C. What happened then was by December the temp jumped to 20 – 23 degrees C and the weather pattern changed to easterlies with rain! Just crazy! It's the first time I've had to mow the grass in summer as usually it dies off! Our orchard is smiling along with the butternuts, kumara and potatoes, the courgettes are always trying to turn themselves into marrows before our eyes. Certainly has been an amazing summer so far. El Nino has produced some amazing waves if you're into surfing, not just for Hawaii in the North Pacific but also for us in the South Pacific, both coasts have been alive this summer, especially the ex-tropical cyclone Victor.

One of the bonuses for us has been the large falls of seaweed on our local beach. I'm not talking about a sprinkle, I estimate one fall to have been around 4 to 5 hundred tonne, in drifts of up to 1 metre in height. I've never seen so much at once, so naturally we've been busy collecting and mulching with this wonderful bounty from our ocean. 10 tonnes later and our orchard mulched, we are satisfied and

exhausted.



From the beach to the paddock under the pruned cherimoya trees ...



With the temperature in the 30 degrees C mark in the shade its beach time for a swim. What an incredible paradise we live and share in, so it's important folk to press for sustainability through organic agriculture and thought processes.

Here's to 2016, may it be GE Free, TPPA Free and Deep Sea Oil Spillage Free.

Regards, Rich and Jose
NatureZone Gardens



I have been browsing lately re wasp controls that don't kill bees. Doc has been successfully trialling chemical bait that yet is to be available to keepers. (Latest

beekeeper magazine).

But a simple effective control is the inverted plastic drink bottle trap. Using meat instead of sugar or other bee attracting materials. That is one cuts top funnel off bottle. Forces within remainder and tape joint, yellow n orange attract wasps also, two holes to hang if that is how you are using. Wasp goes in for kai but can't easily find way out as craypot type design. Then dies.

Using meat spares the non-carnivores like bees. Effective on German wasps.

Spring is when the large over wintered solitary queens are looking for suitable nest sites, I've squashed heaps, and whilst I don't mind a few wasps helping in the garden I've had to destroy a few nests over the years, some quite huge. And I've had a queen eating at my hive for breakfast...very brutal and powerful.

Just thought I'd mention this bee friendly trap.

Thanks and regards, Alex



YUM COURGETTE CHIPS



Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Combine in a small mixing bowl, breadcrumbs, parmesan cheese, black pepper, salt, finely chopped garlic, and cayenne pepper. Dip zucchini slices into milk and

dredge into breadcrumbs to coat both sides. **Note:** It may be necessary to press crumbs onto courgette slices to ensure the crumbs stick.

Arrange courgette on baking paper and lightly mist with olive oil.

Bake 15 minutes, turn over and continue baking until golden, approximately 10-15 minutes (being careful not to burn). Allow to cool to room temperature before storing in an airtight container.

TIP: Courgette Chips will continue to get crispier while cooling. (We couldn't wait to let them cool and ate them all!!!)



MISSION STATEMENT OF FAR NORTH ORGANICS & PRODUCERS

- 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

FNOG COMMITTEE 2015

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Certification Manager

Kris

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Terry & Jan Arie

Certification Committee

Jan Arie, Terry, Kris, Jim.