



# Organic Garden City Trust Commercial Group

## Newsletter

Issue No 1 : October 1997

### Contents

Item	Page
Welcome	1
The Mid-Winter Convergence	2
Bio-Gro Certification Standards Review	2
Celebrate! - 7 Oaks Organic Celebration	3
An Evening at Harts Creek II	4
A New Market for Organic Lamb?	4
Carrot Rust Fly Control in Organics	5
Classifieds	6

Coming Events	Date
Link with Agri-Tech 2000 TV1 midday	24 Oct
Organic Celebration	23 Nov
An Evening on Harts Creek II	3 Dec
Deadline for Certification Standards Submissions	3 Dec
Mark Levick & Certification Standards Review	30 Jan
Buyers and Producers Forum	March
Farm Walks	1998

The Newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month of publication.

**Contact:**  
Merf (Charles Merfield)  
"Gilead", Hamptons Road  
RD4 Christchurch  
New Zealand  
Email merfiec@tui.lincoln.ac.nz  
Ph 03 349 6947, Fx 03 325 3844

### Welcome

Welcome to the first Organic Garden City Trust, Commercial Group Newsletter. The group has taken on and widened the remit of the old regional organic group 'Canterbury Organic Producers' which has been inactive for some time. We are aiming to build an active network of people involved with commercial organics; growers, farmers, processors, wholesalers and retailers, with the goal of facilitating the growth and stability of the organic market.

To be a success, a regional group needs everyone in the region to participate in one way or another. With the growing interest shown in organics at the moment and the increasing realisation that all is not well with "clean green NZ" this is an ideal and essential time to form such an organisation.

The Commercial Group is one of eight sections of the Organic Garden City Trust (OGCT), which was born at a workshop held in April run by the Sustainable Cities Trust. The OGCT's goal is to turn Major Vicky Buck's pledge given at the at the 10th IFOAM conference "To make Christchurch the Organic Garden City" a reality.

The commercial group is working only with the organic industry, not gardeners, or other similar non profit groups. This clear focus will allow us to address the issues associated with commercial organics, such as information provision, certification, and marketing. The benefits of this focus are already clear, with the production of this, the first newsletter and the very successful 'Midwinter Convergence'.

Our aim for the immediate future is to produce this newsletter on a quarterly basis, organise events and meetings, and provide a central contact point for those in the industry.

For this to work we need your input. We need people that will dedicate time to organising events or joining the group committee. At present we have six regular members of the committee, Tim Chamberlain, Yoep Nederpelt, Robyn Patchett, Janice Schaper, Chris McGill and Charles Merfield (Merf) and Piko. There is a constant need for new ideas and fresh faces to keep such groups progressing. The committee meets once a month normally on Monday evenings. You may like to organise an event for example, a farm walk, an article for the newsletter, a presentation or a meeting.

If you are servicing the organic industry, e.g. consultants, advisors etc, we want to hear from you. This will allow the group to build a central listing of contacts in the region for the mutual benefit of all. If you know of anyone who would like to be on the mailing list please send us their address. The group is also looking for sponsorship, for events, the newsletter, and general running of the groups activities. If you are interested please contact us for more information.

All of us hope that you enjoy the newsletter and we look forward to hearing from you in the near future.



---

## The Mid-Winter Convergence

The Mid-Winter Convergence proved to be a very successful evening. It was a great chance for reacquainting with old friends, meeting new ones, being inspired, and challenged to continue the good fight of organics. Over fifty five people attended the evening, which delighted us.

The four speakers presented a range of valuable ideas and information. Holger Kahl challenged us to stand up and be counted if the food we grew, bought and ate was certified organic. He stretched our imagination to visualise our children coming home boasting they had just gained a degree in composting!

Hugh Campbell inspired us that there is light at the end of the tunnel; that organic growing, marketing and exporting is happening very successfully in New Zealand. The commercial successes were due to strong organisational networks supporting the growers, such as Watties and the Kiwifruit marketing board. The kiwifruit growers in the Bay of Plenty have strong grower and industry networks – from the local inspector who was also an adviser, through regular grower meetings, to the well honed marketing framework of Zespri.

The profile of the North American organic consumer was well illustrated by David Lindstrom. The American organic markets, particularly in California are very strong and growing at exponential rates. They are also rapidly moving into processed and luxury goods, which is where the big money is to be made. David is the owner and managing director of Lindstrom Foods, an importer and wholesalers of wholefoods and nutritional supplements.

The need for increased co-operation in production and marketing was a theme running through the whole evening. Merf presented a range of information including the huge \$11 billion turnover of agricultural co-ops in New Zealand, and outlined the principal benefits and problems associated with a range of co-operative ventures.

People were asked for feedback on:

- Whether a regional organic group for producers, processors, wholesalers and retailers should be formed.
- If a newsletter was a good idea.
- If the commercial group should co-ordinate submissions and feedback on the Bio-Gro standards review.

The answers to all three were a resounding yes. You are now reading the first newsletter, we are organising submissions and feedback on the certification standards review, and we have taken over from Canterbury Organic Producers as the regional organic industry group & network.

We also asked for issues that were concerning people, and thought we did not get as much input as hoped, some of the issues raised were: the need for more information especially on production techniques for new growers, a co-operative wholesale export facility for smaller growers, the need for cheaper certification, and a mobile abattoir. While the group has limited ability to act on some of these issues at present J Manhire at AgNZ Ltd., PO Box 8640 Riccarton Chch 03-318-8921, has technical information packs available, and Bio-Gro has a list of organic consultants. Bio-Gro have put in place a small grower certification scheme (contact them for details), and the group has some information on mobile abattoirs that operate in the UK (contact Merf).

The things that made the evening work so well were, the large number of attendees and their active participation. The potluck meal was truly delicious and vibrant, with so many people catching up, making contacts and exchanging ideas.

Merf and Chris McGill

---

## Bio-Gro Certification Standards Review

Bio-Gro is about to start a review of their certified organic production standards. To give you better input and feedback in this process, the Commercial Group committee (CGC) has organised for Mark Levick, the Bio-Gro Certification Manager, to come to Christchurch to discuss the review.

This will be a rare opportunity to raise your concerns and issues regarding certification standards and to gain direct feedback from Bio-Gro. It will also be a valuable chance to find out about other peoples difficulties and solutions to organic production and certification.

The CGC will be playing a purely facilitating role in this exercise, and it will not take a standpoint on any issue. This exercise is not replacing the Bio-Gro standards review consultation procedures, but is in addition to them. If you wish to make a direct submission to Bio-Gro, there is no onus to become involved in the CGC's facilitation exercise, and if you take part in the CGC facilitation exercise,



## Bio-Gro Certification Standards Review (cont.)

you are not excluded from making direct submissions to Bio-Gro.

The CGC's procedure is in two parts. Send a written submission with your suggestions and comments on the standards, to the CGC. The CGC will write a brief summary of the submissions and send them to Mark Levick. Mark will then come to Christchurch to discuss submissions and the standards review process. Only those issues submitted in writing to the CGC will be discussed by Mark. No new issues will be raised; the reasons for this are:

- It is important for Mark to be fully informed on submissions that he will discuss. If he is not familiar with an issue in advance, he will not be able comment in full.
- There are a large number of issues to be addressed in a limited time.
- Many people feel very passionately about these issues and it is important to have a calm discussion!

All submissions must be in written form (typed if possible). To facilitate the committees and Marks job please use the following format.

- Your name
- Contact details.
- The issue you wish to raise. If you are commenting on a particular standard please include its number (e.g. C3.2.1) and the standards version you are referring to (e.g. version 1994:1). Please use the latest standards (version 1994:1) where ever possible.
- If you have more than one issue to address use headings to clearly separate them from each other.
- Please be concise.

All submissions must be sent to Merf, "Gilead", Hamptons Road, RD4 Chch, by the 3 December 1997 or handed in at the Evening on Harts Creek II. Any received after that date will be included only at the discretion of the CGC committee. Mark Levick will be in Christchurch to discuss the submissions at 6.30pm on the 30 of January 1997 starting at 6.30pm at the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church Hall, on the corner of Oxford Terrace and Madras Street. Everyone is encouraged to come to the meeting to hear the discussions, but to reiterate only written submissions received before the due date will be discussed. Tea and coffee will be provided afterwards, please bring your own biscuits or cake.

There will be a five dollar charge to cover the cost of the hall. For further information contact Tim Chamberlain on 03 324 3549.

**Merf and Tim Chamberlain**

---

## Celebrate !

A celebration of all things organic, is the aim of the second Organic Celebration, to be held on Sunday 23 November, at 7 Oaks, Hassals Lane, Opawa. This public event looks set to become one of the highlights on the Canterbury region's organic calendar. It is an ideal shop window for the organic movement, with all aspects, from the commercial industry, to home gardens, on display.

The public part of the event starts at midday and runs through to 9.00pm. There will be a range of stalls, guest speakers including Hugh Campbell and Bob Crowder, workshops on liquid fertilisers, appropriate technology and other topics, demonstrations, and informative posters on organics. There will also be a band and café. Admission is a gold coin donation, everybody is welcome.

In addition to this, there is a BYO brunch at 10.00am, for all those involved in organics. It will be a good opportunity to meet other people in organics, for a social chat and to catch up with what's going on. The commercial group would like to extend an invitation to those in the organic industry, to put up a stall on the day. It is great opportunity to promote your products and services, or even just to sell some goods. There will be a charge of \$30 per stall, additional donations are welcome. If you wish to have a stall or want more information on stalls please contact Janice Schaper on 03 337 0022 or Shelly and Karen on 03 366 8116 during work hours. If you would like to have a display, take a workshop or want any general information please contact Ray Wright phone 3798 150 ext 8180. Ray will be at this number on Thursdays and at other times messages will be picked up by an answer phone. Or you can email him on holger@chch.planet.org.nz.

**Merf and Chris McGill**



---

## An Evening at Harts Creek II

Building on the very successful 'An Evening at Harts Creek 1' held in March of this year, a second 'Evening at Harts Creek' has been organised for the 3 December 1997, which will include a farm walk, presentations, and a social BYO BBQ.

The event is being hosted by Tim Chamberlain and Rose Donaghy at their property Harts Creek Farm, Leeston. Tim and Rose farm 160ha of land the majority being Bio-Gro certified. It is a mixed cropping operation with dairy heifers, sheep, and vegetable crops.

- The farm walk starts at 3.00pm.
- Presentations will start about 6.00pm
- The BBQ will run from 7.30pm till late

This event is an excellent chance to hear a range of the latest research on New Zealand and Australian organics, and a great opportunity to meet people in the Canterbury organic industry.

The farm walk will look at a range of crops, livestock and conservation areas.

The four speakers are Hugh Campbell and Ruth Liepins from New Zealand and Kristen Lyons and Andy Monk from Australia.

- Hugh is a lecturer in Social Anthropology at Otago University and has been Programme Leader on a FoRST funded project examining the development of organic food production in New Zealand. He has conducted research in Canterbury, Gisborne and Bay of Plenty which he will be presenting an update on.
- Ruth is a lecturer in Human Geography from Otago University. She has a background in rural research and has ongoing interests in gender issues in agriculture and community change in rural regions. She was funded by MAF in 1997 to study the influence of gender on the adoption of organic agriculture.
- Kristen is a PhD student with the Rural Social and Economic Research Centre at Central Queensland University. She is researching the development of the organic agriculture industry in Australia and New Zealand, and the experiences of organic growers. She is particularly interested in the contributions of local and indigenous knowledges, as well as the role of the state and trans-national corporations in shaping the organic agriculture movement.

- Andy is a Ph.D. student at the University of Wollongong. He is looking at the restructuring of the organic agriculture movement in Australia. He is a member of NAASA and has conducted a wide ranging study of organic production in Australia as well as visiting New Zealand earlier this year.

Please bring your own food and drinks, a large BBQ will be available for you to cook on. The presentations and BBQ will be beside Harts Creek, which is a fast flowing stream, children will need close supervision. Please ensure you have suitable footwear and plenty of warm clothing for later in the evening. If wet the event will be transferred to Lakeside Hall, and the BBQ will turn into a pot luck meal, so please bring suitable finger food instead. The hall will be signposted from the farm.

There is a gold coin admission for each adult to help with the costs of running the commercial group. You are welcome to attend any stage of the day, late comers and early leavers welcome.

Directions: From the Leeston Hotel take the Leeston Lake Road towards lake Ellesmere. About 3km down Leeston Lake Road turn right into Lochheads Road. The venue will be sign posted from there.

For further information please contact Tim on 03 324 3549.

**Merf, Tim Chamberlain and Rose Donaghy**

---

## A New Market for Organic Lamb?

The market for organic lamb, or any organic meat for that matter, is very limited in New Zealand at present. Even for those with outlets, the demand is often for only a few animals at a time. Many New Zealand farms have both crops and livestock. With increasing demand for organic crops, particularly from Watties and export markets, farmers are having to manage their stock organically to keep their cropping land certified. They are not, however, getting any increased returns for the extra work and risk involved in producing organic livestock. With the general domestic market for organic produce still far from buoyant, as Heinz-Watties recent withdrawal of their organic produce from New Zealand supermarkets shows, export markets look like the best option to gain premiums for organic meat.

Geoff Burke is currently trying to establish just such an export market. Geoff, a kiwi by birth, has spent



## A New Market for Organic Lamb? (cont.)

the last five years working in merchant banking in London. He is currently based at Lincoln University, researching the possibility of exporting organic lamb to England. "The potential is looking very good at present" according to Geoff. "The surveys I have conducted in London indicate that there is strong demand from customers in the top economic brackets, who are prepared to pay considerable premiums for quality New Zealand organic lamb". He has recently been approached by an international operation wanting NZ organic lamb for English markets. At the moment Geoff is in the UK discussing the potential for exports with several English marketing operations who are dealing with the luxury market.

Shortly before Geoff left for the UK, he was interviewed along with Tim Chamberlain by Tania Oolders from Agri-Tech 2000, about exporting organic lamb. This will be screening on Saturday 24 October at midday on TV1. In the interview Geoff and Tim talk about the potential and also the barriers to such an operation. Even if these initial moves do not produce contracts, Geoff believes that a market will develop in the not too distant future, "There is significant potential for this market, and the ability of New Zealand organic lamb to compete internationally appears to be very strong". If you would like more information, please contact Geoff at PO Box 103, Lincoln University, Canterbury.

Merf

---

## Carrot Rust Fly Control in Organics - a Quick Summary

Carrot rust fly is the most problematic pest in organic carrots, particularly when crops have been grown for several years on the same farm. There are a range of techniques used for control, which vary in their success and proven potential.

The carrot rust fly attacks Umbelliferae crops and many related weeds. It overwinters as a pupa in the soil and larvae in plants emerging in the spring depending on temperature. There are 3 generations a year with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations being close together. The 1<sup>st</sup> generation of adults in Canterbury peaks in mid October with fly levels low to zero in late November and early December. The second generation appears in January,

followed by a low in February building up to a maximum in April reducing to zero again in June. The numbers of flies generally increases with each generation. The exact times of the generations will vary with latitude and seasons.

Sowing dates are a recognised control tool. The first crop of carrots should be timed to emerge after the first generation of flies. This reduces damage to the crop and also later sowings as the total numbers of flies are reduced. Generally later sowings have lower damage.

Rotation is vital. The adults are weak fliers so ideally crops should be grown as far apart as possible to minimise the movement of flies from old crops to new ones. This is often difficult to practice but should be striven for.

Hygiene. The destruction of carrots left in the field after harvesting by grazing or through cultivation helps keep fly numbers down. This must be done immediately after harvest as the larvae emerge to pupae in the soil where they cannot be killed. Ploughing is not enough, the carrots must be destroyed rather than buried.

Crop covers, either non-woven/spun-bonded/fleece or knitted (e.g. miroclima® (not an endorsement)) are very effective, often more effective than pesticides if laid well and at the correct time. In Canterbury their use is limited to spring crops, as summer temperatures make conditions under the covers too hostile. There are added benefits of much earlier production and protection from soil capping. Weeds are a major problem under covers. Several of the non-woven types have very poor UV light stability while the knitted types have very good UV stability.

Site. The adults hang around in hedgerows so open windy fields are lower risk. Rough tussocky grass field margins boost the numbers of beetles which are the main predators of the fly's eggs and larvae. Most damage occurs in the crop margins so beetle friendly boundaries can be a help.

Pyrethrum based sprays can be a double edged sword. They are no use against the eggs or larvae, and as the adults only fly in the evenings, sprays must be timed to coincide with the adults being in the crop. There is the potential that more beneficials will be killed than flies making the problem worse. Garlic sprays are alleged to have an effect but I have not seen any data to confirm it. Any effect is not due to smell however as the majority of experiments trying to disguise carrot smell have failed to reduce damage from flies. Intercropping with onions, an organic favourite, has shown inconsistent results.



Early lifting is a desperation measure as it throws marketing plans out of the window. If sampling is showing high levels of attack at an early stage (very few crops are suitably monitored) lifting can save money.

Conclusion. These techniques can help reduce the impact of carrot rust flies on organic carrots, however a large amount of research is still required to produce effective proven control.

Merf

## Classifieds

### Advertising Rates

Advertising rates are one New Zealand dollar a line (approx. 8 words a line) up to a quarter page, and then twenty five New Zealand dollars per quarter page. All enquires to Merf.

### Earthwise - Sponsorship Req.

Earthwise is Canterbury's only true environmental radio programme. Every week we broadcast live on Plains FM 96.9 reaching 20 percent of Canterbury listeners (Community radio stats, 1997).

Our interest is to connect our listeners with the experts - ecologists, conservation professional and organic producers. We are volunteers. We are on radio every Thursday at 8.00 to 8.30pm. We believe we can help each other...

You need a proven advertising vehicle, we need sponsorship. The people who listen to Earthwise are your target market. Are you interested in sponsoring us? Contact Harald Breiding, 244 Pine Avenue, Christchurch 7 ph/fx 388 8351 or email

greent@chch.planet.org.nz

### Daniel Lewthwaite - Job Wanted

Hi, my name is Daniel Lewthwaite and I am keen to learn about organic farming. Last summer I worked on the organic unit at Lincoln University and am keen to continue this summer. To this end I am looking for paid work on an organic property in Canterbury. I have my own transport and am reliable and enthusiastic. If any of you have need of a paid worker and feel I could help, I can be contacted on (03) 3497356 or by email at: lewthwad@lincoln.ac.nz

### Job Vacancy OGCT, Co-ordinator – Administrator

The OGCT is looking for a co-ordinator / administrator under the ACE scheme. To qualify you have to be registered unemployed for six months or more.

If you are a multi-talented, enthusiastic person, who can put the Trust into working order and take it forward into a leading position within Christchurch and the Canterbury region this job could be for you.

Work includes:

- Office administration (computing skills required)
- Data base administration.
- Organisational skills – launch, newsletters, fundraising.
- Support of sub-groups.
- Publicity.

If you are interested in this position contact Holger Kahl phone 3798 150 ext 8180.

Organic Garden City Trust: Commercial Group  
"Gilead"  
Hamptons Road  
RD4 Christchurch  
New Zealand

If any of your details are incorrect please contact Merf at the return address.