Canterbury Commercial Organics Group

Newsletter

Issue No 19: March 2002

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Coming Events	*Date*
CCOG Field Day	14 Apr
Organic Market & Trade Expo, Ashburton	21 Apr
Tree Crops Field Day (BHU, Lincoln)	28 Apr

The Newsletter is published three times per year by the Canterbury Commercial Organics Group, a non profit charity run by volunteers.

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Field Day April 14
Organic Dairy Farm

CCOG is holding a field day at Brian and Jackie Clearwater's organic dairy farm at Peel Forest (near Geraldine) on April 14, starting at 11 am.

Brian and Jackie's farm is 110 ha and they milk 150 cows. They also run 70 heifers and some calves on the property. They have been fully certified with Certenz since October. At the moment they sell the milk to the dairy company Fonterra but in the future they hope to have their own processing plant so that they can sell organic milk and yoghurt.

The Clearwaters have farmed here for 3 years and used organic methods from the start. Brian and Jackie have a background in horticulture. They sharemilked for some years before buying their farm.

The Clearwaters will give us an introductory talk, then we will have a farm walk to see the cows and milking shed. Over a picnic lunch there will be the opportunity to ask questions and chat.

Directions: From Christchurch: The quickest way is to go down Highway 1 through Ashburton to Tinwald. Turn right off Highway 1 at the Agrifarm machinery building. Go over the railway line and go for approx. 30 km to Highway 72 (Scenic Hwy). When you reach Hwy 72, turn left towards Geraldine and go over the Rangitata River bridge. Turn right just 50 m after the bridge to Arundel and Peel Forest. Go past the sawmill and up a small hill to a crossroads at a cemetery. At the crossroads turn right, go about .5 km to a Y intersection. Stop at the give way sign, then take the almost straight ahead road to Peel Forest (towards the mountains). The Clearwaters' farm is about 3 km from this intersection. The Rapid number is 793 Peel Forest Rd – their name is on a letterbox on the right side of the road but the farm is on the left. Go down the driveway and meet at the house.

Start time: 11 am

Bring: picnic lunch and thermos, gum boots & jacket if wet, gold coin donation.

Kowhai Farm Update – March 2002

The 2001-2002 season saw four crops drilled on Kowhai Farm, Heinz Wattie's Organic Farm at Lincoln University. These included autumn sown wheat and ryecorn, and a pea and bean crop for Heinz Wattie's. However it soon turned out that the season was not going to be quite as straightforward as planned!

Firstly, the wheat crop did not establish well which made any attempts to tine weed the young crop difficult. Fortunately, just prior to weeding the crop we spun on some clover seed. By November a huge weed population existed in the crop, which would have made harvest almost impossible, so the decision was made to sell the standing crop for silage. A quick graze to tidy up the remaining weeds then allowed the undersown clover to come away and this proved to be a great source of high quality feed for bought-in lambs grazing on the property over the summer.

The ryecorn crop was altogether a different story. It established well and went from strength to strength with good growth and great weed suppression. The crop flowered prolifically during November and approached maturity in February. It was, of course, a difficult season for harvesting grain but after long delays due to the weather the crop was finally harvested in late February and sent to Ashburton for drying. Although the yield was good (approximately 4t/ha), the overall crop quality (falling number) was affected and some grain may not be suitable for rye flour.

The pea crop was sown in mid October and, due to the anticipated weed pressure, underwent 3 successive tine weedings (especially to control nightshade). As with the wheat and ryecorn crops plant tissue analysis was carried out at an early stage of crop growth but did not highlight any serious nutrient deficiencies; hence no foliar fertiliser applications were made. However later on areas of the crop began to appear quite pale and the final result for the crop was 4.7t/ha. It had been obvious for some time that this paddock needed a restorative phase, and has just been drilled with a diverse pasture mix including tall fescue, clover and chicory.

Beans were the final crop to be planted, in late November. A change in plans saw paddock A6 left in pasture for another year and, due to poor pasture establishment, paddock A2 on Springs Road (the one with all the Californian Thistles) drilled in beans instead. The lesson learnt from A2 was that adequate cultivation is required to ensure good weed control and ideal seedbed preparation prior to pasture establishment (we tried oversowing).

The beans germinated rapidly (within 4 days) making any attempts to tine-weed before emergence impossible. Soil sampled from the paddock at planting showed mineralisable nitrogen to be 86 kg/ha (quite good). However plant tissue analysis carried out on the young bean plants revealed several nutrient deficiencies including N, P, S, Mg, Zn and B. Based on these results, and the general appearance of the plants, a foliar application of liquid fish and seaweed was made to the crop. The beans were tine weeded twice after emergence followed shortly after by one inter-row hoeing. Wet weather thereafter made further weeding impossible and resulted in a mass of weed growth which could not be controlled until 'things' dried out. So mid January saw the commencement of a crop salvage operation involving inter-row hoeing, handweeding and topping. However none of these techniques was particularly successful at this late stage and eventually all that could be done was to wait for the crop to be harvested. The resulting yield was a dismal 3.3t/ha, compared with an outstanding 13.1 t/ha from last years bean crop. Anyway at least there's next season to look forward to, by which time we should have full BIO-GRO certification.

Anthony White

Change at CCOG

The CCOG committee has decided to reduce the number of newsletters to 3 per year. Field days and events we organise will also drop to 3/yr because of the number of other organic-related events that are available to members. The (very small) committee (Robyn Patchett, Sue Cumberworth, Mary Ralston, Vanya Maw and Rex Verity) would greatly appreciate any help you could give to organise events. Feedback on the newsletter, letters to the editor, advertisements and contributions would also help make the newsletter a better read!

Field Day report – Philip and Fiona Rushton's

CCOG and the Central Canterbury Organic Growers Discussion Group jointly organised a field day at Philip and Fiona Rushton's property near Rakaia on Sunday 9 December. We had a good turn out of about 45 people. Many thanks to the Rushtons for their hospitality; it was a great afternoon and a pleasant evening followed with a BBQ.

The Rushton's farm is 270 ha and is fully certified Bio-Gro. Their main crops are process peas, wheat, and potatoes. Complementing this are 2500 Corriedale ewes and a small herd of cattle. A very interesting feature of the property is the central pivot irrigation system which irrigates 104 ha.

Philip has developed the "Wilty-dale" a cross between the Corriedale ewe and Wiltshire ram – Philip thinks this cross has advantages with less wool (less time spent dagging), the meat is leaner and the sheep are faster growing than the Corriedale. The lambs are leaner and almost goat-like. The ewe hoggetts gave 200% lambing. He thinks survival is better due to thicker pelts. Philip thinks the 30% organic premium for lambs is not enough to cover the lower production in an organic system. One of the main problems with his Corriedale sheep has been effective lice control despite shearing twice-yearly and using pyrethrum.

The peas were being harvested the afternoon we visited (and were they delicious!!!). It had been a tricky season with a bit too much moisture; the peas had kept flowering so the peas were of uneven maturity. Following peas will be a grass or lupin green crop before wheat or potatoes.

An Agmardt weed control trial is being run at the property by Farhad Dastgheib of Lincoln. Various forms of mechanical weed control are being compared in wheat and pea crops. The objectives of these experiments are to find the effects of land preparation techniques on weed seed recruitment from the soil and to compare five tyne weeding treatments for their effects on weed removal as well as on the crop itself, and aims to identify best management practices for weed control in wheat and peas.

Weed trial

We viewed the wheat paddock where the trial was being run. The variety was Monad which was drilled in May with 300 kg of RPR. The effect of irrigation is to provide enough moisture so that both crop and weeds will grow. With the weeds being opportunistic, some will exploit whatever conditions exist – this year shortly after sowing there was a dry spell which allowed weeds to take off. Powdery mildew was now a problem in humid conditions and Philip was hoping for a good norwester.

The weed trial was of three replicates of 5 treatments. Plot size was 12 x 20 m.

Pre-emergence tine weeding occurred on 15th May. Many fumitory seeds had germinated (wire stage) and a few were emerging through the soil.

Early post emergence weeding was done on 15th June, when wheat was at 1-2 leaf stage and fumitory seedlings were at cotyledon or 2-true leaf stage.

Late post emergence weeding was performed on 23rd August. Wheat was at early tillering stage (2 tillers and 4-5 leaves). Different stages of weeds were present: most fumitory plants had 4-5 leaves with a few older ones, chickweed also had put on some growth, up to 6 leaves.

Success of the tine weeding operation was measured for the late post emergence treatment. Total number of weeds were measured before and after weeding in fixed quadrats. On average the number of weeds was reduced from 356 per m^2 down to 160 per m^2, giving a success rate of 55%. The effectivity of tine weeding was dependent on type and growth stage of weeds.

Mid-season results for weeds in wheat, data taken on 26 Oct. 01

Tine weeding	Number/m^2	Dry weight (g/m^2)	Dry wt./plant (mg)
Nil	444	22.9	55
Pre-em.	149	8.9	87
Early post	210	13.1	87
Late post	188	7.8	39
Pre-em. + Late Post	71	2.5	78
F test	10%	5%	ns

Mid-season results for wheat, data taken on 26 Oct. 01.

Tine weeding	Plant/m^2	Tiller/plant	Dry wt. /plant (g)
Nil	228	1.95	3.15
Pre-em.	251	2.28	3.20
Early post	194	2.41	3.75
Late post	247	2.11	3.37
Pre-em. + Late Post	217	2.32	3.25
F test	ns	ns	ns

Further information on this wheat trial and the pea weed trial can be obtained from Farhad Dastgheib, IWM Consultancy, Phone: (03) 325 2132 Email: farhad@inet.net.nz Final results will be analysed when the crop has been harvested, and will be reported in a future newsletter.

Mixed pastures for organic livestock & cropping systems

David Musgrave, organic farmer and processor of linseed at Waihi Bush, near Geraldine, also spoke at the field day; on hemp and on mixed pastures. The following is an abridged version of the hand-out he gave on mixed pastures.

Ryegrass and white clover based pastures are used almost universally on New Zealand farms, for their quick establishment, cheap seed, and ease of management and reasonable productivity. What is not generally recognised is that such pastures have a number of inherent limitations that can affect the whole farming system. Other species can be used in pasture mixes to create more productive and persistent pastures.

David grew up on the 140 ha mixed cropping farm where he now lives at Woodbury, near Geraldine. He worked for MAF Research as a scientist with most of his work focussed on the potential for deeper rooting and more drought tolerant pasture species than the traditional ryegrass/white clover pastures. There seems to be a lack of awareness that ryegrass, as a species, has a number of shortcomings which affect the whole farming system, which are not shared by all grasses.

Unfortunately simple one-grass/ one-legume mixtures do not confer the same benefits as more complex mixtures. Where complex mixes based on deeper rooting species have been trialled, data show that even under irrigation such mixes are capable of producing more dry matter than ryegrass-based pastures.

Data on animal productivity on mixed pastures is scarce. However a trial in the Manawatu was able to show increases in beef meat output of about 14% by use of a newly released red clover cultivar. This is particularly significant in organic systems reliant on clovers to build soil nitrogen levels, as there is a strong correlation between nitrogen fixation and productivity of clovers.

The alkaloid produced by the ryegrass endophyte fungus (which protects ryegrass from damage by Argentine stem weevil) also acts as an antifeeding agent for livestock. Thus it is very difficult to get

young sheep to grow any faster than 120-150 grams per day during their first autumn no matter how lush the high endophyte ryegrass pasture. On species such as timothy, tall fescue, prairie grass or low endophyte ryegrass growth rates of 200-240 grams per day are possible and on chicory, lucerne or clovers growth rates in excess of 300 grams per day are possible.

This suggests that young stock grazing high endophyte ryegrass are under considerable dietary stress. Such stress is likely to make them more susceptible to internal parasites. Experience on my farm has been that the need for synthetic anthelmintics is substantially less when young stock are grazed on mixed pastures free from ryegrass. Species such as deer and Alpacas are extremely susceptible to ryegrass staggers, so it is vital to have endophyte free pastures available. Alpacas are so susceptible to ryegrass staggers that once exposed to endophyte poisoning, the staggers will reoccur whenever the animals are stressed.

Having a range of species in a pasture is an accepted way to balance the mineral status of the diet. Tall fescue tends to have low sodium content, which can be a problem in simple mixtures, but is not in complex mixtures. Including herbs, such as chicory (which is very high in zinc, potassium and calcium) or plantain (which is high in magnesium and calcium) in the pasture, is a particularly effective way increasing the mineral content of the pasture, which can improve stock health significantly.

Investigations suggest that some plants, such as lucerne and chicory, have substantially lower levels of infective larvae of internal parasites in the zone harvested by grazing animals, which has potential to reduce the need for anthelmintics. There is also some evidence for a degree of direct anthelmintic effect from including plantain in the pasture.

Thus it is important for optimum livestock health and performance that mixed pastures are used - it is not sufficient to plant endophyte free ryegrass based pastures.

Ryegrass pastures are quite susceptible to weed invasion, particular after a dry autumn or grassgrub/Porina damage. A fully randomised grazing trial on my farm at Geraldine in 1987 investigated grass mixtures with Puna chicory. In the second year, after a very dry autumn, counts of nodding thistle were made and after progressive invasion by Californian thistle further counts were taken in year seven. Generally the pattern was that those species that form a complete sward with good cover, such as tall fescue, were best at preventing the invasion of both nodding and Californian thistle.

A really interesting result was that the numbers of chicory plants were very low by the time the Californian thistle counts were taken. Yet wherever chicory had been included in the original mixture the number of Californian thistle plants were very low. There were clear, straight lines across the paddock, thick Californian thistle on one side and nothing on the other side, where the chicory had been. This and other observations suggest that the deep taproot of chicory is breaking up compacted layers down the soil profile and making conditions unfavourable for Californian thistle growth. If one digs a hole down to the subsoil, one usually finds the Californian thistle rhizomes in the compacted zone just below the cultivation zone.

The numbers of grassgrub larvae in the soil are controlled into a cyclical pattern by natural pathogens and predators. Unfortunately the level at which grassgrub numbers usually start to crash is higher than the level at which substantial damage starts to happen to ryegrass based pastures. Two trials that measured the effects of a high population of grassgrub larvae on grass productivity showed that of all the commonly used grasses, ryegrass was by far the most sensitive. Species such as tall fescue and cocksfoot were scarcely effected, while ryegrass production was dropped by 50 - 60 %.

Since I started using mixed pastures on my own property, I have only once noticed faint signs of grassgrub damage - when I sampled the affected area I found over 600 grubs per square meter – an unusually high population which would have completely disappeared a ryegrass based pasture.

Choice of species

Tall fescue - has many desirable attributes for use in mixed pastures. It is a deep rooting species that makes it one of the most drought tolerant of the common temperate species. Some cultivars have excellent spring growth - up to 25% more than ryegrass in the early spring, and because they do not rehead after flowering, they have excellent yields of green leaf over the summer. A feature of tall fescue-based pastures is the excellent legume content - my experience has been that the right cultivars of tall fescue form an excel-

lent base for very productive mixed pastures based on both lucerne and clovers.

Prairie grass - has only been used in NZ pastures for about 25 years, but in that time has gained a reputation for high productivity, particularly over the autumn and winter. Unfortunately, it is almost universally recommended to be sown only with clover as a special purpose pasture. Yet a long term grazing trial in the Manawatu has shown that in more complex mixtures, Matua has thrived under both cattle and sheep type managements for ten years. My experience has been that in mixtures with tall fescue, both Matua and Gala grazing brome contribute significantly to cool season growth and will persist as long as the pastures are not set stocked for too long.

Cocksfoot - tends to be the most widely used of the other grasses. Cocksfoot has many attributes in common with tall fescue - drought and insect tolerance, and excellent summer/autumn production. Unfortunately, a high level of cocksfoot in a mixed pasture severely reduces both lucerne and clover production compared to other grasses and cocksfoot is not particularly palatable to livestock. Both problems are particularly significant in organic systems, which reduces the usefulness of cocksfoot and I generally recommend only small quantities of cocksfoot in a mix.

Phalaris - is unique in its ability to thrive in high nitrogen, heavily grazed areas such as stock camps. Being a very hardy perennial, it competes well with the barley grass, which also thrives in such areas and can greatly reduce the barley grass problem. Phalaris is also totally resistant to grass grub. It can be toxic to animals, but when used as a very minor component of a mixture this has never been a problem and it is one of the few species to persist in stock camps and under high levels of grassgrub.

Red Clover - as already mentioned, red clover based pastures have the potential to increase legume yield and hence fertility build up in the soil. Although they are relatively short lived, they can still contribute significantly to the productivity of an organic cropping system.

Lucerne - as a single species is an open invitation to weed invasion, with high levels of soil nitrogen and bare ground during the cool season. While most research fails to find any yield increase from including single grass species in mixes with lucerne, I have experimented with various lucerne based mixes and the results have been very positive. If the right combinations are used the stands remain weed-free and productive, with excellent animal health and they make very high quality hay or silage.

Chicory - is the most important herb widely available at present. It is a very important component of mixed pastures because its high productivity, high quality and high mineral content promotes healthy animals. Its ability to improve the soil structure and reduce weeds is also important.

Plantain - data is accumulating to show a reliable reduction in animal scouring and some degree of vermicidal effect. It also has high mineral content and the cultivar Tonic has excellent winter growth, which helps to counter the generally lower levels of minerals in cool season herbage.

Sheeps Burnett - has been widely used in the past for its high mineral content and good cool season growth. While it grows well on poor soils, I have found it to quickly reduce to a very minor component on more fertile soils.

Some suggestions for mixtures

For most situations a clover based mixed pasture will be easier to manage and will give good performance even in a dry year. However on lighter soils or drier environments it is worth going to a lucerne-based pasture. For such mixtures it is really critical to match the grass cultivars to the lucerne cultivars, so that the growth rhythms are similar. If this is not done you are likely to have either grass or lucerne dominating. I have established a number of very successful examples of lucerne based mixed pastures – including one on my own farm (800 mm average rainfall) which stayed as a very productive, well balanced, weed free pasture for ten years. Such lucerne-based pastures should include lucerne, chicory, timothy, tall fescue, grazing brome, phalaris and cocksfoot. Clover based pastures should include chicory, timothy, tall fescue, grazing brome, phalaris, cocksfoot, red clover, white clover, plantain and yarrow.

Soil testing

It is advisable to get a soil test before proceeding to resow new pastures to check for the following:
- That calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium levels are close to the optimum ratios, which is important for plant and animal health. It is the ratio that is important rather than the absolute level and to calculate the ratios you need to know the Cation Exchange Capacity of the soil.

- That phosphate and sulphur levels are present in close to the optimum levels.
- That trace elements such as boron, cobalt, copper, selenium and zinc are present in close to the optimum levels. Lack of any of these elements can be particularly important for stock heath.

Not all soil-testing laboratories routinely test for all these parameters – I personally use R J Hill Laboratories. If you want to farm organically it is helpful to get your soil test done through an organic consultant so that you get a fertiliser recommendation suitable for your system.

How to establish

To establish new pasture you need to kill the existing sward by either:
- Spraying with herbicides or steam weeding, followed by direct drilling. If there are lots of annual species such as barley grass or thistles it may be necessary to spray in the autumn and again in the spring before planting.
- Prepare a conventional seedbed to plant into by cultivation.

To ensure that you get the pasture balance you wanted (and sowed), it is important to sow in early autumn (no later than early March) or early spring. This is because some of the species used in mixed pastures vary in their ability to establish at low temperature or are winter dormant (e.g. chicory). Late planting will mean that such species are poorly represented in the pasture.

It is important to drill at 2 – 3 cm depth – deeper planting will mean that some of the small seeds cultivars will not emerge. In dry conditions this surface can very quickly become dried out and give patchy establishment. I have found that heavy rolling immediately after drilling restores the capillary action to the soil and helps to keep the surface moist, which greatly enhances establishment. In windy areas, such rolling can increase the risk of wind blow during the establishment phase.

Pasture management

Planted at the right time, a mixed pasture will establish at about the same speed as a ryegrass-based pasture. It is desirable to take the first grazing when the pasture reaches about 10 – 15 cm height, as this will remove any annual weed growth and encourage the pasture to thicken up.

All the mixtures I have suggested are designed for rotational grazing rather than set stocking. This does not mean a fresh paddock is needed every day, but it is desirable to have at least four paddocks your stock can be rotated around.

Hemp

David also spoke about hemp growing – he is one of 11 farmers trialling hemp this year. He has planted 10 ha and will be looking at different planting times, sowing rates and harvesting methods.

Hemp seeds are rich in Omega-3 and other essential fatty acids, and the fibre is in demand for insulation. As well as oil, the seed in rich in protein. The fibre is one of the strongest natural fibres. New Wool Products, of Nelson, is keen to make a 80:20 wool:hemp insulation product which, if costs can be kept down by growing hemp here, will be able to compete with fibreglass insulation. It has the same thermal properties and has four times better acoustic properties.

Hemp is very fast growing (4-6 cm/day) and hence needs reasonable fertility. As a crop it's very good for the soil, putting back lots of organic matter. Canterbury's soils are ideal, says David, and they should produce good quality oils.

It's unlikely that hemp fibre will be processed here for clothing as the Chinese have been doing that for years and it would be hard to compete with them.

David Musgrave
Waihi Bush Organic Farm, 21 RD, Geraldine, NZ

Letters to the Editor, news items and notices of events are welcome. Please send any newsletter material to Mary Ralston, RD 12, Rakaia, email mary.ralston@xtra.co.nz

Tree Crops Assn Field Day

Sunday 28th April: Joint field day with Farm Forestry Association - Lincoln University Biological Husbandry Unit

Contact person: Derrick Rooney

Start time: 1pm

The Biological Husbandry Unit at Lincoln University is hosting a joint field day for the Farm Forestry Assn and Tree Crops Association.

We will see mixed shelterbelts, including oak, walnut, chestnut, pears, apples and wattles. There are apple and pear orchards, containing a number of varieties, and grown without chemical sprays. Research on beneficial insects is taking place in experimental pasture mixes, and there are also organic vegetable plots. We will be guided around the BHU by the manager, Tim Jenkins.

Travelling away from Lincoln township on Ellesmere Junction Road, cross Springs Road and pass Lincoln University on your left. At the intersection with Weedons Ross Road, turn left onto a gravel road (between some pipe railings). Drive down this road as far as the magnolia plot.

Canterbury Organics – Update on small grower certification

POD UPDATES

We can report that Canterbury Organic now has four grower pods. These are Geraldine, Banks Peninsular, Community Gardens and West Melton. A Christchurch pod is expected in the near future.

Geraldine

Led by Jim and Eleanor Jolly, the Geraldine pod, which had been embryonic for some time, finally began to hatch into reality in February. A lunchtime meeting, organised by the Jollys, was attended by two other interested growers, as well as the intrepid Tremane Barr and Robyn Patchett who had travelled down to answer questions and help get the thing going. These properties have made a firm commitment to continuing with the certification process, and will hopefully be the nucleus of a group that looks set to become quite strong. The meeting was a good way to start the ball rolling, our thanks to the Jollys for their organisation.

Banks Peninsular

The first official get-together for the Banks Peninsular pod took place in late February, and took the form of a form-filling-in session, a getting-to-know-each-other session and a peer-review all at the same time. Of the five members of this pod, only two are seeking to commence the certification process this year. Nevertheless, all five did turn up at Barrys Bay to work their way through a somewhat optimistic agenda, and covered everything they set out to do. Congratulations!

Both of the properties that underwent the peer review raised numerous questions for the pod, and we should thank pod leader Sue Cumberworth for noting these down and getting them through to the Canterbury Organic certification committee for further discussion.

It is usual for the initial inspections to raise more questions than can be answered immediately, and this was certainly the case for this pod. While no recommendations on either property could be given on the day, the discussion about the particular characteristics of the properties was valuable and provides a good place to start from in terms of what the pod needs to do next.

Community Gardens

The Community Gardens pod first met in May last year as one of the initial pilot pods. This was in fact before Canterbury Organic had developed as an entity and as such little progress in actually certifying the three gardens involved took place until recently. However, in mid-March this year the initial gardens, along with two others, reaffirmed their interest in the project and committed a day to restarting the process with a full peer inspection.

The day started by recapping two of the initial gardens, and then moving onto the two new ones.

It highlighted the issues confronting community gardeners, particularly with regards to the importance placed by some gardens on receiving sun-

dry donations of materials from the community. It also highlighted the level of commitment these gardens have to producing to a high standard, and was very inspirational.

The properties span the area from Linwood to Harewood to Addington to Governors Bay, demonstrating how geography can sometimes come second to style of production in pod-formation.

Each of the properties received a recommendation as to certification status, and this will go before the Canterbury Organic certification committee for further discussion. A decision regarding these properties is expected by May.

West Melton

The West Melton pod was also one of the initial pilot pods, and took part in the first Canterbury peer review last year. Out of the four growers who participated in that first inspection, only two are still part of the pod. Yet both are committed to seeing their certification through, and there appear to be possibilities of new producers joining the pod.

Little is left to do in terms of organising the certification of these two properties, it's just a case of waiting for that beloved paperwork to roll on in...

Matt Morris <ogct@organics.org.nz>

Dear Canterbury Commercial Organic Group growers,

During the last year, the Organic Garden City Trust has been actively exploring the possibility of starting a trading arm. We have been focusing on a number of commercial opportunities including an organic café as well an organic wholesale warehouse.

We believe that the organic wholesale warehouse/distribution hub venture has a real potential and we would like to invite Canterbury Commercial Organic Group Growers to contact us, as we would like to secure our supply of organic produce as well as to help CCOG growers allocate the market for their produce in advance.

We plan to

- Assist CCOG growers by acting as a sales outlet for your produce
- Assist growers in transition
- Ascertain that customers receive a steady supply of produce they want, through our communication of customer wants back to CCOG growers/producers
- Raise the profile of organics in Canterbury and highlight the future export potential of organics as a major export revenue earner for NZ economy, through active distribution of organic produce.

Please contact Alexander Pitt on (03) 365-5038, or email ogct@organics.org.nz to discuss the venture further. You can also visit our Website at http://www.organics.org.nz

We look forward to hearing from you.

Organic Market & Trade Expo

Sunday 21 April 10 – 4 pm

Ashburton Racecourse

A festive organic market day with a wide variety of fascinating stalls including: organic food, produce and drinks, crafts, eco-friendly products and info, music and entertainment, herbal products, natural/holistic practitioners.

Registrations are invited. Last years expo at the same venue was extremely successful for the 45 stallholders and attracted over 1000 people. This year the venue area has been increased to include downstairs and outdoor areas. Most indoor spaces are 2m x 4m. Some tables, display boards and power are available.

Cost: $35, free to non-profit organisations. Book early to ensure your space (before 8 April).

Contact: Organic Market and Trade Expo 2002, PO Box 323 Ashburton, Ph/fax 03 308 9966
Email: organicsexpo2002@clear.net.nz

Advertising

Advertising rates are $1 a line (eight words a line) up to a quarter page, $25 per quarter page, $50 half page, $90 page. All enquires to Mary, email mary.ralston@xtra.co.nz

Be prepared for winter colds & flu with Pukunui Herbs echinaceae. Bio-Gro 2045. 50 ml bottle $10. Wholesale orders welcome. Phone/fax Pukunui Herbs NZ, 03 3198 722.

FOR SALE Bio-gro apples and pears at Robbie's Patch, Bethels Rd, Ellesmere, OR by courier – 15 kg for $20. Gala, sunset, royal gala, fiesta, and later braeburn, grannies and sturmer. Can order a rainbow mix! Phone 329 5725 and leave a message.

GRAZING WANTED on Bio-Gro certified land for certified sheep and/or cattle. Numbers to suit. Phone Ernst 03 322 4960, fax 322 4961.

FOR SALE Calves for sale, 6 Bio-Gro cert. September born, weaned Angus x Lowline steers. Phone Ernst at 322 4960.

FOR SALE Bio-Gro certified seed; echinacea augustifolia and echinacea purpurea. Germination certificate available. Bio-Gro 2045. Phone/fax Pukunui Herbs NZ, 03 3198 722.

Canterbury Commercial Organics Group - Newsletter
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If any of your details are incorrect please contact Robyn at the return address.