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OANZ Update October 2019.

BY MARK WHITE

Vice-Chair - COKA

NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS UPDATE

Progress is still being made by the Government and MPI on the National Organic Standards and Regulations project. It is now expected that consultation around the proposals will take place in the first half of next year.

However, that process has recently been overshadowed by a period of turmoil within OANZ (Organics Aotearoa New Zealand). Unfortunately, dirty politics, and a controversial AGM, have both disrupted a lot of the good work that OANZ had been undertaking.

Since the AGM (which resulted in the non-election of Doug Voss), the new Chair (Noel Josephson) had been attempting to put in place an agenda that involved taking OANZ in a different direction – contrary to the member-mandated work which was to focus on the National Organic Standards and Regulations (NOSR) project. This new non-mandated focus and direction has caused tension for board members, and has resulted in Richard Lees (ex Vice Chair) and myself resigning from the board - rather than get embroiled in a “no confidence” leadership situation – as the OANZ constitution can make those situations very prolonged. The new chair has now also stepped down.

So – since the AGM when Doug was not re-elected – from a governance situation - OANZ has got itself into a bit of a pickle! Currently, there is no Chair, Vice-Chair, or CEO – and the organisation is a few board members short. In order to move forward COKA has requested an OANZ council meeting so that OANZ members can discuss the direction of the organisation, along with the current governance situation. COKA is looking to “reaffirm the current member mandate to focus OANZ on the National Organic Standards and Regulations project”. I will provide members with an update following the upcoming council meeting.

Chair's Editorial & Annual Report. February 2020.

BY DOUG VOSS

Chairman's Report

Our year got underway with the 2019 harvest - the outcome of which was significantly different to the 2018 harvest.

Organic growers presented a "mixed bag" for ZESPRI to market for the 2019/2020 season:

- ***Record high levels of TZG and volumes of Y band fruit;***
- ***Reduced volumes of fruit to sell in a market which has increasing demand;***
- Significant reduction in fruit size.

New Certified Organic Regime: OANZ continued to advocate for the need to make progress with the new Organic ACT and Regulations to allow for implementation of National Standards and certified organic regime. Stressing that we must achieve what is required, as this process is extremely important to the future of New Zealand Certified Organics. ***It is not going to happen unless we have complete organic sector unity.***

Our new COKA secretary Belinda McLeod joined us, replacing Liz Espin. We welcomed Belinda in June and thanked Liz for a job well done.

The weather over July and August didn't make pruning a very pleasant experience - but that's the business we are in - which is impacted in ways we have no control over as we all know, such as the weather.

Market reports were showing green organic was enjoying strong and improving pricing in market and with shipping well advanced, the only real unknown was how big the pot of money is going to be for our green organic pool.

As an organic gold grower, it was difficult to be interested in the selling price for Sungold Organic as our returns are predetermined by a set premium per tray.

It's no mystery that Organic SunGold was in high demand and sells at good market premium over conventional Sungold.

I believed that Organic SunGold Growers are entitled to be paid per tray returns that reflects directly the prices received in the marketplace.

The format of our August meeting was designated as a member-only event following the formal business, and consisted of:

- A presentation from Catriona and Mark White on the White family's recent visit to the Italian Kiwifruit industry and an introduction to one of our major to one of our major pests risks the Stinkbug;
- The rest of the meeting was open discussion, where members can bring up any issues of interest or concern;

- A key objective for me would be for the members to give the executive some clear direction of their expectations of what the executive should be focusing on so that we can best represent your interest.

I believe this was a very successful with a clear message from members to the executive to continue to lobby ZESPRI in the best interest of Organic Growers.

In the October COKA News, our Vice Chair Mark White reported on the OANZ AGM held on the 30th of August which resulted in the non-election of myself and then the resignation of the newly elected Chair Noel Josephson. Since then all the pre-AGM Board except for one board member has resigned. This resulted in the request from COKA to hold an OANZ Council. COKA was looking to “reaffirm the current member mandate to focus OANZ on the National Standards and Regulations project” (NOSR).

This meeting was held in November and was attended by Mark White and myself and unfortunately the consensus that COKA was seeking wasn’t achieved. The outcome of the meeting was reported back to the COKA executive December meeting with the recommendation that COKA withdraws from OANZ and endeavour to work alongside other organic producer groups (such as HortNZ) to promote the NOSR project and other issues of importance to organic producers. This recommendation was in turn made to the December COKA general meeting and was strongly endorsed.

In the meantime, ZESPRI had issued its October forecast - the forecasted OGR values for Organic Green were very stable and steady compared with the first forecast in August, which boded well for the end of the selling season which was rapidly approaching.

In November ZESPRI management announced that they would be recommending to the December Board meeting that a separate Organic SunGold pool should be created to be operating from the 2020 harvest.

Organic SunGold growers were surveyed to establish the level of support for this recommendation.

On the 10th of December Alice Moore reported “The survey achieved a 66 percent response rate. On an individual KPIN basis 76 percent of respondents agreed with ‘creating our own pool’. While on an individual KPIN basis 76 percent were in agreement.”

“Given this strong direction from growers, the Board has approved the creation of a separate pool for SunGold organic for 2020/21 payments.”

It was pleasing to see such a strong level of support for a separate pool despite ongoing claims that there wasn’t grower support for such move.

You will all be aware of the current dry conditions on orchards (at least at the time of writing). The experts are forecasting rain to move in from

the north over the next week. Fingers crossed that we get some nice steady rain spread over a few days with very little wind!

I would like to thank the following:

- The COKA executive and Mark White in particular for their support during the year;
- Belinda McLeod, who joined us early in the year and has picked up her duties as our secretary in an effective and efficient manner;
- Alice Moore (Global Marketing Manager-Organics) and her colleagues for the regular reporting back from ZESPRI and the marketplace;
- Bruce Cameron, ZESPRI Chairman who had been our long-term liaison board director and who was replaced by Paul Jones (Deputy Chairman) during the year;
- All our COKA members for your excellent attendance at our meetings during the year.

I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on the 4th of March.

Kind Regards

Doug