

## Demeter New Zealand Bulletin No 1 January 2008

This is our first bulletin on technical matters. If you have comments that would help us improve it, please let us know.

### Coming work

The Demeter inspectors meet to review their year and plan for the future on 10 & 11 January – probably just as you get this document. **If you have any matters you would like them to consider, please contact your inspector immediately.**

Following that, David Wright will be participating in a Demeter International certification workshop in Switzerland at the beginning of February.

### Varroa Mite

If Biosecurity New Zealand requires Apistan strips in a hive for testing purposes:

- a. The licensee is to obtain from Biosecurity New Zealand a statement of what has been done
- b. The strips should stay in the hive for no longer than 24 hours
- c. If the strips stay in the hive for more than 24 hours the hive shall be moved to uncertified land, such as the quarantine paddock.
- d. The hive products from treated hives will not be certified at this stage.
- e. Provided that the above requirements are met, certification of other products will not be affected.

### BioGro certificates

BioGro has developed an alternative procedure to requesting the supplier for a copy of the BioGro certificate for the product.

The procedure is to go on-line to the BioGro website [www.biogro.co.nz](http://www.biogro.co.nz) and follow the links via “Farm Inputs” to the product you are proposing to buy. E.g. [www.biogro.co.nz](http://www.biogro.co.nz) / Farm Inputs / Soil and Plant Nutrition Management (for fertilisers)

Once you have located the product print the page and keep it on file. You will see that the date posted is printed at the bottom of the page – BioGro updates these pages weekly, and the date should correspond to the week you purchase the material. Old pages are not relevant, as approval may have been withdrawn in the meantime.

The printed page is an alternative to a copy of a current BioGro certificate.

### Demeter International evaluation

Rienk ter Braake conducted the partner evaluation of Demeter New Zealand in July, visiting the office and a half dozen licensees. As a result Demeter New Zealand has some corrective actions to attend to, just as farmers often do after an inspection. Some relate to

internal procedures and a few are requests for standards changes that will affect licensees directly. They are:

1. Poultry manure. Demeter standards already prohibit the use of manure from unethical systems such as battery hen houses. Demeter International asks for it to be restricted to coming from certified organic sources only.
2. Blood products (blood and bone, dried blood, etc.) Demeter International has adopted the European rules against the use of any blood products in soil fertility management and asks Demeter New Zealand to do the same.
3. Conversion period. Demeter International allows the conversion of the farm over five years while the New Zealand standards allow seven.

The Demeter Standards Committee is still considering numbers 1 & 2, but has agreed to recommend change no. 3 to the Council of the Bio Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association. If you have comments, please let us know.

### **Exemptions**

There are some cases where New Zealand can allow exemptions from the Demeter International standards. De-horning of cattle is an example – Demeter International standards do not allow for de-horning but New Zealand can allow exemptions, but they must be renewed each year. The inspector will discuss exemptions with you during the visit, and record any requests for standards exemptions for consideration during assessment.

Another situation where exemptions may be considered is that something that is technically a non-compliance but could reasonably be allowed. Examples are

1. Non-organic seeds are used in the home garden for personal use only, but are not fully documented. According to the standards all land under the management of the licensee must meet the standards, whether the licensee wants the products certified or not. The standards require all brought-in seeds to be documented.
2. The licensee has several hens for home egg supply – the eggs are not sold off the farm. The hens are fed household scraps including non-organic food, but the standards require organic feed.

Both the above are technically non-compliances but have been allowed in the past. In future, if they were to be continued to be allowed they would be recorded as both non-compliances and as exemptions.

It will help the inspectorate if licensees themselves note where they may wish to be allowed small non-compliances like these, and formally request them. This should also help licensees become clearer about what the standards actually require.