

21 October 2019

Committee Secretariat
Primary Production Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Email: pp@parliament.govt.nz

RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION

Organic Products Bill

Introduction

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide a written submission on the Organic Products Bill.

General Comments

1. RWNZ agrees in principle with the general direction of this bill, however, we make the following observations and recommendations.
2. RWNZ supports environmentally and financially sustainable land use, which can include organic production. We see this as a key to maintaining vibrancy in our rural communities, which in turn are essential to the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of New Zealand.

Specific Comments

3. RWNZ recommends that there be a definition of organics in the bill and suggests that the one provided by IFOAM will be the best fit. IFOAM is an international organisation and as such, as spent considerable time ensuring that any definitions are understandable in any language.
4. RWNZ further suggests that IFOAM's agreed four principles of Organic Agriculture be incorporated into the Organic Products Bill.

5. RWNZ requests that wild harvest foods and aquaculture, both wild and farmed, are included as organic products.
6. RWNZ requests that an expert panel be a requirement of implementation of this bill, and written in to the Bill.
7. The expert panel should be convened by MPI with the purpose to ensure the bill, once enacted, is implemented fairly, that any organic producer is treated fairly in transition, and that any producer wishing to convert to organics is given proper support and time to transition.
8. The expert panel should primarily be experts in organic food production, wild harvest and marketing of organic products.
9. The members of the expert panel should be representative of the range of needs to ensure a competitive organic economy - from local grassroots production to international marketing.
10. RWNZ also requests that the membership of the panel be gender balanced to ensure the experiences and voices of rural organic producers and marketers who are women are included.
11. RWNZ believes that approval as an operator should be at two levels; an individual in an enterprise who monitors compliance and equally if not more importantly, the business is accredited as a producer.
12. RWNZ suggests that compliance be along the lines of ISO17065, the EU/UK example and also takes in to account the successes of the Canadian model.
13. RWNZ seeks the following assurances:
 - 13.1. That compliance costs will not be prohibitive for small operations that the power of warrantless entry does not lead to business disruption and mistrust.
 - 13.2. The model provided by current primary industry quality assurance practices should be followed.
 - 13.3. That minor non-compliance and first offences are handled differently to blatant disregard or deliberate deception.
14. RWNZ requests that both a gender impact analysis and rural impact analysis be done on this legislation so that any adverse impact on either or the intersectionality of both is eliminated.

About Rural Women New Zealand

15. Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and has an authoritative voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.
16. RWNZ strives to ensure that all rural residents, workers and families have equitable access to services, inequalities are addressed by Government, and the wellbeing of rural communities is considered from the beginning of all policy and legislative development.

17. RWNZ is affiliated to the Associated Country Women of the World and as such upholds all United Nations, ILO, FAO and WHO conventions and outcome statements as they relate to women and rural women in particular.

RWNZ would like to draw particular attention to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Organic Products Bill will go a long way to achieving all of the SDG's however, we are of the belief that SDG 12: Responsible consumption and Production has particular significance because by committing to this goal through this bill in particular Parliament is ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

We look forward to discussing this further with you in our oral submission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Angela McLeod', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

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