



Grant Ridings on Jenerayations Farm, Kerepehi.

# Organic co-op set for expansion

**SUDESH KISSUN**  
sudesk@ruralnews.co.nz

**NEW ZEALAND'S** only organic dairy cooperative is ready for its next phase of product development and growth.

Organic Dairy Hub Cooperative NZ (ODH) has appointed a new chief executive and is looking to expand its product range this season.

Clay Fulcher, until recently the national sales manager at Fonterra subsidiary NZ Agbiz Ltd, was introduced to ODH farmer shareholders at its annual meeting in Taupo two weeks ago.

ODH executive director Sharon Shannon told *Dairy News* that Fulcher has an extensive background in the dairy industry and is pleased to lead the co-op into the next phase of development and growth.

The 100% farmer owned ODH supplies organic milk to local dairy processors including Goodman Fielder, Green Valley Dairies, Lewis Road Creamery and Kawerau Dairies. It also produces a range of organic milk powder from A2 cows for domes-

tic and export markets.

Shannon says ODH is "very clear on strategy and where we are looking to take this business, for our shareholders".

"ODH is providing the whole package for shareholders – a true co-op that prides itself on looking out for each other.

"Our farmers all have farm gate numbers but no one is just a number. All shareholders personally know each other.

"Directors and senior management are accessible and available to all our shareholders.

"We live and breathe our culture and our values, we provide organic practical support and we support our in-conversion farmers through the process of conversion. We provide shareholder buying power for organic products and we form longstanding business relationships that provide stability for our business and our shareholders."

While ODH is currently at full capacity, it has a waiting list of farms wanting to supply the co-op.

Shannon says ODH is interested in talking to any farmers already organic or interested

in changing their farming system to a biological organic system.

"For us it's about building the relationship with them and understanding what they need from us as much as what we need from them."

ODH fully supports farms changing from conventional farming practices to organic farming.

Shannon did not divulge the milk price paid to its farmer suppliers but says ODH is "just not about the milk price".

"It's about how we can wrap our co-op arms around all our farmers and make them highly efficient on farm and in their business to drive profitability.

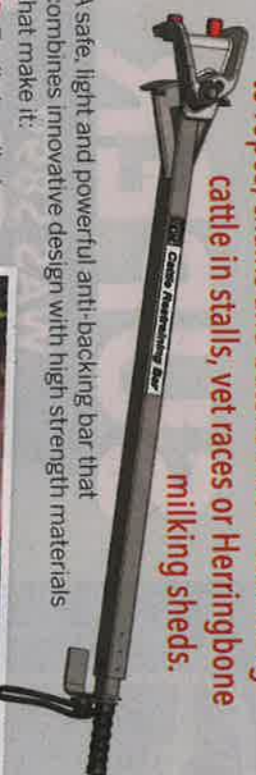
"ODH has the coun-

try's most experienced and successful biological organic farmers, from in-conversion farmers to farmers 25 years into organics.

"We have some of the most forward thinking farmers and business people in the country who had the passion and vision to create a true co-op out of real collaboration."

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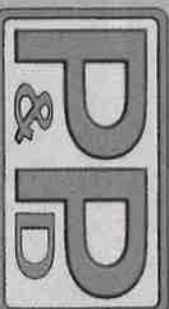
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## FARMERS GET AWARDS FOR QUALITY MILK



From left: Colin May, FIL, Jenny and Ray Ridings and ODH executive director Sharon Shannon.

AT ITS recent annual meeting in Taupo, Organic Dairy Hub (ODH) gave out the inaugural Farm of the Year awards.

A special trophy, made from recycled scrap metal, was donated by Adrian Worsley Art. Prizes were donated by FIL.

Kerepehi-based Jenerayations Farm, owned by the Ridings family, won the top award, for supplying ODH the finest grade milk all season, Farrand Farms, Northland and Roydon Phillips, Taranaki came second and third.

ODH executive director Sharon Shannon says the co-op is proud of the quality of milk supplied by its farmers and its shareholder achievements. "ODH farmers understand the full journey of milk from the time the shed lights go on in the morning to the consumer enjoying the end product."

Farms supplying are located in most regions of the North Island, from Northland to South Waikato, and from Taranaki across Waikato to Bay of Plenty.

"We have a nice spread of farm which allows us to service all areas of the North Island," says Shannon.

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