

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr.S Mason

Chief Executive Officer, Bio-Gro, Wellington, New Zealand

Kia Ora! Welcome!

Mr. Chairman, Participants of the Seventh International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming,

It is a great privilege for Bio-Gro to be invited to this conference and to be given an opportunity to speak at the opening ceremony.

The initial information and call for papers on this conference lists the five principles of Kyusei Nature Farming, which are as follows:

- Production of good quality food for the advancement of human well being
- Development of economical and spiritual benefits to producers and consumers
- Achievement of sustainability and ease of adoption
- Conformation to nature and protection of environment
- Procurement of sufficient food for all living beings

The accepted concept of organic farming today, which is also certified, works with nature and not against it and is environmentally friendly. It is a method of producing high quality and high value food. The umbrella organization of organic agriculture is the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) which is represented here by Ms.Liz Clay, the World Board Member from Australia, to whom a warm welcome is extended. Certified organic agriculture in New Zealand is represented by organizations such as Bio-Gro, which helps produce organics and certify them. Nature farming and organic farming are similar and will, one day, merge together. Certainly, they are sister-farming methods, as in the case of natural, biological and ecological farming. Currently, throughout the world, there is a stand off between two organizations, representing two fundamentally different systems of agriculture. On one hand, there is one group, such as ourselves who support organic or nature farming, and on the other, large organizations, especially multinational companies driving farmers to produce using increasing quantities of synthetically produced inputs and overly intervention technologies such as genetic engineering. These interventionist forms of agriculture push for high production at all costs. High stocking rates of ruminants, high populations of poultry and swine in houses, increasing use of fertilizers, especially nitrogen and the use of genetic engineering, all push for greater production and not quality. The organizations pushing for this type of agriculture have considerable power and do not want to give up their progress at this stage. They have been pushing the silver bullets for agriculture to develop solutions for all problems. These however offer only short-term gains and create greater problems at the end. Their argument for greater productivity and sustainability appears to be fundamentally a fraud, when a part of their technology is to kill the viability of seeds. This has a wonderful name - Terminator technology. which says it all. These seeds will clearly produce a low value food. If these seeds cannot produce life, how can these plants produce quality food?

Such technologies will make farmers more dependent on supplies of inputs from multinational companies. Today, with the scale of vested interests, it is difficult to say how this stand off will be resolved. Most likely, the consumer markets will resolve it. Understandably, most consumers support nature farming, for its high value food that is produced and because nature farming is based on sound principles and being environmentally friendly. Ultimately, it will be the markets that will decide the stand off.

Nature farming is a thinking person's agriculture. I am very pleased to be here on behalf of Bio-Gro New Zealand and to see many Bio-Gro certified farmers here today. It is a great privilege for me to be invited to speak here. I look forward to the presentations, workshops and field visits, and to meeting many of you during the conference. I wish the conference well.

Thank you.