



# Update from WWOOF Headquarters

WWOOF NZ Newsletter  
March 2007

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## WWOOF Conference -Sapporo, Japan

30 Oct—1st Nov 2006

Delegates from France, Italy, Germany, UK, Canada, Australia, USA, Japan and NZ met to establish the International WWOOF Association - IWA. Currently there is a consultation process underway to take this further. The main role of the association is to manage the list of WWOOF hosts in countries that do not yet have their own WWOOF Organisation and to manage a neutral website (currently [www.wwoofinternational.org](http://www.wwoofinternational.org)) that gives an overview of WWOOFing around the world. The IWA has already started to build links with organisations like IFOAM.



International WWOOF Coordinators meeting on a farm in Hokkaido. Our hosts are on the right, Sue Coppard (founder of WWOOF) is in the long gray jacket at center-left.

## Next Printing of the WWOOF Book

The **end of March** will be the deadline for making changes to your listing before the next printing. Remember hosts can go online and make their own edits when they like (see "Website" below). If you can, please take time to review what you have written as this is what will be printed. Checking **grammar, spelling, relevance** etc. will be useful, especially for speakers of languages other than English. Please keep your details to about 100 words otherwise they may be cut-off. Of course Hosts will always be able to mail their changes in to the above PO Box.

## Website [www.wwoof.co.nz](http://www.wwoof.co.nz)

Thank you to all the hosts who provided feedback on the website developments. The ability for hosts to edit their description online was well received. Hosts were also interested in being able to search online for WWOOFers and view their profiles. Hosts said the fol-

lowing details would be important for them to view:

1. WWOOFer's membership number
2. Their Personal Introduction
3. Home address/country of origin
4. Email address and phone number
5. Previous hosts
6. Vegetarian? Vegan? Special dietary requirements
7. Special skills

Any other suggestions?

One difficulty hosts have is **WWOOFers who break bookings** without notifying the host. WWOOF is looking at how to solve this problem and one solution may be to flag a WWOOFer's profile if they break more than say, 2 bookings. To avoid this happening, WWOOFers please ensure you let your host know if you can't make it!

(Please note that these online services do not mean that "offline" services are being reduced. Hosts will always be able to mail in updates, feedback etc. just the same as before)!

## Cover photos

If you have a photo of you and/or your WWOOFers working hard on your property then please send a copy to be printed on the cover of the next edition of the WWOOF book.

## Quote from a host

I have had incredible WWOOFers. They have contributed not just to my garden but to my family's well-being. They have shown my 13-year old son that there are alternative ways to live in the world (teens by definition can't learn this from their parents) which include ethical behaviour and low-tech entertainment like card games and willow crafts. WWOOFers should rule the world. Thank you so much for your organisation.

Marianna

## 1000+ WWOOF Hosts

In January 2007 the number of WWOOF Hosts in NZ past the 1000 mark for the first time. This makes NZ the second most popular country in the world for WWOOFing, Australia being the largest at over 1600 WWOOF Hosts. So our hats go off to all those hosts and WWOOFers who have worked to make their WWOOFing exchanges a success!

## WWOOFer's Dilemma

If a WWOOFer stays 2 nights but works for 3 days, is this a good exchange? It will probably depend on who you ask. For the WWOOFer it may seem like they have worked an extra day. For the host it may seem like their WWOOFer is leaving just when they are getting to know the routines. Who's right?

## Feedback from the past few months...

Following are some of the comments received from members recently. Read on and see what other think.

Hello N.Z. Wwoof team,  
I Wwoofed last year (Jan. till April) on the South Island and had only very good experiences, no matter where I went. I stayed at six Wwoof addresses. I have been very occupied since my return to Canada and am only now organizing the photographs I took. There hasn't a day gone by that I have not thought of New Zealand and its people in one way or another. The Autumn Fest event looks tempting, however "The Concord" is not in operation anymore.... Our farm and yogurt/ice cream operation is now a Wwoofing farm and at this moment a Japanese girl, Maki, is staying with us. It is gorgeous Spring weather and new life emerges everywhere. Wishing everyone Happy Wwoofing.  
- Ineke Booy

We are swayed to go with those who philosophically argue against an on-line site for WWOOFers to generate public comments about guests. Notwithstanding some good points, we think that there most certainly are ways this medium might be abused and it would almost need daily monitoring by wwoof to maintain integrity of hosts' name. The safer and fairer way is to maintain the current situation where you moderate on opinions/complaints, we think. We do congratulate you on introducing a "Search for Wwoofer" facility. In the suggested information below ... Our thoughts are to keep it very simple, not complicated by seeking over-much from traveling WWOOFers.  
- Chris

"2 issues arise from your message....  
1. Wwoofers often expect to come based only on supplying their name & sometimes country. This is not good enough for us & further info is either supplied or we hear nothing further from them when asked I think the expectation should be that wwoofers supply as much info as possible. This is not just a job, but a live-in situation  
2. We have hosted a few hundred wwoofers though wwoof & helpx. We have just pulled our entry on helpx due to one very unreasonable dissatisfied 'helper'.... due to a helper review which I regard as rather unfair. There is always one person who thinks their opinion should contradict the others. So, I am dead against wwoofer reviews because of opportunity to abuse the system. Hope you take this onboard!"  
- Keith

Regarding info on woofers.... I think it would be valuable to know if they have relevant skills or maybe even irrelevant skills. Maybe there could be a checklist with an 'other' section. Some skills might be weeding, planting, harvesting, chain saw, building, livestock, etc. On the other hand this might disadvantage those young and eager folk who haven't got much skill other than enthusiasm!  
- Eleanor

I think the ability to alter our details as hosts is very good and we welcome this. I have reservations about a guest book and wouldn't use it. We are fairly new to wwoofing and have had 10 wwoofers through our place but we have had to ask two to leave - one because she couldn't work on her own and she was smoking and the other was asked to leave for smoking as well - (we forgot to ask!!! Our fault but we adding to to the web page). We have our own guest book but didn't invite these people to sign it - each only stayed a couple of nights and it doesn't feel right asking people to comment on their stay when we have asked them to leave. Conversely we could have been rather negative when writing comments on one of the wwoofers as she didn't work well for us BUT we heard later that she had got on well else where. Some people fit in and some people don't - comments on wwoofers wouldn't be helpful and might bias potential hosts and are very subjective by nature. Hope these comments are helpful. We think you run a great web site by the way.  
- Sarah

" Would you choose to use an online guest book?"  
Honestly? No! I like the WWOOF book we have and I would prefer to keep it that way! I also prefer that our WWOOFers don't hang out on the PC for hours and hours. If we become more dependent on computers it will have an impact on the way we live!

One other thought I have again and again. We have wonderful WWOOFers here. And I often would like to tell other hosts how great they are. What if the WWOOFers would have a reference book for them as well? Or part of the WWOOF book? Where we hosts could fill in stuff in the same way as WWOOFers do in our Host WWOOF book? If it would be part of the WWOOF book a WWOOFer buys, it would also promote that Hosts ask for the WWOOF book more often and browse through the comments the previous WWOOF hosts have left there. Just an idea!  
- Peter

Maybe some good ideas in that last email from you, BUT, for dinosaurs such as myself who still do not actually own a computer not sure that I find it relevant or useful? And probably I would feel it was a loss of privacy I think. Thanks anyway.  
- Sandra