

Olives New Zealand
SFF/Focus Grove Project Steering Group
Inaugural Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 6th July 2014
Telephone Conference: 7pm – 8pm

1. Present

Finance Manager – Craig Leaf-Wright, Project Manager – John Dunlop, Technical Advisor – Stuart Tustin, Project Administrator – Gayle Sheridan, Chair – Andrew Taylor (joined during item 3 ii)

Andrew had advised he would be a little late in joining the meeting so Craig assumed the role of Chair and welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Andrew – for lateness

3. Business:

i. Confirm the Focus Groves

The four groves were confirmed as; Hawke's Bay - Aquiferra, Wairarapa - Leafyridge, Nelson - Kakariki, Canterbury – Terrace Edge.

ii. Confirm the Extension Plan

The Extension Framework Plan as circulated was accepted.

The project encompasses three harvest years – 2016, 2017 and 2018. The project start date was 1 July 2016 and the finish date is October 2018 with the final Conference presentation. The project is based on Frantoio only and relies on there being a control and trial block for each grove, to enable comparative performances to be drawn.

There was substantial discussion around the measure to be used; tonnage by hectare or kilos by tree. Given that the Focus Groves had different planting matrixes this would impact on the number of trees (e.g. from 330 – 400) and therefore the crop load. It was agreed that the measure therefore needed to be based on kilos per tree.

It was also noted that remedial pruning in the first year could result in a reduced crop load and that there was crop wastage. To establish the base starting point, the average harvest data was calculated at 10kg harvested per tree. This would be the target for 2017, rising to 15kg harvested per tree in 2018. Further out 20kg.

The Milestones detailed the specific programme and deliverables with due dates. It was critical that these be met because these were directly linked to funding. While many of the deliverables would be managed by Gayle as Project Administrator there were other deliverables reliant on Plant and Food and the Regional Chairs. For example, the requirement to take a register of attendees at Field Days and provided a synopsis of the key points and feedback from attendees. Stuart said that it was now a Health and Safety requirement to keep a register of all visitors to a business.

Action Point

Gayle – Advise the Project Steering Group one month out of a milestone due date and the deliverables required.

iii. Review 2015 Harvest Volume Data

As part of the annual Grove Census, groves provided their harvest tonnage by variety and the oil yield percentage. The harvest tonnage is divided by the number of trees for each variety to give the harvested kgs per tree.

Thus the harvest data for the four Focus Groves for 2014 and 2015 is as follows.

Harvest Data : Frantoio (kg per tree)			
Participant	Region	2015	2014
Aquiferra	Hawke's Bay	21.7	22.8
Leafyridge	Wairarapa	0	15.2
Kakariki	Nelson	16	10
Terrace Edge	Canterbury	1.86	1.86

Note – Harvest data figures provided are total; not separated for Trial and Control blocks.

Stuart said that as water was a limiting factor on harvest it would also be interesting to monitor the yield with an aim to improve this by canopy management. John agreed that potential huge crops drove the need to manage the canopy to ensure quality output. Stuart said that pruning needed to occur ahead of flowering and thinning if required after fruit set.

Craig noted that the reason Leafyridge had no Frantoio harvest in 2015 was due to a variety of reasons including low flowering, poor fruit set, frosts and birds. Andrew said that unfortunately this was a common scenario for many groves.

iv. Confirm Conference Presentation

The Conference Presentation will cover off the project aim, plan overview and status, the hypotheses and the plan for addressing these. The preliminary findings and anecdotes from the 2015 visits would also be of value.

The presentation would include a Panel Discussion. The four Focus Groves would be represented on the Panel along with invited guests – Reni Hildenbrand from South Africa and Jim Rowntree from South Australia. Each would be asked to give a 10 minute brief on the biggest issue facing them as growers and how this was being addressed. There would also be time for open discussion and questions/answers.

There was subsequent discussion about the attendance at Conferences compared to the Regional Field Days. Conference attracted a good proportion of local attendees but much less from further afield. (For example at the last Conference in Wellington more than half of the attendees were from Kapiti/Wairarapa.) By contrast the five Regional Field Days at the end of 2015 had attracted attendances of 20+ at each with more than 40 in Wairarapa. It was felt that the Regional Field Days would be a more effective medium for the first Project Presentation and this should be discussed with MPI. The Panel Discussion would still be a unique opportunity for Conference and a less detailed overview of the Project could be included in the Update of Olives NZ Activities presentation to be given by Andrew. The Extension Plan may need to be updated accordingly.

Action Point

Gayle - Discuss with MPI including the key points from the Extension Framework in the President's Overview of Olives NZ Activities at Conference and leave the more detailed hypotheses, plan for addressing these, preliminary findings, etc. to the Field Days.

Gayle - Draft the project aim and plan overview from the SFF application and provide to Stuart/Andrew as the starting point for their Project presentations.

Stuart – Develop the Project presentation (this will be required by 30 September latest).

Regional Chairs – Provide photographs from 2015 Focus Grove visits/Field Days.

v. Set Dates for Focus Grove visits and Regional Field Days

The format of the Focus Grove visits preceding the Regional Field Days had worked very well in 2015 and it was agreed to stick with this model.

The following are the suggested dates for October/November 2016

Thursday 27th October – Nelson

Friday 28th October – Canterbury

Friday 4th November – Hawke’s Bay

Friday 11th November – Wairarapa

Friday 18th November - Auckland (Field Day only)

March 2017 and September 2017 to be advised.

4. General Business

John noted that harvest waste was an important factor, e.g. pre-harvest drop, olives that are left on the trees and shaker/capture efficiency. Stuart suggested collecting the olives from a sample of 10 trees to calculate the waste factor.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 8pm.

Next Meeting – Wednesday 23rd November 2016

Business:

- Confirm first Project Report – current status of Focus Grove health, 2016 production and recommendations made to the individual groves.
- Set dates for March 2017 Focus Grove visits and Regional Field Days.

Action Points from Meeting

Who	What	Due
Gayle	<p>Advise the Project Steering Group one month out of a milestone due date and the deliverables required.</p> <p>Discuss with MPI including the key points from the Extension Framework in the President’s Overview of Olives NZ Activities at Conference and leave the more detailed hypotheses, plan for addressing these, preliminary findings, etc. to the Field Days.</p> <p>Draft the project aim and plan overview from the SFF application and provide to Stuart/Andrew as the starting point for their Project presentations.</p>	<p>Nov 2016</p> <p>2017: March/July/Sept/Oct</p> <p>2018: March/Sept/Oct</p> <p>July 2017</p> <p>July 2017</p>
Stuart	<p>Develop the Project presentation (this will be required by 30 September latest).</p>	September 2017
Regional Chairs	<p>Provide photographs from 2015 Focus Grove visits/Field Days.</p>	August 2017