**Minutes of the Executive and Regional Chairs Meeting held on Saturday 9 & Sunday 10 February 2008**

**Present:**   
Jim Syme (chair), Margaret Edwards, Mark Heard, Alastair Bridge, Steve Clark, Andrew Taylor, Ed Scott, Graham Keen, Ian Manson, Colin Campbell, Roger Armstrong, James Brodie, Ken Mark, Warwick Grey

**Jim Syme opened the meeting and outlined his perception of the industry and what lies ahead of us.**

**Impressions**

* a dedicated team
* a Strategic Plan with wants and requirements but with limited financial resources therefore a levy is critical. There needs to be Strategic Plan/annual Work Plan syncronisation
* some communication but could do better
* a website that needs updating
* the need for all stakeholders to have a “common songsheet and to sing together”

**Apologies:** Tony Casey

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**Jim moved that they were a true and accurate record     
               Seconded: Ed Scott     CARRIED

**Matters arising:**

* Andrew Taylor asked what had been done about a protocol for assisting regions to upskill local judges
* Alastair Bridge said that the matter had been sent to the Regional Council for feed-back on what their attitude is and a report was expected at this meeting
* Ian Manson replied that only Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay run their own local competitions but the Regional Council meeting showed “resounding support” for local competitions
* Margaret Edwards said that over the last 3 or 4 years she and Laurence Eyres had run tasting courses in most regions. The aim was to have everyone who attended to be a competent “taster. She had received recent requests for more courses to be held. Regional competitions led to inconsistencies in results between regional and national competitions. She cited the example of the Waiheke Olive Festival and suggested other regions could hold similar events.
* Andrew suggested that the method of “qualification” could differ in regional competitions. We don’t want to continue to alienate non-ONZ members and that is a true danger.
* Ken Mark said that the idea of local competitions is to allow small local growers to find out how good their oils are
* Jim said that we want everybody to be as upskilled as possible. Some regions want to upskill, ONZ wants that to happen and the Executive will encourage that to happen
* Steve Clark was of the opinion that Margaret and Laurence’s courses are fantastic and well worthwhile

**Financial report:**

* Graham Keen presented the various financial papers and said that every Executive member must present a budget for approval by the Executive
* There is a need for far better management of cash accounts – there is too much not on term deposit
* He moved that ONZ transfer accounts from BNZ Martinborough to ASB Kapiti.  Seconded : Margaret               CARRIED
* Steve suggested we might need a budget for the development of regional websites
* Jim said that the only financial reports that the Exec needed to see were the account balances, year to date actual against budget and cashflow

**Regional Council Report**

* Ian Manson reported on a “very comprehensive meeting” that discussed a possible industry levy, local competitions, attempts to increase membership, subscription levels, communication regional websites
* Most regions (except Hawkes Bay) thought that a an industry levy would be supported
* 2008 production was estimated at 1400 tonnes or 160,000 litres

**Commodity Levy**

* Ian summarised the reasons exploring the possibility of an industry levy which have been circulated to the Executive and to regions
* Regional meetings must continue – Marlborough and Nelson are still to hold theirs. Ian will travel to these meetings and Colin Campbell will address the Oliveti AGM next week
* A model for a levy will be built off the back of the Strategic Plan once developed
* Ian outlined a possible software package to help processors administer collection of a levy. The package will be free to processors who will be paid a service fee to collect the levy.  Warwick Grey offered to critique the proposals
* Margaret asked if the levy will be on oil or fruit. This sparked a big debate with arguments for each option. Hawkes Bay wants the levy to be on fruit.
* Roger asked if the proposed software package could have a “dummy run” next season prior to implementation of a levy and this was agreed to
* Ken Mark was disappointed in lack of consultation with the regions over the levy – the matter was too rushed with not enough time given for consideration. He said membership is diminishing and he was concerned about the future of the industry.
* Ken said he had a paper that should have been tabled at the Regional Council meeting which he refused to table at the Executive meeting. At this point the Regional Council meeting was re-convened to allow Ken to table his paper to that meeting
* Ian reported that the Regional Council moved that a paper on the levy issue be prepared to go back to regions. Ian will do this.
* Alastair read an email received by the Hawkes Bay committee from Tony Casey as to what should be addressed at this meeting. There was another email from Bruce Speedy from Hawkes Bay which illustrated the misunderstandings over the levy that are present throughout the industry

**2008 Certification**

* Margaret spoke to her Exec paper and reiterated that the website guidelines for certification must be simplified
* There is the on-going issue of the cost of certification and negotiations need to be held with HortResearch
* There is a very low level of certification in some regions notably Auckland and Hawkes Bay
* There is evidence that there is much more recognition by the public of the certification “red dot”
* James Brodie asked if regions will be asked to put forward the names of people who would like to be on the sensory panel. Margaret replied that the costs to people and the logistics of being on the panel put many people off. However there could be “off-shoot” panel in regions but the IOC only recognises one panel
* James would also like to see research done by ONZ on “food grade” plastic containers and to publicise the results
* Margaret replied that storage aspects would be looked at under the current SFF project

**2008 Conference**

* Alastair reported that plans were underway for a 3 day conference to be held in Wellington on 3,4 & 5 October.
* There will be a pruning field day on the Friday run by Leandro Ravetti
* Further details will be released as the programme is developed

**2008 Awards**

* Margaret spoke to her paper outlining this year’s Awards
* Roger Armstrong asked if we could re-address the matter of “commercial” and “boutique” categories in the Awards. Members were asked for suggestions which will be circulated by email.

**2008 Processors Course**

* Margaret spoke to her Exec paper on the course which is planned to be held at Simunovich Olive Estate in mid April
* Spaces are restricted to 25 with 17 registrations to date

**2009 International Olive Oil Competition**

* Alastair spoke to the Exec papers on the subject and outlined progress to date but said the biggest hurdle at this stage was sponsorship
* James said he could help with an approach to Qantas and asked if regions could see what may be involved in the competition and associated “event”
* The meeting approved the appointment of Avenues Event Management as event manager should the competition proceed

**Website**

* Steve Clark reported that the Regional Council felt that communication was really important and that a good website has a vital role to play
* Steve showed a mock-up of the Central Otago regional page and wants each region to have their own web page
* It was agreed that the regional information should be on the public area of the website - not the members-only area
* Netlist will be asked for a budget to develop regional webpages
* It was also agreed that there should be 6 monthly reports from researchers on olive matters; more accessibility to research and development information; new information put on the website should be advised to members via email with a link to  information included in that email; there should be a link to the Olivegrower & Processor magazine publishers website; the IOP Manual needs up-dating

**Linolenic Acid survey**

* Margaret presented her report on the survey and on-going debate over the subject
* Margaret also appealed to regions to support the call for samples for the annual testing regime

**Food Safety Plan**

Ian presented his paper on the Food Safety Plan template and 5 draft copies were given to Roger, Graham, Ed, Andrew and Mark who are to come back with any comments on possible changes

**Grove Management software programme**

* Ian present his paper, ran through developments and asked if the project was worth pursuing
* Steve said that and alternative idea is available in Australia for trial for $20
* The Exec were asked for feedback at the next Exec meeting

**Marlborough Branch resolution   
“That Olives New Zealand within the domestic market place test, expose and lobby for enforcement to ensure all labelling complies with international standards and matches the contents of the container”**

* Mark Heard spoke to the paper and said that it should be a level playing field for all oils – both local and internationals
* Jim stated that in his experience the Commerce Commission activity was slanted towards financial cases rather than compliance cases. The Commission is cash strapped to take on a wide range of cases
* Ed supported what Marlborough is trying to achieve but our industry can not afford bad publicity
* Margaret said that the much publicised “Ribena case” was based on science and the Commerce Commission would probably only refer a case to FSANZ as a safety issue. In the “Consumer” magazine article several year’s ago there was only one overseas oil that didn’t meet the EVOO standard. We might have a case against overseas oils on labelling but then there are many N Z oils that don’t comply with labelling regulations.
* In summarising Jim said there was much enthusiasm for what was trying to be achieved. We need to refresh our own members of the labelling regulations.
* Graham said that there was also an opportunity for ONZ to issue a press statement saying that the industry is encouraging members to correctly label their product
* Alastair agreed to visit the Commission and find out what needs to be done if we want to bring a case and what our chances of success would be

**Strategic Plan**

* Jim started the lengthy discussions and said that the present Plan does not tell us the pathway to achieve our goals.
* He recommended a small sub-committee be established to prepare a draft, report back to the Exec and regions for feedback. The amended draft would then be sent to all members to get buy-in from them.
* We need to tie in to the Plan the need for a levy and sell that to members.
* We also need to address the need to keep costs down for growers and members
* Andrew was of the opinion that we must tie in the bigger industry players as they will have a sense of ownership
* James suggested that one person from each region should be appointed to co-ordinate that region’s input to the Plan. Alastair will email regions asking them to nominate a regional rep. Regions will be asked to encourage members to read the material that is sent out to them
* A sub-committee of Jim Syme, Margaret Edwards, Andrew Taylor & Alastair Bridge was appointed to start work on the re-draft
* Andrew said it was necessary to “drill down” in to HortNZ for material on sustainability and we can use their public awareness skills eg. 5 Plus A Day. Then we need to inform our membership that we have this connection with HortNZ
* Margaret also suggested a connection with HortNZ’s recipe co-ordinators
* Andrew also suggested that Jim should visit regions together with a “technical” person to promote interaction with members
* The Plan needs to present a Situation Analysis. Goals, How Do We Achieve the Goals, Strategy and a Budget. We then plan year by year goals and year by year activities to achieve those goals. Priorities will be set per year and a timeline set

**discussion then moved to various subject that will be dealt with in the Strategic Plan :**

* + Graham suggested that our involvement with NZ Gap should be done away with
  + Weblinks should be established for export requirements needed by members
  + We need to re-address the cost of certification ie. is there another independant testing facility? Talk with HortResearch. James suggested that  we hire lab space or contract services for a specific task. Do we need to contract a PR person to produce promotional material? Ian asked if the ‘red dot’ was doing anything for us – the consensus was that it is,. We should promote the ‘red dot’ on the front page of the website and in The Orchardist and other publications such as ‘Lifestyle Block’
  + James asked whether we are promoting the ‘red dot’ or NZEVOO. The answer was that we are concentrating on building local market share using the ‘red dot’ as a quality assurance mark. May be we should tie Roberto in to promote NZEVOO locally – his radio ads from 4 years ago are still being talked about
  + Roger suggested the ‘red dot’ shelf talkers should be amended to show mountains and olive groves
  + We need far more publicity and promotion following the Awards. Regions need to pester local media for more publicity
  + Awards : Andrew suggested we need to entertain media at the Awards and connected activities and during judging to attract more media attention. There should be promotional time allowed for Best In Class winners to address the dinner where the media is present
  + Roger questioned the relevance of the SFF funding, what it was going to prove and where it fitted in to the R & D programme. Margaret explained the latest project.
  + James said that an R & D plan needed prioritising and it was decided that the R & D committee would comprise Margaret, Andrew & Ed

**General Business**

* Andrew questioned the expense of Margaret attending the exposition in Spain in March as we are not trying to market to the EU but rather to North America, UK etc
* Ian Manson replied that the event is not an EU event but rather a promotion of olive oil to a worldwide audience. We will be showcasing N Z EVOO to an audience who may well come in to contact with N Z oil exporters in the future in other parts of the world
* Jim said the “marketing” budget needs to be broken down in to areas where it should be spent
* Andrew also asked if The Orchardist is the right vehicle to promote the “olive message”
* discussion took place on the possibility of an email newsletter or blog space

**The meeting concluded at 3.10pm Sunday with Jim thanking everyone for making the effort to attend and especially to Margaret & John Edwards for making their home available for the meeting and dinner.**