Minutes of the Executive Committee held by Teleconference on Thursday 11 September 2008 at 7.45pm

**Present:**Jim Syme (chair), Steve Clark, Mark Heard, Margaret Edwards, Graham Keen, Ed Scott, Andrew Taylor, Ian Manson, Alastair Bridge

**Apologies:**
Nil

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**Minutes were accepted as being a true and accurate record

**Matters arising:**

* Jim said that the Strategic Plan had now been out with the membership for 7 weeks and there had only been a few brief comments about it. He suggested that there should several minor amendments done following that feedback and then the Plan should be posted on the website and members advised. All agreed.
* Discussion took place as to how to progress the commodity levy.
* Jim will include comment in his Presidential Report at the AGM but there still needs to be some work done in regions that haven’t yet had levy meetings eg. Nelson and Central Otago
* The decision was made that a discussion paper would be issued before Conference with how such a levy would be divvied up between activities and a forecast budget based on the areas of expenditure as identified in the Strategic Plan
* Alastair and Ian will draw up this paper
* Margaret reported that HortResearch will be sponsoring the Awards which will be known as the “Olives New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards in conjunction with HortResearch”

**Communication Plan**

* A draft Communication Plan has been issued to the Exec for comment.
* The next stage will be to circulate it to regions and then to the membership.
* It was agreed that it will be sent to regions within 2 weeks and circulated to the membership before Conference.

**Executive Procedure and Governance**

* Jim said that the present ONZ Rules (Constitution) fall short on some procedural areas and he has drawn up a draft Executive Procedure and Governance document.
* The Executive is to give Alastair any feedback on the document and it will then be posted on the website

**Marketing/ Certification (submission from N Z Olive Growers & Exporters)**

* a letter has been received from N Z Olive Growers & Exporters ….

    " We read with interest the suggestion in the recent executive minutes of further promoting the ONZ certification programme to consumers.
Obviously our funds should be applied to reaching the greatest number of prospective customers, with the least cost.
We suggest that ONZ might instead consider hiring a stall at each of the 2009 regional food shows, scheduled to take place in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, in April, May and July-August 2009.
The cost of the stalls ranges from between $2535 up to  $10,800 for a double stand in each of the three venues.
Each stall could display the trademark ONZ Certification  artwork, with information about the process and flyers to give to each “customer”.
We envisage that the stalls would be manned by volunteer ONZ members, particularly those who have product to market, and who would also contribute to the cost of stall hire. This gives them an opportunity to display and sell their oils,  and if there were several to a stall, it would give the customer an opportunity to taste and compare oils from the same region, side by side.
If  there  were sufficient volunteers, then ONZ could draw lots to determine who  could display, and the hours could be allocated in accordance with availability.
In addition, since the food shows are run sequentially, the same art work and display material could be used at each stand, instead of replicating it, and this gives ONZ absolute control over the content and presentation.
The food shows are now an established area of marketing to the food industry as well as to individual consumers, and enjoy a large number of visitors each year, so ONZ would have a much wider and more discerning audience than at individual festivals etc. as at present proposed."

* Alastair said that the idea could be worthwhile but feedback from companies he knew that displayed at the Food Shows was that it was expensive for little commercial return
* Steve Clark said that such shows were too specific to brands and not generic enough for a body such as ONZ to promote the industry and certification
* The consensus was that such an initiative would not be worthwhile as an industry promotion

**Website**

* Steve spoke to his paper and summarised each point ….

The content of each page of the Olives New Zealand website has been reviewed and alterations have been proposed for consideration by the Executive.  The pages have been reviewed in the order that they appear in the navigation bar on the public home page.  A review of the members’ only pages will be undertaken and forwarded in due course.

**Home Page**The home page has been refreshed by the inclusion of new photographs on two occasions, but the layout is still somewhat fragmented, too long and needs to be re-formatted.
The introductory section needs to be re-written to provide a better lead in from the “Welcome to the Olives New Zealand Website” heading.
The heading “About Olives New Zealand” should be moved down the page to head the section that includes “Industry Vision”, “Mission Statement” and “Objectives”.
The details under Quality Assurance, Growers, Processors, Marketers and Certification are actually objectives and need to be re-formatted to fit the Objectives format and wording.
The “Certified New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil” and the “Marketing & Promotion” sections seem out of place and should be moved to another page.
There are also a number of references to NZ GAP.  Are these still relevant or should they be deleted?
The home page should contain a highlighted section containing announcements.  The current section announcing the 2008 Olives New Zealand Conference is a good example.  This section would need to be updated or hidden as necessary.
An amended page is proposed (refer to the attached file).  Even the proposed home page is still rather long.  An alternative is to place the “About Olives New Zealand” section in a separate “about us” page and leave only the welcome paragraph and the announcements on the home page.

**Growing Olives**This page is still current and doesn’t appear to be in need of updating.

**The Good Oil**Again this page appears to be relevant but there may be more recent information available that could be incorporated.
Is a wider review of the health benefits of olive oil required?  If so, for the review to have credibility, Olives New Zealand would need to contract a health professional eg Jim Mann (Professor in Human Nutrition and Medicine at the University of Otago) or a post graduate student under appropriate supervision, to conduct to the review.

**Frequently Asked Questions**Generally the content is satisfactory, but there is a need for the answers given to be updated to reflect more recent knowledge.  For example, there are more than 10 – 12 olive varieties available in New Zealand and olive trees can certainly withstand temperatures lower than the stated -0.2 C.
The names of the regional chairs listed at the end of the page have been updated.

**Olive History**The content of this page appears to be appropriate, but Margaret Edwards, the author of the page may wish to review and update the content.

**New Zealand Olive Industry**
By and large the content of this page is appropriate, but there is a need to update with more recent data, eg olive industry production figures for 2007 and 2008.
The sections describing each of the olive growing regions should be reviewed by the Executive members and/or regional chairs to check that the information for their regions is current.

**Certification**This page was updated to include 2008 documents in place of the 2007 document.

**Olive Events**This page has been blank until just recently when the events detailed in the Coming Events section of the e-Newsletter was added.
The regional chairs/secretaries need to be more forthcoming with details of events to be held in their regions.

**Olive Oil in the Marketplace**This page lists a number of retail outlets that stock New Zealand olive oils, primarily those in the southern North Island.  It doesn’t appear to have been updated for some time.  Keeping the list current would be well nigh impossible even if growers were willing to provide the raw data.
A number of growers believe that this information is commercially sensitive and that, coupled with the difficulty in maintaining the list suggests that this page should be deleted.
An alternative to deletion would be delete the current content and incorporate the “Certified New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oils” section from the current home page followed by a current list of certified growers.  Obviously this list would need to be updated weekly at the peak period of certification but at lesser periods outside this time frame.

**Recipes**
This page could be regarded as unnecessary given that an Internet search would turn up a much larger number of recipes, but there appears to be no harm in leaving it as is.

**Awards & Recognition**
This page currently repeats the information announcing the 2008 Olives New Zealand Conference and Awards from the home page.
This repetition is unnecessary and should be replaced with details of the 2007 Award winners, which in turn would be replaced with details of the 2008 Award winners when these become available.
The links to winners from previous years should be maintained.

**Disclaimer**
The first paragraph contains a sentence asking users to refer any inaccurate information to the Web Administrator without providing any link to facilitate this.  In any event, who is the Web Administrator??
The final paragraph contains a fairly standard disclaimer.  Should it be referred to a solicitor to check that it is still relevant and current?

**Regional Organisations**
The regional organisations web page was updated earlier this year to reflect the changes in regional group committees.  Regional chairs and secretaries will need to forward the details of their committees as these change.
A link to the Olivetti website has been created as part of their contact details, and a separate web page for Central Otago has been created and linked to their contact details.  The web page provides links to the newsletters and coming events.
Attempts to set up web pages for other regional groups have so far failed due to a lack of response.

**Member Websites**This page contains a short description and a link to individual member’s websites.  Two new entries have been created and further entries will be provided on request.

**Olives New Zealand Newsletter**This is a new page that was created in June 2008, to provide access to the e-newsletter.  The current newsletter is displayed on the page, while links are provided to back issues.

**Membership Benefits**This page spells out the benefits of membership in Olives New Zealand.  Apart from a number of errors the content seems appropriate but the Executive may wish to review it and suggest changes.
The errors include :
• Reference to the international standard for fatty acid levels under the heading ONZ Certification Programme.
• A statement that the judging panel provides feedback to each entrant about their oil under the heading ONZ Olive Oil Annual Awards.

**Joining Olives New Zealand**This page provides a form for prospective members to fill out.  Apart from updating the Olives New Zealand’s postal address the page doesn’t require any amendment.

**Contact Us**
This page was updated earlier this year to reflect the current membership of the Executive.  It will be updated as that membership changes.

**General**HTML code includes metatags which can be used to provide a description of the web page and to provide keywords to facilitate searching by search engines.  None of the pages has provided any keywords and few provide a description.  While search engines now search page content rather than just keywords, it would probably help improve the visibility of the website if keywords were provided.
It has been suggested that the Olives New Zealand website should act as a one-stop shop where visitors can access information on suppliers and/or contractors servicing the olive industry.  I would envisage a new web page in a similar format to the used in the Members’ Websites page whereby each entry would contain a heading with the company name and/or logo, a short description of the services provided and a link to the supplier’s/contractor’s website.
An appropriate fee would be charged for each entry.

* Steve and Margaret will discuss what health contributions should be posted on the site
* It was agreed that the “olive marketplace” should be removed and replaced by the register of certified oils each year. This register will list the brands and varieties that have been certified within those brands

 **Auditing of Imported Oils**

* Mark Heard again spoke of his concern that something needed to be done about the quality/labelling of imported oils
* Margaret report that Consumer magazine is going to do another test and this will take place in the week of 6 September. The report will deal with both New Zealand and imported oils taken from the shelves of supermarkets. It will include up to 20 oils
* Ed was of the opinion that the risk of “taking on” importers of olive oil is too risky
* Margaret agreed and said that the N Z industry would run the risk of being accused of protectionist tactics and this would receive little traction. A huge amount of testing would be required to make any complaint worthwhile
* Jim agreed and said that the importers and “European” producers would be far too powerful for us in a legal battle
* It was agreed that any action needed to come from individual producers
* Ed said that Olive New Zealand’s stance was to continue to strongly promote N Z EVOO and the certification OliveMark and, if anything, concentrate on the “country of origin” labelling issue
* It was agreed that the matter will be kept on future agendas as “work in progress”

**Certification**

* Margaret reported that this year 172 oils were submitted for certification compared with 138 last year. This shows that the commercial advantages of certification are being recognised.
* Many of the oils were from new producers

**2008 Conference & Awards**

Alastair reported that things were progessing well with 89 conference registrations to date (with 3 weeks still to go) and 46 Awards entries

**Executive Officers Position**

* Jim reported that a number of applications had been received for the position and Margaret and he would draw up a short-list next week and conduct interviews shortly thereafter
* It has been decided not to pursue the Hort N Z option due to cost

**Updating the IOP Manual**

* Alastair reported that he had met with Chris Gaellic and Sandy Lang and the causes of the present problems have been identified
* Work is now being done on how to fix the problem, by whom and at what cost
* Andrew suggested that care was needed in talking about any specific chemical used for olives due to the lack of registration of such chemicals in New Zealand
* Margaret said that there is a document available that is used by other horticultural groups that could be available to us

**Financial**

* Graham presented his report and the draft 2008-9 budget
* the Executive recommended that the budget be presented to the Annual General Meeting on 12 October
* the financial statements were adopted as read and it was moved and agreed that the audited financial statements be presented to the membership
* Jim introduced a motion dealing with the investment of ONZ funds …..

**Rule 15.9** states that any surplus funds shall be invested with any trading bank or in such securities for the investment of trust monies.

The "sub-prime crisis" in the USA & its further ramifications for banks & financial institutions around the world have led to a significant loss of confidence in segments of the finance/investment markets in New Zealand. It is expected that the crises in the USA will worsen as banks devalue assets.

In New Zealand, besides finance company redemptions, companies and trusts that are authorised securities for the investment of trust monies (Guardian Trust, ING Mortgage Trust, AMP Mortgage Trust, AXA Mortgage Trust etc) are also finding their flow of new investments is very low and they do not have the liquidity to be able to redeem investments as they mature. So like the finance companies they are delaying payment to investors.

ONZ does not want to be in the position of not receiving funds when investments fall due so the following is proposed.

“that due to the current low confidence in segments of New Zealand's investment market the authority (ONZ Rule 15.9) to invest ONZ funds in authorised securities for trust funds (Unit Trusts Act 1908) is to be withdrawn.
Until further resolved all funds are to be invested in either ANZ/National, ASB, BNZ or Westpac banks & not in any other security”

* this was adopted unanimously

**General Business**

* committee chairs are to provide Jim with their reports by 22 September for inclusion in the Annual Report
* it was decided that Alastair will email the membership advising that “The Olivegrower and Processor” will replace “The Orchardist” and that those members who already subscribe to “The Olivegrower and Processor”  should not renew their subscriptions

**Next meeting :** the week after Conference with the incoming Executive Officer and Executive