**Minutes of the Executive Committee held by Teleconference on Tuesday 16 December 2008 at 7.45pm**

**Present:**
Jim Syme (Chairman), Steve Clark, Margaret Edwards, Graham Keen, Andrew Taylor, Ian Juno, Colin Campbell, Brian Milne and Bruce Robertson (EO)

**Apologies:**
Nil

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Minutes of the following meetings were accepted as being a true and accurate record.

Proposed by Jim / seconded Brian. Passed

**Matters arising:**

* Jim – interpretation of clause 13.9.2 (a) resolved that under rule 3.3 (power of EC to interpret rules), that elected members do not represent a region, they represent the olive industry.
* Possible review and re-structure of rules – all agreed that in 2009 we should concentrate on securing the support of olive growers for the commodity levy, work hard at improving communications with all members and we will leave any review of rules to 2010 after we have the levy agreed.
* Steve then spoke to his draft questionnaire paper and sought input from the executive for addition to the paper. He thought that we should include questions on the judging.
* **Steve agreed to compose a new version questionnaire and submit same to the executive for comment and input**

Jim spoke to his draft memo to members preceding the questionnaire Brian agreed the memo was an ideal pre-cursor and should be included in the questionnaire.
Colin asked if that in the questionnaire, could we include the positive/good points about the awards
Brian asked if we were all happy with the award review process – all agreed and that the review will be of very good value. Colin said that we should have a continuous process of review and improvement.
Graham asked if the current judging process has international recognition
In response Margaret explained that the review for the awards is focused on EVOO. Certification means the IOC scan sheet can be applied to the oils and then explained that the judging criteria and process as basically a ‘beauty’ contest of the oils on that day of judging.
Andrew commented that the awards permit us to support our domestic promotion and consumption and that the awards will evolve over time and in response Colin agreed and that awards permitted leverage when marketing oils domestically.
Reference was made to the Australian awards programme and the need they have in developing their local market promotion and publicity.

Jim referred to the recent Consumers Institute report and commented that the results were very good and the overall report was good for our industry. All agreed.

**Review of Certification Programme.**

* Margaret offered to help new growers and referrals from the regions are also welcome
* It was agreed that all the details of the procedures need to be on our web site for the 2009 awards.
* Margaret stated that 176 Oils were tested in 2008.
* In each flight of tests 12 oils were tested but she would like to negotiate with plant and research to 10 oils per flight at the same cost as 12 oils. **Margaret offered to produce a modified agreement for The Institute of Plant & Food Research and to circulate it to the Exec for comment.**
* Jim asked if a reduced number of oils could lead to a price increase, but Margaret thought this as unlikely.
* Brian sought clarification on the returns to the growers, which Margaret explained in full in response.
* Colin sought clarification on the lab results and how they are conveyed to the growers. In response, Margaret explained that if the oil has not passed, Margaret conveys such Info to the EO, who in turn passes this information onto the grower concerned.
* Graham referred to the recent article in the Friday Olive Extracts news re the certification required overseas.
* Margaret explained we follow the IOC rules and regulations and if international recognition is sought, it needs to be at an IOC recognised lab (currently the closest is in Wagga Wagga in NSW). Graham suggested we need to send an email in response to the article. **Margaret offered to supply Bruce with an explanation and Bruce is to circulate it to the members**.
* All approved the 2008 review.
* Margaret asked, that if there were any people we knew that would like to be sensory panellists- then they are most welcome and they need to contact Margaret. It was agreed we could put such a comment in the forthcoming E-News. It was commented that ideally it would be good to have new panellists from outside Auckland, but they need to be aware that travel to Auckland for tuition and judging was at their cost.

**Exporting**

Bruce explained he has commenced work on this and has to date contacted Helen Meehan, Jim Tait (NZTE), Avocado NZ, Simon Hegarty of the HEC and Iffor Fowkes Williams re cluster development. Bruce also has intentions of talking to all major olive oil exporters.
Bruce commented that export development has to be a priority and there is a need within the industry for collaborative effort in export development that are non – threatening to existing exporters and permit the industry to profitably grow.
Brian raised the issue of olive oil being a processed product and how this would apply under the HEA act. **Bruce to seek an opinion on this from HEA.**Andrew commented that there are a large number of olive growers across NZ that are endeavouring to grow and their expansion into exports are part of their respective plans and therefore we need to ensure we capture as many of these as possible into any industry produced export strategy. Agreed.
**It was agreed Bruce is to continue this development work, contact Iffor re possibly addressing the chairs meeting or the AGM/Conference and to report to the Exec further at the next meeting.**

**Commodity Levy**

Brian spoke to his paper on the levy and offered to provide any clarification.
Brian expressed concern at the possible delay of the meeting with the regional chairs until March, as we need to be meeting earlier (Feb), because of the time parameters we are working to.
Brian asked if we could meet the regional chairs in mid Feb, because if we miss the deadline for next year we will have to wait until 2011 for getting our approval etc from the Minister.
Graham commented that many growers tentatively support the concept of a levy but was most concerned as to where the funds would be spent.
Brian stated that we need a budget for tabling and approval at the Feb meeting detailing all costs.
Graham moved we proceed.
All agreed that we need a Feb meeting and that we do need to make ‘face to face’ presentations to all the regions. It is vital we have more than adequate, well documented meetings with as many growers as possible in making our submissions to the Minister.
Brian confirmed that the Kapiti region supported the concept of a levy.
Andrew advised that he had recently spoken to NZ’s three largest oil producers who have some reservations re the levy, but emphasised that we need the support of the main oil producers for the levy concept to succeed.
Brian asked for executive members are to advise Bruce of the main growers in their regions so he is a position to contact them.
Andrew commented on the disparity of funds contributed between large and small growers. Large growers will be the main contributors to the levy fund and therefore we need to secure their support.
**Brian asked if exec members could please advise him of where the best venue would be in their regions to conduct the levy presentations.**Brian confirmed that he would make the presentations, with additional support form Ian Turk and possibly Jim and Bruce.

**Bruce is to contact Tony Casey soonest re the need for a Feb meeting.** We need to meet 14-15 Feb; Ian Juno offered to consider the Wairarapa as an alternative if so required.
Andrew asked when do we need to retain the services of Ian Turk and in response Brian that we are already using Ian and Graham confirmed that we already have a budget for these costs.

**Brian is to draft a Power-point presentation for all Exec members as per the recommendations in Brian’s paper.**

**Conference Review**

Jim introduced this section, explaining that we need to keep the wheels rolling on this subject.
**It was agreed that Exec members would provide Margaret and Bruce with their comments on the 2008 conference and what we need to do for 2009.**Bruce advised that the Hotel Intercontinental in Wellington has been provisionally booked for 2009.
Margaret asked for input from the executive on prospective speakers, workshops etc. Members are to advise Margaret accordingly.

**Combined Regional Chairs meeting – Feb/Mar 09**

It was agreed, as discussed earlier, that we must have a meeting with the regional chairs in Feb 09.
Jim referred to our agreed work plan and the items detailed.
**Jim advised that he would send some additional notes to the exec members after Christmas for consideration.**

**Financial- Accounts.**

The accounts as tabled were accepted.
Graham commented that the conference accounts show a small deficit of approximately $2800.00, mainly due to budgets composed on 180 attendees and only 120 actual registrations.
Graham suggested that in 2009, we should consider increasing our registration costs as we had not done so for quite some time and this would permit the conference/awards to break even or report a small profit.
Jim commented that in the current economic climate, we need to be conservative in our member registrations.
Graham commented that we need to finalise a budget for the conference by Jun and we need to finalise sponsors for the conference soon.
**Margaret asked if exec members would please advise Bruce of any potential sponsors as soon as possible.**It was suggested that we should consider approaching Peralisi for sponsoring the processors course and Alfa Laval for the conference.
Margaret and Bruce are to liase further on the conference.

Andrew emphasised that there was a need for content of the conference speakers etc, to be valued by the attendees so they in turn see merit in paying to attend our conferences.

Brian referred to the levy notes and asked Graham to consider how a levy would be allocated on the components detailed, based on $250k as levy revenue (500,000 litres @ 0.50c per litre).

Colin commented on the projected budget expenses and in response Graham explained that the SFF was a major expense we have to address in 2009.
Graham advised that we have $25,000.00 form last year’s SFF to hand.
**Graham also advised that he had recently spoken to Ian Manson re the SFF and will send his comments onto Jim.**

**General Business**

There was no general business.

In closing Jim thanked everyone for all their considerable help during the year and wished everyone the best for the forthcoming Festive season.

It was agreed the next meeting would be in February 2009.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Bruce G Robertson
Executive Officer / Secretary