

OLIVES NEW ZEALAND
MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING
THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2014 TELEPHONE CONFERENCE 7.10PM – 8.40PM

1. Present

Andrew Taylor (President), Kay McKelvie (Vice President), Allan Frazer, John Dunlop, Tony Millar, Gayle Sheridan

2. Apologies

Craig Leaf-Wright, Bob Marshall

3. Executive Officer Report

Membership

There have been 10 new members, taking total membership to 175. The comparative membership in June 2013 was 165 members.

2014 Grove Census

The draft report had been circulated to the Executive and an Executive Summary posted to the website. While 100 members had contributed, approx. 50 had not despite considerable follow-up and inducements. Information had been able to be provided back to growers who had advised their harvest tonnage and oil yield figures on how these compared, by variety, on a regional and national basis. The tonnage figures advised showed a poor performance across the board when related back to the trees in the groves. Of the top ten most planted varieties only Manzanillo, Kalamata, Pendolino and Picual were producing 10 or more kilos of fruit. The other varieties were down around 4-8 kilos. There was considerable discussion on the issue of grove performance and it was generally agreed that if this one issue of productivity could be addressed it would have huge impacts on viability and profitability.

There was a similar picture with oil yield with the national average being less than 12%.

The Executive approved issuing of the 2014 Grove Census Report to those members who had participated in the census.

Focus Grove Project

Following on from the confirmed trends of general poor performance in harvest from the Grove Census and pending end of harvest that it was now urgent to visit the Focus Groves and provide advice. It was agreed that the Project Steering Group should be convened to review the project status, including the grove visits.

Olives NZ needs to show AGMARDT that the industry is serious and intends to persevere with funding applications. It was agreed to write to AGMARDT to ask what steps could be taken to ensure that the olive industry is added to their priority list.

It was also agreed then to resubmit the project enquiry for funding.

Certification

27 samples had been received for certification with results pending for the majority of these.

NZ EVOO Awards

The Head Judge from Italy has been confirmed.

It was agreed to reclassify Light class to Mild, in line with other EVOO competitions.

The South Island branch chairs were asked to consult with their regional groups for interest in having Head Judge visit, for example to run a sensory assessment workshop if members

were unable to attend the Wellington workshop. There would need to be some user pays to cover the associated costs of the visit.

International Competitions

Two 2013 Best in Class winners have been assisted with getting their entries off to Los Angeles.

Marketing

Three hospitality training providers had requested field trips to visit olive groves and press operators.

There has been a lots of media interest in harvest resulting from the press release issued by Olives NZ and the forthcoming Martinborough Olive Harvest Festival. There was a substantial article on Olivo in Thursday's Dominion Post and also an interview with Wayne Startup from The Village Press. Links to these would be in the June newsletter.

There has been a great level of interest in the Health Benefit cards and the OliveMark bags by members. The latter are almost sold out and a re-order done. A run of OliveMark balloons has also been ordered to be available for use at the Martinborough Festival and the Auckland Food Show.

The recipes and photographs were coming in for the recipe calendar and recipe leaflets. A first draft of the calendar page had been done and looks excellent.

It was generally agreed that marketing support for members was seen as a priority.

4. 2014 Executive Priorities

Marketing

The Marketing Template was discussed and an additional column needed to be added for Actions, especially how Branches would contribute.

It was agreed to look at the possibility for the Head Judge to run a tasting seminar for the Food Writers in Auckland during the week of the NZ EVOO judging and perhaps to also involve other members of the judging panel.

Support for attending Food Shows had been raised by the Kapiti Group, who asked whether Olives NZ could provide financial support. Some growers are already involved with the forthcoming Wellington on a Plate and it was suggested that these type of activities would be better facilitated by the regional groups.

A national event such as the Field Days would need centralised support, this type of event was very expensive to attend and may need a partner to make affordable.

Around half a dozen growers attended last year's Auckland Food Show with their own stands and perhaps a regional group should look at a collaborative attendance if they wished to target this type of event.

Productivity

The Focus Grove Project had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Processing/2015 Conference

Rangihoua would be delighted to be the venue for 2015 conference. There are accommodation options on Waiheke or back in Auckland. The conference would focus on processing and would be targeted at growers and processors. If follow-on regional workshops for processors were to be considered that that these would have to be user pays so would be more affordable to add on as a subsequent day(s) to conference at Rangihoua.

5. General Business

Food Matching

The proposed seminar for Food Writers would cover this off.

Truth in Labelling

There had been a TV news item on the organic sector pushing for official recognition for a certification program, similar to the Olives NZ certification program and perhaps Olives NZ could benefit from an alliance with this sector. Kapiti Branch thought this was a good topic to be raising with local politicians given that it is election year.

There had also been a radio interview with Beef and Lamb about labelling to differentiate NZ products as well as processing methods. This was another industry focussing on differentiation and informing the public of the significance of this. It was agreed that Allan should arrange a meeting with Beef and Lamb for himself, Andrew and Gayle for when Andrew and Gayle were in Auckland for the Awards judging.

Notice of Absence

Tony advised that he would be away from August until December because of work commitments.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

NEXT MEETING

21 August 2014 – Teleconference starting at 7pm