

President's Report

The Annual General Meeting is a time to reflect on the achievements of the past year and to consider how our organisation is meeting its objectives.

Review of 2013

In 2013 we achieved success in these areas:

Certification

NZEVO Awards

Conference

Marketing

Membership; and

Sponsorship

In addition we commenced work on the Focus Grove Project.

Certification

Harvest 2013 provided an excellent rebound of quantity and quality of fruit and oil. After the difficulties of 2012 this was a welcome change for growers. For Olives New Zealand the improved yields and an easier growing season translated into increased certification numbers and volume; notably, with fewer oils failing certification being a further positive outcome. A total of 150 samples were submitted for certification. We believe the certification programme is now running very efficiently. In 2014 the programme will be extended to include testing for polyphenols.

NZEVO Awards

The awards dinner in Christchurch was enjoyed by all that attended, particularly I suggest by, Chris and Annette Moore of Robinson's Bay, Akaroa, who repeated their win of 2012 and took home a second best in show award.

Our guest judge, Sue Langstaff from California provided excellent leadership as our head judge offering expert direction to the judging panel when needed. 11 gold medals and 69 medals overall once again verified our ability to produce excellent oil and confirmed the huge seasonal challenge that the previous year, 2012, had been; this should not be forgotten quickly.

While here Sue emphasised that producers need to know their own oil. Sue is confident that everyone who wants to learn sensory evaluation techniques can learn enough to

identify their own oil and therefore better understand the range of complexities and attributes of EVOO.

Conference

The past year started with a successful conference in Auckland titled “taking control of the four P’s – Productivity + Processing + Promotion = Profitability. Profitability is important to all business including olive growers. Our guest speakers prompted us in several ways to benchmark the activities we undertake in productivity, processing, promotion and the end goal of profitability.

On day-one our guest speakers Stuart Tustin (Plant & Food Research), Sjef Lamers (Sustainable Nutrition), Ian Harvey (Plantwise) and Rob de Borst (Mantissa Corporation) provided us with a great deal of information to use to achieve improved productivity. The second day of the conference provided members with a choice to attend the processing course with Pablo Canamasas or the field day at Simunovich Olive Grove and cosmetic factory. Both were well received.

Marketing

The promotional DVD Simply the Best was released at our 2013 conference. We have also started a shelf wobblers trial (which is in the process of final evaluation – thank you for your feedback). We have another exciting opportunity for promotional material that will be introduced to you this harvest season.

We were able to make the most of newspaper articles and radio interviews during Sue Langstaff’s visit. After the Olive Oil judging and while travelling around New Zealand, Sue made herself available for numerous interviews along the way.

And of course, we are now on facebook. Thanks to member Cindy Millar, from Canterbury.

Membership

Membership continues to increase. Presently there are 180 members.

Sponsorship

Once again I must express on your behalf our gratitude to our sponsors who help to make the running of ONZ more pleasant, if not, possible. Their support is most appreciated.

GEA Westfalia

CB Norwood

COSPAC

Mantissa Corporation

Omnia Nutrology

Silex Tools

Arthur Holmes

Deltagen

Focus Grove Project

We introduced the focus grove project at the 2013 conference. The focus grove project has been introduced to identify crop management practices that will help the industry achieve financial viability by lifting productivity per hectare. Unfortunately while we missed out on funding from the sustainable farming fund last year we have re-submitted our application with the assistance of Plant & Food and are hopeful of a positive result some-time in April.

ONZ going forward

Communication was, is, and remains one of our most important membership tools. We value your communication at all levels, whether through the regional groups, directly with the Executive members or with our Executive Officer, Gayle Sheridan. Gayle has once again provided excellent assistance and direction to both the executive and members and we thank her for her continued diligence. Please do not hesitate to use the phone, emails, facebook and our website to remain in communication with us.

This year John Arthur has retired as vice-president and David Walshaw has retired from his role on the executive, firstly in an elected position and then as a co-opted member. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their support and leadership through the last four or five years. Challenges over these years have required patience, a positive vision of the future and a willingness to set aside personal views for the wider view of the growers. Both of these gentlemen have worked willingly in areas such as developing our new constitution, keeping us fiscally responsible, and both participated in the development of our promotional DVD "simply the best". We have a small gift and I would ask you to show your appreciation of them in the usual way.

ONZ has many things it could be doing but with limited resources there are some things that we are going and we are working hard to do them well. ONZ is driven by effective regional groups so please participate in your regional group. Thank you for your continued support. I hope the coming harvest is a success for you all.