

Focus Grove Project Speaking Points

Why are we here?

Current 2015 harvest:

- Many groves had no harvest
- Majority had poor harvests (less than 20% of average)
- Exceptions are active participants in pilot Focus Grove Project.

Data from annual Grove Census (not including those who did not harvest)

- 2013 and 2014 70% groves harvested less than 10kg per tree
- 2012 77% harvested less 10kg per tree
- Less than 10kg per tree is not viable, at least 20kg per tree is required
- Top performing variety in regions range from 19 – 35kg per tree.

Feedback from February member survey of 73 members

- 37% said their biggest issue was selling the oil (because of price?)
- 30% said their biggest issue was grove productivity, viability.

Pilot Focus Grove Participants

- Following grove management programme for canopy management & disease management
- Aim has been to get all trees producing acceptable crops and on an annual basis
- Preliminary results show an increase in crop loads range from 50% to 60% over 2013 & 2014.

Why we need a Focus Grove Project

NZ climate is different to others and reliance on overseas data has not been particularly helpful over the years. New Zealand issues are different, e.g. prolific growth.

We need grove management formally monitored and measured by an external, independent tree specialist, experienced in addressing productivity issues in other (stone) fruit trees.

We must get production up and costs down to be competitive and increase market share.

Project Assumptions

Improved productivity = reduced costs = cheaper/more competitive oil = increased market share

Two key factors will improve productivity.

Canopy Management

Pruning is required to:

- renew the fruiting surface of the tree and achieve high yields
- maintain vegetative growth of fruiting shoots
- maintain the skeleton structure and contain tree size
- enable light penetration and air circulation inside the canopy
- permit control of pests and diseases (by spraying)
- prevent aging of the canopy and eliminate dead wood
- re-form the canopy after damage by frosts and pests
- rejuvenate old or abandoned trees
- enable mechanical harvesting
- permit easy movement of machinery in the orchard.

Disease Management

Major diseases in New Zealand are Peacock Spot, Cercosporiose, Anthracnose.

Disease results in:

- defoliation
- twig death
- strong bloom failing to develop
- crop production substantially reduced.

Industry data on value of industry

NZ imports 4.5m litres olive oil annually

Industry is valued at \$35m per annum

Local industry only produces about 400,000 litres per annum

Huge opportunity for local industry for a quality and well priced product.

Re-scoped Focus Grove Project

An orchardist expert from Plant and Food Research will establish a baseline for the pilot groves and provide initial and then ongoing advice on pruning and spraying. Through regular follow-up visits by the expert and our own olive growing expert, ongoing improvements will be made to the grove management regime with annual measurement of olive production. The project will formally run from July 2016 – October 2018, although some preliminary work has been carried out.

MPI advisor said focus for Sustainable Farming Fund funding application needs to be on increasing the market share, which can only be achieved by increasing productivity and reducing costs.

Four groves – chosen to be representative of varied growing regions

Note that the four groves have already covered implementation costs of approx. \$4,000 per annum and will continue to incur these for the next three years of the project.

Hawke's Bay - Aquiferra

Wairarapa – Leafyridge

Nelson – Kakariki

Canterbury – Bel Hamed

Two visits each in 2016 and 2017 and a final visit 2018

- photograph
- provide advice
- measure change/effectiveness.

Deliverables

To ensure growers receive immediate and useful information by:

- Regional field days one in 2016 and two in 2017 (five regional locations – Canterbury, Nelson, Hawke's Bay, Kapiti/Wairarapa, Auckland/Northland/Waiheke Island)
- Presentations at conferences in 2016, (2017) and 2018
- Progress Reports in 2016, 2017 and 2018
- Final Summary Report in 2018
- Three Fact Sheets (canopy management 1 and 2 and disease management).

Budget

\$71,320 in cash and \$68,280 in kind (primarily from Focus Grove participants).

Clear message from MPI advisor that 50% cash co-funding required.

Industry cash contribution - \$35,660 (\$5,000 already received from Branches)

Shortfall of \$31,000 needs to come from a variety of industry stakeholders

e.g. 21 sponsors at \$1500 each, or \$500 per year for three years

Sponsorship chunks could be shared by a collective of small groves.

No single grower can afford to carry out the research and if it is not funded, it won't happen.

Funding commitment required by end of July 2015, first payment due March 2016.

Who will benefit?

Industry needs to get more olives per tree in order to get costs down and become more competitive.

All growers will benefit!

Processors will benefit!

Consumers will benefit!

TEAM = TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE!