



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Saturday 19th March 2016
10.15am – 12 noon
Carterton Events Centre, Holloway St, Carterton

Andrew Taylor, President, welcomed attendees to the Annual General Meeting and declared the meeting open.

1) Present

Steven & Christine Price, John Valentine. Kate & Mark Bunny, Laurie & Peter Rothenberg, Tricia Noble-Beasley, Delyth & Andrew Taylor, John Arthur, John Dunlop, Bruce McCallum, Colin & Diane Hadley, Ruth & Peter Graham, Niall Holland, David Bate, Ray Lilley, Andrea Stewart, Ross Vintiner, Paul Harris, Gail Powell, Bill Hey, Margaret Hanson, Ruth & Craig Leaf-Wright, Bob Marshall, Ian Juno, Gayle Sheridan.

2) Apologies

Chris & Annette Moore, David & Helen Walshaw, Geoff Crawford, Richard & Julie Winder, Julie Mays, Werner Seitner, Anne Marshall, John Pool, Andrew & Jo Priddle, Christopher Crompton-Smith, John & Margaret Edwards, Charles & Kay Chinnaiyah, Jan Whyte, Sue & Trevor Lowe, Jocelyn Robinson, Sandy Black, Hamilton & Gaylene McConachy, Bryan & Jill Upshon, Helen & John Meehan, Tony & Nathan Casey, Allan Frazer, Chris & Hilary Penman, Mike & Joy Cooper, Robert Noble-Beasley, Jenny Lilley, Robin Lockie, Helen Dunlop, Mal & Sue Nowill, Shona Thompson.

MOTION

That the apologies be accepted.

Moved: Andrew Taylor

Seconded: Margaret Hanson

CARRIED

3) Minutes of 2015 AGM

Andrew noted that the 2015 minutes had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

MOTION

The 2015 AGM Minutes be approved as complete and accurate.

Moved: Craig Leaf-Wright

Seconded: Tricia Noble-Beasley

CARRIED

There were no matters arising.

4) President's Report

Andrew read his 2015 report covering specifically the following areas.

1. Certification – despite a poor harvest year there had been 120 oils submitted for certification with 10 that were assessed as not being EVOO.
2. Awards – there was an entry of 59 EVOO and 10 flavoured oils. Best in Show for the 3rd time in 4 years went to Robinsons Bay. Best Boutique went to Man o'War, Best Flavoured to Juno Olives, Best Label to number 29 and Best Processor to The Olive Press.
3. Judging Seminar – Head Judge Peter Olson and Margi Kirkby ran a judging/tasting seminar ahead of the Awards judging.
4. Promotional Activities – Olives NZ continues to supply promotional material for members.
5. Membership - as at December 2015 there were 194 financial members.
6. Sponsorship – Olives NZ is very appreciative of the sponsorship support from Kiwi Labels, COSPAK, Deltagen, VITIS, The Olive Centre and Point 4 Ltd. Unfortunately several major sponsors did not renew in 2015 citing lack of support from the industry.
7. Focus Grove Project – has got underway due to the financial support received in advance. The project has been short listed by the Sustainable Farming Fund with a final decision due in April.
8. Executive – thanks to all of the Executive for the time they put in. Particularly; Craig as Vice President, Treasurer and Wairarapa Branch Chair, and the other Branch Chairs: Tony Millar – Canterbury, John Dunlop – Nelson, Tricia Noble-Beasley – Kapiti, Bob Marshall – Hawke's Bay. Tony Millar has stepped down as Branch Chair and special thanks to him for his work, and welcome to Niall Holland who has taken over. Thanks also to Gayle for work she puts in as Executive Officer.

MOTION

The President's Report be accepted.

Moved: Andrew Taylor

Seconded: John Dunlop

CARRIED

5) Treasurer's Report

Craig explained that there were funding challenges with the fixed costs incurred in the running of the organisation. There seems to be some resistance to membership fees increasing but the loss of substantial sponsorship funding left no other option. It is disappointing that some other major suppliers to the industry are not interested in providing any support. He noted that in 2015 Certification had returned a surplus, although less than in 2014, but the Awards had run at a loss.

Craig then read the Treasurer's report.

MOTION

The Treasurer's Report be accepted.

Moved: Craig Leaf-Wright

Seconded: Margaret Hanson

CARRIED

Andrew asked if there were any suggestions on how the funding situation could be addressed.

Laurie Rothenberg suggested that the membership fee structure be reviewed as it was quite flat. She thought that people with more than 1500 trees should be paying more than those with

250 trees, and similarly those with 5,000 or more trees should be paying more than those with 1500 trees,

Andrew said that when the Constitution was reviewed it was noted that the majority of members had between 1,000 – 3,000 trees and the figure of more than 250 trees was recommended to the Executive as the middle ground for Full Member status.

Laurie said those with more than 3,000 trees should be paying substantially more than those with 250 trees and suppliers should also be contributing more as Associate Members.

John Valentine said that a commodity levy is related to production however previous discussions about its introduction had met with resistance from members.

Ross Vintiner said that a production levy would pose a challenge when a bad year was encountered and John Valentine said that a commodity levy was not affected by annual production once the levy was set for a period.

Ross asked for further explanation on why sponsorship had been lost.

Andrew said that sponsors had been quite clear that this was because of a lack of support from the industry. Also GEA, for example, pointed out that other sectors are much more important to their business.

David Bate said sponsors were obviously not seeing a payback and there is a need to ensure that members do support the sponsors. He suggested that the organisation look at common items and agree to support specific businesses. This could be done as a loyalty scheme with a financial return to Olives NZ from companies based on spend by members.

Andrew said that the likes of Mantissa have well supported Olives NZ in the past by attending Conferences and other activities but they had not seen a payback. He said that the issue was also that the olive industry does not use enough product compared to other sectors.

Peter Graham said that larger members have said in the past that they don't need Olives NZ and therefore would not be prepared to pay more.

MOTION

That the Olives NZ Executive look at a better scale of grove/membership fee structure to provide the necessary funding for the organisation.

Moved: Laurie Rothenberg

Seconded: Ray Lilley

Craig said he would look at the impact on membership fees of setting Full Member at 1500 trees and would report back to members.

Niall said that Canterbury branch had done a stock take of all former members in their region and had identified a lot who felt there were no benefits to membership based on their prior experience. He said groves were going to waste because people were not aware how to look after these. He felt there were opportunities to gain these members back if they were aware of the current activities of Olives NZ.

Bruce McCallum said reviewing the membership structure would not address the real issues and is just tinkering around the edges. He asked what was the basis for not increasing membership fees more.

Craig said that the 2016 increase had been 20% and resulted in some members not renewing their membership. He said in the past people had been prepared to put a lot into the industry for the benefit of others and more of this needed to happen.

John Valentine said that saying you do not get value out of membership is a cop out. For example he gets substantially more value out of attending conferences and field days than the investment required.

Andrew said that there are a number of members who are not serious and the remainder need to fund the organisation more substantially.

Peter Graham suggested enabling people to contribute towards specific activities on top of their membership fee.

Ross Vintiner said the perception of value carries on. For example the certification cost via Modern Olives is cheaper than via Olives NZ. He said it is not transparent what costs are being added to the fee charged by DPI.¹

Margaret Hanson said that additional costs in the Olives NZ certification charge contributed towards the administration activities and there is a need to look at bigger issues and the return for time/investment.

Craig said that the issue with Certification and the Awards related to volume because of fixed costs incurred irrespectively. Budgets are based on assumptions of volumes and this impacted negatively in 2015.

Andrew said that other activities (such as workshops, conference) are based on feedback from members to provide them with assistance and support but these only break even where ideally they should contribute towards overheads,

Tricia Noble-Beasley noted that targeted funding had worked well with the Focus Grove pledges.

Ian Juno suggested that members could be offered a menu of specific projects that they might like to contribute funding towards at the time they pay their membership fee.

David Bate suggested looking at active members and how the fee structure would look if the inactive members dropped out.

Bruce McCallum endorsed this approach and said the key activities were Certification, the OliveMark and the Awards. In his retail shop he observed that people will buy based on the medals and are prepared to pay a premium, Perhaps there was another similar initiative that could be looked at.

Colin Hadley said the OliveMark is not understood or recognised by the public in general. He had discussions with a major producer over why they did not use the OliveMark and was advised that the colour was not appropriate for international markets.

Andrew said that feedback from the 2015 International Guest Judge had been overwhelmingly supportive of the OliveMark and that she was also impressed with the NZ EVOO Awards. On a recent trip to Spain he became aware of a consortium of growers there who had initiated a quality mark on a similar quality standard.

Ross Vintiner said that in a major retailer he supplies only 7 out of 38 brands have the OliveMark. He said it should be compulsory for members who have their oil certified to use the OliveMark.

Laurie said that some growers not getting their oil certified was another issue.

Craig said it was hard to understand why people would not use the OliveMark when their oil is certified. He said the Executive had looked at promotional campaigns for the OliveMark but there were inadequate funds available.

Peter Graham suggested asking members if they would contribute towards a marketing campaign.

¹ "Certification – Future Direction" circulated to all members in February 2012 shows the additional costs relate to packaging, freight, storage, administration, etc. See <http://www.olivesnz.org.nz/members-news/certification-future-directions/>

Andrew asked if those present would support compulsory certification and use of the OliveMark as a condition of membership. A show of hands showed about half supported this.

David Bate said such an approach would alienate non active members further.

Andrew said that some oil produced is not Extra Virgin and that members should be participating in all activities. He said there was ongoing feedback from the Head Judges, who were taken on regional tours, that growers needed to improve their tasting skills.

Bruce McCallum said that the pre-requisite of having attended a previous tasting seminar may have been a deterrent to attending the 2015 seminar although the Executive Officer had waived this requirement when asked.

Laurie suggested smaller and regional tasting seminars might be better supported and could use local judges.

Gayle said there was an action point for the Branch Chairs to arrange sensory analysis and blending workshops in their regions to coincide with harvest.

There being no further discussion the motion was put to the meeting. CARRIED

Noting taking into account the impact of losing non participating members, the option for specific project contributions and that any proposal would be brought back to the members for input before progressing.

6) Appointment of Auditor

MOTION

That Parkers Business Solutions be re-appointed as Auditor for 2016.

Moved: Craig Leaf-Wright Seconded: Ian Juno CARRIED

7) Notified Business

The Phenomenal Phenols Presentation by Ross Vintiner and Ray Lilley was well received by those present. Andrew thanked Ross and Ray for the time they had put into preparing the background paper and the presentation.

8) General Business

Laurie Rothenberg raised that the moving of the Awards out into the middle of October posed an issue with their supermarket contract. She suggested moving Conference back to coinciding with the AGM and moving the Awards back to the former date.

Andrew thanked Laurie for this feedback.

There being no further business Andrew declared the meeting closed at 12 noon.