

Olives New Zealand
Executive Meeting Minutes
Saturday October 14th 2017
Boardroom, James Cook Hotel, Wellington
3.15 – 5.00pm

1. Present

Andrew Taylor, John Dunlop, Niall Holland, Tricia Noble- Beasley, Gayle Sheridan

2. Apologies

Craig Leaf-Wright, Bob Marshal

3. Executive Officer Report

Gayle spoke to her report which had been circulated.

Focus Grove Project

There are three milestones due with associated funding from SFF. MPI has yet to finalise the mid project review template. The others are the Focus Grove Field Days Report and the Pruning Fact Sheet. The Fact Sheet had been drafted and just required photos.

The Focus Grove Field Days had attracted very good turn-outs with the last one in Northland being scheduled for November. There had been great feedback from attendees about the tasting sessions run by Giuseppe and Domenico.

2017 Awards

There had been an excellent entry of 85 EVOO and 17 Flavoured. Medals were spread across New Zealand with 44 going to Wairarapa, 12 to Canterbury, 9 to Nelson, 8 each to Hawke's Bay and Kapiti, 6 to Northland, 4 to Auckland and 1 each to Bay of Plenty, Central Otago, Marlborough and Waiheke Island. This equated to 19 Gold Medals, 43 Silver Medals and 33 Bronze Medals, a total of 95 medals. There were 7 entries that received no award.

However approximately 1/3 of entries were cloudy and three had sediment. Some bottles were also overfilled and oil leaked out of the top when they were heated.

Andrew said that the judges had commented that some of the oils were unpleasant and may have been defective. Even if these had been certified as EVOO they now were not, probably because of lack of racking and/or poor storage. He would raise this at the Awards Dinner as this jeopardised the integrity of the OliveMark. Andrew said that the period of certification of two years had been raised previously and needed further discussion.

After discussion, it was generally agreed that 14 months was more valid but there was the issue of cost in recertifying an oil.

Andrew concluded that growers need to decide whether they would pay the processor for finishing their oil (filtering or racking, etc.) or whether they would take on this responsibility. Either way it must be done.

Marketing

There would be an advertisement in Cuisine magazine congratulating the Best in Class winners, with a photo. Kelli Brett, editor who had joined the judging panel for the flavoured oils, had said she would look to do an article on NZ EVOO in 2018.

There would be an article on NZ EVOO in the Business Central in November and this would have a similar Best in Class ad.

Consumer had done a survey of supermarket olive oils including those from New Zealand, Australia and Europe, using the DPI Oil Testing Service. The report would be published in November. (Olives NZ has subsequently been asked for comment on the draft.)

Food Safety Act

MPI has advised that Olives NZ should change its application to acknowledge that growers would need to register under National Programme One and request exemption for the activity that requires National Programme Three, which is bottling. However, there is an issue if bottling is being done manually rather than with a filling machine. This needs to be canvassed.

Dan Tosswill from The Village Press joined the meeting at 4pm. He had previously had discussions with Andrew, Bob and Gayle about marketing NZ EVOO and had also had discussions with various growers around the country. Gayle had provided Dan with a copy of the Marketing Plan and also NZ Olive Industry Overview that was provided to media.

Dan said with the changes at TVP there was now a willingness to be involved in marketing initiatives with Olives NZ, including a contribution towards funding a marketing strategy. He said that there needed to be effective communications to address the general lack of understanding about EVOO. Even in grocery there was a total lack of understanding with olive oil just being seen as another cooking oil. The challenge is how to raise this awareness.

There was subsequent discussion and a general feeling among those present that there would be a number of members willing to buy into a marketing strategy and that the regional Chairs needed to target these people.

Andrew asked if Dan could draft a paper for presentation to target members in preparation for a meeting or discussion in January/February with a view to taking something to the AGM in March. He said Olives NZ would be happy to act as the integrator/co-ordinator.

4. General Business

Branch Updates

As the meeting ran out of time this item was not covered. However following is the report received from Niall.

The Canterbury region produced just 55 tonnes of fruit for processing at the two main presses this year. Average oil content was about 10.5% w/w yielding around 6,000 litres of oil from the region. Ripening was very late and the press operated through to the 8th August.

Several groves have changed hands and we are canvassing the new owners for membership. The Field Days have been very good bait for this because the practical advice provided by Andrew and Stuart is greatly valued. Having the judges visit at this week's field day was also appreciated, especially for the hour of tasting provided by Giuseppe. Domenico and Giuseppe impressed the consistency with which they identified constituent flavours.

The year has continued to be exceptionally wet and disease will be an issue as some groves are just too wet to sustain the required spray regime and other do not see the output justifying the input. Comments indicate that many growers feel that budding is early this year.

The meeting closed at 5pm

NEXT MEETING 9 November