

Olives New Zealand
Executive Meeting Minutes
Thursday 18th June 2020
ZOOM Conference Meeting
7.05pm – 8.45pm

1. Present

Craig Leaf-Wright (President), Tricia Noble-Beasley (Vice President), Charles Chinnaiyah (Treasurer), Geoff Crawford, Niall Holland, Ray Gregory, Andrew Priddle, Gayle Sheridan

Craig welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented that ZOOM is a good forum for meetings and is also much cheaper than the teleconferencing package we had been using.

2. Apologies

Nil

3. Financial

Charles spoke to the financial statements which had been circulated.

In relation to the Profit & Loss Report there were the same variances as last meeting.

Although Certification is tracking under budget this will catch up over successive months.

In relation to Sponsorship it is unlikely that there will be any new sponsors in the current financial environment. However, apart from HortPlus, no other sponsor has indicated that they will be withdrawing their support.

Craig noted that the Processor Course income/expenditure was self-balancing so cancellation did not impact on the bottom line. Andrew asked when the next course would be and it was hoped that this would be in 2021.

Charles said the Balance Sheet shows healthy balances and perhaps it would be timely to move some funds from the Savings Account to a Short Term Deposit Account to attract more interest.

Charles noted that the OliveMark Promotion expenditure for the social media campaign was unbudgeted but more than sufficient funds to cover. GST was due at the end of June.

4. Executive Officer Report

Gayle spoke to her report which had been circulated. There had been a lot of work resulting from the New York Competition and subsequent promotional campaign. Initially in providing information and photos, checking draft releases and then responding to messages and comments.

Membership

There have been three new members join since the last meeting as well as a couple of previous members re-join.

Focus Grove Project

The Rural Delivery programme has drawn good feedback from members and non-members.

The Organic Approach article in the Aust & NZ Olivegrower & Processor magazine has drawn only three expressions of interest in a chat group.

Marketing

Loading the two versions of the Simply the Best video to the Facebook page ahead of the New York promo campaign was well received.

More than 25 growers have been added to the Buy Local section of the website.

The New York Competition social media campaign had been a good investment, costing \$1351 with more than 14,000 hits. The media release had cost \$805 and has resulted in at least three articles.

The campaign objectives were:

1. Build public awareness about NZ EVOO
2. Encourage the consumption/purchase of EVOO produced by our members
3. Highlight the incredible achievement of NZ producers in winning 7 gold medals in New York.

The first and third objectives of the campaign were achieved and there was good engagement/feedback with the target market. The second objective has not immediately been apparent although clicks to the "Buy Local" section of the Olives NZ website went from 0-2 per day in the preceding weeks to 20 per day during the campaign. It is to be hoped that there might be some ongoing return from the campaign. There had also been an export enquiry which is being worked on.

Using professionals has proved successful and, for the investment, is recommended for the NZ EVOO Awards promotion. Perhaps fewer Facebook posts but with broader coverage.

2020 AGM

Using ZOOM had worked well and begs the question whether to have face to face AGMs in the future. Some 27 participants from Waiheke Island to Canterbury and with positive feedback.

There was an action item from the AGM for the Executive to reconsider adding table olives to the NZ EVOO Awards. The same judging panel could be used, provided there was mentoring during the judging, and could be added to the last day of the judging programme. The additional costs would be the Facilitator's time in organising and collating the judging plus a new trophy would be required. The additional Facilitator cost would mean the entry fee would need to be the same as for the oil entries.

It was agreed to check with the NZ judging panel if any have experience in judging/assessing table olives and if they would feel competent to judge table olive classes at the NZ EVOO Awards, potentially open forum being led by an 'expert'. Check that additional costs in adding table olives would enable entry fees to be kept in line with oil entry fees. Canvas members as to whether they would enter table olive classes to gauge level of support and viability.

COVID-19

Most Farmers Markets have re-opened and members have reported that restaurant sales are also picking up. Moore Wilson has also restarted tastings. However the general feeling was that NZ EVOO sales were well behind.

Gayle asked if there was more that Olives NZ could be doing that might result in increased sales for members, for example a Health Benefits promotion on social media. It was generally felt that too many promotions threaten to overwhelm and it was best to wait for the Awards promotion in October.

Certification

Approximately 20 x 2020 samples have been sent to the Oil Testing Service in Wagga Wagga. Thus far there have been no delays in shipping or processing. However should the Oil Testing Service become overloaded as happened in 2019, then Modern Olives could be used to avoid any backlog.

NZ EVOO Awards

The events of this week with new COVID-19 cases cast doubt on whether there would be a Tasman travel bubble anytime soon. This would mean no Australian judges but we do have an adequate number of well experienced and respected NZ judges to call on. It was agreed that the Head Judge would be one of these and one of those that had judged at the Australian “international” competition.

There was an issue with the availability of Auckland Airport Hotels as it appeared they had all been contracted by the Government for quarantine purposes, including Jet Park. Kay Mc Math would look at other options.

Judging EVOO and Flavoured Oil Seminar

Given the ongoing uncertainty about trans-Tasman travel it was agreed that this seminar could not be rescheduled at this time.

Conference 2020

There was potential for another presentation at Conference and it was agreed to look at social media marketing.

With the cancellation of WOW, there was an opportunity to have Conference in Wellington as there should be good deals on accommodation. It was agreed to look at this and also then at a minibus option for attendees to get over to Wairarapa on the Friday for the Field Day.

5. 2020 Executive Priorities

Productivity – see Executive Officer Report

Processing – course to be held in 2021

Marketing – see Executive Officer Report

6. General Business

Member Issue

An email had been received from a member concerning allegations made about them in an email sent out by another member. The first member said the statements were untrue and asked for the support of Olives NZ when they took up the matter with the second member. It was noted that the first member had subsequently taken legal advice. The Executive decided that this was an appropriate course of action and it was not appropriate for Olive NZ to become involved. However the Executive was disappointed by public disagreements between members and it was agreed that members should be reminded that Olives New Zealand is a co-operative organisation and of the Mission Statement.

Branch Updates

Wairarapa

Andrew said that he has been totally occupied with harvesting over the past few months. He noted that the new processing plant at Masterton has been operating with very good volumes and feedback. He said that fruit harvested had been typically small and bird strike was an issue. Some groves have significantly less harvest than anticipated also due to fruit loss, probably because of drought conditions.

Kapiti

Tricia said that while harvest tonnage is down, the yields have been the same as previous years. Most groves have finished harvest and the branch has the annual new season tasting and luncheon coming up.

Canterbury

Niall said typically across Canterbury harvest is down by at least 50% because of poor fruit set, bird strike and the prolonged dry weather resulting in fruit drop. The groves on Banks Peninsula however are looking good. Old French Road is potentially looking at their best harvest ever and is now doing their own processing with a small Oliomio. This is working well. Robinsons Bay is also looking at a very good harvest.

Nelson

Ray estimated that Nelson harvest was down about 30% at a number of groves and put this down to heavy pruning. Yields are very similar to previous years and despite harvest being down, it will still be a very good harvest.

Hawke's Bay

Geoff said that most groves in Hawke's Bay have finished harvest with the exception of Mohaka which is in progress. Irrigation has been necessary for good oil recovery, for example 20%. Otherwise the fruit has been shrivelled. Geoff said the forecast rain would be welcome in aiding recovery of the trees.

There being no further business, Craig thanked all for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

2020 Meeting and Other Key Dates

June 18th

August 20th

October 10th – Conference, Awards Dinner

November 19th