

Olives New Zealand
Executive Meeting Minutes Synopsis
Thursday 18th February 2021
ZOOM Conference Meeting
7.10pm – 8.25pm

1. Present

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

Alan Blakemore, the new Canterbury Chair, was welcomed by Craig to the meeting and to the Executive.

2. Financial

Charles spoke to the three reports that had been circulated.

The 2021 Budget Variance Report showed Membership fee income slightly over-budget but Charles noted there was approximately \$13,000 in invoices as yet not paid.

He said that Awards expenditure was over budget because of the New York entry fees which would normally have come through in December. Gayle explained this was because there was little information on the NYIOOC website to confirm the competition was running in 2021 and she had left doing the entries until December to get the 'early bird' rate.

Charles pointed out that the Balance Sheet showed \$70,000 on fixed deposit and the financial position for Olives NZ was very healthy.

Charles said the 2021 Budget had been drafted based on 2020 actuals. He noted there was no conference in 2021 and the Awards income/expenditure was on the basis of remote judging again. The bottom line was a \$16,000+ surplus.

Charles advised that the draft 2020 accounts had been received from the auditors and will be made available to members when finalised.

3. Executive Officer Report

Gayle spoke to her report which had been circulated.

Financial Systems

The net out-turn for 2020 is a surplus of \$14,792 compared to \$8,270 in 2019.

There were now 30 members who have not paid their 2021 membership invoice despite a number of reminders. The next step would be to post a copy of their invoices. Any that remained unpaid at the end of March, membership would be terminated, as per the Constitution.

Membership

Membership is now 177 with 15 resignations processed. This is the usual scenario and there would be new and re-joining members through the year.

Focus Grove Project

It was pleasing to note that the 2020 oil samples submitted for residue testing were all clear.

The dates for the first round of visits/field days have been set for April. Gayle will send updated membership lists to Branch Chairs and Secretaries at the end of March. She requested that the Branches then sent out reminders about the Field Days to ensure their regional members were aware of the date and programme.

AGM

No nominations or remits had been received. That meant that the present incumbents of President, Vice President and Treasurer were appointed for another 3 year term.

Certification 2021

There are now two Australian Sensory Panels accredited for 2021 by the International Olive Council (IOC):

The NSW Department of Primary Industries Oil Testing Service (DPI)
Modern Olives, Victoria.

The Executive discussed the options in using both organisations for 2021 Certification.

It was apparent that there were a number of reasons to consider a move to Modern Olives:

Their laboratory is also accredited by IOC (DPI laboratory has not been accredited for 2021)

Turnaround is 7 working days from receipt of samples (vs 15)

Only one bottle is required, making two in total including the Olives NZ stored bottle (vs 3 bottles)

Cost is cheaper meaning that savings can be passed back to members (recommended at \$230 per sample vs \$250)

Shipping costs to Australia will be cheaper given only one bottle is required and may also be cheaper for some members in sending in their submissions because of less bottles required.

From the member's point of view the two major changes would be reverting to sending two bottles per oil to be certified and the possible cost reduction in Certification fees. There should also be a faster turnaround in August/September when the majority of submissions are received.

The following motions were moved and carried.

- Olives NZ move to using Modern Olives for certification testing with effect 2021.
- The 2021 Certification fee be reduced from \$250 per sample to \$230.

Gayle noted that the updated 2021 Certification packs will be emailed out to members in May but the above changes would be communicated immediately to members via the newsletter. Certification information and forms will also be available on the website in due course.

2021 Awards

It was most unlikely that international judges would be able to be used this year and even from Australia was not certain. From Sydney, Soumi Paul Mukhopadhyay and her husband Abhijit Paul would be available and would be happy to judge remotely.

Modern Olives can supply blue plastic tasting cups and lids to address the minor issues with using plastic shot glasses.

Marketing

All is quiet in relation to marketing but sales are apparently buoyant. A number of brands have sold out of their own oil and have brought in. The Executive agreed that sales are very good.

The response from Mike Kotlyar about Facebook promotion was discussed.

MPI Update

Gayle spoke on several initiatives from MPI subsequent to her report.

The first being the future requirement for a Farm Environment Plan to show how a business was positively addressing climate change, sustainability and traceability. This would be required of all growers with 5 hectares or more of horticultural land use and would impact on more than a dozen members.

For further information <https://hewakaekenoa.nz/>

The second initiative was around providing support and training to enter primary industries. <https://www.opportunitygrowshere.nz/>

The new Advisor will attend one of the forthcoming Field Days (probably Northland) and was also provided with contact information for groves in Auckland and Waiheke Island as she was keen to visit groves and meet growers.

Another initiative is a Zoom Fruit and Nut Sectors workshop in March, to which Craig and Gayle have been invited. Ahead of the meeting MPI has requested information on potential future projects. Gayle had advised opportunities for further increased production and introducing new varieties that are more frost tolerant. She identified the issues for the olive sector being Country of Origin and Truth in Labelling where the NZ consumer assumes that olive oil bottled in NZ is produced in NZ and is actually Extra Virgin.

Craig thanked Gayle for her report.

4. 2020 Executive Priorities

Productivity – Focus Grove Project Field Days in April.

Processing – Course subject to Pablo being able to travel to NZ so realistically not possible until 2022.

Marketing – covered off in Executive Officer report.

5. General Business

Branch Updates

Wairarapa

Andrew said that the Branch activities have been quiet since the October Field Day. His observations are that crop load is looking good across the region, especially Barnea, Picholene and Picual. However with the drought conditions fruit is small which may impact on yield again. Craig noted that will mean intense oils again and he added that he had started irrigation later than last year. Andrew said the region had benefitted from good rain in November which had kept the ground moist through until January. Craig said Leafyridge has good grape like bunches of fruit again and biennial bearing is looking to be a problem of the past.

Andrew said the Branch AGM is scheduled for 7 March.

Akrotiri has new owners who are keen to rejuvenate the grove.

Andrew said the Startup harvester is no longer in the Wairarapa and this might put pressure on machine harvesting capacity. Craig said he had talked with Kal about the Village Press harvester being available in Wairarapa given potential conflict with harvesting at Mohaka. Kal had said there was not going to be a large harvest there so Village Press should be able to provide services for Wairarapa.

Kapiti

Tricia had difficulty in contributing during the meeting because of poor cell phone coverage. However she advised reports from several growers saying their fruit seems to be patchy, but the Frantoio seems to be prolific. Some groves looking good and consistent. The Kapiti Branch AGM is this Sunday.

Nelson

Ray said there is good fruit size in Nelson because of the rain. He noted there is an issue with the supply of talc in New Zealand and he is putting together an order from Australia. He is keen to hear from other processors who would like to be included as a container will be more viable.

Hawke's Bay

Geoff said it has been very dry in Hawke's Bay since Christmas and there has been a moderate fruit set. There were rain storms around flowering which looks to have impacted on fruit set.

The Branch AGM is scheduled for next week and there have been no new volunteers for the Branch Executive.

Canterbury

Alan said there has been good flowering and fruit set across Canterbury. It has been quite dry especially South Canterbury and fruit is behind usual. Strong winds have been exacerbating fruit loss. North Canterbury is looking ok.

Alan said a new owner has purchased two groves totalling about 3,000 trees in Amberley and Malcolm McKenzie has been working with him on pruning these. These groves are located opposite Terrace Edge so near to the press, so is good news for future throughput.

The bottom line in Canterbury is that good rain is needed.

Craig thanked Alan for his report and reiterated his welcome to the Executive.

Northland

Andrew reported he has been in contact with growers in Northland in looking at harvesting needs. Mangawhai groves are looking good but Karikari Peninsula is not. A large grove there has been sold and is likely to be subdivided.

Andrew said he will probably be harvesting at Mangonui in April so hopes to attend the Field Day at Olives on the Hill.

Purchase of Olives NZ Management System

Craig said this has been an Action Point on the Agenda for some months. He said that Gayle and Lionel were in Martinborough in January which provided an opportunity for Charles and himself to meet up with them. Lionel was able to give a demonstration of the main features of the system and Gayle provided copies of Procedure Guidelines detailing how to use the system for specific operations. Craig said it was good to get a better understanding of how the system operated, what it produced and how it provided the basis for most of the services now provided by Olives NZ. He was impressed with the checks and balances built into the system. He said the necessity for the system was apparent but he did hold concerns about succession for Gayle. The system itself was obviously robust and well thought out, showing the benefits of having Lionel work alongside Gayle in developing and enhancing the system. He noted it was written in Excel so would be easy for ongoing support.

Charles said there were two key components, the database system and the business knowledge and these being linked. He flagged a potential future issue with Gayle's business knowledge as being key in knowing what is required. Charles said he was impressed with how the system had been programmed and it was critical for the ongoing operation of Olives NZ. It was now timely for the organisation to formally purchase the system and to continue with maintenance. He said the asking price was very reasonable and the system is well worth the investment.

Craig had asked Gayle to give an overview of the system, its development and how it operates.

When Gayle took over as EO in 2011 there were few systems in place for administration and little documentation detailing regulations. These issues highlighted the need for systems which ensured rigour and standards to be maintained and monitored. This included the need to address Certification as Plant and Food Research advised they would no longer host the IOC Panel and a system to be put in place for administration of the NZ EVOO Awards.

Lionel Sheridan developed the Olives NZ database to enable Gayle to carry out the activities required for Olives NZ. It is a management information system that has been progressively enhanced and now runs pretty much all of the services and activities of Olives NZ, with the exception of financial which is run using the Xero accounting package.

The integral component of the Olives NZ database is the member section which includes a high level of information about each member, their grove and participation in Certification, Awards, OliveMark, Grove Census, AGM/Conference, FGP sponsorship, Grower page, etc.

The Olives NZ database is a Xero-look-alike and is programmed in Excel using Visual Basic. It interacts with other MS Office applications e.g. Word, Outlook and PowerPoint to produce documentation. It runs on Windows 10 PCs and is not compatible with Apple.

In addition to the services mentioned, the system also includes a Group E-Mail application to formally communicate with members, or subsets of members, about key activities with form

and personalised attachments (AGM, Certification, Awards, Grove Census, Field Days, Sponsor newsletters, etc.). The Reporting application has a sophisticated suite of set reports that can be customised and for example, produces all of the data and charts for the annual Harvest Data Report.

The Certification and Awards applications produce all of the supporting documentation, for example the documentation and email required by the Oil Testing Service, the carton packing list, carton labels, the storage packing list. The system then generates the results emails, Certification Certificates (with detailed chemical and organoleptic test results), list of certified oils for the website.

Awards documentation produced includes the entries spreadsheet for the Facilitator with exhibit codes, certificate merge list for the printer, medals order form for the printer, winners report for the website, best processor report, personalised medal order forms for entrants, letters to entrants who do not attend the Awards Dinner, presentation report for the PowerPoint presentation for the Awards Dinner.

All systems are linked with 'rules' to maintain integrity. For example controlling that only certified oil can be entered in the Awards and the correct category is entered based on volume certified.

The original system was developed and implemented in 2012. It has been re-written, updated and enhanced on an ongoing basis since then and as the Executive has requested more (and more) information, sophistication and changes. There are separate datasheets for 2011-2012 and annually thereafter. That is there is a full set of data available for each year of operations and this is drawn on, for example, as members request historical information about their grove.

In a nutshell the Olives NZ database has enabled the organisation to lift the level of service provided to members, lifted the sophistication of support provided to members and branch chairs and the information provided to outside organisations.

The duties now required of the Executive Officer have grown substantially. The database is integral to being able to carry out these duties, particularly in the time available and given the demand for information to be provided in an efficient and timely manner.

The database can be supported remotely using a computer takeover application. The price is \$15,000 plus GST billable in April 2021. Modifications and enhancements will be charged at \$75 per hour plus GST.

The following motion was put and carried.

That Olives NZ purchase the database management system from Lionel Sheridan at the asking price of \$15,000 plus GST.

It was noted that the software purchase could be written off over a period of time and Charles and Gayle should check out what is the norm.

There being no further business, Craig thanked all for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

New Members:

Jo Gascoigne and Richard Goodyear, Wairarapa