

Olives New Zealand
Executive Meeting Minutes Synopsis
Thursday 17th June 2021
ZOOM Conference Meeting
7pm – 8.15pm

1. Present

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

2. Apologies

Charles Chinnaiyah

3. Financial

Gayle spoke to the reports prepared by Charles, in his absence.

Budget Variance Report showed income from Certification Fees lagging a little at present which would self-correct and Sponsorship under budget because Kiwi Labels would be offering an in-kind contribution. The Awards expenses were over budget because of trophies ordered for the New York winners, matched by Awards income from these being over budget, and also Rydges Wellington Airport Hotel had required a deposit to lock down the date for the Awards Dinner in October.

The Balance Sheet shows a healthy bottom line with \$50,000+ on Term Deposit.

The Profit & Loss shows a surplus for the year to date of \$26,753.

There were no question on the Financial Reports.

4. Executive Officer Report

Gayle spoke to her report which had been circulated.

Financial Systems

There are no outstanding debtors.

Membership

There have been 10 new members and one re-joined members since the last meeting. This took membership to 176, compared to 181 in June 2020.

Focus Grove Project

The April Field Days report was on the website and the link promoted to members via email and the newsletter. The milestone payment has been received from MPI.

2021 AGM

Craig spoke on the personalised and user-pays visit to Lot 8 by Stuart Tustin and himself at the conclusion of the Wairarapa Field Day. This visit was in response to the issues raised by a member at the AGM that they had seen no improvements in grove production since 2000. Stuart gave advice on how overgrown trees can be remediated over a period of time. And the member had advised that the visit was worth-while.

Certification

Certification using Modern Olives was going well with 32 samples sent thus far. In response to a question from Andrew, Gayle advised that a total of 194 samples had been submitted in 2020 with 13 samples as at this time last year.

2021 Awards

The excellent performance of NZ EVOOs in the 2021 New York International Olive Oil Competition was noted. The results particularly supported the competence of the NZ judging panel and the efficiency of the remote judging system. The proposal to use remote judging in 2021, because of ongoing issues with COVID, was approved.

The proposal that the first three entries for a member be at \$150 per entry and subsequent entries be at \$100 per entry was approved.

The judging panel was confirmed:

Dr Soumi Paul Mukhopadhyay - Australia (Head Judge)

Abhijit Paul – Australia

Charlotte Connoley – Auckland

Raffaella Delmonte – Auckland

Hilary Fenemor – Nelson

Peter Coubrough – Nelson.

It was noted that 2021 was the 21st anniversary of the NZ EVOO Awards and the certificates would have a commemorative logo and Kiwi Labels were working on special medal stickers. It was agreed that this was sufficient recognition of the occasion and perhaps the 25th anniversary might be a bigger celebration.

The Awards Dinner has been confirmed at Rydges Wellington Airport Hotel. Unfortunately the room/breakfast rate was higher than in 2020 but still cheaper than other similar hotels in the city. The media cost for the dinner has also not been as discounted as in 2020 and keeping the ticket charge at \$120 per person would reflect in a reduced drinks budget.

Sponsors

It was noted that Food Tech Solutions (FTS) had expressed concern at the low level of orders for enzymes this year. Key processors had been surveyed and feedback provided to FTS. An issue was pricing compared to the Horticulture product and FTS had reviewed their pricing accordingly. Gayle will ensure that FTS and benefits of enzymes are promoted to members ahead of next season.

Craig noted that the season impacted on the use of enzymes and 2021 being the second relatively dry season resulted in less use. He still had plenty of product from 2020.

Ray commented that they use enzyme frequently so the price differential in products was an issue.

Kiwi Labels has advised that they will no longer provide financial sponsorship but would offer an in-kind contribution of supplying the awards medal stickers at no cost. This equated to \$2800+ and Charles had agreed that this should be offset against their Gold sponsorship by transferring the equivalent cash value from Awards to Sponsorship.

MPI Update

Gayle needs to check on the status of matters raised with the MPI Stakeholder Engagement Advisor as it appears that this has been limited to referrals to other MPI staff for further discussion.

The requirement for an olive oil Material Safety Data Sheet had been raised by a member and Craig suggested that MPI should be able to help with this. He noted that a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) normally applies to chemicals and hazardous substances. Geoff said it was a horrendous document to prepare and Johnno would be better off trying to get approval to do a Product Information Form. This requires information on storage temperature and requirements, how spills are managed and how contamination is avoided, etc. It is a one page rather than a huge document like the MSDS.

Food Safety – National Programmes

It was noted that the MPI Section 33 Exemption relating to packaging under NP1 had been renewed for another three years. Geoff raised concern that MPI now held Olives NZ responsible for ensuring the requirements of growers continue to be met.

Subsequent to the meeting Gayle advised she had printed off a list from Xero of all people who have brought a NP1 Template. Some 74 members. She can then check this list off against Certification as the season progresses. At the end she will know who has not submitted oils for Certification and can check to see if they applied for the bottling exemption and will be able to follow up with them. She will advise the Executive in due course how this works out.

AOA

AOA has formally requested that Stuart Tustin speak at their Conference on the Focus Grove Project. This will most likely be in October 2022.

Future Projects

It was noted that the current Focus Grove Project would finish in October 2021 and the Executive would proactively consult with members as to what next. The Branch AGMs followed by the main AGM in March 2022 would provide a good opportunity for consultation and discussion.

Some potential projects have already been suggested – marketing, updating the Best Practice Management manual in line with the Focus Grove Project findings, sustainable growing standard.

It was agreed that Craig and Gayle should meet with David Walshaw after harvest to discuss further his proposal for a sustainable olive growing standard.

Tricia suggested adding information to the website on sustainable olive growing practices, both organic and non-organic, and how olive trees contribute positively to the environment by the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It was noted that olive trees are not eligible for carbon credits because they are not of sufficient height.

Gayle will look at how information on the positive environmental contribution of the olive industry and information on sustainable practices could be included on the website.

Craig thanked Gayle for her report.

5. 2020 Executive Priorities

Productivity – see Focus Grove Report on website.

Processing – the course has been scheduled for 2022, subject to Pablo being able to travel to NZ. It was agreed that it was important and timely that Olives NZ run a Processing Practicing

course in 2022 as it would be three years since the last course. It was agreed that Olives NZ look for an alternative if Pablo could not run this.

Marketing – nothing to report

6. General Business

Branch Updates

Wairarapa

Andrew said ripening has been variable across varieties and across the wider region. The main 'hump' has been early and he noted it has been a dry harvest so far. He said that better pruning is required across many groves. There had been a good harvest for a number of groves, producing 25+kg per tree and greater than growers had estimated.

Craig said that oil yield had been high at the start of the season, up to 18%, but as the season has progressed this has dropped to an average of 12-14%. Leafyridge had harvested Picual early to get more pungency. He noted that unfortunately the majority of boutique groves used colour as an indication of fruit maturity and harvested too early. However there were some very nice oils being produced.

Kapiti

Tricia said most groves had finished harvesting. Noble Estate was ready to harvest the second week in May as in 2020, but did not have access to a mechanical harvester and therefore they lost a lot of fruit. Across the region there are reports that Frantoio harvest in particular was up. The branch has its annual tasting of new season's oils scheduled for August and this would include a shared lunch and grove walk.

Nelson

Ray said much of the fruit in Nelson is still green and it is wet. What was ready to harvest had come off the trees well and there was a good crop. Kakariki had taken an extra ton off the Frantoio Focus Grove block, so above 20kg per tree. The branch will have a get together after harvest.

Hawke's Bay

Geoff said it has generally been a lighter harvest across the region. There had been a low fruit set because of weather events over flowering with particularly heavy rains. For example the Kalamata trees that Telegraph Hill harvest would normally produce 25kg but this year only 2kg. The Focus Grove also appeared down. Yields were typically 13-14%.

He said that there appeared to be new owners at the Mohaka grove who had entered into a management contract with Village Press. He said the grove had been neglected and was overgrown and full of disease so it was looking to be a poor harvest there.

Canterbury

Alan said fruit set had been good but drought conditions had affected fruit size. Groves that have been able to irrigate have a good crop but others were quite poor. Fruit has been variable in ripening. Typical yield was 11-13% but as low as 8%. Akaroa reported up to 20%.

The recent heavy rain has plumped up the fruit and would not appear to have damaged trees. The Waipara press was half way through their work plan so there was still a lot of harvesting to be done. The weather has caused delays.

There being no further business, Craig thanked all for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm.