



Hazelnut Growers of Australia Ltd.
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Hazelnut Newsletter Number 9 – December 2004

AGM and Seminar in Hobart

About 30 people attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Seminar in Hobart over the weekend of 13-14 November.

At the AGM the President (Peter Wheelwright) reported on:

1. the recent Australian Nut Industry Council (ANIC) Conference in Melbourne;
2. the development of plant disease incursion planning being undertaken by the Committee in association with ANIC and Plant Health Australia (PHA); and
3. the efforts by the Board to initiate research projects in conjunction with Horticulture Australia (HAL).

At the meeting the following committee members retired:

Peter Wheelwright – President
Tom McInnes – Secretary/Treasurer
Nico Duynhoven – Committee member
Chris Nixon – Southern Highlands Area Rep.

The following members were elected to the Committee:

Stewart Deans – President
Peter Wheelwright – Vice President
Vanessa Cox – Secretary
Clem Cox – Treasurer
Lyn McRae – Research Committee
Vanessa Cox – Research Committee
Bruce Thompson – Research Committee
Tom McInnes – Central West Area Rep
Donald Fraser – Southern Highlands Area Rep
John Zito – Tasmanian Area Rep

Other existing Committee Members are:

Jim Clement - Southern Victorian Rep
Bruce West - Committee Member
Lyn McRae -Sub Editor
John Dishon - Border NSW/Vic Rep

The Board thanks the outgoing committee on behalf of the members and welcomes the new committee.

The meeting agreed that the Board should review the Articles of Association, particularly in relation

to membership and develop a proposal for members to consider at the next AGM.

Lyn McRae sought interest from members in completing a bird damage survey.

Peter Wheelwright summarised the results of the Grower's survey compiled by Nico Duynhoven.

During the Seminar following the AGM Stewart Deans presented some records on crop yield results from his property by year and variety.

Basil Baldwin presented a report on hazelnut varietal trials based on various trial plots in south-east Australia over many years. This research is aimed at determining which hazelnut varieties perform consistently well at various locations in Australia. The HGA is supporting this research until the 2005 season when the varietal trial completes.

John Zito presented some sample hazelnut material infested with Big-bud Mite and indicated the symptoms. He noted that Big-bud Mite has probably been in Tasmania from a very early time when plant material was imported before there was any plant quarantine regime in place. John warned of the danger of importing material from Tasmania and noted that there are no restrictions on moving plant material from Tasmania to the mainland. He cautioned members to always be sure where your plant material is being sourced.

John Zito also presented on his visit to Italy to inspect harvesting equipment. John discussed some brands of nut harvesting equipment with illustrations and talked about the issues of pricing and direct importation.

Members were invited to visit John Zito's property at Kettering to inspect the varietal trial plot. Basil Baldwin explained that this plot is important to the varietal trial because it represents a maritime environment similar to many areas overseas where hazelnuts are grown. It will be interesting to see if there are significant differences in productivity between this plot and those in harsher environments.



John showed the remains of trees that were infected with Big-bud mite and had been removed and destroyed. He also talked about white truffles growing on his nut trees. This is interesting, as generally trees are either grown for nuts or truffles but not both.

Board Activities

Prior to the AGM the Board met and discussed the following issues:

1. the resignation of Committee members;
2. the restrictions in the Articles of Association relating to membership and voting rights;
3. the Research Projects and application for HAL funding; and
4. the Plant Disease Incursion plan being progressed by PHA in conjunction with ANIC and possible costs and benefits to HGA members.

There are still a number of issues to be clarified before the Board could propose a Plant Incursion Risk agreement for consideration by the members.

Currently HGA pay a small membership fee to belong to ANIC and ANIC pays a membership fee to PHA. PHA also received a subsidy from the Australian Government, which is due to finish in about 12 months when membership fees will rise.

Larger grower organisations see benefit in entering into separate agreements with PHA (rather than through ANIC). It is not yet known if the smaller organisations can still deal through ANIC and if not whether a separate membership of PHA is required. It is also not known if the agreement will remain in force until amended or needs to be maintained on a periodic basis.

There is no doubt that having an agreement in place with the Government will be beneficial in the event of an incursion but the costs may well outweigh the risks. There is also benefit in being able to spread the costs over several nut organisations but that also increases the risk profile as we would then have to contribute to incursions in other nut crops.

Research Projects

As advised in the last Newsletter HAL agreed to contribute to two HGA nominated research projects. The HGA Board and Researchers had difficulty specifying the detail of the research projects in the time available but progressed the application to study Pests & Diseases in Hazelnuts for production of a useful handbook for growers. There are ongoing difficulties with this application, which the Research Committee will address.

The new Research Committee will be looking at developing a process for undertaking research projects. We need to document how the research

will deliver the outcomes required and how that is related to the HGA Strategic Plan.

Coming Events

Over the next two months the Board plan to discuss how we can increase the value of HGA Membership and map out a calendar of events up to the next AGM. The details should be finalised for issue in the February Newsletter.

For enquires please contact Vanessa Cox at enquiries@mudgeehampers.com.au
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Hazelnut Survey

The annual hazelnut survey which is collated by Nico Duynhoven as presented at the AGM. This survey has been conducted for a number of years and assists the board of the HGA and the members with the information provided. It is also of use when we seek funding for research.

The picture which emerged this year is that there has been continued growth and a significant numbers of growers intend to increase their plantings. In addition there are now a number of plantings in NSW and Victoria of 2000 or more trees. The survey also revealed that the numbers of trees are about evenly balanced between these states. However the results need to be treated with some caution as while some 62 members completed the survey this is only part of the industry. The total of 41,000 trees in the ground is not the whole story.

The survey also revealed that while there is still a great variation in the types of nuts planted the new plantings are dominated by Ennis, Tokolyi Cosford and Barcelona. These three varieties are now the major varieties in the ground. In addition we can expect a considerable increase in production as a significant number of the trees are less than 5 years old.

Conclusion

This newsletter is intended to provide a means of communication between the Board and the HGA members. Comments on the newsletter and articles/information for inclusion are welcomed and should be addressed to The President, Stewart Deans, by phone on 02 6238 0778, or by email to sdeans@pcug.org.au

The Board wishes Members a very merry Christmas and a happy and productive new year.

