



Cherry Growers Association of South Australia

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: 18 August 2020

Meeting Opened: 7.10 pm

Venue: Ashton Community Memorial Hall
2 Stony Rise Road, Ashton SA 5137

Meeting Closed: 8:15 pm

Present:

Susie Green
Andrew Flavell
Joe & Anna Ceravolo
Lyn & Geoff Greene
Graham Mason
Simon Cornish
Helen Lindon & Paul Shank
Bob Barnard
Nick Noske
Colin Bungay
Sophie Taylor
James Erskine
Coral & Tony Gallasch
Jonathon Leonard
David Leonard
Craig Harris
Kerrie Arthur

Apologies:

Wayne & Julie Altmann
Pete Arthur
Linda, Trevor and Brett Desmond
Gill, John and Simon Cowling
Guilio Avolio
Ron Burke
Darren Graetz
Phil Marriott
Ian Plummer
Justin Tiller
John Caldicott
Ian Sparnon

AGENDA ITEMS

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Deferred until the next meeting due to late circulation

Promotions Report

The main focus of promotions last year was a push through social media early in the season and in the post-Christmas period. This was outsourced to ensure high quality engagement through this key period. A very big thank you to Helen Lindon for all her work in pulling together the Cherry Map once again – she puts in an enormous amount of effort and passion into the map. This season we have received a \$5k grant through Adelaide Hills Tourism as part of the bushfire recovery fund, which will be put towards an activity to broaden promotions of cherries to restaurants, cellar doors and cafes etc.

Bob Barnard made the observation that we get a lot of overseas visitors come to Adelaide for cherry picking and that we will need to focus more on the domestic public for promoting cherry picking this year.

Financial Report

Anna Ceravolo presented the draft financial report for the 2019/20 financial year. It was noted that some expenses allocated to sundry expenses need to be re-allocated to the Factrees Evaluation Project. The Financial Report was moved to be accepted by the membership.

Moved: Andrew Flavell

Seconded: Joe Ceravolo

All in favour

National Update

An update on CGA activities was provided via Zoom by Tom Eastlake, President of CGA.

There have been a lot of changes this year, with 3 key areas of focus:

- Export and securing air freight
- Domestic market and marketing
- Employment and transfer of employees between states

Expectations are that it could be a large national crop, based on historical trends and reports of high bud numbers, high chill, good rains and favourable conditions across most growing areas. At this stage it is estimated at 21,5000 tonnes, based on trends from previous years. The biggest crop that the domestic market has previously absorbed is 14,500 tonnes.

Therefore, there will be a big focus on exports for this season. There are very little air freight options available. The majority of commercial freighters are currently coming in and out of Sydney, with road freight ex Sydney being good. Melbourne has had very little air freight and there are subsidised flights running ex Adelaide and other cities. Flights will be available ex Adelaide provided there is sufficient demand.

Export markets are looking stronger than they were in April/May/June, when they crashed. Table grapes had a lot of issues with rejections through this period, largely due to not being able to get into market to follow up on consignments.

China has now freed up a lot. US cherries are trading into China quite well, albeit in small volumes due to a very high demand domestically. Observations in the US market is that consumers are wanting to treat themselves and are buying high quality produce.

South Korea is looking very positive. There are good reports on the Korean market and extra flights are opening up. There is a teleconference with the Austrade team on Korea in the 1st week in September. Information on that will be distributed shortly.

The Chilean market is forecasting steady growth in exported cherries. They have no other option than to push fruit into the Chinese market. They usually sell on consignment and buyers do what they can do to get the best money. This could have a negative impact on sales of Australian cherries into the market this year by driving down prices.

Vietnamese market demand looks strong. Sending cherries to Vietnam out of Melbourne won't be an option unless they accept irradiation by e-beam technology used in the new facility. Freight into Vietnam will also be a limiting factor.

The International Freight Assistance Mechanism (IFAM) is running a lot more smoothly than it was when it first started, with booking times down from 6 weeks to days. CGA is working hard to keep IFAM available for this season.

For the domestic market, consumption of fresh produce across the board is higher than usual, but we can't rely on that factor to absorb all the likely crop. Therefore, domestic marketing will also have a strong focus this season. In the past few years the major marketing spend has been in export markets and there is a pool of money that has been carried over. Hort Innovation will fund the domestic marketing activities out of the marketing levy and the CGA marketing team has been very involved in the development of the new marketing program. It will include a rebrand to try and push sales of significant volumes of fruit. It is likely that the domestic market will need to take more fruit than usual.

CGA has undertaken more lobbying this year than ever before, with good relations into the Minister's office. One of the areas of focus has been on fruit fly and lobbying for national support for SA's efforts in fruit fly control and eradication.

Executive Office Update

Susie Green gave a rundown on some of the key activities for the past year. There has been a major focus on Fruit Fly with all the outbreaks in metro Adelaide. The introduction of the Horticultural Netting Infrastructure Program has been the result of 5 years of work to get support for netting to industry. The Solar Pumping project being run in conjunction with Apple & Pear Growers will deliver savings to more than 80 irrigation pumps across the industries. There has also been a focus on COVID-19 and understanding the impacts on industry. A special workshop will be held for growers in October to help equip industry for the challenges we face in the upcoming season.

President's Report

Thanks to every for the opportunity to hold the office of president of CGSA for the last twelve months.

This last year has flown past quicker than any other I can remember. It's been a season with very strong export and domestic market conditions but with bush fires, COVID-19 and Medfly thrown in for good measure. We have also seen strong demand in the farm gate sector with "pick your own" really driving that demand. It's certainly been a year of challenges, even without the usual Christmas downpour.

Although there hasn't been much done in terms of projects, CGSA's resources, namely Susie, have certainly been busy and a valuable asset to cherry growers in SA. There has been the task of shaping out the proposed merger between CGSA and APGSA Susie in particular, has been a great asset, especially after the Cudlee Creek fire.

More recently, we have shifted our attention to preparing the industry to operate as smoothly as we practically can in a COVID-19 environment with the added complexity of a Medfly outbreak impacting on some growers.

With that said, I believe the challenge lies ahead, not behind us. There are the relationship issues with our main trading partner, the current Medfly outbreak and COVID-19 all having the potential to negatively impact our businesses. I believe the way we can best meet the challenges ahead is to be well informed, well organized and most importantly, well resourced.

Thanks to the committee, Anna, Susie, the marketing committee and a special thanks to Helen Lindon whose passion for the industry is amazing. So 2020/21, bring it on!

Nick Noske.

Moved: Colin Bungay

Seconded: Andrew Flavell

All in favour.

Election of office bearers and committee members

Nick vacated the President's chair and handed control of the meeting to Susie Green. All positions were declared vacant. The following appointments were made.

President - Nick Noske

Nominated by: Colin Bungay
Seconded by: Joe Ceravolo

Vice President – David Leonard

Nominated by: Andrew Flavell
Seconded by: Nick Noske

Treasurer – Anna Ceravolo

Nominated by: David Leonard
Seconded by: Nick Noske

Public Officer – Susie Green

Nominated by: David Leonard
Seconded by: Joe Ceravolo

Committee members:

James Erskine

Nom: Nick Noske Seconded: Joe Ceravolo

John Caldicott

Nom: Nick Noske Seconded: Colin Bungay

Helen Lindon

Nom: Joe Ceravolo Seconded: Grant Wotton

Andrew Flavell

Nom: Joe Ceravolo Seconded: Grant Wotton

Joe Ceravolo

Nom: Joe Ceravolo Seconded: Grant Wotton

Tony Hannaford

Nom: Joe Ceravolo Seconded: Grant Wotton

Other Business

Joe Ceravolo queried whether orchards within the Fruit Fly Suspension area could have people come onto their block and eat cherries on sight. It was clarified that at the last PIRSA meeting it was indicated that this is the case as long as people don't take fruit off site.

Nick and other growers indicated that they haven't seen assessment reports from the evaluation blocks at Ian Sparnon's place from Graham's Factree.

Action: CGSA approach Graham's Factree and ask Flemings for a copy of reports as the contract they have is with GCSA, not Ian Sparnon.

There was a discussion on seasonal timing. Thoughts are that it is looking early, with flowers appearing on some early Lyn.

Andrew gave a brief update on the evaluation trial at his place, thanking Darren Graetz for all his efforts. They have thinned out a lot of the less promising varieties and are now down to about 60 varieties on 3 rootstocks. This evaluation will continue.

Once the meeting was closed, Susie gave a presentation on the Fruit Fly outbreaks. There was also a discussion on GM crops and the current consultations underway by Councils. There are mixed views making it difficult for industry to form a fixed opinion one way or another. Susie will prepare a submission that expresses the diversity of views. Growers are also able to put in their own submissions.