



The Olive Hunter

Issue 96

Newsletter of the Hunter Olive Association

April 2006

WebPage: www.hunterolives.asn.au
Email: editor@hunterolives.asn.au

P.O. Box 434, Narrabeen 2101
Tel. 0422 936 010

STOP PRESS

POSITION VACANT – NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Christina is retiring from this role and we are in URGENT need of a person or persons to assist with the editing and publishing of our newsletter. Persons interested in the role should contact any of the Executive members for further information.

Presidents Report



Harvest time, the early harvest could be attributed to a number of issues, but I see the weather as being the key element. This year has seen a reduction of up to 40% in rainfall in some areas of the valley. Resultantly with the dryer climate (unless there is sufficient water stored for supporting irrigation) the fruit has ripened earlier. I would guess that most of the table fruit has been harvested and processing progressing, irrespective of whether the product is for the individual growers or a bulk facility.

At this stage I have had little feedback on the oil fruit, for these growers the hard work is just starting or about to start. I trust that members growing for oil have there processing options organized. As identified previously there are approximately 7 presses in the valley and I am sure that by now they would be committed to full capacity for their machines.

The AGM is next month, so be sure to put the date in your calendars. As usual the dinner following will be up to the usual high standard, so get in early to guarantee a place.

It was good to see a good rollup for the initial HACCP/Table Olive production Methods and the Olive Oil marketing seminar. Well done to Steve Mitchell for the concept and organisation.

There will be more information to come, but the committee is looking at the distribution costs for the newsletter. With the acceptance of email as a communication medium, we could achieve substantial savings if those members with access to email were to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter. So if you have access to email and are currently receiving a posted copy of the newsletter could you please let Howard Webb know so that we can amend the mailing list?

A reminder that all positions are open at the AGM, be sure to get your nominations in on time. Howard will be providing more information in this edition.

The Hunter Olive Association accepts no responsibility for the statements made or opinions expressed.

NEWS

from the HOA

It is with regret that I have to retire from editing the HOA Newsletter. Continued illness in the family and the first time commercial quantities in my groves make it impossible for me to continue volunteering my time. I have really enjoyed the couple of days each month to bring together the material in the newsletter and hope that it satisfied the needs. I also hope that there is another person out there amongst the membership that is willing to give this job a go. It will bring you much satisfaction and is a worthwhile undertaking. Cheers to all - Christina

The Hunter Olive Association AGM is approaching fast. Ken McCraw has kindly provided the Presidents Annual Report to be published this month. See page 4.

Nomination forms for the AGM will be appended to this newsletter.

Mike Wilson has researched the rainfall this season in the Hunter Valley. It indicates that rainfall was far short of normal. Table olive fruit size and ease of harvesting has been affected. Read more on page 6.

This year the 'Feast of the Olive' will be held at one venue only. The two day event requires a lot of organisation and time, which has been given freely by HOA committee members. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to spread resources to so many venues. Details of the Feast will be made available when they are finalised.

HOA are now offering the opportunity for advertisers to provide occasional advertorials in the newsletter, which will allow members to be more informed of their products or services.

Membership Fees 2006-7

At the last executive meeting it was decided that due to the increased cost of printing and mailing hard copies of the newsletter membership fees will include a surcharge of \$11.00 (including GST) for members who wish to have a mailed copy of the newsletter.

Basic membership will remain at \$66.00 (including GST).

The following request has already been sent via email to members. Anyone not receiving email newsletters, are welcome to contribute their ideas, stories or anecdotes to Mike.

Dear HOA members,

Several months ago the HOA committee agreed to run a series of feature articles on olives in the Hunter Valley in a local publication, Breathe Magazine. This is a high quality, coffee table style magazine that is distributed in the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney and is published quarterly. Copies of the magazine are free and are available from most of the Cellar Door sales and accommodation outlets in the Hunter.

To date we have run articles on the Feast of the Olive, the olive oil show and the winners of awards and most recently on cooking with olives (thanks to Christina Sawaya for providing most of the copy, recipes, etc). We have an on-going commitment for two further articles in Breathe, one for their Winter (May, June July) edition and one for their Spring (August, September & October) edition. The Spring edition will feature the Feast of the Olive, but as yet we don't have a "theme" for the winter edition, so we are inviting members to make a contribution.

My thought at this time is to run a feature on how wonderful the 2006 olive season was (!) and how wonderful our oils are and how fantastic the table olives are this year. Today may be a bit premature to announce a wonderful year, but some articles on fresh oils being released (in May?) and other newsworthy stories can easily be woven into this article. We get a double page spread in the magazine, so there is plenty of space for articles and stories.

If you have any creative input, please send anything you have to me and I will work in with the Breathe team to make it into an eye-catching story.

Regards,

Mike Wilson.

Olive Opportunity !
'Willandra', Wollar Road, MUDGEE NSW 2850



A very spacious 4 bedroom home set amid park like established gardens and situated just 11km from Mudgee. Featuring tiled open living areas, spacious kitchen, tiled bathroom, rumpus/office plus workshop. All bedrooms are of a good size and the main has a large walk-in wardrobe and ensuite. The home is heated during the winter months with a slow combustion wood fire and there is also reverse cycle air conditioning. The home has verandahs front and back with the front north facing verandah a perfect vantage point for taking in the rural views. Outside there is a parent's retreat, multiple car parks, 7 m x 14 m steel framed shed and a good set of cattle yards. Now on to the olives! This perfectly set up olive grove comprises of 1500 olive trees with a complete drip irrigation system to the entire operation. The trees were planted in 2000 and are situated for easy access for plant and machinery. There is also a contract for the sale of the olives, details available through our office. This property is a must see and a fantastic proposition for those looking for the best in lifestyle.

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Diary Dates

April 8, 2006	Pickling Workshop, Mudgee
May 27, 2006	HOA Annual General Meeting
Sep 14-15, 2006	Olive Harvest Workshop, Rylstone NSW
Sep 20-Oct1	Feast of the Olive
Oct 26-28, 2006	Australian Olive Expo, Canberra

Canadians donate olive seedlings to palestinian farmers

One thousand Palestinian farmers in the East Hebron Area Development Programme (ADP) recently received 21,000 olive tree seedlings donated by the World Vision Canada Gift Catalogue to help families generate a subsidiary income and enhance food security in the ADP. Source: Reuters AlertNet

* * *

PRESIDENTS ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Firstly let me express my gratitude to the executive committee members. Complacency is not in their vocabulary. New and ongoing activities are being continually reviewed to identify opportunities to maximise the derived benefit to the membership and the local industry. I am proud to be a part of such a dynamic and enthusiastic group with new members equally providing an excellent contribution. Our monthly meetings always result in enthusiastic discussion in all topic areas, which can only benefit the members and local industry.

The **newsletter** is our key communication medium. Christina has moulded the document into a professional, informative and colourful reading material, which I look forward to receiving. Unfortunately, Christina is no longer able to assist as editor, so we are in desperate need of a person or persons to fill the role.

We are now offering the opportunity for advertisers to provide occasional advertorials in the newsletter, which will allow members to be more informed of their products/services.

Membership has fallen slightly from 143 to 134. The reduction can be attributed to members no longer in the industry. Although the suggestion of a 'farm-gate' sign was raised last year, members were asked to submit any ideas without any response. We are now organising some draft designs to be considered. We need to promote the association to attract new members, and the displaying of these signs will go a long way to assisting with this task.

Local Industry Growth

There is growth and expansion in the local industry as the groves mature and growers expand to meet the new challenges. Although due to unforeseen circumstances the Co-op has closed the impetus for growers to manage product quality, processing and marketing issues is being accommodated. There are now seven presses in the valley, two mechanical harvesting machines and with table fruit a group of growers have formed a consortium called the Hunter Boutique Olive Growers to prepare table fruit for the market. These are both positive and encouraging signs of the maturation of the local industry.

The Year in Review

This years submission for funding through the NSW Tourism Regional Flagship programme again managed to get an invite to submit an in-depth proposal, we were unsuccessful. We approached NSW Tourism and were able to get some extensive positive feedback.

The Feast of the Olive was 'as usual' an extremely successful event, and this was attributed to the assistance of the Venue owners and our regular band of hard working volunteers.

With a great amount of organising, Steve Mitchell brought together a successful inaugural Oil show, providing an opportunity for producers of olive products to be compared on a 'level playing-field'. This event will continue as an annual event, providing another opportunity to showcase the Hunter Olive industry.

We changed from **Harvesting seminar** to an informative article in the newsletter titled 'Harvest 2006 – What are the options'. This change was seen to be more beneficial for members who were unable to attend the seminar and explained the who, what and where in the local industry for harvesting, processing and pickling options.

The seasons have been relatively unkind this year, with a dryer than normal year, resulting in an earlier harvest than usual. I can only hope that growers have been watching their fruit carefully to achieve a timely harvest for their fruit.

This year we had an opportunity to visit and participate in the AOA AGM and Olive expo in Canberra. It was a good opportunity to catch up on advancements in industry technology and advancements in research with the papers delivered at the expo, without the expense of travelling interstate.

New Initiatives

In the past the 'Feast of the Olive' has been a multi venue event. The committee in reviewing the event have identified that our limited resources are stretched, there is not enough volunteers to provide assistance for the two day event and I feel we are abusing the goodwill of the few. The committee have considered our options and have agreed that a single venue event would be more effective and be less of a drain on our volunteer resources.

The down side of this decision is the loss of marketing opportunity for our members that have previously allowed their venues to be a part of the event. As such the committee has agreed to put more emphasis on advertising and promotion of the 'Olive Trail' and to redesigning the 'Trail' brochure, to highlight the opportunities for visitors to appreciate the product attributes of the local olive industry. Resultantly, we are striving to showcase the local industry at a single venue annually, but in conjunction provide visitors with the opportunity to go to venues that market local olive products, at any time throughout the year. The event will be highlighted in the newsletter and through the media as it draws nearer.

In addition, the committee is looking at having a seminar on olive tree nutrition. The intention is to identify local environmental issues associated with growing olive trees and opportunities to counter the negatives on tree health.

To advance the awareness of the local industry and an appreciation of the local olive industry, we are providing feature articles in each edition of 'Breathe' magazine for the current year. This is a local quality magazine that has a broad distribution in the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Sydney areas.

Financially we have annual costs of \$12,000 and generally are able to achieve a 'break even' with events and newsletter advertising, but with membership renewals we would prefer members to nominate to receive their newsletter by email, to reduce our printing and postage overheads.

Please be mindful that the committee is a representative body for the association, our role as an association is to research members needs, to communicate industry practices, to facilitate training needs and assist with resolution of local issues, but this can only be achieved through input from the members we represent. If we don't get input from the members we must rely on the issue and needs identified from within the committee members. To the credit of the committee members they have a comprehensive understanding of the local industry and the inherent challenges fro our member growers.

In closing, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank Christina for her creativity and perseverance in producing the monthly newsletter. She has generated a very high standard product, which I am sure will be a challenge to sustain.

HOA Committee for 2005 - 2006		Important Numbers		
President	Ken McCraw	President	Ken McCraw	6579 1444
Vice President	Mike Wilson	Vice-President	Mike Wilson	65791004
Secretary / Membership	Howard Webb	Treasurer	Peter Herborn	49988349
Treasurer	Peter Herborn	Secretary	Howard Webb	9913 2123
Committee	Steve Goodchild Jim Herlihy Stephen Mitchell Jim Morgan Geoff Taylor Marian Waite			
Webmaster	Liane Heinke			
Editor	Christina Sawaya			

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 The Hunter Olive Centre
 Phone 4998 7524

Is Drought affecting Olives ?

The harvesting season has started in earnest during February and by late March the first results were starting to become apparent. All the olives harvested to that date had been green, with Manzanillo, Sevillano and UC13A6 as the most dominant table olive varieties that I had harvested. There had been some variation in both size and quality and quite a large degree of damage. This high level of damage seems to be strongly related to action of the picking of the fruit using rakes and a catching frame, although a proportion of the fruit that has been damaged by hail, birds, olives rubbing on branches, disease and the like. The olives were generally quite hard.

My observations are that the green olives are particularly difficult to pick at the moment as they require a significant amount of force to remove them from the tree, and this is unusual. I suspect that the dry summer has something to do with this, so I've carried out a bit of research into this summer's conditions

Figures for Cessnock from the Bureau of Meteorology website indicate a significantly dryer than usual season:

Month	Average rain	Rain this year	Evaporation
November 2005	69mm	66mm	123mm
December 2005	66mm	12mm	222mm
January 2006	107mm	40mm	167mm
February 2006	95mm	54mm	150mm
March 2006	106mm	50mm	131mm
Total	443mm	222mm	793mm
Singleton	391mm	198mm	
Jerrys Plains	334mm	191mm	

Over the summer months, during an average year we can expect 443mm of rain in the Cessnock area, with these figures taken at Cessnock Airport being fairly representative of the area. I have tracked down figures for Singleton & Jerrys Plains and they bear out the story.

This season we received just 222mm at Cessnock, and many groves have reported far less than this. If we take into account the open pan evaporation figure of 793mm it would seem that the trees would struggle to produce any crop at all unless they have significant irrigation. This does seem to bear out in my observations where the groves that did receive major irrigation are in much better condition than those that didn't, and the fruit is much easier to pick.

I have discovered that olives on trees that have not received significant amounts of irrigation water are smaller than previous years, many are shrivelled and all are hard to remove from the tree. This in itself is going to be a major problem with tree shakers and other forms of mechanical harvesting as the olives just do not want to let go.

Mike Wilson

NZ producer sells to Tesco

New Zealand's largest producer and processor of extra virgin olive oil, The Village Press of Hawke's Bay, has finalised a deal to supply its oil to major UK supermarket chain Tesco, a deal which marks a significant breakthrough into the UK's £48m (NZ\$129m) olive oil market.

The initial supply is for 13,200 500ml bottles into 500 Tesco stores, which represents a doubling of the company's previous annual exports to that country. Source: [Scoop Independent News](#)

AOA Report

Soon all the fruit will have been harvested for this season and pruning and general maintenance will be carried out in many groves. This task includes removing weeds and any deceases that may lurk in the trees. **Here is a reprint from the AOA website with chemical permits currently in force. You may find this info useful.**

The Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued Off Label Permits for:

Chemical name	Application	Valid in	Renewed until
Alpha-cypermethrin	curculio beetle control	all states except Vic	31 December 2005
L-alpha-cypermethrin	rutherglen bug control	all states except Vic	31 March 2008
Buprofezin	scale insects	all states except Vic	30 June 2005
Chlorpyrifos	ants, african black		
	beetle, light brown apple moth	all states except Vic	31 December 2005
Copper hydroxide	fungal leaf spots/ fruit rots	all states except Vic	31 December 2008
Copper oxychloride	fungal leaf spots/ fruit rots	all states	31 December 2008
Dimethoate (Rogor)	lace bug, green vegetable bug		
	and rutherglen bug	all states except Vic	31 December 2005
Fenthion (Lebaycid)	lace bug, rutherglen bug,		
	Queensland fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly	all states except Vic	30 June 2005 [EXP] Renewal underway
Fluazifop-P	control various weeds common		
	in many orchard situations.	all states except Vic	1 September 2006
Glufosinate-ammonium	control various weeds common		
	in many orchard situations.	all states except Vic	18 August 2008
Metalaxyl (Ridomil Gold)	phytophthora root and crown		
	rot in potted trees only	all states except Vic	1 January 2006
Methidathion (Supracide)	scale insects including black		
	scale, olive scale and California red scale	all states except Vic	31 December 2005 **
Mineral spray oil	scale insect pests	all states	15 August 2005 [EXP] Renewal underway
Natrasoap	insecticidal soap for lace bug	all states	27 August 2008
Pendimethalin	control various weeds		A permit is no longer required

**Given methidathion is a Schedule 7 Poison, Victorian users are required to obtain a permit from Vic DPI before they can undertake this use.

Note that these are not the only chemicals that can be legally used on olive trees. There are some other products registered for use in orchard situations that can be used provided label rates and critical comments are followed. Please read the permits carefully and note the conditions of use. For example, fruit must not be harvested from trees for 90 days after being sprayed with methidathion and many of the chemicals are for non-bearing trees only. The permits are temporary and will not be extended until residue data is collected. As well, there are a number of chemicals the NRA will not issue permits for at all until residue data is collected.

More information about the NRA is available from <http://www.dpie.gov.au/nra/>

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HUNTER OLIVE ASSOCIATION (Inc)
Notice of the 2006 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the above association.

The meeting will be held at The Hunter Resort, Hermitage Rd Pokolbin on the **27th May 2005** at 5.30pm, followed by optional dinner at 6.30pm at a cost of around \$60 per head. **(bookings for the dinner are essential)** contact the Secretary.

Business will include consideration and receipt of reports, financial statement, election of executive and committee members and any business of which formal notice has been given.

Nominations: All executive positions shall be vacated and nominations for the positions of :- President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and committee members are now invited from financial members of the HOA. (see below) receipt of nominations will be accepted by mail or fax up to and including 5pm, Thursday 13th May 2005; address mail to

Secretary. Hunter Olive Assn.
C/- P.O. Box 4
East Gresford 2311

(P) 49389676, 0428972768 (F) 94840877 email secretary@hunterolives.asn.au

Other Business: Any member wishing to submit motions for debate and/or consideration at the AGM are invited to send same to the Secretary (as above) by the 13th May 2005

A list of nominations for vacant positions as advertised, reports and financial statements and motions to be considered will be forwarded to members prior to the AGM, together with proxy forms for those unable to attend.

Please ensure the secretary has any changes of address, phone, fax, or email contacts.

Howard Webb
Hon. Secretary HOA

.....cut off & return lower portion to.....

HUNTER OLIVE ASSOCIATION Inc
(Secretary.P.O. Box 4 East Gresford NSW 2311)

NOMINATION FORM

I.....being a financial member wish to nominate

.....For the position of.....

Signed.....dated/...../2006

I.....being a financial member wish to second the above nomination.

Signed.....dated/...../2006

I.....being a financial member accept the above nomination.

Signed.....dated/...../2006

Editor: Christina Sawaya
Printed by Snap Printing, Castle Hill, Circulation
200

Hunter Olive Association Inc.
C/- P.O. Box 434
Narrabeen 2101
Email:
editor@hunterlives.asn.au
Home Page: www.hunterlives.asn.au