

HOA ACTIVITIES AT AND AROUND THE FEAST

Saturday 9th September—Judging 2006 Hunter Valley Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Table Fruit Show. See article below.

Thursday 28th September—Awards Presentation for H.V. Olive Show at Sandalyn Estate. Details by email shortly.

Saturday 30th September and Sunday 1st October—Feast of the Olive

Features of 2006 Feast are:

- ◆ HOA Stall with oils and fruit from 2006 Show for tasting, HOA information and *Olive Trail* brochures
- ◆ HOA marquee with short presentations on olives, oils and cooking demonstrations by well known local chefs
- ◆ 50 Market stalls from the popular *The Vintage* growers' markets with many Hunter Valley olive producers and processors
- ◆ Food with the theme of Mediterranean cuisine
- ◆ Drinks, lunch and dinner available at the Clubhouse
- ◆ HOA Members Social gathering for drinks Saturday 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm
- ◆ FREE admission, FREE parking, FREE entertainment at a great venue

HOA MEMBERS' SOCIAL GET TOGETHER

Relax at the end of a hard day's shopping or selling at *The Feast* with a drink and a chat with fellow HOA members. Most Committee members will be there. Drinks from the bar at the golf clubhouse 4 to 5 pm. Great venue, great view, great company.

HUNTER VALLEY OLIVE TRAIL BROCHURE

Compilation and art work for the new edition of the *Olive Trail* brochure is now complete and a print run will be ordered shortly. The aim is to have the new, larger fold out brochure available before *The Feast*. Members are encouraged to help distribute these in tourist venues and information centres.

Contact Mike Wilson on 0419 244 785 for supplies or more information.

2006 Hunter Valley Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Table Fruit Show

Planning for this year's show is well under way. Entries are well up on last year with 50 olive oil entries and around 25 table olive and tapenade entries.

Judging will be held on Saturday 9th September. Award winning entries will be announced at a function to be held at Sandalyn Estate on Thursday 28th September.

Award winning entries will be displayed during The Feast of the Olive at The Vintage.

The Association would like to recognize the sponsors of the show:

- ◆ The Hunter Olive Centre
- ◆ McCarthys
- ◆ Plasdene

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

For those who haven't paid their 2006/2007 subscription yet this will be your last newsletter. We don't want to lose you. Contact the Secretary if you can't find your renewal notice.

Positive olive plan on pole position—Feral Olives

The following statement was released to the press by N.S.W. Department of Primary Industries on 23rd August, 2006:-

A POSITIVE plan has been set in motion for the environmental management of feral olives, those which grow in the wild, with the formation of a new working group.

NSW Department of Primary Industries weed ecologist, and working group chair, Stephen Johnson, said the group was the result of a forum held in Orange this month to address the issue in NSW before feral European olives become a problem in the State.

“The commercial olive industry is keen to work with us to address any concerns sooner rather than later,” Dr Johnson said.

“The first step forward is to complete a risk assessment, map the current situation and address any research gaps we may identify.”

President of the NSW Olive Council and working group member, Nelson Quinn, said wild olives have grown near the sites of some, but not all, old groves in NSW.

“Those plantings are now 100 to 150 years old. If we can work out what factors led to some olives escaping but not others we will be in a good position to manage new and existing plantings,” Mr Quinn said.

“The olive industry wants to grow responsibly with the least possible impact on the environment and there are lessons to be learned from South Australia (SA), Tasmania and Victoria where olive management plans are already in place.”

SA’s climate is ideal for olive growing and plants which have escaped orchards are viewed as weeds.

The Tasmanian climate ensures that feral olives are not a significant problem and in Victoria the central and Gippsland areas only are considered a major risk due to land use factors.

Existing research confirms that climate and land use are key factors in the distribution of wild olives, with grazing and cropping areas which do not have remnant native vegetation considered low-risk.

Another major area of research identified by the working group is the management of animals and birds, including foxes and starlings, which may spread olive seeds.

Supported by NSW DPI, the Weeds Society of NSW Inc and the NSW Olive Council on behalf of the Australian Olive Association Ltd, the working group also includes the SA-based Dr Neville Crossman from the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation, Mount Annan Botanic Gardens’ representative Peter Cuneo and Orange City Council councillor and Noxious Weeds Advisory Committee member, Reg Kidd.

It is estimated that more than 8000 hectares of European olive trees will be planted in NSW within the next four years.

Contact Dr Stephen Johnson (02) 6391 3146 or Mr Nelson Quinn 0428 231 591 for more information.

Olive Oil Tasting Group

The last meeting of the Tasting Group was held on 7th August at Adina Vineyard.

The session focused on robust oils and kalamata olives.

The next session will be in November when we will review the award winning oils and olives from this year’s show.

Mechanical Pruning by Mike Wilson

Although mechanical pruning is not going to be the ideal solution for every grove, this option of pruning olive trees may well be the answer for quite a lot of growers with sizable groves and a huge amount of pruning to undertake.

In 2005 a South Australian based pruning company operated by John Gallard was contracted to come to the Hunter to do pruning at Pukara Estate at Denman. The request was to lower the height of the trees to make them suitable for over the row straddle harvesting, so an even height of around 3.5m was chosen allowing some regrowth but keeping the trees small enough to harvest by straddle. This proved to be very effective so when a number of growers expressed an interest in the technology I contacted Steve Goodchild at Pukara to discuss the technology and then John Gallard to assess his availability for this season.

As a result of many phone calls we have secured the services of John and his mechanical pruner to pay a visit to the Hunter this year with his visit planned for around the third week of September. We have several groves already committed to using this service but if any other growers wish to make use of the machinery while John is in the Valley we may still be able to accommodate them. Contact Mike Wilson on 0419 244785 for further information.

A large tractor will tow the pruning machine and it has an adjustable cutting head so it can cut across the top, at an angle or along the sides of trees depending on what shape is required. The cutting head itself comprises 5 circular saws mounted on a star-shaped arm that moves into the canopy and this action tends to throw the cuttings out of the tree and into the rows for mulching / burning. The height is adjustable to suit the trees. The machinery can prune around 2 acres an hour, which at the normal 8m x 5m spacing means around 200 trees per hour if pruning both sides. Most of the trees in the Hunter will only require pruning from one side at this stage of their growth. There is a minimum charge of \$200 per grove, but we expect to be able to keep the cost to the growers to under \$2 per tree.

Mechanical pruning is particularly effective to reduce the height of trees and is ideally suited to the three main styles of harvesting employed in the Hunter: by straddle harvesters, by tree shakers or by hand / pneumatic rake picking as the main effect is to promote growth of new wood and therefore fruit in easily acces-

<p>HOA Committee 2006/2007</p> <p>President Ken McCraw Vice President Mike Wilson Secretary Howard Webb Treasurer Peter Herborn Committee Steve Goodchild Liane Heinke Jim Herlihy Rob Mackenzie Steve Mitchell Jim Morgan</p>	<p><u>Soil Moisture</u></p> <p>There are two accepted ways to tell if your trees have enough water:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Guess and hope for the best2. Check the amount of moisture that is available to the roots of the trees around 400mm below the surface <p>If you are interested in the second method - I may be able to help Mike Wilson - Hunter Olive Grove Services</p>
<p><i>LOOKING FOR A RETAIL OUTLET FOR YOUR OLIVE PRODUCTS ?</i></p>	<p>IRRIGATION?</p> <p>Get a second quote...</p> <p>Murray or Scott at</p> <p>NATIONAL PUMPS 4934 8699</p> <p>We carry stock of almost everything you need. Visit our shop in East Maitland or we'll come to you. <i>From the home yard to the largest olive grove...</i></p>
<p>If so</p> <p>Please contact Joel Kuhn at</p> <p>The Hunter Olive Centre Phone 4998 7524</p>	

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