

President's Message, January 2011

With the first decade of the 21st century behind us it is time not so much to reflect on the past but open our minds on what we can do to contribute to our Blackcurrant Industry in the second decade.

The past years have seen severe financial difficulties faced by the Blackcurrant Industry with uneconomic returns at all levels of our industry. The pain is evident and despite many positive gains made during this time, the industry continues to operate under real pressure.

Market signals are very important and influence our returns in all sectors of our industry. The key message for the next decade, starting in 2011, is all participants in our industry need to make collective decisions for the long term profitability. We must place ourselves in a position so each sector is banking some profit for reinvestment in this exciting, competitive business.

Significant progress has been made in Plant Breeding, Agronomy, Science & Research of Health and Wellness, Processing- Juice, Powder, Concentrate, Smoothies, Ingredients, Partnering with other Berries.

Difficult as it may be "Brands" are gaining momentum even with the trade barriers and legal hurdles thrown up by the various "FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITIES" around the world. Your national associations feel the same issues and challenges but it is pleasing to see an increase in the number of national associations forming over the past two to three years. One of the major strengths the IBA has is the forming of excellent networks, pathways and communication opportunities created with the introduction of our Web Site. This has been an important facet in the key role IBA can play alongside your country associations.

Collaboration has and will continue to be the key message for us all. Fragmentation and splinter groups forming to seek different outcomes than your associations, may achieve but should be tempered with the proviso that a unified and collective industry is stronger than any group acting as individuals.

Fundamentally the challenge IBA has is to represent industry, not the interests of a few. To perform well we must demonstrate fairness and neutrality to the net gain of all.

May I take this opportunity in thanking those of you who have assisted our General Manager, Bill Floyd, with content for your IBA Web Site. I challenge all of you to keep up the support of our industry via this medium.

Jim Grierson, IBA President, January 2011