

President's Message, June 2011

Those of us who attended the 16th European Blackcurrant conference in Goes, Netherlands enjoyed a very interesting and ground breaking conference. There was some very exciting research on gut health presented by Dr Abdul Molan and our own General Manager Bill Floyd presented on behalf of Sujon, NZ the benefits of consuming Blackcurrant formulations for muscle recovery after exercise both in humans and horses. You will find the science and ongoing results behind these products elsewhere on the IBA web.

It is a pleasure to report that at the AGM of the European Blackcurrant Association, President Svend Jensen, confirmed that the EBA voted to discontinue as an independent organization and saw fit to formally become part of the International Blackcurrant Association. Under the IBA banner we will continue with the annual conference concept being grower based with a full industry conference every two years. As I presented at Goes, I would like to congratulate the European past and present attendees for their work over the past sixteen years as the EBA, which has been the catalyst in the formation of the IBA.

Whilst we reviewed the projected production from the forthcoming European harvest it became obvious that due to the loss from frost and the continuation of the extreme drought across Europe that our annualized international production would be in the region of 100,000 tones. This is the lowest we have predicted since we started to record these figures. What does this mean for our industry? If the IBA philosophy persists we should under these conditions add value to our price per kg produced as the fundamental law of supply and demand will take over and innovative and committed buyers will seek to lock in reducing stock supplies. In this situation the trend of the last decade for the first of the season's sales to set the price for the balance of the season is not likely to apply to the 2011 crop. My challenge to the industry is, do not sell for the sake of it, this is an opportunity for considered selling, for creating a sound grower-buyer relationship that will benefit all in the long-term. Market demand is increasing: and the new uses of the blackcurrant will add to the market pull.

Prior to the conference in Goes, the IBA called an inaugural meeting with key processing and marketing companies to discuss the IBA philosophy and ask what is required to better the knowledge of how we can strengthen the position of the

Blackcurrant compared to our competitor berry fruit. The outcome was very positive and one we wish to build on again at the 3rd international blackcurrant conference next year.

The UK Foundation is being host of the forthcoming 3rd International Blackcurrant Conference to be held in the Dundee, Scotland (May 16th thru 18th, 2012) in conjunction with the James Hutton Institute. Organizing chairman, Jonathan Snape reports that the program is developing well. I encourage all to mark your calendar for this event.

I would like to thank the IBA members in voting both myself as President and Svend Jensen as Vice President. We along with our board wish to continue to develop the IBA for the benefit of the global blackcurrant industry.

Jim Grierson, IBA President, June 2011