

7th President's annual report, May 2015



Retrospective 2014

After 8 years of successful work, our General Manager, Bill Floyd, has to resign due to health reasons. The IBA owes Bill a lot. The IBA Executive looked for candidates, carried out a selection process and, finally, voted for Stefanie Sharma from France to continue Bills work. Stefanie will be introduced in June 2015 during the Vilnius conference.

Last year's harvest was good, but with disappointing prices, following from a low-level, steady-demand concentrate market. This is a result of a decrease in fruit juice consumption in general. It seems that we can expect another good harvest this year. The IBA Production Chart 2015 will be updated during the conference.

Activities of the IBA

The IBA has a number of activities by which we look to achieving our Vision, including:

- Distribution of information: the Production Chart is an important example of this activity
- Linking people: growers, processors, scientists, marketers and consumers, especially through our annual Conferences.
- Promotion and lobby work: working with companies that can change the global attitude towards blackcurrants. This work ongoing and done by your Exec and General Manager.
- **Future of the IBA**

We don't shy away from big tasks, but we have to be realistic. All of our work has to be done with a very limited budget, a part-time manager and volunteers. The Country Organisations are each different in their structure, products, customers and size. And so are their berries. This is a very important point: blackcurrants should not be treated as, nor promoted as a commodity like wheat or oil. They can be special in their origin, plant varietal and agronomy practices, and their phytochemical (flavour/nutritional/neutraceutical) values.

Undoubtedly blackcurrants have an excellent and proven health value. But to claim that in the EU on product labels, it would be necessary to prove that to the EFSA in a very expensive procedure. That is why the "Stress Hero" strategy is a good way to add story and value to our product.

I'm very positive about the future of our global crop and the future of the IBA. I look forward to meeting old and new friends and colleagues in Vilnius. My special thanks to Audrius Sasnauskas and the team from Lithuania for their excellent preparation. Once again, we can look forward to a very successful Conference, continuing the traditions established in New Zealand, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Scotland, Germany and Poland.

Dirk Herdieckerhoff, IBA President, May 2015