

April 2020



AUSTRALIAN OLIVE  
ASSOCIATION<sub>LTD</sub>

# AOA Update

Australian Olive Association news and events

The "AOA Update" is a periodic e-newsletter from the AOA Board to keep AOA members up-to-date with the strategic and operational aspects of the Association. Feedback is encouraged via email to [secretariat@australianolives.com.au](mailto:secretariat@australianolives.com.au).

Included in this edition are comments from the President, Michael Thomsett and CEO, Greg Seymour. There's news on the AOA's advocacy program, an update on the Australian International Olive Awards (AIOA), the National Conference and Exhibition, agrichemicals, the upcoming webinar series on a range of technical topics and tips on cyber security.

At the March Board meeting, Directors agreed to produce a periodic e-newsletter dedicated to olive oil processors. A survey will be circulated shortly. The first e-newsletter is planned to be published before the end of June. In the meantime, processors can click on this [link](#) to pre-register for the newsletter.

Finally, with harvest underway or fast approaching for many, the Board thought it would be useful to rerun a list of issues published in OliveCare® News that producers and processors should consider together.

Enjoy the read!

## President's Message



Dear Members,

It is with somewhat a sombre note that I write to you during this crisis that is gripping the world. The human and economic cost is shattering and beyond belief. The timeframe for any sort of normality is unknown but we must push-on and remain nimble for when restrictions begin to relax.

The olive industry is an important component of Australian horticulture so production and supply to our customers must continue wherever and however possible. The run on EVOO in supermarkets early on in COVID-19 (CV19) restrictions shows just how important our product has become to Australian consumers.

While supermarket sales have been buoyant since CV19, the closure of many growers' markets and non-essential outlets has presented a few marketing challenges for many of our smaller/ boutique producer members. Many have stepped up to the challenge with enhanced online marketing and innovation within the social media space and other adaptive strategies. A series of webinars on online marketing have been scheduled for next month to help those who need a bit more confidence in this area.

The Board has scheduled additional meetings to monitor the impact of CV19 and has been analysing the avalanche of information from various authorities to communicate what is pertinent to our members. We are used to working remotely so its pretty much business as usual.

The management team have been busy making sure the AOA is across the issues that matter, while maintaining our regular communications. The team have also been working on a series of webinars with Q&A sessions to fill in the void left when the planned workshops and field days had to be postponed. We are aiming to have the first webinar ready in early May.

The benefits of having an effective Peak Industry Body (PIB) for olives has become even more obvious during the recent crisis. The AOA's PIB memberships and networks with VoH, Horticulture Council and their links to NFF have meant communication flows up and down the system have been extremely efficient. This has enabled the AOA to look after the interests of the olive industry very well.

For this level of service to continue it is important that we have widespread membership across the industry to ensure the AOA is well enough resourced to meet these challenges when they arise. If you are not a member of the AOA then please consider [joining](#) today. We welcome everyone involved in the olive industry because everyone benefits from things the AOA does and many hands make light work.

As harvest commences in some regions and is not far away in others, let's hope for a successful season to help meet the demand for our quality products. Please spare a thought (and helping hand) for those struggling with little or no crop.

Good health to you all.

Regards,  
Michael Thomsett

## CEO's Message

The media is still dominated by CV19 but not too much new actionable information has come across the desk since Bulletin 2 was emailed. Restrictions are still firmly in place everywhere and it appears it will remain that way in most jurisdictions for a few more weeks at least.



Fortunately it appears that most of the operational issues associated with the CV19 restrictions have been ironed out. The protocols around the extension of visas for foreign workers have become clearer. Olive producers seeking clarity regarding what foreign workers are legally able to do based on their visa status should visit the home affairs website <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/staying-australia>. We've had no reports of any major problems for olive producers in the run up to harvest but let us know if any issues emerge and we'll see what we can do to get them sorted.

You can link to [Bulletin 1](#) and [Bulletin 2](#) to update yourselves on harvest management protocols, revisit any of the advice on CV19, or link to the key websites to be sure you have the latest information. We'll be sure to send a further CV19 Bulletin out if there are any major changes you need to know about.

Greg Seymour  
CEO

## Advocacy and Representation

### HSRS for Edible Oils

The moment of truth for the Health Star Rating System (HSRS) for edible oils is likely to be in May or even June depending on when the Federal Government's Food Forum next meets. The AOA has contacted every Australian Federal, State and Territory Minister on the Forum; and every relevant technical leader on the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) in every state and territory on the matter. Our colleagues at Olives New Zealand have joined the AOA's efforts and engaged with the relevant NZ Ministers

and scientists on the Food Forum and FRSC.

The AOA has suggested an alternative approach to assessing the healthiness of edible oils so that consumers and other stakeholders can be confident the star-rating on the label is a technically correct and truthful.

The AOA met with (prior to CV19) and had teleconferences with numerous state delegations to explain the AOA's suggestions and respond to questions. Feedback from these engagements has been positive but non-committal. However it is very clear that our recommendations have been heard, appreciated, and considered in a fact-based framework by all recipients. Unfortunately there are no certainties in politics, but the olive oil industry can rest assured that no stone has been left unturned in the pursuit of a better HSRS for edible oils.

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## Water Advocacy

A report on the second of three inquiries into the management of the Murray Darling Basin was released last week. The Interim Inspector General of Murray-Darling Basin Water Resources, Mick Keelty, presented his report into water sharing arrangements in the southern Basin to the Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia Keith Pitt. The others are the Sefton Report into socio-economic circumstances among Basin communities (draft report 15 March), and the ACCC inquiry into the water market (due 31 May).

The Keelty report reinforced the need to improve the transparency, accessibility and availability of information about Murray-Darling Basin water matters. The Government will implement all five recommendations which can be found in the [report](#).

The AOA has been maintaining a watching brief on how these reports play out since our initial representations in conjunction with our horticultural colleagues last year. The ACCC inquiry is the critical one in relation to transparency in the water market.

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## AU-EU FTA Update

The AOA is continuing to work with federal government departments, and directly with Australia's FTA negotiators involved with the Australia (AU) – European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The Association and some of its members have been providing information about the production and sales of Kalamata olives in Australia so the AU-EU FTA team have the best information available to them in a form that is necessary to argue that the EU should not have Kalamata recognized as Geographical Indicator (GI) in the AU\_EU agreement.

It has been a drawn-out process so far, and with the impact of CV19, it is unclear when negotiations are likely to conclude.

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## Codex

The AOA Codex Team provides detailed technical advice to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment (DAWE) in relation to the Codex e-Working Group reviewing the Codex Standard for olive oils. The Codex standard is the reference point for international trade. Australia, along with several other non-EU producers and importers, continues to seek quality standards that consider the needs of consumers. The team has already made three submissions in 2020 with many more required before the e-Working Group concludes its work.

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## Plant Health Australia

The AOA recently met with Plant Health Australia (PHA) senior officers (via teleconference) to discuss biosecurity issues impacting on the olive industry. A major concern raised was the availability of resources and capability of state agriculture departments to monitor and manage exotic disease outbreaks before they became established in Australia.

The AOA's concerns, along with those of other industries who opted to meet with PHA, have now been referred to the PHA Executive and Board for a response.

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## **Fungicide Resistance**

When using fungicides it is important to rotate control options to prevent development of resistance to the chemical by the fungus. That means we need several chemicals that are effective against the diseases that are causing us a problem.

The Australian Olive Association is doing its part to help reduce resistance by working closely with Hort Innovation to obtain legal use permits or registration for new chemical control options for olives. The chemical use surveys that are sent out from AOA are an important element in understanding the current industry practices and identify gaps or emerging problems so we can advise Hort Innovation what trial work needs to take place.

Once the research has been completed, the AOA supports the progress of the new chemical through the regulatory system and holds permits on behalf of olive producers.

The May Grove Innovation e-newsletter will have a more detailed article by Peter McFarlane on the resistance management program for fungal diseases in olives.

## **AOA Activities and Initiatives**



## **2020 Australian International Olive Awards**

### **News**

The AOA Board recently reappointed incumbent Shane Cummins as Head judge for the 2020 Australian International Olive Awards (AIOA) competition. The Board thanked Shane for his dedication to the role and the significant contribution of his personal time and resources to the development of the AIOA and other regional competitions around Australia.

The AOA is radically restructuring the AIOA competition this year to cope with the impact of CV19 (see story below) so Shane is already hard at work supporting AIOA Convenor and Chief Steward Trudie Michels in the development of a new AIOA operational plan. Details will be announced shortly.

In making the appointment to the voluntary position for the 2020 competition, the Board indicated that it will be reviewing the AIOA post-CV19, and indicated the use of panels to spread the workload of the Head Judge function will be under consideration.

### **2020 AIOA Competition Going Ahead**

The fourth AIOA will be going ahead in September 2020 despite the CV19 restrictions. The Board acknowledged the commercial importance of the competition to the Australian olive industry, particularly the promotional activities of smaller producers, and requested the AIOA committee to find a way to hold the competition in these trying times.

Details of the restructured competition will be released shortly but the key dates for calendars are:

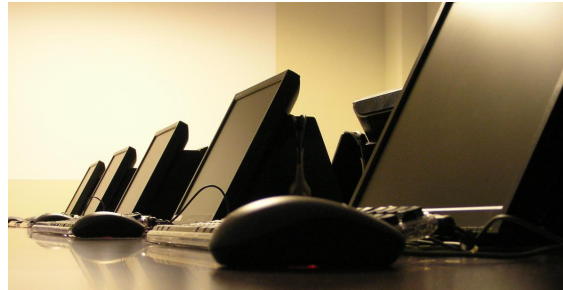
- 1 July - Entries open, 2020 Australian International Olive Awards
- 4 September - Entries close, 2020 Australian International Olive Awards
- 5 October - Results emailed to entrants, 2020 Australian International Olive Awards

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## 2020 National Olive Industry Conference & Trade Exhibition

At this stage the National Conference scheduled for 16-18 October in Devonport is still on. The Board has indicated that if CV19 restrictions force a cancellation of the 2020 event, the 2021 event will be held from 15-17 October at the same venue.

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### Webinar Program

Due to the postponement of the “Healthy Soils” field day program and the need to maintain the momentum the productivity program has created since the commencement of the IPDM workshops nearly two years ago, the AOA will be running a series of technical webinars with Q&A until CV19 restrictions are relaxed enough that we can get back in the paddock and recommence the field day program.

Presentations are currently being prepared by experts on a range of topics such remote sensing for olives, online/ digital marketing 101 for olive growers, processing aids for olives, recycling olive processing waste, and export marketing for EVOO and olives. We plan to make an announcement of dates and times, and topics and content for the first few webinars next week. An e-notice will sent out as soon as details are locked in.

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### Considerations for a Smooth Processing Experience

As mentioned earlier, the Board was keen to assist in making harvest as smooth as possible in spite of the disruptions caused by CV19. The following list of issues from an OliveCare® checklist is a handy place to start. They should be discussed and agreed upon by growers and processors before fruit is harvested and delivered to the mill.

#### 1. Terms of payment

When booking a processing service, growers should confirm the following matters:

- Fees for processing services (may be on a volumetric scale):
  - < 1 tonne of olives: \$X / 100kg
  - >1 tonne of olives: \$Y/ tonne
  - >10 tonne of olives: \$Z / tonne
- Any fees / penalties for variety / fruit presentation (eg excess leaf trash)?
- Payment arrangements for processing services on receipt or within (X) days of fruit receipt?

**Note:** Toll processors (processors who process other people's olives) by law must collect and submit the required levy payments to government on behalf of the grower. These payments must be declared on the processing invoice.

## 2. Booking and fruit receipt arrangements

- Prior booking of processing services is required;
- When delivering fruit to the processor growers must observe the following requirements:
  - CV19 health arrangements, including providing a health declaration, and observing social distancing (growers may be instructed to remain in their vehicle). Click [here](#) for more details.
  - Standard biosecurity arrangements including providing clean fruit and bins (without disease, contamination and with minimal leaf trash), and removal of empty bin(s) from the fruit receipt area
- Deliver clean fruit and containers suitable for receiving bulk oil
- Deliver clean containers of suitable size and quality for receiving bulk oil

**Note:** Polyethylene IBCs / Pallecons are only suitable for short term storage / transport, unless a metallic liner is used to protect the oil from oxidation by light and air.

## 3. Risks assessment for product quality and safety

- What training and experience in olive oil processing does the processor have?
- It is recommended that the processor and the grower jointly undertake a risk assessment of Biological, Chemical and Physical Hazards and identify any issues which require careful management to maintain product safety and quality.

## 4. Processing records that should be provided to the grower

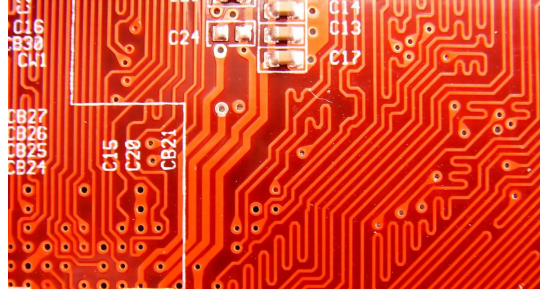
- The total weight of olives delivered over the weighbridge
- Time taken from fruit delivery to milling
- The total volume of olive oil extracted
- Mill grid size
- Malaxation time and temperature
- A description of any processing aids used (food grade only)
- Oil decanter - 2 or 3 phase?
- Any processing issues / breakdowns

## 5. Confirm standard processing operations

- De-leaf the olives and wash with clean, potable water
- Control temperature of malaxation to avoid damage to the quality of the oil
- Thorough cleaning of processing machinery so that later batches are not contaminated by residues undertaken after:
  - Each batch?
  - Each grower?
  - Each day's processing?
- Only food grade cleaning solutions used and are subsequently rinsed.

**NB OliveCare® members have access to more detailed checklists and supporting information. If you are not an OliveCare® signatory, you can join by contacting the AOA at [secretariat@australianolives.com.au](mailto:secretariat@australianolives.com.au). Liz and Peter will look after you.**

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## Protecting your Business Against Cyber Threats

A cyber security incident could significantly impact on your ability to access your devices, data or the internet. By following some simple measures, you can significantly avoid or reduce the impact of such an incident. If you or your staff are now working primarily from home due to CV19 restrictions and safety considerations, it is important that you review your information and digital policies and communicate these to all relevant parties.

At the 2019 National Olive Conference & Trade Exhibition, Glen Makowski spoke on the importance of cyber security. You can view his **Cybersecurity – Keeping You And Your Business Safe** presentation [here](#).

The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) has excellent free resources for small business on cyber security management for small business. Click [here](#) to access. In their [Small Business Cyber Security Guide](#) the ACSC explains malware, phishing and ransomware; the importance of automatic updates and back-ups and multi-factor authentication and provides the following checklist for managing cyber security:

### Summary Checklist

#### Software considerations

- Turn on automatic updates for your operating system
  - Set up a convenient time for these to occur
- Turn on automatic updates for your software applications
  - Set up a convenient time for these to occur
- Back up your business, keep backups separated and unconnected from your devices, and regularly ensure you can restore your backups
- Enable Multi-Factor Authentication wherever possible

#### People and procedures

- Establish an Access Control System to determine who should have access to what information
    - Restrict administrator privileges to an 'as-required' basis
    - Do not share passphrases e.g. individual logins
    - Remember to revoke accounts when employees leave the business
  - Use strong passphrases
    - Use with Multi-factor authentication
    - Longer
    - Complex
    - Unique
    - Easy to remember
  - Incorporate, update and regularly repeat cyber security training and awareness amongst your employees
  - Create a cyber security incident response plan
  - Reward employees who find threats
  - Create a cyber security culture and encourage regular discussions
  - Always be cautious of emails with the following:
    - Requests for money, especially if urgent or overdue
    - Bank account changes
    - Attachments, especially from unknown or suspicious email addresses
    - Requests to check or confirm login details.
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## What's New on Industry Websites?

1. **Australian Olive Association:** <https://australianolives.com.au/> includes lots of technical information in the AOA 'Members Lounge' and you can link to lots of informative websites.

### Recent additions and updates include:

- AOA COVID-19 Bulletins and Resources: <https://australianolives.com.au/covid-19/>
- Updated Chemical Permits listing: <https://australianolives.com.au/chemical-permits/>
- Biosecurity Risk Management Resources: <https://australianolives.com.au/bio-security-plan/>
- Updated Table Olive Standard: <https://australianolives.com.au/table-olive-standard/>
- Hort innovation Olive Statistics 2018/19: [https://australianolives.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HA18002-australian-horticulture-statistics-handbook-fruit-2019\\_Olives.pdf](https://australianolives.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/HA18002-australian-horticulture-statistics-handbook-fruit-2019_Olives.pdf)
- April edition and back issues of OliveCare® News (signatories only): <https://australianolives.com.au/olivecare-members-area/olivecare-newsletter/>

2. **OliveBiz:** <https://olivebiz.com.au/> - includes back issues of OG&P magazine (subscribers only), FOE, R&D Insights, Grove Innovation, TasteBook®, AOA Annual Conference Presentations & other industry events. It houses research reports and other levy funded publications.

### Recent additions and updates include:

- March Edition of OGP <https://olivebiz.com.au/magazines/olivegrower/current/>
- March Edition of R&D Insights: <https://olivebiz.com.au/r-d-insights-june-2019-2-2-2/>
- March Edition of Grove Innovation: <https://olivebiz.com.au/grove-innovation-news-index/>
- 2020 back issues of Friday Olive Extracts: <https://olivebiz.com.au/2020-back-issues/>
- Updated list of olive levy funded R&D reports: <https://olivebiz.com.au/magazines/olivegrower/rd-reports/>

3. **Australian Extra Virgin Everyday:** <https://australianextravirgin.com.au/> - is the AOA's marketing website to promote Australian EVOO and table olives to consumers.

### Recent updates include:

- listing by State of AOA Certified brands (EVOO, Flavoured Olive Oil and Table Olives): <https://australianextravirgin.com.au/brands/>

4. **Olive Wellness Institute:** <https://olivewellnessinstitute.org/> - a website providing science-based information related to EVOO and other olive products.

### Recent additions and updates include:

- [Mediterranean diet and EVOO as cancer-fighting foods](#)
  - [Comparing different cooking oil – which should you use?](#)
  - [Tips for health professionals to encourage people to include Extra Virgin Olive Oil in their daily diet](#)
  - [The Role of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in Improving Clinical Risk Factors](#)
  - [Grower & Processor Resources](#)
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