

General Manager's report 2015



Activities are shown within financial year (1 April – 31 March).

Note: Change of GM in June, report does not include Bill Floyd's activities for the last two months of his management (his work at that moment mainly went into the organization of the take-over, transmission of knowledge and conference questions).

1. Promotion

I. Austria Juice NPDU

Austria Juice sponsored the IBA for developing a strategy which may help to increase sales for Austria Juice and thus increase the sales potential of blackcurrant growers.

Achievements 2015:

- A project of a one-day symposium bringing together researchers and processors on an international level has been worked out and was supposed to take place in 2017 in Dijon, France. The same sort of meeting should afterwards be included in the framework of each IBA conference. Its aim was to initiate the creation of new products. The project was too ambitious to be realized with limited financial resources, and has to be changed.

Planned 2016:

- Austria Juice and the IBA work on the creation of a working group within

the IBA: this New Product Development Unit will have to define countries and types of new products to be developed. A yearly cooking contest for hobby cooks, bloggers and professionals is the basic idea.

II. New Holland Blackcurrant Food Heroes

New Holland sponsored the IBA for the Food Heroes project. A new section in our website has been created, showing the various uses of blackcurrants in cooking.

Achievements 2015:

- Together with the creation of the new website, the recipe section has changed. It has been improved by classifying the recipes and including New Holland's logo on each page. Further recipes have been added into the collection over the months.

Planned 2016:

- New Holland continues to support this project. The IBA will steadily increase the number of recipes and highlight them also on the IBA facebook pages. Blackcurrant, before being transformed into a nutraceutical, is a wonderful berry with flavours that can be used in many kinds of food. Bringing people to cook with blackcurrants will slowly increase the demand in the fresh fruit or IQF market.

III. Communication

The IBA's first aim is to facilitate communication in the global blackcurrant family, and spread knowledge about blackcurrant – the best berry for life.

Achievements 2015:

- Since October 2015, the GM sends a short newsletter every two months to a database of over 700 people. Anyone can contribute to it, and anyone can register for it on the website. No confidential information is being spread through the newsletter.
- 3 facebook pages have been launched:

- English version: Blackcurrant – best berry for life
- German version: Cassis – lecker gesund
- French version: Cassis – petite baie contre stress et tensions

Planned 2016:

- Increase the database of subscribers to the newsletter.
- Improve the facebook posting frequency.
- Increase the number of followers of the facebook pages. Facebook is the most used social media at the moment and allows us to spread general knowledge about blackcurrants all over the world. Two main themes to develop: health benefits and food/drinks with blackcurrants.
- Raise sponsorship for improving the work on facebook and newsletters.

iV. Website

Given the technological changes and evolution of all means of communication over the past few years, our website needed to be refreshed.

Achievements 2015:

- Change of the name: www.internationalblackcurrantassociation.com has become www.blackcurrant-iba.com
- Change of the website host (financial improvement: cost has decreased by 700%)
- Change of the look: new template
- Internal administration by the GM instead of an external company. Gain: being more reactive, reducing costs.
- Introduction of a limited access to confidential information for IBA members by registration.
- New section on health benefits of blackcurrants

Planned 2016:

- Old sections to be improved (country association info, recipe section etc.)
- New sections to be added:
 - Agronomy and plant breeding sector group information
 - New Product Development Unit

- Press work
- Improvement of the SEO (search engine optimization) for being more visible

V. Media

Our impact on traditional media is quite low: press work cannot be well done on an international level for small organizations with limited time and resources like ours.

Achievements 2015:

- Putting together all the former media releases in one section of the website and adding new articles and links.
- Answering enquiries of different press people, collecting their data.

Planned 2016:

- Collecting names and addresses of journalists from all over the world to keep updated with our newsletters/press releases.
- Give support to countries/growers for improving their work with press on a local level (more efficient!).
- Further develop the media releases and section dedicated to press on the website.

2. Executive (Governance & Administration)

The General Manager's work is to look after the good administration of our association, whether financial or other matters are concerned. It is the General Manager's responsibility to keep the IBA in a sound financial situation, ensure payments of membership fees and secure sponsorship income which is vital for the IBA.

Achievements 2015:

- The IBA's rules of association had to be reviewed (last update in 2012) after some changes. The introduction of individual membership possibilities and fees need to be specified in these rules. Preparation of this point of the agenda with the IBA Board for the Annual General Meeting and vote.
- The interval of IBA conferences seemed not to suit any more, and bi-annual conferences are seen to be more interesting and valuable. This makes a few changes necessary in the administration of the IBA by the Board and Executive and needs to be voted in the AGM. Preparation of this point of the agenda with the IBA Board.
- Most of the traditional sponsors continue to support the work of the IBA. Other sponsorship opportunities have been identified and are under discussion or will be discussed.

Planned 2016:

- Keep the amount of time spent on general matters stable to be able to concentrate further on promotion.
- Raise new sponsorships.
- Significantly increase the number of individual members of the IBA.

3. Conferences

The IBA conferences are traditionally hosted in one of the member countries and organized by this country's association. The role of the General Manager is to support the organizing team and make information before and after the conferences available to the IBA members.

Achievements 2015:

- Presentations from the conference in Vilnius + pictures available on the IBA website.
- Support for the organization of the conference in Ashford.

Planned 2016:

- As in former years, make presentations from the conference in Ashford +

pictures available on the IBA website as close to the conference as possible, especially the data on global blackcurrant production sponsored by Weremczuk.

- No conference planned in 2017.

4. Country Associations

9 countries have country associations and were members of the IBA in 2015: Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and United Kingdom. Changes: Lithuania cannot afford membership in the IBA for 2016. Japan has created a country association and has become member of the IBA in 2016.

Several other countries grow blackcurrants commercially or have research institutes, but have no associations like in the 10 countries mentioned above.

Achievements 2015:

- A breakdown of information about each member country has been realised.
- Contacts have been established with Austria and China.
- A change in the IBA's rules of association has been elaborated, enabling people and organizations from these countries to become members of the IBA individually, unless a country association is formed.
- Lists of members of each country association have been collected and put into a common IBA database. Membership cards have been issued.

Planned 2016:

- Improve the information available about member countries on the website.
- Monitor developments in other countries and assist those who want to establish an association.

5. Agronomy, Plant Breeding, Health & Science

Achievements 2015:

- The Agronomy & Plant Breeding sector group of the IBA sponsored by Bayer has been formalized, data collected on pest control, plant protection products and blackcurrant varieties from all over the world. The working group will come together and decide for a strategy of sharing this information and topics to be discussed over the next years.
- A new section about “blackcurrant – the stress hero” has been developed on our website.

Planned 2016:

- Develop a new section on agronomy and plant breeding available for our members on our website.
- Significantly improve the health section of the website and make the wonderful health benefits of blackcurrants know to the people through facebook.

Stefanie Sharma,

General Manager IBA

Activities 2012-2013 / Planned Activities 2013-2014

Report on the IBA Strategic Programme



Activities have been monitored on 6 platforms: Country Associations; Conference; Sector Groups; Health & Science; Promotion; Sponsorship; Executive (Governance & Administration). Activities shown within Financial year (1 April – 31 March), and not calendar year.

Country Associations

Nine countries are members of the IBA: Denmark; France; Germany; Japan; Netherlands, New Zealand; Norway; Poland; United Kingdom. Another eleven countries are known to produce commercially grown blackcurrants and or have research institutes focussed on blackcurrants and participate in IBA activities: Australia; Canada; China; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Russia; Ukraine; USA; Uzbekistan.

Achievements 2012-2013

Poland assisted to become a full financial member; IBA President participated in meetings in Poland. IBA President assisted new Polish organisation to develop new networks with key international processors. Contacts initiated with Russian researchers and Russia's own blackcurrant growers Association.

Planned 2013-2014

Develop contacts with Russia and look at values for Russian in full membership of IBA. Initiate discussions with USA industry to develop USA Country Association. Monitor industry developments in other countries and options for membership through research institutes if no grower groups.

Conference

The major annual industry event. At Dundee in 2012 it was agreed that a full Conference will alternate with a biannual Horticultural Conference each year.

Achievements 2012-2013

Dundee Conference 2012 rated a major success by all participants. Inaugural Biannual 2-day Horticultural Conference concept agreed to alternate with full 3-day Conference. IBA Global Production Database formalised as a key part of all future Conferences with information updates on IBA website.

Planned 2013-2014

IBA assisting the German Committee to develop the programme, secure registrations and publicity: June 2013. IBA to assist KSPCP (Polish Growers Association) with planning for Conference 2014. Production database will be refined on an on-going basis as better information available.

Sector Groups

Achievements 2012-2013

IBA Agronomy & Plant Breeding (A&PB) Sector Group formed with own memberships database. Prestigious group of scientists secured as presenters for inaugural Sector Group Forum.

Planned 2013-2014

A&PB Forum in June: significant research synergy expected to result from this initiative and positive publicity expected to be secured with both trade-specialist and general media. IBA policy is to assist potential sector group members to develop their own self-funding entities: we believe two sector groups could be A&PB and a new sector group to do with Product Development.

Health & Science

Achievements 2012-2013:

Research from Dundee published on IBA website. IBA assisted research organisation with introduction to brand marketer for long-term project development.

Planned 2013-2014:

Monitor published research for news potential as part of IBA promotional

activities.

Promotion

Achievements 2012-2013:

IBA website providing information base for all activities. General media release distributed January 2013: limited success outside of IBA membership highlighted need for "real news". IBA assisted French Cassissium generate good publicity within France.

Planned 2013-2014:

Working with German Committee to maximise publicity from Conference and Forum in June. Will use networks created with A&PB Sector group to generate positive media release re Blackcurrants and Climate Change. Will provide media releases late 2013-early 2014 to support KSPCP with Conference in Poland.

Sponsorship

Achievements 2012-2013:

Four Leaf renewed (but reduced from £16250 to £6500), Jarrow sponsorship renewed £2000. New sponsorship from Agrana Juices (£6000), Weremczuk (£6000), CRT Currantbase (£1000)

Planned 2013-2014:

Liaise directly with each Country Association: identify companies that are champions of blackcurrants within those countries and would benefit from being sponsors. IBA manager will be paid on commission only, and not time spent, for securing sponsorships.

Executive (Governance & Administration)

Achieved 2012-2013:

New Exec Committee formed (President/2 Vice Presidents/General Manager): Has monthly Exec Skype Conference and Minutes reported to IBA Board. IBA management services contracted to Floyd Marketing (FML). FML works on hourly rate and position is part-time. IBA Board meeting held prior to Conference

2012. IBA AGM held prior to Conference 2012: IBA Rules approved by AGM and used by Exec.

Planned 2013-2014:

Exec Committee monthly Skypes to be bi-monthly and not monthly. Annual Board meeting and AGM in Germany.

7 May 2013

Report on 2014/2015 Activities



Membership

We have 9 financial members: Denmark; France; Germany; Lithuania, Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; United Kingdom. A new organisation is being formed in Japan, the Japan Blackcurrant Association, and it becomes a Country member from October 2015.

Potential Members

The Rules of the IBA allow for non-Grower Associations or organisations to represent a Country if no groups of growers are organised to do so. Countries with the potential to become members through grower or non-grower groups include Australia, China, Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Sweden, Ukraine, USA. Strong research institutions and or innovative marketers in these countries could form the basis of a membership group and the IBA needs to explore this.

Non-voting Individual Membership

The new IBA Board should consider the introduction of an individual person/company membership (as opposed to a Country membership). The 2015 Conference has a Conference registration fee differential for members and non-

members. This, plus other incentives and benefits, could see the successful introduction of an “individual’ person/company membership.

Sponsorship

The successful development of the IBA in its present form came about through the vision of the early sponsors who “backed” an unknown group of people and their Vision: sponsors such as Four Leaf Japan (now Beneseed Japan), Jarrow USA, and CurrantC, followed by Weremczuk and Agrana, and then Austria Juice, New Holland, and Bayer Crop Science.

As the IBA’s strategies show their value within industry and within markets the IBA’s value to sponsors will continue to grow. In 2014 the IBA developed three new sponsor-specific strategies: strategies critical to the IBA achieving its Vision and also of very direct appeal and value to those sponsors: Austria Juice, New Holland Agriculture, and Bayer Crop Science. This inter-value strategic sponsorship model is the best model for an organisation like the IBA. Opportunities exist to significantly increase sponsorship in this manner in the years ahead.

A Global Consumer Positioning Platform: Blackcurrent-“the Stress Hero!”

In the last few years we have seen scientists start to focus on a specific consumer benefit that blackcurrants can provide. It can be best summed up with the “strapline’/’hashtag’: **Blackcurrent-the Stress Hero**. Research already published, and more being published in 2015, shows blackcurrants can offer a significant value for sportspeople in reducing the harmful effects of rigorous exercise. And the benefit is not only for physical stress: research also shows a benefit for those in mentally stressful situations; and indicative secondary research suggests a benefit against dietary stress.

A research collaboration between New Zealand and Japan is investigating the potential of a blackcurrant supplement to be useful in reducing the harm of refined sugars in the diet. This has potential relevance for obesity issues and diabetes, and the overall global issue known as “metabolic syndrome’.

Researchers also believe that there may be a link between this “metabolic syndrome’ value and the value of blackcurrant supplements for sport stress. The IBA has a key role to play in continuing this focus by supporting researchers and promoting brands that champion the blackcurrant’s “ownership” of this

platform. Such a simple and “clean’ positioning platform is essential: most successful foods have one: none yet claim to be “the stress hero”. It is blackcurrants for the taking (or the losing!). Importantly, this position doesn’t detract from other research values: eye health and cardio health and the like. I believe research could one day show there is an underlying physiological effect from blackcurrants that links all of these values.

And such a position doesn’t detract from blackcurrants value as a food or beverage component: it in fact adds cache to the berry and enhances F&B marketing opportunities. Look to the blueberry phenomenon to understand this.

The Conference Organisers in Lithuania are to be thanked for making “Blackcurrant: the Stress hero” the theme of the 2015 Conference.

Growing the Market: the Strategies

The blackcurrant “suffers’ from not being trendy or fashionable; despite the wonderful individual efforts of many individuals and companies. In 2014 the IBA introduced two strategies with the intention of changing the global mind-set towards the blackcurrant and Influencing the marketplace to use blackcurrants in new product development.

The New Holland Blackcurrant Food Heroes Project

This project has just gone “public” and is on our website www.internationalblackcurrantassociation.com

The IBA will promote exciting and novel, as well as traditional culinary uses, from around the world. Last year we asked members of the IBA to assist in this global search: response has been disappointing but understandable: this is new and “uncharted” territory for members (and it was for us too!).

But our website now has examples and every member of the IBA has the opportunity to add their information to it.

The Austria Juice New Product Development Unit

The big problem facing “blackcurrants’ isn’t “research” or “quality” (nor at the moment “price”!):

- we have wonderful research (eg the UK Foundations Health Wheel),

- the vast majority of growers produce exceptional quality,
- and the low price right now is a sad joke!

So why aren't blackcurrant products everywhere and growing on supermarket shelves? "New product development' is expensive and a long-term process. And usually market leaders follow rather than initiate real innovation: they watch small companies prove something before they commit to it. But perhaps one of the single best results of the establishment of the IBA has been the support of it by category champion and industry giant: Austria Juice. The IBA is working with Austria Juice to bring about a change in the global demand for blackcurrants. Ideas from the New Holland Food Heroes Project will provide a highly valuable source of ideas that could be suitable for high volume/global possibilities and these will be assessed by a team at Austria Juice. An international Sensory Symposium is also planned to be held at a prestigious European University, for leading food technologists and new product development decision-makers. We are looking at tactics that will make products happen: rather than hoping they might.

The Bayer Crop Science-IBA Agronomy & Plant Breeding Sector Group

At the core of the IBA's activities is a rightful focus on agronomy and plant-breeding. As market demand develops, growers will look to maximise their own opportunities through growing berries from plants bespoke for phytochemical traits: traits to suit food and beverage applications and or proven health values. In 2014 the IBA "overhauled" its research resource and this is now available in an easy-to-use format on the IBA website.

In addition the newly-formed Sector Group, sponsored by BCS, will act as a catalyst for the ongoing conceptualisation and implementation of group initiatives/research topics/communications that can be of benefit to all growers. Over the next year we hope to introduce the IBA Variety Information Matrix (IBAVIM): a central information database for varieties.

Global Production and Pricing

The IBA's primary role was, initially, to gather the global production stats and prices and make these public. The way we were doing it was dangerous in that we could have been accused of price fixing. Even if we can show historical pricing this might not be in the best interests of the growers to do so: if we can only show an "average" it makes it difficult for quality and innovation investment by

growers to be rewarded: an average price lowers everyone's expectations. But from the EU presentation at Poland, showing a detailed breakdown of historical pricing for a previous season could still be considered price manipulation. At the Conference in June the Board will decide what information the IBA should gather and promote on the Weremczuk-sponsored IBA Global Production Chart.

Bill Floyd, General Manager IBA, May 2015