

GUEST EDITORIAL

Garden to the glass...

by Paul Dalzell

Chairman, New Zealand Hops Ltd

Hops have been grown in New Zealand's Nelson region since early European settlement nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. Today the region's fertile temperate valleys still provide excellent conditions for growing unique bitter, dual purpose and aroma hop varieties.



To improve their collective market knowledge, hop growers formed associations as early as 1900. While individually the farms were too small

to market hops on their own account, in 1936 the New Zealand Government passed the Primary Products Marketing Act to provide a statutory framework for primary producer groups to promote the growth of their industries.

Three years later in 1939, the New Zealand Hop Marketing Board was formed to regulate production and provide a single marketing organisation for hop growers. Funded by a levy on production, five board members were hop growers and there was one government representative on the board.

The board acted as agent for the growers and over a period of 50 years has contributed immensely to the survival and growth of the small hop industry.

In 1998 the board was officially deregulated with hop growers later forming a cooperative company (New Zealand Hop Marketers Ltd) to carry on the marketing and administration operations for the industry.

CONFIDENCE

Hop growing expansion for new markets during the early 1980s improved grower confidence in the future of the industry. In 1982, the hop growers



formed New Zealand Hop Products Ltd, purchasing a coolstore complex at Appleby and then invested heavily to establish offices, warehouses and additional coolstores to handle the hop crop more effectively.

In 1985, a pellet plant was added and the first order of 2,000kg of Type-90 pellets was shipped to Japan. The ability to process the hops into pellets was a milestone to industry development, reducing freight costs and storage losses when shipping long distances by sea. It also opened up the opportunity to market directly to breweries without having to use the processing facilities of a hop merchant.

Local processing facilities have been essential to the marketing of hops by a grower group such as ours. In 2002, supercritical CO₂ extraction facilities were established on our Appleby site in conjunction with another local company.

LEGACY

The legacy of a single marketing organisation lives on with the formation of New Zealand Hops Ltd, a merger of the assets of the deregulated NZ Hop



Marketing Board with the processing facilities of NZ Hop Products Ltd. These facilities have all been financed by hop growers over the past 25 years.

New Zealand Hops Ltd retains cooperative company status with all hop producers being shareholders in the company. We have both grower and independent directors.

Our philosophy as a grower group has been to work directly with the brewer customers who use our hops as much as possible. We have learned from experience how to operate on an international basis and we are proud of our reputation as a reliable quality producer and supplier.

This does not happen overnight! It has been a long process to gain the market knowledge, the contacts, the recognition and the custom of major brewers. We are confident that we have built a solid base and a sustainable future for our grower members. ●



Paul Dalzell, Chairman,
New Zealand Hops Ltd
PHOTO: NZ HOPS LTD



The cooperative can be
found online at
www.nzhops.co.nz

A Bruff hop picker
in operation at the NZ Hops
plant

PHOTO: NZ HOPS LTD

Hop bines laden with
Pacific Gem hops, Sunrise
Valley, Upper Moutere

PHOTO: NZ HOPS LTD

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