

Forestry & Production Horticulture Nursery Summit

Final minutes of the Meeting

Thursday 23 April 2015
Terrace Conference Centre, 114 The Terrace, Wellington

Present: Steve Gellert, Gellert Nurseries; Dennis Cassidy, NZ Peony Society; Graham Milne, Ohaeawai Nursery; Mike Simpson & Kate Marshall, Waimea Nurseries; Geoff Thorpe & Leo Kelso, Riversun; Kevin Strawbridge, NZ Forest Nursery Growers Association; Patrick Murray, Murrays Nurseries; Vern, Andrew & Terry Wearmouth, Kauri Park Nurseries; Kerry Sixtus, Pattullos Nursery; Barry O'Neill, Kiwifruit Vine Health; Brigid Jenkins, Forest Owners Association; Bill Dyck, FOA Forest Biosecurity Manager; Alan Pollard, Pipfruit NZ; Marie Dawkins, Summerfruit NZ; Nikki Johnson, NZ Citrus Growers; John Seymour, Vegetables NZ; Richard Palmer, Horticulture NZ; Vince Wylaars, Zealandia Horticulture & NGINZ Board; Andrew Harrison, KVH & NGINZ Board Chair; Don Forgie, NGINZ Board; John Liddle, CEO NGINZ

Facilitator: Peter Silcock, Horticulture New Zealand

In Attendance: Frances Palmer, NGINZ (minute recorder)

Apologies: David Blewden, NZ Flower Growers Association; Andy McGrath, McGrath Nursery; Philip Manson, Andy Warren, Bloomz NZ; NZ Winegrowers; Andrew Boylan, Tharfield Nursery; Andrew Tayler, NGINZ Board; Stephen Burton, Annton Nursery; Malcolm Woolmore, Lyndale Nurseries; Greg Palmer, Nga Rakau Nurseries; Ben Wickam, Vine Industry Nursery Association; Stephen Honey, Leaderbrand NZ; Jennifer Scoular, Avocado NZ; Antony Toledo, Multiflora.

Purpose:

To collectively discuss the merit of NGINZ's Towards 2025 proposals and any alternatives, and the best approach to meet the needs of nurseries supplying to forestry and production horticulture.

Introduction: Peter Silcock

- Round table introductions
- Peter confirmed the purpose of the meetings with attendees
- Outline of meeting agenda – identify what is needed and then discuss the how (including the NGINZ proposal)
- Expectations of participants – free and frank discussions, have an open mind and active listening and reaching agreement where possible
- The Facilitators notes of the meeting would be circulated in draft form for feedback from participants

NGINZ Overview: NGINZ pre-circulated a background paper (below) covering what it had heard/feedback from forestry & horticulture nurseries through the Towards 2025 consultation process to date. Andrew Harrison spoke to this (presentation below) and Vince Wylaars added his perspective to this as both a NGINZ Board member and Zealandia Horticulture owner.



Forestry and
Horticulture Nurseries



Microsoft PowerPoint
97-2003 Presentation

Discussion: Issues & Opportunities

The extent to which forestry and production nurseries have common issues and/or opportunities were explored in relation to five key areas identified by meeting participants: biosecurity, R&D, advocacy, labour & workforce training and RMA.

Biosecurity

- General agreement biosecurity is a common and key issue for forestry and horticulture nurseries
- Biosecurity issues are likely to be shared with other product groups and other similar nurseries.
- There is a mutual dependency between nurseries and the product group they supply.
 - Diseases are spread by or with plants so the product groups have no control unless they work with the nurseries.
 - Nurseries moving plants around the country are seen as a big risk.
- In some cases a nursery's biosecurity programme needs to meet the requirements of one or more sector body/product group (e.g., forestry, avocados, wine grapes & kiwifruit) certification schemes.
- Differing views were explored around the extent to which sector bodies/product groups currently represent (or not) nursery biosecurity interests.
- There was discussion about the funding of and who should be representing/protecting the interest of nursery growers. Some individuals felt that Product Groups not the nurseries should fund biosecurity costs such as GIA.
- A number of Product Groups stated they did not have the mandate or desire to represent nursery growers or fund nursery biosecurity.
- Some product groups have limited resource and no strategy to connect with nurseries.
- There was discussion regarding the commercial relationship between nurseries and the growers they supply.
- The interest of nursery growers need to be represented and protected.
- At times the biosecurity interests of the nursery and the industry they are supplying will differ.
- There are common issues and systems between nurseries supplying different industry groups.
- GIA and biosecurity – forestry and horticulture nurseries need a say, can't let others make decisions for us; nurseries have a role to play;

Summary

- Mutual dependency between forestry and horticulture nurseries and industry they supply (how, who, costs associated with biosecurity representation still to be worked through)

- Individual sectors/product groups have species-specific issues/needs, and where this is the case the associated biosecurity requirements need to be customer driven
- Many pest and disease issues overlap/affect multiple industries (e.g., phytophthoras)
- Common areas across nurseries are surveillance, general nursery phytosanitary practices, plant transport hygiene
- Is this just a customer relationship or do nurseries want to be actively engaged through a sector group (forest nursery group) or a body like NGINZ. A closer working relationship between nurseries and sector bodies/product groups is needed

Research & Development

- Many issues and opportunities in common across all nurseries (field and/or potted), e.g., soil health, compaction, endophytes, GPS, robotics, water (in & out), agrichemicals, media, diagnostics, genetics, traceability, energy, biodegradability
- Don't want to re-invent the wheel so advantages in sharing information
- Current disconnect on R&D projects across different sectors (although currently R&D investment is very limited)
- Intellectual property issues need to be managed

An organised industry can have significant influence over Government allocation of research \$\$*Summary*

- Clear areas in common and a clear gap.
- Common issues
 - who represents industry and advocates into the science system, leverages industry investment with govt investment?
 - who ensures nursery R&D needs and priorities are clear?
 - who disseminates the results of research/ensures transfer of results so nurseries can realise benefits of science investment? Addressing shortage of capability (technical & academic)
- Challenges around how to achieve fair allocation of research investment across sectors of the nursery industry? How to connect various parts of the industry?

Advocacy

- General agreement advocacy is critical and a common issue
- Some issues are nursery specific eg legionella but most are broad eg biosecurity, importation new plant material, health & safety, employment, training, ACC, RSE.

Summary

- Need a strong industry voice eg import of plant material
- Discussion around scale vs focus (noting nursery 3rd largest hort industry by value)
- Partnerships and relationships with other industry representative bodies are critical – unite voices on common issues

Labour & workforce training

- Analysis of the labour force (skills required, where the training is to come from) which is transferrable across other industries
- Some differences in capability across regions and seasonally

- General lack of tertiary trained students in horticulture
- Nursery training vs more general management training (staff management, systems, IT)
- Shift in thinking required by educational institutions
- Setting of standards is important – don't make it too easy to pass
- Struggle to find middle management

Summary

- Common issue across nursery industry and with wider horticulture
- Need to define what nursery industry needs and promote the industry as a career of choice – change perceptions
- Connected to being able to create a positive perception of the industry

RMA

- Significant common issue
- Little expansion in the nursery industry over the past decade (now starting to change) so most are oblivious to the requirements
- Urban and life style expansion impacting on nurseries

Summary

- A horticulture and primary industry wide issue, not just nurseries
- Some RMA areas are more nursery specific, e.g., wastewater

Other lower priority areas of common interest:

Peter then opened the floor to discuss any other potential common issues

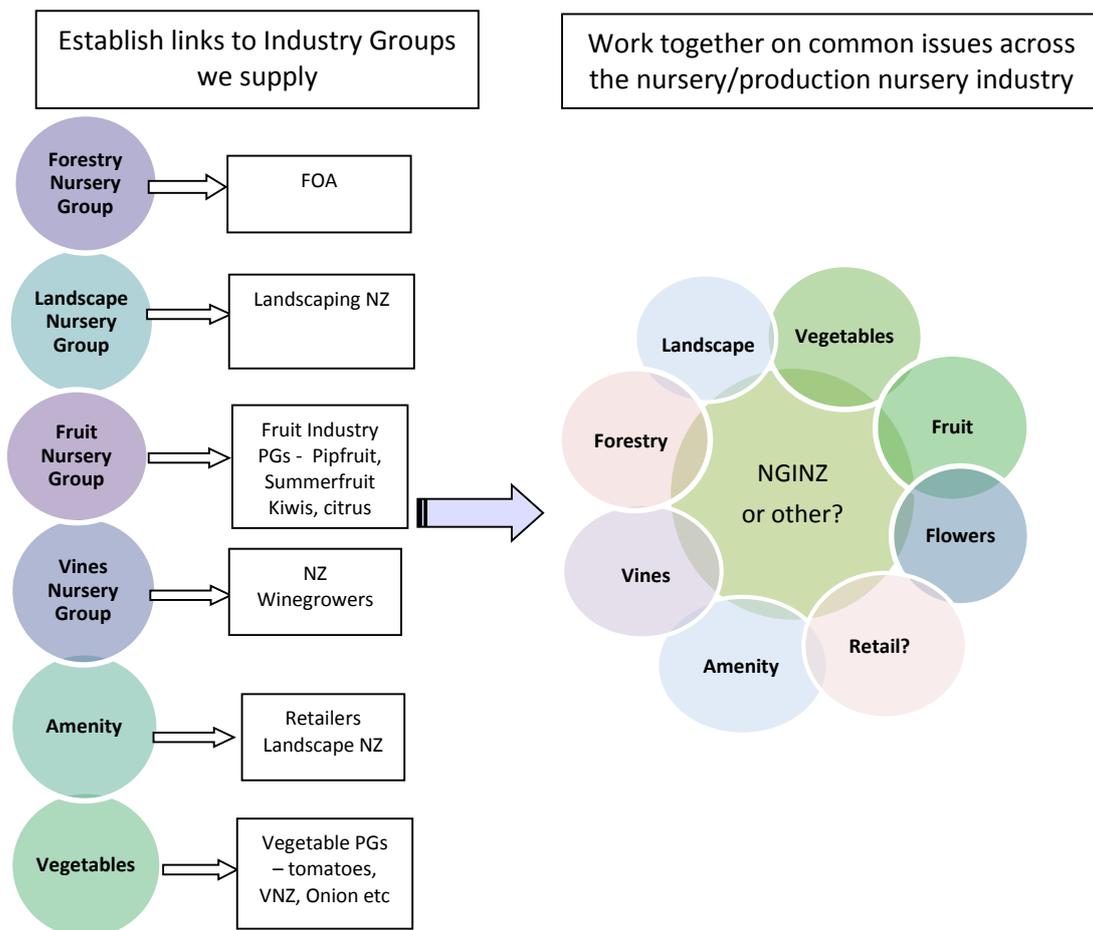
- Industry standards ('professional' and 'plant')
- Industry data collection – important to have information about the industry if we are to advocate for the industry e.g. number of employees, size/scale of businesses, contribution to the economy (including the industries we support)
- Negotiated benefits (e.g., better insurance options, group purchasing programmes)

Discussion: Options for Working Collectively

Peter summarised the earlier discussion which had identified the needs across the forestry and production horticulture nursery industry. He then opened discussion on what was the best way to address these needs.

- Who is going to provide the best value?
- Are sector bodies/product groups the best home for the nurseries that supply to them?
 - Nurseries don't pay a levy to their sector body/product group because there is no mechanism and they have not been asked
 - Some nurseries expressed the view that product group should control the whole group and its supply chain
 - Horticulture product groups exist to serve their fruit and vegetable growers, and the levy orders under the Commodity Levies Act are specific about who and what products they represents - nurseries cannot be added in Product groups do not represent nurseries & they have no expertise in that area

- Some product groups already have a relationship with their nurseries (e.g., a MOU exists between NZWG and nursery wine growers) Hort NZ are about the fruit & veg commodity, not plant production. What value would a nursery group bring to Hort NZ?
- If there is sufficient value, could the Nursery industry pay the 0.15% levy? Under this scenario the Nursery Industry would need a unified voice/representative body (product group) anyway.
- If NGINZ stands alone, will it be big enough to have a voice?
- Concern was expressed that NGINZ is currently retail focused and the current NGINZ model would need to significantly change to better represent the forestry and production horticulture nursery industry.
- A lot more can be achieved working together as nurseries - It is reasonable to have some facility to progress common issues and opportunities
- Stronger relationships between nurseries and sector bodies/product groups they supply is also essential.



- Nursery participants requested that NGINZ defer any levy referendum or application for the foreseeable future, and instead work with nurseries from across the spectrum to develop a

new, alternate proposal for a nursery-led industry body that can best progress common issues and opportunities including an industry direction that is relevant to all nurseries.

- Participants agreed to actively engage and work with NGINZ to develop such an alternative, and to support a new proposal that is jointly developed and mutually agreed.
- NGINZ representatives agreed to take this request to its full board for consideration on 6 May and provide a response shortly thereafter, and committed to ongoing discussion.