



New Zealand Macadamia Society 2019 Conference & Annual General Meeting

The 2019 Conference AGM was held on a foggy north Waikato morning on 26 May 2019 at Top Notch Macadamias, 40a Top Road, Patetonga. Top Notch is both an established macadamia orchard and a nut processing facility.

Agenda

- Tea/coffee, scone/muffin. Mix and Mingle
- Welcome by Vice-President (unfortunately the President was ill and could not be there)
- 6 Exhibitor stands covering range of topics
- Split groups
 1. Factory tour and exhibitor stands
 2. Report from 8th World Macadamia Symposium China 2018 and NZ Macadamia 10yr Growth Strategy
- Lunch
- Dr. Asha Chagan – Guava Moth Research
- Dr. Brad Howlett – Pollination for improved yields
- AGM

Top Notch Factory

Those who were interested got to have a good walk around the processing facility and take part in a Q&A session. Top Notch processes their own nuts as well as nuts from a number of North Island orchards. They receive nuts in bags or hoppers after they have gone through the initial drying stage.



For hoppers they have developed a system that both carries and dries the nuts, made from a standard agricultural cube container with the top cut out and a bottom trapdoor-controlled chute and a fan that blows air through the nuts. These affordable hoppers can take half a tonne of nuts.

Once at the requisite initial moisture content they have a large hopper drier that reduces the nuts to the final moisture content. Nuts are then lifted in a vertical conveyor to the top floor where they are



cracked and sorted by size. They then proceed to a sorting table to grade and identify rejects. The operation is not fully mechanised, but it represents a good compromise of investment to expected nut volume. As we grow the industry operators like Top Notch will be able to look to investment.

Following the tour there was a useful session that ran through their process and experience with the nuts that they were receiving.

Exhibitors

There were a number of stands:

- Ilko Scheepens from Crackadamia (www.crackadamia.com). Ilko is very well known to the industry manufacturing a range of cracking and husking machines for both the NZ and Australian market. Ilko had machinery demonstrations and the very popular hand nut crackers on hand.
- Dugald Hamilton from NZ Respond (www.linkedin.com/in/dugald-hamilton-b6bb55ba/). Dugald is developing a range of beneficial live fungus inoculants that will improve soil health and release soil nutrients. He is working for a number of agricultural sectors and is trailing his product on two orchards. We will be interested in the results.
- Wetex Kang and Tame Iti from NZ Honey Innovations Ltd., (www.mybeehives.co.nz/) arrived mid-morning and circulated amongst the several growers they supply hives to. Wetex is collecting macadamia honey from Torere Macadamias blocks for research and training their staff as they grow their own hive numbers.
- Raymond Burr from QLABS ([www.qlabs.co.nz/](http://www qlabs.co.nz/)) has worked with many macadamia growers for several years, providing soil tests and the appropriate fertiliser for macadamia requirements. Ray and Dugald Hamilton work as a Team to improve soil health to support and maintain higher quality yields of macadamias.
- Andrew Baker, EIT Horticultural Tutor, Gisborne (www.eit.ac.nz) for the new NZQA level 2-5 practical macadamia course commencing September 2019, at the new Torere and Gisborne campus. EIT are contracted by Torere to produce plants under Stage 1 of the 10-year Growth Strategy with several joint research projects to improve plant production. An online macadamia course is still in development stage for 2020.
- Kevin Allan, Valuer from Bay Valuations (www.whakatane.info/business/bay-valuation-services-ltd) is developing a macadamia base for future property valuations as current valuations are based on other horticultural crops. Kevin welcomes all growers' queries as part of increasing his knowledge of the industry that will be of great value to all growers.

8th World Macadamia Symposium China 2018

Nick King presented an account of his visit to China and the 8th World Macadamia Symposium. Like most industry China does things on a completely different scale and Nick came home with interesting information on varieties, grafting techniques, growing and harvesting systems and possible macadamia nut end products.

NZ Macadamia 10yr Growth Strategy

Vanessa Hayes presented the work that she and Plant and Food Research had done on a growth strategy for our industry. Starting from an outline of the somewhat faltering history she painted a picture of a way forward, relying on:

- Stage 1 – Increase plant production
- Stage 2 – Scientific research
- Stage 3 – Development of cooperatives and processing factories



Working through these steps it is the intention to develop a sustainable and robust industry for all of our benefits.

Dr. Asha Chagan

Asha, from Plant & Food, presented the work that she and others have been doing on the Guava Moth funded by the Sustainable Farming fund and supported by the NZ Macadamia Society and the NZ Feijoa Growers Assn. It is as yet to present data or results from 2018-19, but these should become available later in the year.

The Guava Moth is an introduced pest that attacks a number of fruits. It was first seen in Northland in feijoas but now is found in a range of fruits and nuts including macadamias and it is moving south and it appears to have started crossing the Bombay Hills.

Due to its life cycle it is not easily attached by chemical control measures and much of the focus is on pheromones, either as attract and catch in traps, or as sprays that interrupt mating. The new multi-pheromone lure and trap looks promising.

Results will be circulated to members as soon as they are available.

Dr. Brad Howlett

Brad, also from Plant and Food, talked about the different pollinating insects and their behaviours. Understanding this could lead us to greatly increasing yields by looking at planting schemes and patterns, ways to encourage different insects as well as bees, and hive positioning. We need to remember that pollination is not just down to bees; "honeybees are the most common macadamia pollinators but we also see stingless bees, lycrid beetles, soldier beetles and flies," he said.

A lot of his work has been funded by the Australian Macadamia Society.

The presentation materials from all of the presenters will be circulated.

AGM

After the presentations the AGM was held. This was mainly concerned with appointing a largely new committee for the Society (Minutes attached).

This was a very successful event and we look forward to trying to Top it next year.

**Roger Matthews
Pounamu Orchards
Motumaoho**