



National Cherry Breeding & Evaluation

Business Plan



Horticulture Australia



Background

- National breeding program conducted by the SARDI since 1995
- Facilitated by a series of HAL projects
- Funded through the Australian Cherry R&D Program
- Six new cherry varieties have been released from the breeding program between 1998 – 2002
- Over the past ten years, no further varieties have been commercialised for release



HAL Project CY11016

- Current SARDI Evaluation Project (CY11016) will conclude at end June 2014
- Current focus on expediting evaluation of superior lines from existing germplasm to support potential commercialisation
- Advanced selections currently undergoing secondary evaluation across 19 regional evaluation sites
- Breeding activities no longer undertaken



National Horticulture RD&E Framework

- Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) nominated major agency for cherry research and development
- SARDI to provide “link” role for cherry improvement
- As a consequence, SARDI will no longer be conducting cherry breeding services from July 2014
- It is also unlikely that there will be ongoing access beyond this date to the primary research site located at Lenswood, South Australia



What does this mean?

Change in arrangements provides an **opportunity** for the Australian cherry industry **to review future direction of breeding and evaluation** activities

Context:

- Available funding
- Priority initiatives identified in Australian Cherry Industry Strategic Investment Plan 2012-2017



Business Plan

- Developed after extensive consultation with industry stakeholders
- Presents findings and recommendations arising from a review of the current Australian Cherry Breeding and Evaluation Program
- Conducted March-July 2012
- Recommendations further supported by an implementation plan



Consultation

Consultation process confirmed:

- There is not necessarily a consensus of views within the industry
- Wide ranging opinions around breeding and evaluation
- Key underlying themes emerged during consultations
- Important in the context of future strategy development



Key Themes

- Need for growers to have access to superior varieties in order to retain international competitiveness
- Commercial sector actively working to facilitate
- Restricted access to some of these new varieties and the impost of royalties
- Given the limitations of available funding through the Australian Cherry R&D Program, evident lack of support for direct industry investment in further breeding activities



Key Themes

- Need for retained access to germplasm stocks from the current breeding program
- Role for industry investment in evaluation less clear
- Commercial sector is actively engaged in a broad range of formal and informal varietal evaluation activities
- Lack of consensus regarding any formal requirement for the investment of industry funds



Future Decision Point

- Based on breeding evaluation findings undertaken over the next two seasons, necessary to **determine whether to undertake extended evaluation** and, if successful, whether to implement a subsequent **commercialisation** process
- Likely to require third-party engagement and external funding given the limited Australian Cherry R&D funds



Industry Engagement

- Commercial sector is actively importing and evaluating new cherry varieties
- CGA should consider benefits of active engagement with commercial providers to support and enhance two-way communication with growers
- Regardless of the direction taken by industry, future evaluation initiatives will benefit from the confirmation of industry-standard criteria for evaluation





Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 1:

Breeding

Australian cherry industry funds are not directly invested in any further breeding activities

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Germplasm Retention

Long-term future access to selected germplasm from the National Breeding and Evaluation Program is secured



RECOMMENDATION 3:

Evaluation/Commercialisation

Evaluation of superior breeding selections continues until end 2014 harvest, after which decision taken by CGA and SARDI regarding further evaluation and ultimately commercialisation of one or more varieties:

- **If YES** – Develop and implement extended evaluation program. (This is likely to require the involvement of third-parties and external funding). Develop and implement commercialisation strategy
- **If NO** – No further action



RECOMMENDATION 4:

Industry Standards

Confirm industry-standard assessment criteria for varietal evaluation

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Engagement with Commercialisers

Active engagement with third-parties involved in commercialisation activities; and enhanced facilitation of two-way communication between growers, commercialisers and other collaborating parties





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