National Cherry Breeding & Evaluation

Business Plan
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
Prepared by:

1DAY Pty Ltd

Julie Haslett - julie.haslett@me.com