



## AGM and General Meeting

**M**inutes of the AGM of Taro Growers Australia, 29 October 2005 at the farm of Don Zanoletti, RN606 Boulders Rd, Babinda.

Meeting began 1:00PM

**Present:** 12 Members

### **President's Report:**

Philippe mentioned problem with Biosecurity Australia—inconsistent enforcement of regulations on importation of taro, eg no potential growing points (eyes) are permitted. Northern NSW growers, especially, are suffering severely from Japanese taro competition. Also, of course, “Niue” cv is being imported at the rate of >1500kg/ annum (3 year old figures)—it's a large market. [In passing, a member enquired about another cv, “Arafura Sunrise”. It is *Niue x a white cv.*]

### **Elections**

Office bearers stepped down. New Execu-

## General Business

**\*Membership fees (\$20): have you paid this year? Check with the Treasurer if you are unsure. Please, we need the funds!**

**\*An updated membership list has been sent to those members who have email addresses. Please let the Secretary or President know if you have recently acquired an email address.**

**\*Some growers are currently suffering from bottom rot. Are you? Rod is interested in knowing who is.**

## Next Meeting

**T**he next meeting of TGA will be on **Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006 at 7:00 PM.** It will be held at the **Wet Tropics Research Centre of the DPI at South Johnstone.**

tive was elected as follows:

**President: Rod Hourston**, nominated P. Petinaud, seconded K. Lake

**Treasurer: John Doyle**, nom. D. Chandlee, sec. P. Petinaud

**Secretary: David Chandlee**, nom R. Hourston, seconded, E. Charteris

All were elected unanimously. Rod was welcomed by those present and took the floor.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

John tabled the Auditor's Report and made a few comments. Only 13 members paid their fees in the last year. Fees are again due, as memberships expire at the AGM. It was suggested to send out an invoice. Members could pay direct into our Tully account or to John. If you have any questions, contact John.

**MOTION:** That the Treasurer's report is a true and accurate report of the associations figures and that it be accepted and all payments made. Moved J. Doyle, seconded D. Chandlee **PASSED**

**MOTION:** That P. Petinaud be deleted as a bank account signatory and that Rod Hourston be substituted. Moved J. Doyle, seconded D. Chandlee **PASSED**  
AGM Meeting closed 2:15PM

(Signed) David K. Chandlee, Secretary

## General Meeting of TGA, 29 October 2005 at the farm of Don Zanoletti, Babinda

**Present:** 12 members and guests

### **General Business:**

Q. Are “Pink taro” available in FNQ?

A. Yes, there are 2 cvs.

Toan (Tom) Tran, Managing Director of Asean Produce Ltd, a Sydney agent spoke.

There are 5 or 6 agents handling taro in the Sydney markets. 4-5 tonnes a week will “choke” (i.e. fill to overflowing) the

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The taro industry information resource was launched at Taro Growers Australia (TGA) AGM at Babinda last year. The resource currently consists of 47 items including books, booklets and DVD's which are listed as Appendix A.

The information resource includes a photo album which provides documentation of TGA field days. A TGA member is acting as the librarian – items are available for loan at meetings or at other times and for those not able to get to meetings via post (user pays both ways). Twelve of the items are RIRDC publications and so are also available from the web. The other publica-

tions are not available in electronic format from anywhere. Loans will be monitored and feedback sought from TGA members on how useful they find the resource.

I would greatly appreciate any feedback on the resource. What booklets or DVDs did you find useful—and why? Write or give me a call. This will all help the industry prosper.

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## Babinda Meeting (cont'd)

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Sydney market. Customers are almost exclusively Asian. The Melbourne market is smaller, due to there being fewer Asians there.

Q. Is large taro a problem? No, but customers can't afford them sometimes, so it's the job of the agent to teach the shopkeeper to cut the corms and cover them with plastic, so smaller families can afford them. This has the added benefit that the sceptical customer can see the quality of the cut corms.

Tom can personally sell 2 tonnes per week. Europeans don't buy taro because of the price compared with other starchy vegetables.

Q. What about cassava?

A. Cassava is saleable, but it must be frozen! Fijian cassava is good quality.

Q. How do you feel the marketability of taro has gone recently?

A. There has been an improvement in taro quality in recent years, and packaging has improved, too.

Q. Do you think that TGA has improved this situation?

A. TGA has strongly helped in this work. Today I am applying to become a member myself.

Next, Jeff Daniells spoke about his research project. He has assembled an Information Resource, which includes, book, photocopies, old and new, videos, etc. These are to improve your knowledge of taro and its agronomy, marketing, etc. Jeff will be in touch with members to let them know how to access these, but in general, get in touch with the Secretary to arrange borrowings.

MOTION: Distribution of literature from the Information Resource is to be user pays (postage, etc.) Moved R. Hourston, Seconded D. Chandlee PASSED

MOTION: That Erica Charteris become the Librarian (she lives in Cairns), and that the literature and other materials in the Information Resource provided by Jeff Daniells will remain with her. Moved P. Petiniaud, seconded K. Lake. PASSED

MOTION: That TGA have general meetings every 2

months. Moved R. Hourston, seconded P. Petiniaud. PASSED

Comments on the Dream Farm article in newsletter no. 6.

Q. Does John Doyle really have a new sub-cultivar of "Bun long"?

A. Nobody knows, of course, but Jeff suggested making a trial with this plant. He offered to coordinate such a trial. Those present supported that idea.

### Import Competition

Tim Johnson, a grower from N. NSW, has complained about Japanese taro (*Colocasia antiquorum*) being imported from China. He supplied a photo which all present looked at. It showed obviously diseased corms in a box. Philippe wrote a letter to AQIS about this "rubbish" being allowed in, and he tabled a letter from AQIS/Biosecurity Australia responding (see attachments if you are receiving this by email). They want TGA to a.) Become stakeholders and b.) find evidence and proof ourselves! As mentioned at previous meetings, there never was an IRA (Import Risk Analysis) for taro imports, since IRAs didn't exist years ago when taro imports commenced.

A TV news report on August 7<sup>th</sup> reported the attempt to smuggle Japanese taro into Australia. It went on to say that the "tomato and potato industries" could be threatened by such smuggling. Confusing, isn't it?

There was general agreement that we should attempt to stop taro importation of this kind, and that we should follow this problem up.

"Dodare" cv of Japanese taro, in Hawaii is better than our "Ishikawa Wase"—it can yield up to 10kg per plant, vs. 5kg per plant for "I.W." Although it could not be imported as propagatable plants, it could be imported as food.

Discussion about edible taro leaves: several cvs can be eaten in this way, including "Bun long". New growers

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LOCATION CODE	TITLE
1	"SPC Foods Leaflet No 1 Taro" (1992) revised ISBN 982-203-417-2
2	"Taro cultivation in Asia and the Pacific" I. Onwueme (1999)
3	"Guide to producing and handling export quality dasheen in the OECS" G C Robin CARDI?CTA (2000) ISBN 9766170053
4	"Taro diseases - a guide to field identification" J. Ooka CTAHR
5	"Nutrient deficiencies and excesses in taro" S. Miyasaka CTAHR
6	"Taro varieties in Hawaii" CTAHR
7	"Pacific islands farm manual" N. Glover & L. Ferentinos ADAP
8	"Quality standards and marketing of selected South Pacific root crops" M Brown
9	"Diseases and pests of taro" G.V.H. Jackson SPC
10	"Taro cultivation in the South Pacific" (1982) M. Lambert SPC Handbook No 22
11	"Taro - Mauka to Makai" 1997 CTAHR
12	"Taro Tissue Culture Manual" 1979 SPC
13A&B	"Taro" J K Wang 1983
14	"Tropical root crops: potato, cassava, sweet potato, taro" (1996) Luis A. Manrique (Manrique International Agrotech.
15	"Mineral nutrient disorders of root crops in the South Pacific" ACIAR Proc. No 65
16	"Select markets for taro, sweet potato and yam" No 03/052
17	"Commercial taro chip development using agri-chain partnerships" No 03/??
18	"Improved marketing of NQ fresh taro" Wedding/O'Keefe
19	"Plant nutrient management in Hawaii's soils" CTAHR ISBN 1-929235-08-8
20	"This Hawaii product went to market" Hollyer et al CTAHR
21	"Easy profit estimator" CTAHR poster
22	"Options for change - New ideas for Australian farmers" No 03/030
23	"Trees for shelter: a guide to using windbreaks on Australian farms" No 02/059
24	"Successful Land Leasing in Australia " No 03/080
25	"Thirty Australian Champions" No 00/141
26	"Adding Value: the critical factors for farmers" No 04/047
27	"Adoption of Environmental Management Systems in Agriculture Part 1: Case studies from Australia & New Zealand farms" No 03/121
28	"The rural and regional guide to e-commerce" No 03/052
29	"Good enough never is - lessons from inspirational businesses in rural Australia"
30	"Northern Territory tropical fruits industry - market opportunities" No 04/105
31	"Beyond Agriculture: Changing patterns of farm household income"
32	"Landcare in the Philippines - stories of people and places"
33	"The new crop industries handbook" No 04/125
34	"The recovery of the taro industry in Samoa 2002" DVD

# Taro Growers Australia

## TARO GROWERS

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*Taro is our business.*

## The Taro Industry Information Resource (cont'd)

LOCATION CODE	TITLE
35A,B&C	"Moloka'i taro conference" 3 Volumes (1990) 3 DVD's
36	"Phytophthora colocasiae....resistant taro cultivars from Palau" (1998) DVD
37	"Sustainable taro culture for the Pacific - Gather the leaves, nourish the roots" DVD
38	"Organic weed control - weed control concepts" (1993) DVD
39A,B&C	"Taking taro into the 1990's" 3 Volumes (1989) 3 DVD's
40	"Agribusiness Marketing - learning from others" CD
41	"Agribusiness Supply Chains - learning from others" CD
42	"Taro Recipes" R1 - R11 Display Folder
43	"Good Fruit and Vegetables articles by David Hanlon" 2003 - present
44	"Miscellaneous" - Newsletters/Project articles etc
45	"Made in Australia" series
46	"Safe Produce" CTAHR poster
47	"Tropical Tastes" DPI&F

## Babinda Meeting (cont'd)

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are planting 5 acres for this purpose. *Palusami* is the South Pacific dish made of young taro leaves with coconut cream.

Growers looked around the taro chip factory-to-be, but it was an empty, albeit completed, building. We also saw taro and cassava being share-farmed on Don's farm.

