

# December 2020 PIT Group Report

## PIT Group Session – 1st December Pinnaroo and Loxton, South Australia

**Pinnaroo: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 12 Noon sharp**

Address 1: **Mallee Orchard Pistachios, 562 Conservation Road, Peebinga, SA, 5304.  
72 km from the Loxton roundabout, travelling on the Browns Well Highway (B57)**

Address 2: **Almond Board of Australia, Centre of Excellence Trial site, 57 Anderson Road, Loxton North.**

This was a PIT Group session aimed at growers of all pistachio trees, new and old. This PIT Group session was just one meeting, held at Mallee Orchard Pistachios at Peebinga, courtesy of Ian Mau in South Australia's Mallee. Starting at noon on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> of December with a barbeque, the meeting then had a general session of introductions and question and answers followed by a tour of the MOP property. The assembly then made their way, 75km back to Loxton for a session with Anthony Wachtel, Josh Fielke and Mark Skewes at the Almond Board of Australia's Centre of Excellence trial site just out of Loxton.

### **PROGRAM:**

The program commenced at 12:30 pm on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

The program for the Tuesday afternoon included: -

- a) Introductions
- b) Interactive open question and answer on the season, oil sprays, bare limb growth etc.
- c) A brief update on the 2019/20 season, harvest quality and potential price by Chris Joyce.
- d) A tour of the extensive MOP plantings, irrigation system, harvest equipment, pre-plant trees/nursery and central leader pruning sites.
- e) Drive back to Loxton for a 5.15pm meeting with....
- f) ABA Centre of Excellence orchard trial site.

The December 2020 PIT Group grower's session at Mallee Orchard Pistachios (MOP) at Peebinga on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2020 was a great success with 35 attending despite the long drive out to the orchard and the gale force winds. Covid-19 protocols were followed with an attendance form filled in and hand sanitiser made available as well as social distancing adhered to.

Being possibly the final PIT Group Meeting for the current project, and at reasonably short notice due to the changing Covid-19 restrictions, it was very pleasing to see 35 pistachio industry people attend the most isolated session we have had at Mallee Orchard Pistachios.

The afternoon began with the customary barbeque. Trevor Ranford led the introductions as we had a few people who had obtained permits to cross the SA frontier to travel the wilds of South Australia to Peebinga. Following introductions Trevor led a general question and answer session where all growers interacted regarding the 2019/20 growing season and harvest, oil sprays and any successes or problems in their orchards. Lively discussion and information sharing continued for over an hour with Chris Joyce providing an update on the quality/potential prices for the 2020 harvested crop.

For the following hour Ian Mau and Tony Green led an extensive tour of the MOP orchards showing the disparate plantings, irrigation system, harvest equipment and modifications required for successful operation on the very sandy soils, nursery trees and central leader pruning sites. As always the attending growers were keen to gain knowledge from not only Ian and Tony but the other industry leaders such as Andrew Bowring among others.

A 75 km drive back to the Almond Board of Australia (ABA) Centre of Excellence orchard at Loxton North saw the second major session of the day start at 5.15pm. ABA Orchard manager Anthony Wachtel and SARDI researchers Josh Fielke and Mark Skewes. Anthony, Josh and Mark led the growers through a number of large trial sites looking at varietal, rootstock and density plantings in search of answers for the Australian almond industry.

7pm saw about 25 growers assemble at the Loxton Hotel for a Covid-19 careful dinner.

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