



BIFGA NEWSLETTER 166

December 2023

NEWSLETTERS/EMAILS

Members may have noticed that it has been some time since we last sent out a Newsletter. This has been due to the increased use of emails, which have been sent out “at-the-time” so that the contents are current. This Newsletter will recap on events since the last Newsletter, and bring members right up-to-date. We do hope that members prefer this approach.

NATIONAL FRUIT SHOW 2023

On our Stand at the National Fruit Show, BIFGA organised a Photography Competition. The photographs from the 12 finalists were displayed on the stand, and a public vote was held to choose the favourite. The winner, who won a £50 gift voucher, was Viv Tanna, with her photograph titled: “After the Harvest”. Many congratulations Viv!

The BIFGA Committee may decide to run this competition again next year, so don't forget to carefully store away any “special” photographs you may have taken, or will take in the meantime.

BIFGA QUIZ – SATURDAY 25TH NOVEMBER 2023 HELD AT STAPLEHURST VILLAGE CENTRE

The BIFGA Quiz was resurrected after a three year absence – mainly due to Covid-19. Eighty people attended the event, which was held at the Staplehurst Village Centre.

The winning team – “The Yongesters”, won with 79 points; ‘The Cherry Pickers’ were 2nd with 70 points; and ‘9 sets of Specs’ were 3rd with 66 points out of 100.

Colin Corfield, Vice Chairman of BIFGA, presented the trophy to Alison Yonge, the Captain of the winning team, and each member of her team received a bottle of Biddenden Farm Pressed Sparkling Apple Juice.

BIFGA 2024 CALENDAR

We have produced the artwork (attached) for a 2024 Calendar, featuring the 12 “finalist” photographs of the 2023 BIFGA Photography Competition.

Please print-off copies as required, on card; or, on paper (then laminate), for use in your home, office, packhouse, etc.

GRAND COALITION TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN FOR “GREATER FAIRNESS FOR FARMERS AND GROWERS IN BRITISH FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS”

As Members may have seen in our recently-circulated “Update (3)”, the Campaign took a significant step forward recently, when Will White, of Sustain, agreed to take the lead role. We now have several organisations included in the Grand Coalition list, covering a very wide-range of agricultural and horticultural crops. In fact, since Update (3) was sent out, several more “organisations” (including four horticultural magazines) have agreed to support the Campaign. Of course, the Grand Coalition needs to get much bigger, as soon as possible, so please spread the word!

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As members will know from “Update (3)” and thanks to the initiative of Riverford Organic Farmers, and their petition: **“Reform the Grocery Supply code of Practice to better protect farmers”**, there will be a “fairness” debate in Parliament on the 22nd January 2024. In support of this, Will White has sent us a link to an internet tool which allows people to email their MP with an “already-written” template letter, which (when you insert your postcode) also automatically addresses it to your MP. Basically all that you need to do is (personalise it if you wish) add your name, and it will be sent to your MP. Please use the link below:

<https://www.sustainweb.org/news/dec23-get-fair-about-farming-debate/>

I would urge all members to take this opportunity to encourage their MP to get involved in this debate.

NEW GOVERNMENT INQUIRY – CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN THE UK FRESH PRODUCE INDUSTRY

This recently-launched Government inquiry is seeking views on the need for supply chain fairness regulations for the fresh produce sector.

As members will know, BIFGA has been complaining about the lack of fairness for apple and pear growers in the British apple and pear supply chain for many years. We have written to Ministers, taken part in consultations, and, in 2019 and 2022, undertaken our own British Gala apple survey into the way the shoppers’ pound is divided up between the key players in a 3 link supply chain: Growers/intermediaries/retailers. As members will know, there is currently a complete imbalance when comparing investment in time and money; risk; and, share of the retail price, with growers suffering significant “unfairness”.

All members should take this opportunity (whether you are a grower, involved in the fresh produce sector in some other way, or a consumer) to have their say. It may be some time before another similar opportunity comes along, so please “Tell it as it is”!

The online enquiry can be found at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/supply-chain-fairness/contractual-relationships-in-the-uk-freshproduce-i/>

The closing date for submissions is the 22nd of February 2024.

NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

- 619A Mr M Horner, Engage Crop Solutions, Unit 5, Town Lane Industrial Estate, Charnock Richard, Chorley, Lancs PR7 5XG
- 660F Mr R Bousfield, Heath Fruit Farm, The Heath, Bluntisham, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 3LQ
- 661A Mr G Hill, Hill Fresh Fruit Ltd., The Farm Office, Court Lodge Farm, Forge Lane, East Farleigh, Maidstone, Kent ME15
- 662A Mr D Whattoff, Metos UK Ltd., Baston Fruit Farm, Outgang Road, Baston, Peterborough PE6 9PU
- 663A Mr N Holmes, Omex Horticulture, Estuary Road, King’s Lynn, Norfolk PE30 2HH
- 664F Mr O Dowding, Dowding’s, Southdown, Shepton Montague, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 8JP

Please remember that we are always keen to find new members (Full, Associate, and Group), and we would appreciate any help that existing members can give in encouraging more to join.

BIFGA TECHNICAL DAY 2024

BIFGA is once again organising a Technical Day Tour, which will take place on Thursday 16th May 2024, visiting two farms in West Kent.

The visits are by kind permission of: Mr and Mrs Teacher, of **Hadlow Place Farm**, Three Elms Lane, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 OBW; and,

Motlands Farm Ltd., Friars Farm, Maidstone Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 7LG.

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Further details will follow in due course, but if you are an Associate Member who has goods, services, or technical information, which you would like to bring to the attention of growers, please contact the Secretary. The cost of a 15 minute “slot” will remain the same as last year (£300), except that there will be a 10% discount available if the slot is booked and paid for by the end of February 2024 – please remember that the number of slots are limited, and will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

BIFGA SUMMER FARM WALK 2024

Our 2024 Summer Farm Walk will take place at New House Farm, near Canterbury, Kent on Wednesday 17th July by kind permission of John Hinchliff. This is a most interesting farm, which grows apples, pears, cherries, and blackcurrants. It is also beautifully situated close to Canterbury, with some stunning views over the City, with the Cathedral in the distance.

We will (as in past years) invite Mark White, the Groceries Code Adjudicator, and representatives of all leading UK supermarkets, to this event, together with British Apples and Pears Ltd., and the National Fruit Show.

It has also been suggested that we might have a repeat of the Classic Car Rally, which was so successful two years ago – if any members have a Vintage or Classic vehicle, and would like to bring it along, please let the BIFGA Secretary know.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

In closing, I, and the BIFGA Secretary, Judi Perry, would like to take this opportunity to send all of our members our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.



J R Breach,
BIFGA Chairman



BRITISH INDEPENDENT FRUIT GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

Secretary: Judi Perry Email: secretary@bifga.org.uk