

BOPP Technical Seminar 'Making the Most from Marketing'

The British Ornamental Plant Producers' Scheme (BOPP) held its AGM and Technical Seminar at the Sutton Bonington (Nottingham University) this year, using the AGM to launch the revisions of their Grower and Packhouse Standards which will be effective from January 2010.

Chairman Steve Homer opened discussion on the future direction of the Scheme by initiating consultation on the use BOPP logo and whether it should be developed into a consumer label; anyone wishing to participate in this debate should contact Jill England at jill.england@bopp.org.uk.

The Technical Seminar focussed on marketing, from an initial overview of the future of the ornamentals industry presented by Tim Briercliffe (Business Development Director of the HTA and BOPP Director) speakers drew attendees through the stages involved in marketing a product: managing consumer expectations, developing new products for specific markets, and finally using product branding as a promotional tool, with the recently developed 'Home Grown' label as a case study.

Although 2009 had been a good season for many growers, particularly with the rise of the 'grow your own' market, Briercliffe urged growers to work together to face the challenges that remained, such as transport costs and logistics where there was the opportunity to reduce costs and improve the level of service provided to the customer.

Consumer trends were moving towards a preference for smaller, local community orientated garden centres, with younger people now coming in with a need for advice and information, and consumers aspiring to gaining pleasure from experiences and life enrichment rather than collecting the latest gadgets; social interaction networks such as Facebook and Twitter and internet research were driving consumer spending decisions.

Margaret Everitt (Margarett Everitt Ltd.) and Pat Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald Nurseries) both advocated detailed analysis of markets, consumers and growers' businesses. Everitt explained how consumer preference mapping and other analytical techniques could be employed to determine which products would be selected by consumers and how their presentation can be manipulated to maximise sales. Pat Fitzgerald had identified new markets and developed products to fit them. He urged growers to go out themselves and explore markets to grow their business into.

Steven Sands (Impetus Marketing) and Bill Godfrey (W. Godfrey & Sons), along with Maurice May, had developed the 'Home Grown' branding funded by the Horticulture Development Company (HDC) and launched at the 2009 Chelsea Flower Show. Godfrey and May had the objective to 'produce a cure for invisibility' in relation to UK horticulture and reiterated Briercliffe's call for growers to work together to raise the profile of the UK horticulture industry.

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