

NCOG cider group proposal

Members expressing (strong) interest as at 25th July 2014 are:

Mark Evens

Hilary Wilson

Denys Nash

Martin Gerrish

Aileen Lee

Gordon & Elizabeth Malcolm

Jane Maggs

Sam Jary

Christine Wolstencroft

Chris Braithwaite

George Mallinson & Janet Farebrother

Paul Neary

Alan Rich

At the NCOG committee meeting of 3/7/14 it was decided that, although the National Trust would provide the premises for the activity, it would not participate more fully in this first year. This initial proposal is therefore for a low-cost operation to “test the water”, but which can be scaled up later. Subsequent increased participation by the NT might include perry making (with a view to commercial sale) and increased cider making; this would result in improvements to facilities and equipment.

Costs

Cost of conversion of barn (done), to include water supply (hot & cold), sink and drainer, table, cupboard (National Trust).

Equipment capital cost – approx £300 – will be financed through NCOG. The main NCOG group retains ownership of the equipment.

Cost to participating members

It is proposed that members of the “cider subgroup” pay an additional subscription for 2014/15 of £10 each. This would entitle them to an equal share in the cider. On the assumption that 100L of cider is made and there are 10 members of the subgroup, this would result in 10L each. The £10 would be payable no later than the date of collection of the cider, but it should be noted that it is not a payment for the cider itself. It is a contribution to NCOG funds to (roughly) cover the depreciation on the equipment, foregone interest on capital and the direct costs of materials. As such it is expected that it might reduce in subsequent years, at least for existing subgroup members.

Approximately 4-5 working “sessions” would be required on site at Acorn Bank. Members would be expected to attend at least 2 sessions in order to claim their cider. Members not contributing apples would be expected to contribute more time than otherwise. The NCOG committee decided not to set exact rules over contributions of time and apples, but clearly both are required to make cider! It is expected that the subgroup will reach amicable consensus on this, but if not, the NCOG committee will use its discretion to determine who has “earned” their cider.

If the volumes and number of members is different from the illustration above, then the numbers will be adjusted accordingly.

The NCOG treasurer will run a “sub-ledger” account for the subgroup's costs and income.

Time commitment

Principal time is:

1 day preparing the barn for cider making

1 day juicing

1-2 brief follow ups to check on fermentation, add yeast etc. (Not really a “working session”)

1 day racking and cleaning

1-2 day packaging and cleaning

Subgroup members should agree dates well in advance to ensure maximum participation.

Apples will be juiced at Acorn Bank using the NCOG mill and presses – most likely on the second Saturday in November. The aim is to collect over 100L of juice to allow for racking losses etc. (If there is a shortfall of apples, it is hoped that the NT can top up as required to make the 100L.) The preparation of the barn will therefore need to take place before this date.

Equipment and other technical details

Cider will be fermented in Spiedel fermenters. While not the cheapest, they are the best quality plastic fermenters and can be used if the scale is later increased through NT participation. The proposal is to have one each of a 100L, 60L and 30L fermenter. Primary fermentation will take place in the 100L fermenter, with subsequent racking to the 60L and 30L fermenters. Note that each of the FVs is oversized so this allows for 100L with the secondary fermenters filled to the brim.

In order for racking to take place without using a pump it will be necessary for the 100L fermenter to be placed at a higher level. Once the 100L fermenter is emptied, the other vessels can be lifted onto this level for later packaging (the 100L vessel cannot be lifted when full).

Depending on the acidity of the cider, it may be necessary to allow/encourage a “malo-lactic” fermentation.

Packaging will be into “bag-in-box”. These are available in 5, 10 and 20 litre sizes. The cost of these is covered by the premium subscription, but members can bring their own (cleaned and sanitised) bottles if they prefer. It may be desirable, since all members are likely to want to participate in this activity to collect their cider, to split packaging into 2 or 3 sessions. The use of 60L and 30L vessels permits this.

Various sundry items are required:

pH papers

Yeast (it is suggested that a commercial yeast is used in this first year, at least)

Yeast nutrient

Pectolase

Potassium metabisulphite

Cleaning – oxy clean

Sanitation – Star San

Funnels, jugs, racking hoses, brushes, etc.

These will be stored in a cupboard to be supplied by the NT.