

Coffee grower for sale

Tenders soon for insolvent FNQ pioneer

From LESLENE WOODWARD
MAREEBA — Tenders will be called soon for the sale of Atherton Tableland pioneer coffee growing business Jaques Brothers Coffee Pty Ltd.

The company went into liquidation in March this year but had continued trading.

One of the liquidators appointed by the Supreme Court, Mr Robert Adcock, of Brisbane-based chartered accountants Hall Chadwick and Co., told The Cairns Post from Brisbane yesterday tenders for the sale of the business as a going concern would be called soon and probably would close at the end of August.

He said one offer already had been made for the company but had been rejected as insufficient.

"It's a very good business. It just needs someone with the right amount of capital," he said.

Mr Adcock attributed the company's difficulties to liquidity problems.

Jaques Brothers Coffee is operated by brothers Richard and Anthony Jaques.

Mr Richard Jaques told The Cairns Post yesterday the family was greatly disappointed at the lack of practical response towards the company at both State and Federal Government levels, considering the pioneering work done by the family in proving a coffee industry was viable in this country.

"It's sad for Australia. This country spends \$200 million to import coffee and we proved the industry is viable here," he said.

"This is the most advanced coffee farm in the world. We have put eight years of hard work into it — all our money

and savings. But that happens to pioneers all down the track. We have lost everything."

The Jaques brand coffee is now marketed within Queensland and interest had been expressed in the United States and Japan regarding import possibilities when liquidity problems within the company brought further negotiations to a halt.

The company began operations in October 1983, growing coffee on a property at Mount Abbott outside Mareeba and marketing it in Queensland. The Jaques brand coffee is now sold throughout Queensland and, according to the company, is served in 80 per cent of Cairns restaurants.

The Jaques brothers, with their wives Linda and Marilyn, began their pioneering Tableland coffee plantation in 1979 with 90,000 coffee bushes.

When their \$600,000 coffee factory was opened in September 1984, the family company which had taken over the business, Jaques Brothers Coffee Pty Ltd, owned a 77 ha property and the bushes had increased to 240,000.

The opening of the factory made the company the only coffee processor in Australia and its efforts were hailed as successfully demonstrating coffee was a viable crop in this country.

In August 1982, the company was responsible for importing into Australia the first mechanical coffee harvester operating outside Brazil, a New Zealand-built berry picker specially adapted to their requirements.

In May this year, a new harvester, built by North Queensland Engineers and Agents in collaboration with the company, was successfully trialled on the property.

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FNQ round-up

Jaques denial

JAQUES Brothers Coffee Pty Ltd was not negotiating with overseas interests for the takeover of the North Queensland coffee grower, the company's manager, Mr Nat Jaques, said yesterday.

Mr Jaques said the company had been negotiating the sale of Jaques Brothers with a number of companies, including a West Australian company, but he did not know of any negotiations with overseas interests.

Mr Jaques said the company was currently trading out of liquidation and was expecting a good crop this year, with a predicted yield of about 100 tonnes of coffee. He said the company also had a good stock of coffee to supply current markets.

Babinda crush high

THE Babinda sugar mill crushed the highest tonnage of cane last week, according to figures released by the Australian Sugar Pro