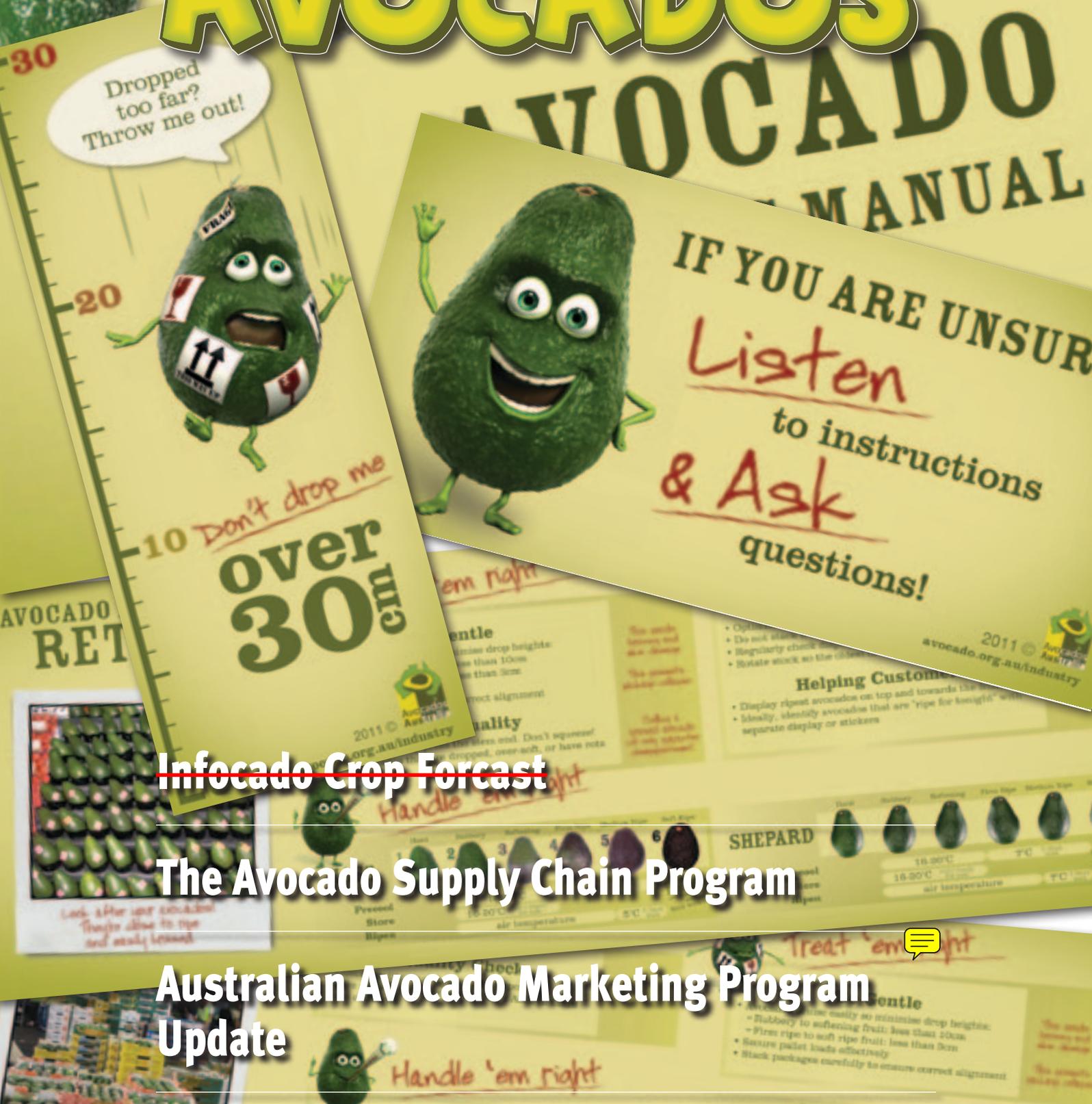


TALKING AVOCADOS



~~Infocado Crop Forecast~~

The Avocado Supply Chain Program

Australian Avocado Marketing Program Update

AUTUMN 2012

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We all make mistakes: If we make a mistake please let us know so a correction may be made in the next issue.

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Cover: A collage of the education material from the Avocado Supply Chain Program.

Chairman's Perspective

I have to admit that these past six months or so have surely tested the resolve of the office of Avocados Australia.

In September, we had the high of the very successful VII World Avocado Congress in Cairns and the staff of Avocados Australia had to come down off that high point very quickly to descend into the lows of a crashing market prices as the southern Australian crop clashed with the incoming New Zealand imports. Added to the pressure was the problem of our retail chains not supporting the Australian industry as we believe they should have.

CEO Antony Allen took the step to challenge the retailers and they did respond where they could. Woolworths kept one Distribution Centre in Queensland for the last of the Qld and NSW crop, whilst Coles battled to manage its Country of Origin labeling requirements. Every one of these challenges had to be handled with care to protect our growers and our relationship with the retailers, for the benefit of the whole industry.

Finally, the New Year settled down with the last of the NZ crop coming in very short of expectation in volume and quality. I was concerned that ~~that~~ poor quality would kill consumer demand but I am pleased that the NQ Shepards came on with excellent quality and restored the consumer faith in our industry.

February saw the resignation of our CEO Antony Allen, after nine and a half years of dedicated service to Avocados Australia. Antony was responsible for leading our industry to the high point where we are today - maintaining returns whilst the industry doubled production over the past ten years - and building a team of office staff that can service our requirements.

Antony left us to pursue new challenges in his career while he is still young enough. I, personally, and on behalf of the board of Avocados Australia and Australian avocado growers wish him great success in his new endeavours.

Since Antony's departure the board of Avocados Australia sought nominations for a new CEO and I am delighted to announce the appointment of John Tyas to that position. John is a long time friend of the avocado industry and of horticulture in Australia: I look forward to working with him and the board to continue and build on the solid platform that the avocado industry stands on here in Australia.

After the roller coaster of highs and lows there were many surprises and disappointments but I will focus on perhaps one of positives that I came to experience. Over the past month the staff at our office in Brisbane has done magnificent work in maintaining the office structure and continuing with the duties and projects in the absence of a CEO for direction. Maree Tyrell, Joanna Embry, John

Leonardi, Courtney Vane, Julie Petty, Nataly Rubio, and Amanda Madden have shown a great dedication to our office and our industry and I thank them all for their professional attitude and their assistance to me as we went through this last month. Their efforts are truly extraordinary and I urge all members to acknowledge and respect them for their dedication and professionalism. They all have a big thank you from me.

John Tyas takes up his new position in early May and I look forward to continuing the success of this great industry.

Jim Kochi

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia



Avocados Australia has for a number of years paid a large amount of money for the industry's right to use the **Heart Foundation "Heart Tick"** on avocados.

If you are using a "Heart Tick" logo from anyone other than the label companies Label Press, Spicer Labels, Sinclair International and Warehouse Packaging and Design you are acting illegally.

No other label printers are able to legally print the "Heart Tick" for use on avocados. Avocados Australia is undertaking a clean up of the "Heart Tick" printing. We will lose access to the "Heart Tick" logo if it is used illegally.

Avocados Australia, AUF and the Heart Foundation will enforce their Registered Trademark rights to the fullest extent.

If you have non-genuine labels do not use them. If you know of label companies offering to print non-genuine **"Heart Tick"** labels for you please let us know on **1300 303 971**, so we can all help keep this valuable tool.

All growers could lose access to the "Heart Tick" logo if you don't act now.

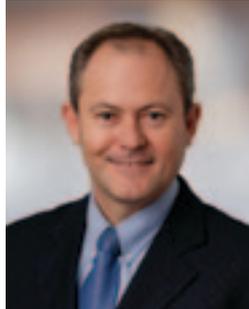


CERT TM

Industry Matters

John Tyas named new Avocados Australia CEO

Last week, after an intensive selection process, the Avocados Australia Board appointed its new Chief Executive Officer Mr John Tyas, who will take up the role in early May.



“We are delighted to announce Mr John Tyas as the new CEO of Avocados Australia” said Avocados Australia Chairman Mr Jim Kochi, “John has had a long association with avocados, he knows and understands the industry very well and we are confident in his ability to guide our growing industry.”

Mr Tyas has more than 20 years experience working in the horticultural industry. For the past 11 years he has worked for Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) as Industry Services Manager for a range of tropical fruit industries, responsible for managing the HAL relationship with such member industries and overseeing the levy investment programs.

Mr Tyas worked for the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation managing various research and development (R&D) portfolios prior to its merger with the Australian Horticultural Corporation to form HAL. Previous roles include managing R&D levy programs for Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Growers and working for Queensland DPI as an Extension Horticulturist.

To the role of Avocados Australia CEO he brings a strong background in strategic planning, R&D and marketing program development, and investment management. John also has hands on experience as a grower on his family farm at Narangba.

“I have had a long involvement with the Australian avocado industry and look forward to joining Avocados

Australia to build on the good work that has been done over many years,” he said.

Mr Tyas will assume the role of CEO in a year that is predicted to produce one of the biggest avocado crops in the history of the Australian avocado industry.

“Avocado is a unique product which has a strong position in the market and has enjoyed significant consumption growth, particularly in the last ten years. It's a progressive industry with a bright future,” he said.

Australia has the highest avocado consumption rate per capita than any other English speaking country in the world. Per person, Australian consumers eat around 2.7 kilograms of avocado a year - an amazing increase of more than 106% in the last decade. In the next four years the industry hopes to lift consumption even further with an ultimate goal of 5kg per person per year.

Avocados Australia presents Avocado Strategic Investment Plan to HAL Board

Last month, on Wednesday, 28 March 2012, the new Avocado Strategic Investment Plan was presented to the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) Board in Canberra. This was a great opportunity to better inform the HAL Board about key issues in the Australian avocado industry and proposed strategic R&D and marketing investments to be implemented through HAL over the next five years.

The HAL Board received presentations on the Strategic Investment Plans from six of the largest HAL member industries, including avocados. This was the first time the HAL Board has held a dedicated meeting for this purpose. The meeting enabled the HAL Board to gain a much deeper understanding of the avocado investment program, so that when projects are considered for approval, their strategic context can be better appreciated and understood.

The Avocado Strategic Investment Plan was endorsed at the recent Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting and was presented to the HAL Board by Avocados Australia

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Chairman Jim Kochi; IAC Chairman Bob Granger; Avocados Australia Director Tom Silver and Industry Services Manager John Tyas.

Supply Chain Education Program

As a part of the supply chain education program, avocado harvest guides for both growers and managers as well as pickers have been developed. These documents have been distributed to all growers.



Copies can be downloaded from the Education Materials page on the Avocados Australia website or hard copies can be ordered from Avocados Australia office.

Please contact Program Officer Julie Petty on (07) 3846 6566 or email supplychain@avocado.org.au for more information.

New Avocados Australia Member logo available: Promote your support of our industry today!



As peak industry body for the Australian avocado industry we are proud to represent the interests of all Australian avocado growers, but many do not realise that we are a 'not-for-profit' membership-based organisation.

There is a common misunderstanding among growers that if you are an Australian avocado grower and you pay an avocado levy then you are automatically a member. This is not the case; to become a member you need to complete an easy two-step membership process.



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Industry Matters continued

The funding generated from our members, and not from avocado levies, allows us to provide certain services with tangible benefits to the whole of industry. These services include:

- Bio-security - lobbying the Government to protect your business
- Submissions and lobbying - approaching Federal and State Governments on industry matters
- Avocados Australia website - providing information about retail prices, dry matter testing etc.
- Infocado - expanding and improving the national avocado crop flow information system
- Avocado export plan - developing a strategy and tools to help exporters access new markets
- Talking Avocados - continuing to improve industry communication via our quarterly magazine

If you are not a member or your membership is coming up for renewal please keep in mind that we need your support through your membership in order to continue offering these services.

For more information or to become a member please visit the Membership section of the website.

To obtain a copy of the Avocados Australia Member Logo please contact the Avocados Australia office at admin@avocado.org.au or (07) 3846 6566.

Foodservice Chef Training Classes in growing export markets

A new project is about to commence that will educate at least 250 chefs and key purchasers in the food service sector in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia about Australian avocados. Through educating this sector about Australian avocados we hope to improve their knowledge of how to use avocados in their menus that, in turn, will lead to increased consumer education and understanding of how the fruit can be used in many different ways.

Industry members are invited to attend these training sessions, but will be required to meet their own travel costs.

Following on from the success of the industry's foodservice strategy in the domestic market, the aim is now to replicate this program in growing export markets such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia to further expand Australian avocados dominance in these sectors.

From 2010 to 2011 Singapore drove volume growth for Australian avocados with 39% increase or almost 200 MT higher and Malaysia lifted up to 72% over the same period.

There were almost 50,000 MT of avocados imported to Asia in 2010, which is almost the equivalent of the Australian avocado production, and shows the potential this market has and the opportunity for the industry.

Looking at the other southern hemisphere competitors, it is evident that Chile has started making inroads to Hong Kong and South Africa to Singapore which is Australia's stronghold.^[1]

The outcomes of this project will be beneficial to the entire industry at large. The latest forecasts are that the Australian avocado production will reach 68 MT by 2012-2013. Therefore, there are strong financial incentives to export, both to increase returns directly, and to move excess product offshore to maintain domestic prices through reduced domestic supply.

The chef training classes will be held for three sectors within the foodservice industry overseas: beverage, dessert and restaurants. The dates for the chef training classes are:

- Kuala Lumpur May 15, 16, 17
- Singapore May 22, 24
- Hong Kong May 29, 30

In total, seven chef training classes will be held using the 'Australian Avocados- Fresh Avocados Masterbook'. The manual, developed for use within the domestic market, will be translated into traditional Chinese and Malay.

The chefs running these sessions are:

- Malaysia - Mohd Noor (Asian and beverage/dessert)
- Malaysia - Chef Chan Choo Kean (Chinese)
- HK - Chef Calvin (Chinese)
- HK - Eddy Leong (Asian)
- Singapore - Eric Neo

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- Singapore - Chef Pung Lu Tin (Chinese)

To view chef profiles please visit the Events page of the Avocados Australia website.

These chef training classes are open to anyone from the industry to attend at their own expense.

Should you wish to participate or require any further information please contact gunjan.tandan@horticulture.com.au

Add an Avo Every Day: Australian avocados have long since lost their reputation as a 'niche' product

The Australian avocado industry is encouraging consumers to eat more Australian avos. Fresh Australian avocados are not only a tasty and nutritious addition to any meal, but this year when you buy an Australian avocado you will also be supporting local farmers in what is predicted to be one of the biggest avocado crops in the history of the Australian avocado industry.

According to early forecasts from the Australian avocado industry, 30% more Australian avocados will be heading straight for the supermarket shelves this year. "There will plenty of Australian avocados on offer this year at your

local supermarket or green grocer, premium quality fruit at great prices, we are hoping more consumers will jump behind Australian avocado growers and start to love this truly amazing fruit" said Mr Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia.

"Australia has the highest avocado consumption rate per capita than any other English speaking country in the world, per person we eat around 2.7 kilograms of avocado a year – that's an increase of more than 106% in the last decade," said Mr Allen. "This year we are hoping to lift consumption even further and get a little closer to our goal of 5kg per person per year."

Australian avocado growers and pack houses have already begun working with the supermarkets, wholesalers and exporters to appropriately manage the crop. Planned programs are in place throughout the entire supply chain to assure consumers that no matter the size of the crop they will still be getting the premium quality that Australian avocados are known for. The industry's highly regarded marketing campaign is also in full swing to promote this wonderful fruit.

Looking to buy an Australian avocado? Currently, Western



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Industry Matters continued

Australian growers are harvesting Hass avocados. Many consumers are familiar with the popular and tasty Hass avocado, which is a wonderfully versatile variety available year-round. Growers in the Atherton Tablelands and Bundaberg regions are or will soon begin harvesting Shepard avocados; a delicious, buttery, green-skinned avocado only available between the months of February and April each year.

Buy an Australian avocado today and share your favourite avocado recipe ideas and tips by liking the Australian Avocados Facebook page at facebook.com/AustralianAvocados. The Australian Avocados Facebook page gives avocado-loving consumers a place where they can freely share, comment, discuss, and engage in conversation about all things avocado-related.

Not on Facebook? Visit the Australian Avocados website at avocado.org.au to share your favourite avocado recipe, see what other avocado-lovers are cooking, and browse hundreds of other quick ideas and tasty recipes that are sure to keep everyone happy.

International Avocado Research Consortium Key to Future

Over the last year the grower organisations from Australia, California, New Zealand and Mexico have formed an international consortium, the Avocado Research Consortium (ARC), to fund key avocado research. The formal agreement between the four organisations was signed in early September 2011 at the VII World Avocado Congress in Cairns, Australia.

The four consortium partners have in the first instance committed research funding to the key issue affecting all aspects of the avocado supply chain; 'alternate bearing'. Avocado trees in all producing countries suffer from varying degrees of alternate bearing and the impact on growers, marketers and consumers is severe.

"Fluctuations in production and therefore supply create the worst conditions for industry growth," explained Ms. Jennifer Scouler, CEO of the New Zealand Avocado Growers' Association, "growers have up to 90 percent variation in crop yields and even variations in yield of 15 percent can reduce profitability to zero."

"We recognised two things in looking for solutions to this key avocado grower issue," explained Mr Antony Allen, Chair of the International ARC and CEO of Avocados Australia, "firstly the alternate bearing issue was a global problem and secondly the research base is shrinking and each country's avocado researcher base is smaller than five years ago."

"We needed to combine our financial and researcher resources to be able to work on this key avocado grower issue and in the process give the research community a good reason to focus on avocados as a career," explained Mr Tom Bellamore, President of the California Avocado Commission.

Last year the first call for research funding proposals was made and there were a number of very clever and innovative proposals submitted in response. Each proposal has ensured that the growers from each of the countries of the Consortium partners will receive direct on the ground benefit from the research as soon as possible.

The first proposed ARC project is one that extends the work of Dr. Carol J. Lovatt from the University of California, Riverside. Dr Lovatt is one of the world's leading avocado researchers and she is partnering with Dr Samuel Salazar-García of INIFAP-Campo Experimental Santiago Ixcuintla in Mexico.

"We have all recognised that we have to expand our research base and train new researchers in each of our countries, and this is one way that we can improve the international networking of avocados researchers,"

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explained Mr Armando Lopez-Orduña, CEO of APEAM, Mexico.

For more information please visit the News page of the Avocados Australia website at industry.avocado.org.au/News

Avocado Co-operative Promotion Program

What are co-operative promotions?

Co-operative promotions exist when separate organisations work together to promote the same product with mutually desirable outcomes. In the case of avocados, funds have been allocated to enhance existing promotions of commercial organisations planned to take place in 2012 through financial and in-kind contributions.

Avocado Co-operative Program - Domestic Promotion
Horticulture Australia (HAL) and Avocados Australia have committed to support the range of businesses that make up the avocado industry by allocating a budget for co-operative promotions in the 2012 season. The promotions must have similar goals and objectives to the national promotions campaign and meet required

professional standards.

HAL and Avocados Australia recognise the value that various participants in the avocado industry provide in promoting the fruit within the highly competitive domestic market. By assisting these participants to effectively promote avocados, the Australian avocado industry is able to generate increased consumer exposure for the product leading to expanded sales and returns for growers.

Avocado Co-operative Program - Export Market Development

HAL and Avocados Australia have committed to support the range of businesses that make up the avocado industry by allocating a budget for co-operative export market development activities including promotions in the 2012 season, aimed specifically at improving Australian volume of avocado exports. The activities funded must have similar goals and objectives to the national avocado strategic plan and meet required professional standards.

HAL and Avocados Australia recognise the value that various participants in the avocado industry provide in market development for avocados within the highly

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Industry Matters continued

competitive export market. By assisting these participants to effectively undertake market development and promotion activities, the Australian avocado industry is able to generate increased exposure for the product leading to expanded sales and returns for growers.

What should the promotions objectives be?

All promotions supported from levies, either financially or in-kind, must have similar goals and objectives to the avocado industry's national 5-year strategic plan and 3-year promotional plan. These are outlined in the 'Domestic Promotion Guidelines and Application Procedures' and the 'Export Market Development Guidelines and Application Procedures' for 2012.

How to apply

Please use the 'Avocado Co-operative Program Application Form' available on the Growers - Notices page of the Avocados Australia website to apply for either program.

OrchardInfo update

Within the coming months all Australian growers will be receiving copies of the 2010/2011 season OrchardInfo forms; these forms require updating and will be sent via post and email. The forms will be out to each growing region as their season finishes. The forms are used to collect orchard information including tree numbers, tree age, varieties, rootstocks and overall production. Once collated, this information will give individuals and the industry a clear understanding of how many trees of different ages are in the ground and therefore provide the information necessary to generate long term forecasts for the industry. It will also give individuals a good idea of what varieties are being grown and where.

We strongly encourage you to fill out the forms to the best

of your ability and return them to us as the more people who participate, the more accurate the reporting will be.

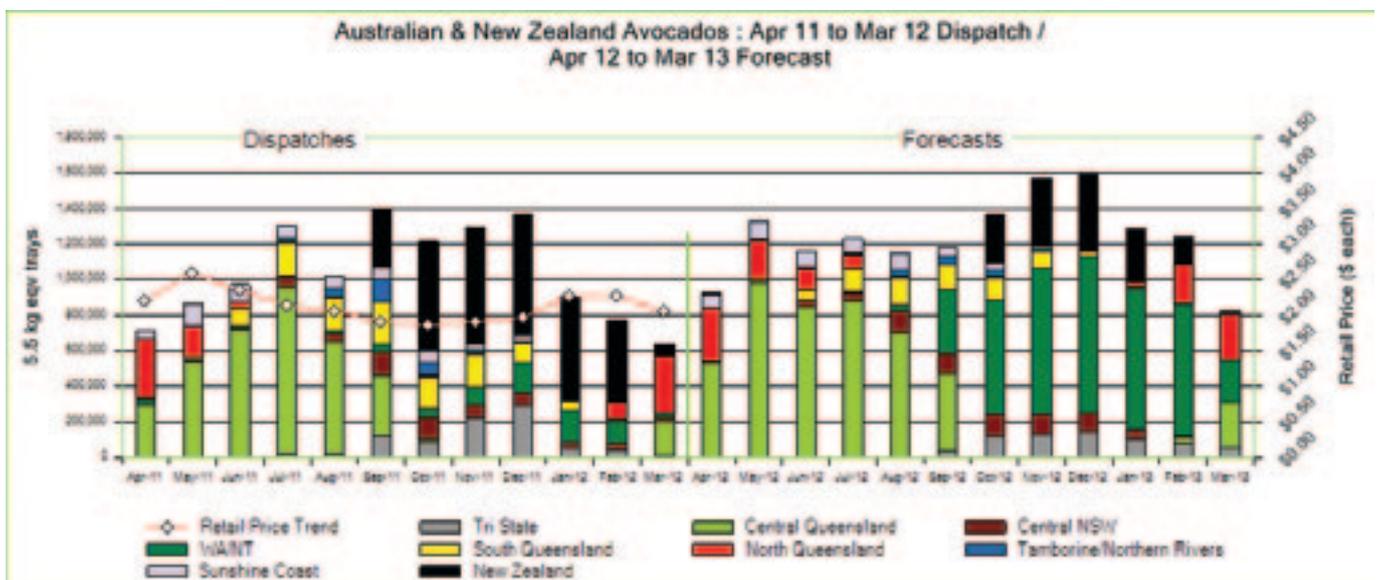
For more information please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566 or email supplychain@avocado.org.au

Infocado Update

Below are extracts from the April 2012 Infocado Quarterly Report and recent weekly reports.

High volumes are predicted in the coming months and the year in general which means it will be vital for all growers to work closely with their supply chain partners to ensure fruit moves through the system as quickly as possible. The expanding export industry should help with moving fruit through the system and all growers and packhouses should be including exports in their marketing plans to alleviate pressure on the domestic market. Carefully planned programs will result in happy consumers and increased sales.

The below graph is an extract from the April 2012 Quarterly Report. It shows the Australian and New Zealand dispatches for the last 12 months and a forecast for the next 12 months.



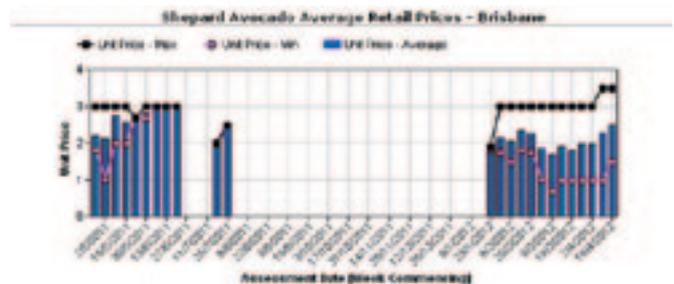
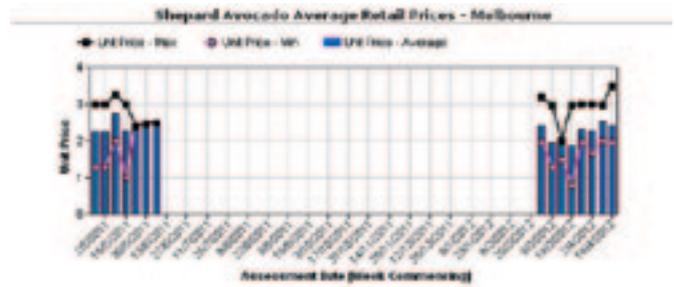
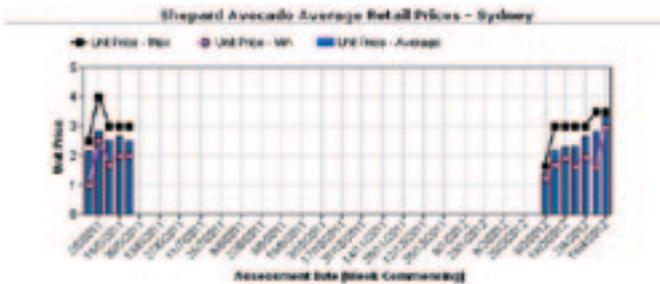


The 2012/2013 WA crop is expected to be huge as new plantings come on line and crop load is particularly heavy. Once final fruit drop has finished a more accurate estimate will be possible.

The below graph is an extract from the most recent Weekly Infocado Report and shows the total dispatches of Australian and New Zealand fruit by destination state. It should be noted that from week 47 onwards no New Zealand figures were entered into Infocado which is why no data is showing above the black line.



As this weeks retail price graphs below illustrate, retail prices for Shepard have remained high into late April. With Hass volumes set to increase dramatically in May we can expect these prices to come down in the coming weeks.



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Around Australia

Tri State Report

By Nick Hobbs, Avocados Australia Director for the Tri State Growing Area



The la Nina weather pattern has seen the tristate again have a mild summer, and while wetter than the drought years, nowhere near as wet as the previous summers. Wine grape growers have gotten through to harvest without the severe fungal disease problems of last season.

The biggest problem has been commodity prices with the orange season a disaster and stone fruit growers reporting one of their lowest priced seasons for many years due to plentiful supply, reduced exports due to the high dollar and perceived lower domestic demand. In fact looking at the pricing generally in the market very low pricing seems to be an issue for many fruit and vegetables this season. Dried vine fruit seems to be the exception with a world shortage lifting returns.

After the biggest harvest in ten years we would normally have seen tristate avocado volumes shrink back with an off year. Not the case. I have reports from growers suggesting cropping levels for Hass ranging from still reasonable to as good as last year and some indicating better than last year, particularly if the patch was not overly heavy last year after coming out of the drought. I would put this partly due to the kind weather conditions but perhaps more due to the fact that many growers have far better nutrition programs now and are achieving good flowering even after a good crop.

On top of this we seem to have had reasonable to good pollination conditions and no heat wave to cause excessive shedding. Now that fruit is starting to show, even the orchards that thought they were a bit light are looking better for crop.

What this means is that Tristate is likely to have the second biggest crop in ten years since the dry period started. Not to last year's level but still significant.

With this in mind and looking at the crop levels particularly in WA, growers need to be seriously considering where their fruit will be marketed. There is enough fruit to support a strong supply of fruit to the supermarkets right through summer and all Tristate growers need to support supply programs to these outlets. If we try and just stick it in the wholesale markets as we have for the past 20 years, leaving the supermarkets to imports, then it is just about certain that we will be joining the stonefruit and other growers with seriously low returns and wondering what went wrong.

Central New South Wales Report

By Chris Nelson, Avocados Australia Director for the Central New South Wales Growing Area



It is with great sadness that I report the end of daylight savings in NSW as I write this update, such a shame it has to finish so soon - although darkness is a good excuse to finish the day in time to see the news. By now, most growers will pretty much know what they will harvest in the coming months. The only remaining influence we still have over volume is whether to size pick or not - depending on the concentration of sunny used, it will usually be possible to increase harvested kilograms by 15-20 percent.

In terms of the pack out quality, this is largely already set from our crop protection programs so far but it is important to keep up the discipline to obtain the lowest possible reject rate. For NSW growers, the issue of fruit quality and product integrity will increasingly become more important if the season just passed is any indication of the future that lies ahead. As competition increases among Australian suppliers and more critically from NZ imports, the work you have done in the past to establish brand reputation and product integrity will now support you in these busier markets.

This past summer supply season, the quality of New Zealand origin product in most supermarkets was very concerning; I would imagine the average consumer would have struggled to justify the purchase as a worthwhile one given what was frequently available in stores. Where exactly the damage was occurring to the fruit we will never know but it is probably a reasonable assumption that the day it was picked there was nothing wrong with it at all. It is true that the imported fruit must be handled more carefully due to the longer period from pick to consumption compared with locally grown fruit, but in many cases even local fruit can spend many weeks between tree and store shelf so we must remain vigilant to our own supply chains.

Now more than ever it is critical to consider every little detail in our supply chains and satisfy ourselves that the end consumer at retail level is receiving the same quality product we pick from our trees. Do whatever you need to do to start your cool chain immediately after the fruit is picked. The time left at ambient after harvest has one of the biggest impacts on shelf life. Generally speaking, I think as growers we already do this reasonably well but we can still improve, and continual improvement and emphasis on this area of operations will pay dividends in the highly competitive markets we will surely be faced with. It is important to remember that once a market

becomes more competitive, we must differentiate to secure our market share. Ensuring our product remains superior and then promoting this to our consumers will be the easiest way to make sure our future is bright.

South Queensland Report

By Daryl Boardman, Avocados Australia
Director for the South Queensland Growing Area



Well who could have asked for a more spectacular Easter. I think the whole east coast if not Australia had fantastic weather which hopefully led to high consumption of avocados.

Currently we are seeing Shepard avocados in the stores and they have been good quality from what I have seen. Hass will not be far away so with a bit of luck quality will be good and sales will also.

Talking to people it seems that tree health since last season's wet is still a problem with some sections of orchards passed saving and being pushed out or stumped. Even the trees that have been saved have mixed degrees of health and fruit set.

As most would now know we have had our CEO leave and

he has been replaced by our new CEO John Tyas. I would like to thank Antony Allen, on behalf of South Qld growers, for his hard work and dedication to this industry, nine and a half years is a long time in a job (something you don't see that much anymore), thanks again Antony.

To our new CEO John Tyas, I welcome you to our great industry and I am sure that with your knowledge of our industry through your association with Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) you will settle in quickly and be a great asset for all in the industry. Welcome and I look forward to working with you to continue to grow and keep the industry profitable for all.

I would like also to just mention our current chairman and office staff. Jim Kochi and the girls and boy at Avocados Australia have done a great job in keeping the industry and projects running through the CEO transition and unless I have missed something I think all has run very smoothly. Thank you to everyone.

As everyone is aware we are looking down the barrel of a huge Hass season, this will need to be well coordinated and managed so I urge everyone to think about their volumes and picking times to make sure they discuss with their markets or marketers the best options.

I wish all in SQ a better season in regards to prices than

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Around Australia continued

last season, but this will only happen if we all talk about and be honest of the volumes that we have, and when we expect to harvest and send to the markets.

Tamborine and Northern Rivers Report

By Tom Silver, Avocados Australia Director for the Tamborine and Northern Rivers Growing Area



2012 has started as another wet one for northern NSW and Tamborine growing areas. Growers in the northern parts of the region were swamped by record rain events in January whilst the northern NSW area, though avoiding any extreme events, has remained incredibly wet underfoot. This has been exacerbated by overcast days and below average temperatures resulting in sodden orchards unable to handle machinery. Despite the overcast conditions fruit continues to size and mature nicely. Fruit is also quite clean with little insect pressure. Crop size continues to be patchy.

It is forecasted that Australia will harvest a record crop of approximately 12 million trays this year; this figure will be higher when NZ fruit is included. Such a massive

volume of fruit requires all players in the market, from the picker in the orchard to the retail employee maintaining the display, to be switched on. All growers, marketers and pack houses need to be focussed and working with wholesalers, supermarkets and exporters to ensure efficient programmed supply. Hass fruit must be at least 23 percent dry matter and growers must resist the temptation of sending low quality or poorly packed fruit as this will only drag down wholesale markets. I believe we can still maintain good prices throughout the season despite the challenges, the benefits of such a large crop is that by communicating that the crop is plentiful, fruit is less likely to be "squirreled" away by handlers and the consumer will be getting a fresher, better quality piece of fruit. Let's make it work!

By now you would be aware of the Australian Avocados sticker delineating Australian fruit from imported product. This promotion of Australian grown avocados will be backed up by the Australian Avocados Marketing Program that spreads across TV, magazine, editorials, PR and online, and will be driving the same 'buy Australian' message. I encourage all pack houses to adopt the new sticker to allow the campaign to work and give the industry better leverage when dealing with retailers.

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Sunshine Coast Report

By Peter Annand, Avocados Australia Director for the Sunshine Coast Growing Area



After devastating rain last year, this summer was mostly cool with comparable total rain in smaller dumps; giving orchards a chance to dry. Though it is too soon to call, this is a reason to hope we will be spared another Phytophthora outbreak. Trees that haven't fully recovered from last year's onslaught are, however, still at risk.

This year's crop looks smaller than last year's. Fruit drop is small, perhaps reflecting the smaller crop and mild season. Growers are approaching picking conservatively after seeing prices crash last September; spreading their risk and avoiding holding fruit too late. However, some report quantities of very late-set fruit that will not mature until Christmas.

The summer leaf flush that will provide next season's fruiting twigs is much less than usual in many cases, suggesting that next year's crop may also be below average.

Central Queensland Report

By Lachlan Donovan and John Walsh, Avocados Australia Directors for the Central Queensland Growing Area



The Shepard season has finished and, although a lighter crop than anticipated, the prices have been strong. With estimates, it always appears that when there is a light crop growers overestimate and when there is a heavy crop we underestimate; let's see how this pans out for the upcoming Hass crop!

This crop is forecast to be big out of CQ and, along with the huge crop forecast out of NQ, we will certainly see some downward pressure on prices this season. There will certainly be a baptism of fire for the new CEO, nothing like a good challenge to keep the blood pumping. Of course saying that, the Marketing Program has been approved and is ready to start; it is a very comprehensive program but with a 30 percent increase in production this year it will be challenge. The industry still needs accurate forecast information, this is especially critical when there is a substantial crop about, without this information it

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Around Australia continued

becomes very difficult putting together the timing of any marketing program.

Congratulations need to be made to our departing CEO, nearly 10 years at the rein. Antony Allen had a major hand in bringing the industry to the highly respected level it is now, lets just hope we continue with the upwards momentum and keep building this industry.

Weather is always an issue and it appears that more huge rain events are occurring which is never good for avocados - we are still finding trees succumbing to these pressures. The good news is that the dams are full and we will probably have full allocation this coming season. Ok, let's bring on the Hass!

North Queensland Report

By Jim Kochi, Avocados Australia Director for the North Queensland Growing Area



This summer season was certainly kinder to North Qld than last year. Actually, we had a "green drought" with frequent short and light rain events without the long deluge that we experienced last year. Consequently, the disease level in the Shepard variety was low and long sunny days brought the dry matter up quickly.

This year, as in 2010, brought the Shepards into the market at excellent quality and good dry matter levels which gave the consumer a good avocado to eat. This was the secret to maintaining higher prices throughout the Shepard season after the low prices seen in the last of the Hass from New Zealand and the last of the Australian crop.

The Hass crop is large this year, the harvest has begun and the power of the marketing program is yet to be seen as the North Qld volume joins the Central Qld volume to produce a market volume in excess of 1 million tray equivalents per month.

This will be the year to test all of our programs and I wish all growers the best result for the coming Hass season.

There will be a lot of information coming to all growers through Guacamole (our industry's fortnightly e-newsletter), in a new monthly marketing e-newsletter and through other digital media sources; take the time to read through this information so you can see the depth and complexity of our marketing program for this year.

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Unique opportunity for avocado growers, packers and marketers

PMA Fresh Connections organisers, together with Avocados Australia are encouraging avocado growers, packers and marketers to get to PMA Fresh Connections 2012 and make the most of a visit from one of the keynote speakers at this year's conference and trade show (Melbourne 26-28 June) Dr Jan de Lyser, Vice President Marketing for the California Avocado Commission (CAC), US Produce Marketer of the Year 2011 and PMA Chair-elect.

In addition to her role as keynote speaker, Jan will be guest speaker at a Special Interest Workshop on "Cutting-edge initiatives to increase avocado sales in the Pacific Rim." Hosted by Avocados Australia, the hour-long workshop is specifically designed to provide detailed and specific information to avocado growers, packers, marketers.

Currently responsible for the overall leadership, management and organisation of the CAC's marketing functions, Jan has helped the avocado industry attain phenomenal growth during her time in the industry and she will offer avocado industry delegates valuable lessons on how this has been achieved.

"Jan will bring to delegates some great insights into successful avocado marketing and really being able to connect with consumers" said Michael Worthington, CEO of PMA Australia-New Zealand. "During her time as Marketing VP, avocados have seen a phenomenal rise in sales. Being awarded Produce Marketer of the Year was highly justified and a reflection of her considerable success and wealth of experience in the avocado industry" he added.

"The Special Interest Workshops (hosted by various retailers, industry organisations and technical experts) are designed to give specific industry segments the opportunity to ask the how, what and why questions that don't usually get asked, and to learn how to apply the most recent techniques into their business environment" said Mr Worthington.

Jan says that there is much to be learned from global alliances, networks and industry peers.

"It makes sense to collaborate globally especially where there is value in learning from each other. As an example, with avocado production research projects we can get a better understanding of and identify solutions for the alternate bearing nature of the Hass avocado worldwide" she said.

"Global alliances can benefit the produce industry in research, marketing and increasing consumption. Even where there is competition for share of shelf and share of

stomach, collaboration on increasing demand ahead of the supply can result in a positive outcome in the marketplace" she added.

In her keynote address to all conference delegates, Jan will be addressing the topic of consumers as drivers of change throughout the fresh produce industry in her plenary session and cites interest in locally grown, food safety, and the "consumer voice" as the three main trends influencing change that she has seen in the fresh produce industry in the past decade.

"Do your consumer research, know your capabilities, understand your distribution and then make disciplined



Jan Delyser

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decisions based upon your strengths and competitive advantages. Work on building both demand and value” she emphasised.

Jan also emphasises the importance of initiatives to increase consumption of fresh produce, and especially avocados.

“Increasing consumption of all fresh produce is very important throughout the entire supply chain, from farm to table. For example, consumer health can be improved with a better diet including more produce. Retailers and foodservice operator profits can benefit from increased consumption of fresh produce, and for growers it is essential to their livelihoods.”

“We have seen avocado volume in the United States nearly triple over the last 10 years and it is expected to continue to increase with additional sources of supply. We are now at 1.4 billion pounds and will likely reach 2 billion pounds in the next 5 years. Without the marketing investment made by the California Avocado Commission since 1978 and the Hass Avocado Board since 2004, we would not

have seen avocado consumption nearly triple with viable returns to producers. It is significant that the California Avocado industry has realized its two highest crop values on record over the past two seasons” she said.

In addition to Jan’s insights, avocado industry members will also benefit from attending sessions on topics such as southern hemisphere suppliers competing for market share in China, food safety, the growing foodservice sector, the battle for retail space, attracting talent to our industry, launching profitable new products and getting the most out of social media.

A joint initiative by PMA Australia-New Zealand and The Australian Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries, PMA Fresh Connections will bring together delegates from across the entire fruit, vegetable and floral industries in Australia and New Zealand and will be sure to inspire, educate and build business connections.

Registrations for PMA Fresh Connections 2012 are now open. To register, and for full information on the event, sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities, please visit www.pmafreshconnections.com.au-05.



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The Avocado Supply Chain Program

Where have we come from and where are we going?

In the past few years the Australian avocado industry has rolled out programs and achieved outcomes that have been the envy of other horticultural industries. Examples of this include Infocado and the range of supply chain education materials which have been adapted for domestic and export use. These achievements stem from a large and complex group of projects with one overarching goal; the development of an Avocado Quality Management System (QMS).

This QMS would take the form of accreditation for each sector of the supply chain. The purpose of this accreditation is to ensure that each sector follows recommended handling practices, thus playing their part in delivering the highest quality fruit to consumers.

This is particularly important given that we know consumers want:

- Ripe and ready fruit they can eat today or tomorrow
- Mature fruit
- 23% Dry Matter for Hass
- 21% Dry Matter for Shepard
- Fruit with less than 10% internal flesh defects

Results from the retail quality surveys indicate that bruising has been a significant issue to date and that industry still has work to do to meet the goal of having less than 10 percent internal flesh defects.

Projects can be broken into two sections; those relating to **Industry Supply** (Infocado, OrchardInfo) and those relating to **Industry Demand** (all other programs). A brief overview of these projects is included below:

Industry Supply

Infocado

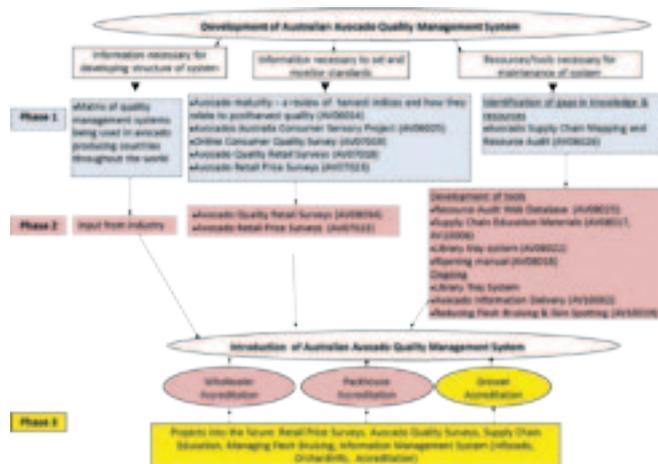
- Developed to assist with the collection of more meaningful and timely data on the volume of avocados entering the Australian market place
- Four modules included in the system; the seasonal forecasts, the weekly forecasts, the dispatch and the wholesale modules
- Accounts for a minimum of 85% of production
- Additional relevant information has been included with reports; retail prices, monthly dry matter reports and marketing updates

OrchardInfo

- Developed for long term forecasting and productivity measurement
- Data gathered includes variety, rootstocks, marketable yield, age, tree/row spacing and number of trees/ha

Industry Demand

The below flowchart depicts the projects which have been undertaken while working towards the implementation of the QMS.



Before the QMS could be rolled out the industry needed to:

- Establish what it needed to aim for – what do consumers want?
- Establish where industry sat in terms of consumer wants – are quality targets being met?
- Identify any important information gaps in the supply chain that will influence industry's goal of meeting consumer wants.
- Fill the information gaps with well researched and documented fruit handling recommendations. These recommendations would be used in the rollout of the QMS and accreditation to measure participants against.
- Establish a system to monitor and measure progress, particularly in terms of quality and volumes into the market.

Phases 1 and 2 in the flowchart show the projects undertaken to help achieve the above listed needs. A brief outline of the outcomes of each of those projects is listed below.

The Avocado Supply Chain Program continued

AVo6014 - Desktop Study of Avocado Maturity

- Undertaken by HortResearch.
- Researched maturity standards around world and technologies used in measuring it.
- Supported the implementation of an industry Dry Matter standard.

AVo6025/AVo7019 – Consumer Sensory Research

- Undertaken by Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and HortResearch.
- Established the above listed consumer preferences; including Dry Matter percentages and goals regarding internal flesh defects.
- This project established the goals the industry needed to work towards. Results have influenced development of many new projects and targets set by the industry. More information about the results from this program can be seen on the Quality Program page of the Avocados Australia website.

AVo6026 Avocado Supply Chain Mapping and Resource Audit

- Undertaken by Avocados Australia, p2p Business Solutions and Produce Pathways.
- Audit of research related to best practice at each point in supply chain and resources available.
- Identified gaps in research, resources and support.
- Recommended the development of a fruit quality benchmarking system for the industry and an Infocado Wholesale module.

AVo7018/AVo8034/AV11015 - Avocado Quality Retail Surveys (based off work in AVo6014, AVo6025 and AVo7019)

- Undertaken by Avocados Australia, DEEDI, and Plant and Food Research.
- From 2008 to present day, monthly avocado quality surveys have been conducted on fruit from 64 stores across Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.
- The goal of the surveys is to monitor fruit quality in the marketplace and the level of disappointment for consumers (i.e. fruit which has more than 10% internal flesh damage or is not mature).
- From 2008 to present day, randomly selected fruit from the Sydney markets is tested monthly for its Dry Matter percentage to measure maturity. Aggregated results are published monthly on the Avocados Australia website and in the Infocado Report.
- Critical project – needed to measure and benchmark the industry’s performance over time based off of previously established targets.

- Results of the project to date can be viewed on the Quality Program and Maturity Monitoring pages of the Avocados Australia website. Results were also published in the last edition of Talking Avocados. Results from the project identified that bruising was a significant issue for the industry, both for Hass and Shepard varieties, and that this issue is improving over time.
- Lead to the contracting of projects targeting a reduction in flesh bruising as well as the development of an Avocado Ripening Manual.

AVo7023 - Retail Price Surveys

- Undertaken by Avocados Australia.
- Includes the collection of avocado retail pricing information from 64 stores in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane on a weekly basis. Data has been collected since June 2008. Results are published weekly on the Avocados Australia website as well as in the Weekly Infocado Report. To view results please visit the Retail Pricing page on the Avocados Australia website.
- Vital information for linking with retail quality to show how quality and retail price interact and also how retail price and volume interact. This is the only project of its kind where pricing information is collected and published in real time.



AVo8017/AV10006 – Supply Chain Education Materials (based off of AVo6026)

- Undertaken by Avocados Australia, DEEDI, the Avocado Export Company (AEC), and supply chain partners.
- Projects aimed to fill previously identified information gaps in the supply chain. Some of the materials have been adapted for use in export markets.
- Developed the following education material that can be downloaded from the Education Materials page on the Avocados Australia website:
 - The Little Green Book (15,000 distributed to date, targeting all sectors of the supply chain)
 - Colour and Ripeness Chart (6,500 distributed to date, targeting all sectors of the supply chain)
 - Avocado Handling: Retailer (3,500 distributed to date, targeting retailers)

- Avocado Handling: Wholesaler (700 distributed to date, targeting wholesalers)
- Avocado Handling: Packhouse (500 distributed to date, targeting packhouses)
- Avocado Harvesting: Pickers (600 distributed to date, targeting avocado pickers)
- Avocado Harvesting: Growers and Managers (600 distributed to date, targeting growers and orchard managers)
- Avocado Transport Guide: Road and Rail (850 distributed to date, targeting packhouses and transport companies)
- Avocado Transport Guide: Road and Rail Quick Reference (850 distributed to date, targeting packhouses and transport companies)
- Australian Avocado Grading Poster (being distributed to all known avocado packhouses)
- Rolled out a retailer education program to over 600 retailers spread across Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane. This program is designed to ensure retailers and their floor staff are aware of the best recommended practices for handling avocados. The goal of this program is to ensure fruit quality is maintained.
- Funding the development of an online, interactive, adult training system where existing education materials will be converted to a training format. This system is designed to be a training and induction aid for all members of the supply chain. The system is under development and will be up and running for some sectors of the supply chain by the end of the year.

AVo8025 - Avocado Resource Audit Web Database

- Undertaken by Avocados Australia.
- Funded the establishment of a web based database with a search and filtering tool for journal articles on avocado research and other resources. This catalogue is available from the Avocados Australia website – interested viewers will need to register to receive their user name and password before using the catalogue.

AVo8018 - Development of Best Practice Guidelines for Avocado Ripening

- Undertaken by DEEDI and supply chain partners.
- Funded the development of an Avocado Ripening Manual – this manual can be downloaded from the Education Materials page of the Avocados Australia website.



AVo8022 - Avocado Quality Monitoring via Library Tray System

- Undertaken by Plant and Food New Zealand.
- Aimed at reviewing existing library tray systems in other industries and countries to establish how one could be established in the Australian marketplace.

Developing a Library Tray System for Hass & Shepard Avocado

- Undertaken by DEEDI and supply chain partners.
- This project is funded through Voluntary Contributions and Federal Government matching dollars through HAL. The aim of the program is to trial the establishment of a library tray system in the Australian market.

AV10002 - Avocado Information Delivery

- Undertaken by DEEDI.
- Funding the publication of a Problem Pocket Solver targeting growers, the revision of production guidelines for growers to replace the Agrilink Avocado Information Kit and ongoing training for growers on how to use AVOMAN. Published materials will be available in hard copy as well as online.

AV10019 - Reducing Flesh Bruising and Skin Spotting in Hass Avocado (based off findings from retail quality surveys)

- Undertaken by DEEDI, The University of Queensland and supply chain partners.
- The goal of the program is to identify how flesh bruising can be decreased. Research is being undertaken to understand where and how bruising occurs in the supply chain, what tools can be developed to help reduce bruising and how bruise assessments can be improved.
- Researchers are also investigating what the impact of skin spotting has on consumer acceptance. Results from this project to date were published in the Summer 2011/12 issue of Talking Avocados.

The above projects have spanned over Phases 1 and 2 of the development of a QMS. Phase 3 encompasses the rollout of the QMS and accreditation; this is the stage industry is up to now. Over the coming years the QMS system will be rolled to all sectors of the supply chain including growers, packhouses, wholesalers, ripeners,

The Avocado Supply Chain Program continued

transporters and retailers with the goal of improving and maintaining fruit quality. Activities and projects going forward and or continuing from this point include:

- Completion of AV10019 (DEEDI bruising project). Results from this project will lead to a better understanding of how and where bruising predominately is occurring in the supply chain as well as recommendations on how these issues can be addressed. The second phase of this project will build on these findings and investigate further options for addressing the issues.
- Completion of AV10002 (Pocket Problem Solver and revision of the Agrilink Manual). The documents produced through this project will form the base of a grower accreditation system detailing the best recommended practices and techniques.
- Completion of AV10006 (online training, retailer training). The online training will provide another tool for avocado businesses to use when training their staff. It can be quickly and cost effectively updated with new information. Initial content will be based off the already published education materials. Continuous retailer training will ensure the industry's messages are being reinforced and quality is maintained. The next phase of this project is designed to continue the rollout and improvement of the online training system and retailer training program through the development of additional

training tools. The project will also fund the continued supply of hard copy educational materials.

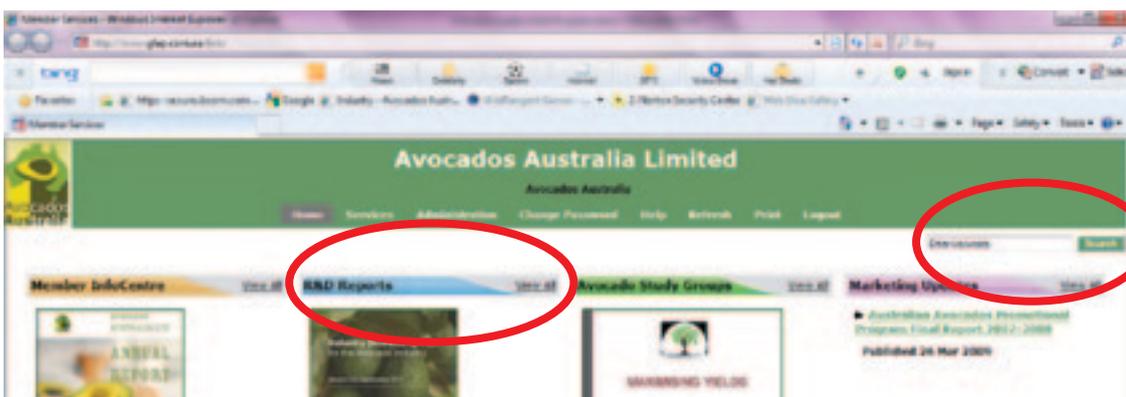
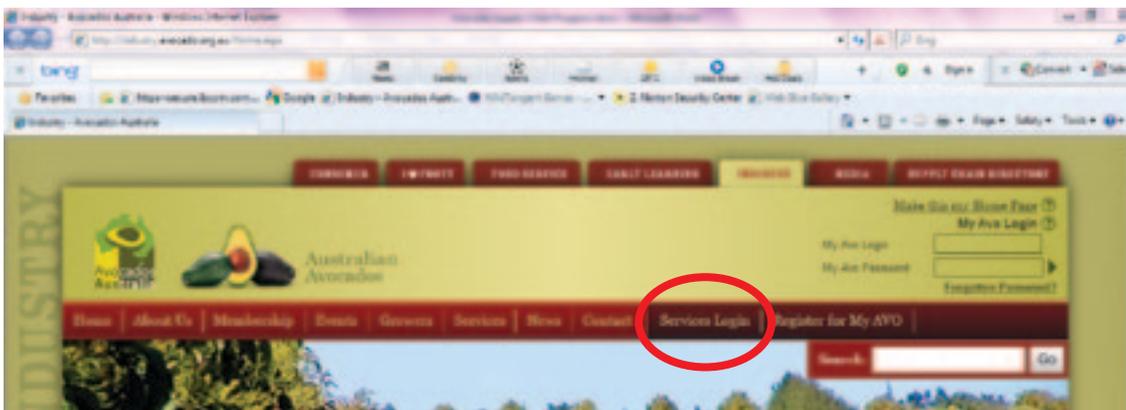
- Retail quality surveys and Dry Matter testing will be continued to enable continuous monitoring of avocado quality and maturity at a retail level. This program provides essential information on how the industry is progressing towards meeting its goal of having less than 10 percent internal damage and providing mature fruit to the market place.
- Retail price collection will continue which will provide a vital link with retail quality to show how quality and retail price interact and also how retail price and volume interact.
- The Infocado and OrchardInfo programs will continue into the future to provide the industry with short and long term volume forecasts. This information is useful both to individual businesses and also to the wider industry in terms of making more informed business choices and decisions about future levy investment.

More information on the finished programs including final reports can be found on the Avocados Australia website. Simply go to the website, click on 'Services Login' and enter your username and password.

Once logged in, you can then search for the final report you want by entering the project code or name into

the search box. Alternatively you can view all reports on the website by clicking 'view all'.

If you have any questions or would like more information about anything mentioned in this article, please contact Julie Petty, Program Manager at Avocados Australia on 07 3846 6566 or email supplychain@avocado.org.au



Grower Monitoring Highlighted in FSB Survey

*Mark Hickey and Stephen Morris
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Wollongbar*

An electronic survey on fruitspotting bug (FSB) management practices was completed by 46 avocado growers and 64 macadamia growers in November 2011. The survey was conducted as part of the HAL cross industry funded Fruitspotting Bug Management Project to establish a baseline of “pest impacts and key management practices” across both industries. The survey was based on results from the 2010/11 season.

The survey showed that the vast majority of those growers surveyed **do** monitor for FSB, with 95 percent of macadamia growers and 83 percent of avocado growers either using a pest scout or monitoring themselves. Because FSB is a very shy pest, most macadamia growers and scouts (87%) counted fallen fruit, while avocado growers tended more to look in trees for the bugs themselves with only 15 percent counting fallen fruit.

Timing of sprays differed between the two industries with avocado growers spraying anytime from soon after fruit set until a few weeks prior to harvest, while macadamia growers most frequently sprayed when the nuts were $\frac{3}{4}$ size, and rarely applied sprays after full size, or later than January. Growers and pest scouts from both industries used the technique of monitoring “hotspots” (areas where the pest tends to congregate) for pest pressure in the orchard, and often only sprayed the hotspot if numbers were high enough. However, 23 percent of avocado growers use a calendar approach to spraying, applying insecticide every three or four weeks throughout the season. Macadamia farmers using pest scouts tended to spray more often than those monitoring themselves, but this was presumably because they had a better gauge on the severity of pest numbers.

26 percent of avocado growers and 20 percent of macadamia growers completing the survey did not spray insecticides for FSB.

Comments were also sought from growers with more than half responding. There were several requests for the project to focus on development of a biocontrol, and several also stressed the importance of finding economical replacement chemicals for endosulfan. Suggestions were also made that the project needs to consider the importance of the correct variety choice, and to recognise that damage levels are likely to be higher in more highly susceptible varieties, such as the smooth skinned avocado varieties, and the thinner shelled macadamia varieties.

The survey has provided useful information to the project, and highlighted some areas for further investigation by the research team, and possible opportunities for structuring grower training.

Method

Growers were asked to access the Survey Monkey via a link from emails sent out by Avocados Australia, the Australia Macadamia Society, SoilCare Inc and through industry e-newsletters. In total 46 avocado growers responded. This represents about 10 percent of the total number of commercial growers in Australia. There was a reasonable spread of farm sizes and regions, with growers from the NSW North Coast in the south to Mareeba in the north participating in the survey.

Avocados

Farm size and production

There was a good spread of respondents with small to large tree numbers. 23 of the 46 growers surveyed had between 200 and 1500 trees, with 11 growers farming 5,000 trees or more. Almost half the growers had yields between six and 12 tonnes/ha, with one small grower averaging 18 tonnes/ha on their farm. The larger orchards tended to have higher yields with 8 of the 11 growers in the 5000+ tree category recoding fruit yield of 12 to 18 tonnes/ha.

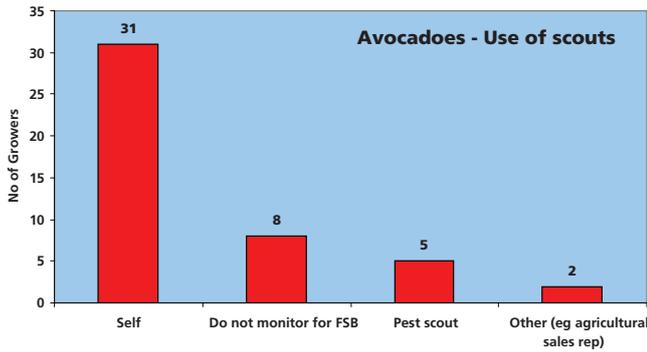
Severity of damage

15 growers reported moderate levels of damage from FSB, and only six described their damage as very serious. Only one grower felt they had no problem with FSB.

Monitoring

31 growers conduct their own monitoring while another seven employ either a pest scout or have a sales representative to scout for them. Pest scouts were employed by the larger farms of more than 5000 trees almost exclusively, with only one pest scout working in an orchard in the 200 to 500 tree category. The vast majority of medium size growers conduct their own monitoring. Only eight growers do not monitor for FSB. The most common method of monitoring was to look at fruit on the bottom of trees, with 34 growers using this method. Twelve of these growers also looked in the top of the trees, while a further five looked at top and bottom of trees and inspected and counted fallen fruit.

Grower Monitoring Highlighted in FSB Survey continued



Who does the monitoring on avocado farms? Note the high number of farmers who do their own monitoring.

Comment: 38 out of 46 growers either employ a pest scout or monitor themselves, which is a higher than expected result for monitoring in the avocado industry. Most growers look in the bottoms of trees for bugs, but 12 also look in tops of trees, either using ladders or hydraulic ladders to assist. The survey question did not ask if they were looking for fruit damage or bugs, and it would be useful to know if they looked first thing in the morning on sunny days, when the bugs tend to be easier to find. The high percentage of grower monitoring suggests there would be value in providing some training in how to monitor and keep records.



Trap hedges attractive to FSB such as *Murraya paniculata* are now being used in crops such as macadamias and avocados on a trial basis by the project team to assist monitoring, particularly early in the season.

Chemical control

22 growers relied on just one type of insecticide through the season, while a further 12 growers rotated their insecticide groups, using two or more types during the fruit growth period. 12 growers did not use insecticides at all in their orchard during 2010/11.

Spray strategies

29 growers monitored hotspots within the orchard, with seven of those growers only spraying the hotspots and 22 spraying the entire orchard as a result of the monitoring. 11 growers left nothing to chance, spraying the entire orchard every two weeks from fruit set until just before harvest without monitoring. Of the 12 growers who did not spray for FSB, six were organic and the remainder try to limit the insecticides applied in their orchard, and didn't spray that year. One grower also recognised the importance of encouraging beneficial insects and, accordingly, did not spray.

Spray strategy (multiple options allowed) - Avocado

Spray Strategy	Count
Monitor hotspots and spray entire orchard when evidence of damage is found.	22
I do not spray for FSB in my orchard.	11
Spray entire orchard every 2 weeks from fruit set until just before harvest without monitoring.	11
Monitor hotspots in your orchard and only spray those areas when evidence of damage is found.	7
Monitor for adult FSB in trees and spray when one or more FSB per tree is found.	7
Monitor fallen fruit on a regular basis and spray when FSB damage is evident.	2

Comment: Although use of pest scouts in the avocado industry is less common than the macadamia industry, only 11 out of 46 growers do not monitor their crops at all and use a calendar spraying approach. The majority of growers who do monitor check in hotspots and seven growers only spray hotspots when bugs are found in those areas. Monitoring fallen fruit is not commonly used when deciding whether to spray, with the majority of growers looking in the bottom and/or tops of the trees for bugs or signs of fruit damage.

Crop losses

About half the growers reported less than five percent losses in the field from FSB stings, and four growers reported very high levels of damage between 10 percent and 20 percent. Only two growers reported seeing no damage from FSB at sorting, and about 30 percent of growers (17) reporting less than two percent damage on the sorting table. One grower also reported not being able to identify FSB damage confidently. A higher percentage of losses of more than five percent on the sorting table tended to come from the small and medium size growers. Only one grower of more than 5000 trees recorded losses



in excess of five percent. Growers using pest scouts had less severe losses on the sorting table, with only one grower recording 5-10% percent losses compared to eight self monitoring growers who had 5-10 percent losses. This pattern was similar for crop losses.

Comment: Monitoring for FSB did not necessarily translate to reduced losses when compared to the “fortnightly spray application and no monitoring” approach. The four growers who used this method each recorded less than 5 percent damage in the field. Roughly half the growers who monitored for FSB suffered more than five percent damage. One reason for this could be that the growers who monitor on a regular basis are more skilled at recognising FSB damage than the ones who don’t, and therefore attribute a more accurate percentage estimate to losses from FSB.

Thanks to all those growers who participated in the survey. The FSB Project Team are planning further surveys later in the year looking at monitoring techniques and use of biological controls.

The fruit spotting bug project is a collaboration of industry, government and private enterprise. The project is funded by Horticulture Australia using avocado, macadamia, lychee, papaya and passionfruit industry levies and across industry funds with matched funds from the Australian Government. NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and Qld Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) are also contributing in-kind funds to the project, and NSW DPI is managing the project on behalf of all partners. Other project partners include the University of Queensland and BioResources.

Effect of Carbon dioxide during ripening (AVo8018)

In the last two editions we spoke to DEEDI researcher Dr Roberto Marques about the R&D trials undertaken to fine tune handling recommendations for the Avocado Ripening Manual. In this article we again talk to Roberto about his work, this time on the effect of carbon dioxide on the ripening behaviour of Hass avocados.

TA: *Over the last two years you have been studying the effect of high carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels on avocado ripening, why have you put in so much effort? How did you go about doing this trial?*

Roberto: Part of the development of the new ripening manual meant working with one large avocado handler to develop systems that met their need to consistently deliver ripened fruit. When we were measuring their ripening rooms for ethylene and CO₂ we found that at times there were high levels of carbon dioxide and we questioned the effect of these levels on fruit ripening behaviour.

To measure this we sourced commercially packed fruit from SE Queensland at two different harvest maturities. We ripened the fruit in specially designed chambers and used five different carbon dioxide levels between 0-8%. When fruit were ripe we assessed them for internal and external quality.

TA: *You repeated this trial over two seasons, what were your findings?*

Roberto: The effect on ripe fruit quality was minimal, but there was a marked effect on time to ripen. For instance, at 8% CO₂ for six days, fruit ripening was delayed by almost two days. Even at 1% for three days the effect on delaying ripening was about 28 hours. This is important and probably explains why some ripening rooms seem to be slower during the critical ripening stage. Those couple of

days must seem like an eternity when a ripener is waiting to fill orders.

TA: *What are your critical recommendations resulting from this work?*

Roberto: We recommend that rooms are vented so the CO₂ does not exceed 1%. You need to monitor that as well.

TA: *Where can avocado handlers get more information on this and how to manage rooms so that your recommendation can be followed?*

Roberto: All these findings have been incorporated into the Avocado Ripening Manual which was released at the World Avocado Congress in September 2011 and is available from [Avocados Australia](#).

The DEEDI project team would like to acknowledge the support from Horticulture Australia Ltd., CostaExchangeLtd., and Avocados Australia in undertaking this work.



An elaborate system for managing gas concentrations was developed for this project so that the effect of carbon dioxide could be measured.

Australian Avocado Marketing Program Update

The primary objective of the Australian Avocados Marketing Campaign 2010-2013 is to shift our target audience's perception of avocados from being a versatile product ingredient in the kitchen to an indispensable ally - a 'must have'. The campaign line has been evolved to 'ADD AN AVO EVERYDAY' with the aim to bring about a shift in the buying behaviour of our target audience from infrequent to regular purchase. By instigating such behavioural change and establishing a commitment to purchasing avocados from an occasional to an 'everyday' basis, the marketing campaign seeks to achieve its goal of increasing the average weight of purchase (AWOP), which is frequency/ occasions per visit x dollars (\$) spent, among light to medium users in the identified target audience.

The target audience were selected using the research conducted in 2009 and the AC Nielsen HomeScan data:

Primary	<p>Bustling Families</p> <p>A bustling family has a mum who wears many hats; she takes her myriad of roles seriously, she is time-poor, and because of this she is fighting her constant daily battles to do what's right for her family and her radar is always keenly focused on her family's wellbeing. She has a habitual household but she is always on the lookout for ways that can make her life that bit easier.</p>
Secondary	<p>Start-Up Families</p> <p>In a start up family everything in mum and dad's world has changed; it is now a world of uncertainty and so mums are 100 percent focused on 'doing the right thing' by their children, and they definitely come first in the house.</p>

The marketing program for 2011-2012 has so far achieved great results¹:

- 202,000 more Australian households bought avocados this year; buying more and spending more
- Overall purchase frequency held steady on the back of penetration gains; gains coming from all life-stage segments.
- With the core target segments there has been small scale growing in volume and value AWOP; Bustling Families increasing volume while Start Up Families showing a dip on the back of important penetration gains
- Marketing campaign appears to be alleviating pressure

¹ AC Nielsen Analysis, HomeScan Data February 2012

during periods of higher pricing with increased overall household reach

Creative development

From mid April to mid May, Australian Avocados will run a recipe competition on Facebook in the search of quick and simple recipe ideas from the active fans on the Australian Avocado Facebook page.

There will be a strong call to action to buy Australian avocados and all creative material is being updated from July 2012 onwards, to feature a kangaroo and a new 'buy Australian' message e.g. 'Buy Fresh.' The aim is to remind consumers to support Australian avocado growers and at the same time point out to them that they should lookout for the sticker on the actual fruit. Online banners, the existing TVCs as well as recipe card booklets and press will be updated to include this message. As in previous years, the consumer press will feature new quick recipes ideas (generated from the recipe competition on Facebook) with the new addition of key health benefits. Recipe cards will also be developed and sent to NRL clubs to hand out to in order to promote and support the competition.

Competitions will run on the Australian Avocados Facebook page to promote spikes of engagement throughout the year. To do so, two major promotions (e.g. an interactive mystery game) will be developed as well as six bi-monthly promotions (e.g. upload photos of your baby tasting avocado for the first time).

Australian Avocados will also have in-store presence at key times throughout the year, running specific promotions and sampling activity to drive sales at point of purchase. There is also the opportunity to promote engagement on the supermarket social media platforms.

NRL Campaign - Giving unhealthy eating the boot!

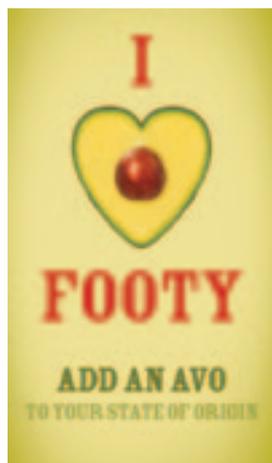


Australian Avocados hope to become the first ever fresh food produce to take a stance against junk food advertising in the history of Australian sports. This April, straight off the heels of a successful 2011 campaign, Australian Avocados and the NRL will renegotiate their contract for the 2012 season.

In 2011, the NRL campaign reached a circulation figure of 43 million with the NRL recipe competition receiving 4,354

votes in total; a fantastic improvement compared to 1444 votes in 2010.

A part of the 2012 contract negotiations includes the plan to give unhealthy eating the boot, with the launch of a new sports sponsorship category that will only be open to healthy eating brands. If Australian Avocados is successful, the plan will be to announce this national-first at an exciting media launch at the Sydney Markets in Flemington.



The I  Footy website and revamped recipe competition will be back in full swing in mid/late April. This year NRL and Australian Avocados have refreshed the competition and are set to launch a national 'Guac Off' to get Aussies thinking guacamole for home entertainment. To kick things off the industry has worked with top recipe developer Sarah Hobbs to create 18 guacamole recipes for each team in the NRL comp, as

well as a NSW and QLD recipe to create some state rivalry during State of Origin time. Look out for team vs team 'Guac offs' with well-known footy stars throughout the season.

The website will again play host to the recipe competition with new teams and new recipes to promote. The competition will be promoted through a rigorous media relations campaign across television, newspapers, magazines, online news and radio, on the Australian Avocados Facebook page, direct emails to the industry consumer database, as well as to the NRL clubs.

Media coverage will consistently appear across the NRL season, with a particular focus on State of Origin in June and footy finals in September/October.



Australian Avocados print and TVC advertising

The avocado TVC can be seen across the Lifestyle channel network including Lifestyle YOU, HOME and the Lifestyle Channel; supported by the 60 second interstitials.

Programming includes Jamie's 30 minute meals, Good chef bad chef, Come Dine with Me, Cake Boss, Secrets of a restaurant chef and Mexican food made simple. June will see the conclusion of the Everyday Meal Block sponsorship with the last three weeks of this activity airing across Lifestyle Food.

A third page vertical ad will run in the April on sale issue of Super Food Ideas, Australian Women's Weekly, Donna Hay Magazine and Recipes +. Australian Avocados have also accessed a new to market publication called Naturally Australia, running a full page advert. Digital display can also be seen on sites such as *Taste.com.au* and *AllRecipes.com.au*

Magazine selection will be widened beyond food with the inclusion of Women's Health, a strong lifestyle publication that is both relevant and high reaching for avocado mums. Sunday Magazine will also be added to the mix as it provides a high reach and influential environment in which to connect with mums.

2012-2013 will see a cut back on sponsorships and funds will instead be invested within channels that will drive maximum exposure for Australian avocados. TV will be optimised to deliver maximum reach. This will be implemented in the introduction of STV (subscription TV) channels such as Fox 8 and Arena and the utilisation of digital FTA (free to air) channels; which will see the media campaign build cost efficient reach and gain access to relevant platforms to the core target audience.

Effective and relevant sponsorships such as the Everyday Meal blocks will be maintained to enhance frequency; new short Australian avocado videos will be produced and feature throughout the year on the Lifestyle YOU and Lifestyle Food channels.



Australian Avocado Marketing Program Update continued

Food Service Campaign

Rounding out the 2011-2012 food service programs will be the facilitation of two training classes with commercial caterers Alliance as well as the final commercial cookery students for this year. The chef training sessions will cover new ground with the inclusion of Newcastle chefs into the program and will conclude with the annual restaurant circuit in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, where industry influencing chefs raise the bar of creativity in the usage of avocado in fine dining menus.

In 2012-2013 there are several exciting activities scheduled for the food service program. In addition to the chef training sessions and continued partnership of the Clubs NSW chef's table competition (for which avocado will be a key ingredient to be included in at least one of three courses submitted for judging), next year's program will see the introduction of a direct mail newsletter campaign that will be sent to an extensive database of chefs situated on the east coast. This newsletter will disseminate Australian avocado news, information, recipes and alert chefs to upcoming training events.

The newsletter will also alert chefs to the menu competition planned for Sydney restaurants to take place in October; for which registered restaurants will feature an avocado dish for the month. On the Food Service section of the website, chefs will be able to register in the competition where bloggers review their avocado menu items for a chance to win. The competition will be positioned towards consumers as well, by encouraging them to submit their own reviews for their chance to win other prizes. This competition aims to put avocados on

the menu and to alert people to look out for avocado when they are out dining. A consumer and food blogger review campaign will support this initiative.

Another new activity is the participation in the food service trade show Speciality Food and Drink Fair via a sponsored workshop area in which Avocados Australia will host training sessions twice a day for the two day duration of the event.

From July 2012 onwards, food service creative will be refreshed to feature new recipes as well as the key 'buy Australian' message. New creative for the masterclass invitations will be developed, 15 new recipes will be added to the existing masterbook and a variety of collateral will be developed to support the 'menu competition'.



Australian Avocados Facebook page



From mid-late April the Australian Avocados Facebook page will host a recipe booklet competition. This competition will generate new recipe ideas for the industry's annual recipe booklet. Facebook activity will continue featuring regular competitions throughout the year that encourage product usage and engage the audience, in turn encouraging them to promote Australian Avocados to their friends.

A centralised Twitter account will deliver more consistent communications for all campaigns, keeping Australian Avocados top of mind throughout the year. YouTube and other social bookmarking sites such as Pinterest and StumbleUpon, will also be developed to drive further online traffic to the Australian Avocados website.

Consumer website



On the consumer website the April feature article is all about Easter. The industry’s resident nutritionist Zoe Bingley-Pullin, with the help of accredited practising dietician Lisa Yates, have put together a feature article and FAQs on chocolate in relation to people’s health. Through this relevant lifestyle content, avocados will be put back into the conversation with healthy chocolate and avocado alternatives that one can have during Easter. Sweet recipes

featuring avocados are largely unrealised by Australian consumers. Through experience on the industry’s Facebook page it has been shown that when avocado and chocolate based recipes are featured, consumers are pleasantly surprised and willing to try it out.

From July 2012 onwards, the website will be refreshed to better cater to the volume of content and target audiences that have grown over the years. A new consumer homepage and ‘Blog’ area will cross-promote all the campaign areas e.g. a Mum visiting the consumer website for recipes, may also be interested in finding out about the Early Childhood program. This will also allow for more detailed information and context to campaign activities. The blog could feature an article about recent in-store sampling activity that was intended to support the NRL campaign and recipe competition. This article in turn can be delivered to our Facebook audience and consumer email database to help build awareness.

Educating Early Childhood educators

The ongoing success of the ‘Eating My Colourful Vegies and Fruit’ program in early childhood centres and the positive feedback from the wider education sector provides encouragement to investigate furthering the reach of



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Australian Avocado Marketing Program Update continued

the program. Food and nutrition for children continue to be a focus of concern amongst health educators. After discussions with key education, health and nutrition stakeholders in several states there is interest in the 'Eating My Colourful Vegies and Fruit' kit being made available to primary schools (with some additions and modifications to make it relevant to the curriculum).

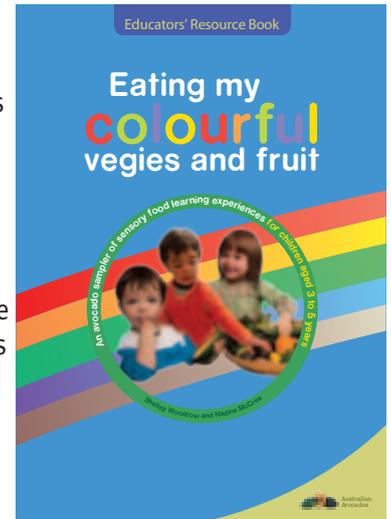
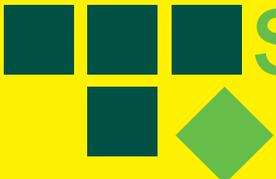
A primary school version of the program will be developed and piloted in 10 schools in 2012-13 ready for a full roll out



to in 2013.

Early childhood settings of Long Day Care Centres and Preschools will continue to be a strong focus of the program's activity in coming years as they provide very positive outcomes for the industry. Many educators have mentioned their surprise at children's willingness to try new fruit and vegies through this program, and that

avocados have become a familiar and well liked choice for many who had previously never tasted them. The rationale for this includes the developmental readiness of children aged 3-5 years to learn to like a new food, more food preparation opportunities in early childhood settings and the ease of access to centres with less bureaucratic obstructions.

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* STANDARD 5.5KG TRAY WITH INSERT



Marketing Glossary

Circulation

Print: Average number of magazines or newspapers printed (daily, weekly or monthly)

Online: Number of monthly unique website visitors

Radio: Average number of listeners per independent data

Broadcast Media (TV): Average number of viewers as per independent ratings data

Frequency

A term used in marketing to describe the average number of times an individual came in contact (viewed/interacted with) a campaign message during a specific time period.

Interstitials

Broadcast Media (TV): A commercial of longer duration, usually inserted between two programs.

Online: Ads that appear in a separate ('pop up') window while a webpage is loading, or are inserted between the contents of the page.

Reach

Reach refers to the approximate number of views or contact an audience had with the campaign message during a specific time period (including repeat views/contact with individuals).

CPM

CPM (cost per mille) describes the cost of internet marketing campaigns where advertisers pay for every time their ad is displayed on a web page. When advertising rates are described as CPM, this is the amount paid for every thousand impressions / views.

Impression

An impression is the display of an ad to a user while viewing a web page. If a single web page contains multiple advertisements from one advertiser, one impression is counted for each ad displayed.

Primary Audience

A target audience is a group of people with similar characteristics or behaviours. The largest portion of revenue from sales will come from the primary target market.

Secondary Audience

The secondary target market includes future primary buyers. Their characteristics and buying behaviours differ slightly from those of the primary target market.

GB's

Grocery Buyer's (GB's) or Main Grocery Buyer's (MGB's) is a behavioural classification for someone in a target audience.

AWOP

Average Weight of Purchase.

EDM

Electronic Direct Mail / Marketing refer to directly marketing a commercial message to a group of people using electronic mail (email).

Facebook Like

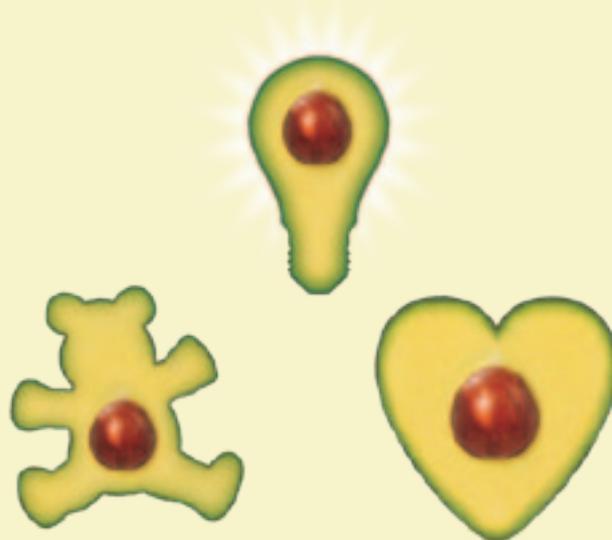
The Facebook "Like" button is a feature that allows users to show their support for specific comments, pictures, wall posts, statuses, or pages.

Website Traffic - Visits

The number of times people have accessed a website in a given time period.

Australian Avocados Database (the Avo Club)

People can sign up to the Australian Avocados database by registering with the website, signing up for emails, and entering competitions. If they opt in to being contacted, EDMs are sent to them to maintain a relationship with these people, keep Australian Avocados top of mind, and provide any relevant news.



Update on Sustainable Orchard Management Practices (AVo8020)

John Leonardi
Avocados Australia

One of the objectives of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of products and orchard management practices either being used by growers or recommended by various companies for use in avocado production. Field trials have been established to test the effect of these strategies on tree growth, fruit yield and quality compared with current industry practices.

Mulching trials

Trials investigating the effect of mulching on tree growth and yield were established in North Queensland in September 2011. A composted product (derived from vegetation waste), Rhodes grass hay and a combination of the two products were applied to 2½ year old Shepard trees in September 2011. Compost was applied at a rate of 10 and 20 tonnes/hectare; Rhodes grass hay at a thickness of 15cm; and in the combined treatments Rhodes grass hay was applied over the top of the compost. A grower treatment (inter-row slashings) was included for comparison.

In September flowering shoots were tagged and the effect of mulching on shoot growth and percentage of shoots bearing a fruit was assessed at harvest on 10 shoots in six trees for each treatment (Table 1).

Table 1 Effect of mulching on shoot growth and percentage of shoots bearing fruit in Shepard avocado trees. Data are means from 60 shoots for each treatment. Means in each column followed by the same letters are not significantly different ($P > 0.05$).

Treatment	Shoot growth (cm)	% of flowering shoots with fruit
Grower treatment	16.3a	60.0a
Rhodes grass hay	16.1a	68.3a
Compost (10 t/ha)	16.7a	65.0a
Rhodes grass hay + compost (10 t/ha)	18.2a	61.7a
Compost (20 t/ha)	16.3a	60.0a
Rhodes grass hay + compost (20 t/ha)	17.2a	70.0a

Results indicate that there was no significant effect of mulching treatment on shoot growth and the percentage of shoots that bore a fruit in the first year of the experiment.

The effect of mulching on yield was assessed in six trees for each treatment. Fruit was harvested at maturity on the 21 February 2012 and the number and weight from each tree recorded.

Table 2 Effect of mulching on the number of fruit, yield and average fruit weight in 3 year old Shepard avocado trees. Yield data are means of six trees per treatment. Means in each column followed by the same letters are not significantly different ($P > 0.05$).

Treatment	No. of fruit	Yield (kg/tree)	Av. fruit wt (g)
Grower treatment	149 a	35.5 a	245.4 a
Rhodes grass hay	187 a	44.8 a	242.1 a
Compost (10 t/ha)	207 a	48.7 a	240.5 a
Rhodes grass hay + compost (10 t/ha)	150 a	37.1 a	252.6 a
Compost (20 t/ha)	154 a	38.1 a	253.4 a
Rhodes grass hay + compost (20 t/ha)	154 a	39.2 a	254.9 a



Rhodes grass hay is commonly used to mulch avocado trees



There was no significant effect of treatment on yield (Table 2); however fruit size tended to be larger in trees receiving the higher rate of compost and in the combined Rhodes grass hay and compost treatments.

A similar trial was also established on 2½ year old Hass trees in North Queensland. Trees will be harvested in April 2012.

Where to from here?

Mulching trials

The trial investigating the effect of mulching with filter-press, avocado woodchip and cane-tops on tree growth, fruit yield and quality established in Central Queensland during September 2009 is continuing. The effect of mulching on shoot growth and leaf nutrient levels will be determined in April. Fruit yield, size and quality will be determined after harvest in June.

Microbe treatments

The effect of soil applications of TwinN, a freeze dried source of nitrogen fixing microbes, on tree growth, fruit quality and yield is being investigated in the 2011/12 cropping season. Two treatments have been applied during the cropping season. The first application was at early fruit set in October 2011. A second application was made at the

maturity of the summer growth flush in March 2012. The effect of treatment on shoot growth and leaf nutrient levels will be assessed in April. Root growth will be assessed three months after the second application in June. Trees will be harvested in June and the effect on yield and fruit quality will be determined.

Foliar treatments

Monthly foliar treatments of pyroligneous acid (PandA®) at 2 and 4 ml/L with and without copper fungicide are continuing. PandA® is an organic liquid derived from bamboo that has been reported to improve root, shoot and fruit growth, increase resistance to pests and diseases, reduce leaf fall and fruit drop, and improve yield and fruit quality. The effect of treatment on shoot growth will be assessed in April. Trees will be harvested in June and the effect on yield and fruit quality will be determined.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all growers who have assisted in conducting trials; King Brown Technology for providing the compost; Mapleton Agri Biotec Pty Ltd for supplying the microbial product (TwinN®) and O'Grady Rural for providing the pyroligneous acid (PandA®). This project is funded by using avocado grower R&D levies which are matched by the Australian Government through Horticulture Australia.



A two year old Hass tree mulched with sugarcane-tops

News from Around the World

Mexico: Avocados from Mexico launches spring campaign

With record volumes anticipated to ship this spring, Avocados from Mexico has announced its new 2012 fully-integrated spring campaign aimed to further increase avocado consumption and build market demand from March Madness through Cinco de Mayo and into June.

The new spring Avocados from Mexico marketing campaign will deliver more than a billion impressions, kicking off with a robust broadcast advertising campaign that will hit the airwaves on March 19 for a total of 6 weeks in key target markets.

The spring program will also help drive market demand and increase consumer purchase frequency through online and mobile marketing, consumer promotions, print ads in popular publications across the nation, public relations efforts, social media engagement, in-store merchandising and more.

“We’re not only building on our brand’s success, but we’re also fuelling future growth for the category with new marketing strategies that expand usage,” says Eduardo Serena, APEAM Marketing Director. “This Spring you can expect to see new strategies that go beyond the traditional approach to inspire consumers to purchase more avocados, more often and enjoy them in new ways.”

According to the just released 2012 Fresh Trends Survey results, the likelihood of an avocado purchase climbed 11 percentage points from 2011 - the second largest jump to any commodity in the survey after pineapple. In fact, avocados were the number one item that consumers said they buy now that they did not buy previously, with 26% saying so.



To help support the increased volume and further drive demand this spring, Avocados from Mexico is encouraging consumers to enjoy avocados for breakfast as a simple spread on toast, diced into wraps and blended into smoothies. The spring breakfast campaign includes the “Wake Up A Winner” sweepstakes, where daily prizes will be awarded and a grand-prize winner will be selected to win a trip to a beautiful Bed and Breakfast in Napa Valley. The promotion will reach more than 12 million consumers through online and mobile advertising targeting mothers

in key markets, eye-catching in-store signage placed at retail, extensive media relations efforts and social media outreach on multiple platforms.

For the Hispanic market, Avocados from Mexico is partnering with celebrity Chef Pepin to promote the great taste and nutritional value of avocados as part of a healthy diet. The promotion will be supported by a Spanish-language advertorial featuring Chef Pepin in regional newspapers in April, online and mobile advertising targeting Latina mothers in key markets, a microsite featuring culturally-relevant recipes, nutrition tips and a coupon offer, as well as tailored seasonal recipes to drive additional media opportunities.

Crop Update 2010/2011 vs. 2011/2012			
Volume Shipments (000 Pounds)			
Season	2010/2011 Pounds	2011/2012 Pounds	Index
July - Sept	84,140,564	actual 92,436,290	110
Oct - Dec	160,920,294	actual 226,061,259	140
Jan - Mar	219,459,795	projected 214,462,043	98
Apr - June	155,287,426	projected 191,543,892	123
Total	619,808,079	projected 724,503,484	117

Avocados from Mexico expects to ship record amounts this season

“Our Business Development Managers have already hit the ground running to meet with their accounts and set up customized promotion programs to support in-store merchandising efforts for spring.”

In addition, Avocados from Mexico has a variety of free POS materials that can be used to encourage impulse sales such as secondary displays and POS cards. Retailers are encouraged to create displays that are eye catching, set up secondary displays in highly trafficked areas and showcase POS cards that highlight meals that are ideal for entertaining. Avocados from Mexico also recommends displaying avocados next to items they partner with in meals and recipes such as bread for breakfast or deli meats, chips, pre-cut salads and platters, which reminds consumers to purchase these items together. Avocados from Mexico POS materials can be ordered online at www.avocadosfrommexico.com/trade

Source: Fresh Plaza



US: Wendy's, Smashburger join avocado craze



Wendy's Co. spicy chicken guacamole club sandwich includes fresh leaf lettuce and sliced tomatoes in addition to pepper jack cheese, ranch sauce & bacon.

Following the lead of Subway and Burger King last year, two more fast food chains now have guacamole and fresh avocados on their sandwiches. Wendy's Co., Dublin, Ohio, and Smashburger Master LLC, Denver, both debuted their new menu options on March 22.

At Wendy's restaurants, customers are encouraged to "rock the guac" with

a spicy chicken guacamole club sandwich. Described in a news release as "creamy, natural guacamole," the avocado-based sandwich topper can be added to Wendy's less spicy chicken sandwiches at the customer's request.

In the news release announcing the spicy guacamole chicken club, Wendy's senior vice president of product development Gerard Lewis said the creation was in response to customers' desire for a wider variety of tastes than traditional fastfood menus offer. Wendy's is offering the sandwich nationwide for a limited time.

Also joining the avocado craze, Smashburger is offering a "Fresh Mex Burger" nationwide for a limited time.



Through April 29 Smashburger restaurants a cross the country will offer the "Fresh Mex" burger, which includes fresh avocado slices, chopped cilantro and a wedge of lime.

sandwich with guacamole and other fresh produce toppings.

A news release from the company said the burger with fresh avocado slices was originally created for the chain's San Diego area restaurants, but its popularity encouraged company officials make it available nationwide through

April 29.

Tom Ryan, chief concept officer for Smashburger, said in the release the combination of avocados, other fresh produce and sauces on the sandwich were inspired by traditional Mexican cuisine.

South African avocados set to command high export prices



South Africa's avocado season this year looks set to be a strong one with high yields predicted, good quality fruit and hungry export markets.

The first shipments are expected to arrive in Europe early this week after a 14-16 day voyage with producers upbeat about demand and wholesale prices.

Westfalia avocado marketing manager Hans Boyum tells www.freshfruitportal.com with Israel finishing its season a little earlier than expected and Spain suffering from the cold European weather in early February, South African avocados were well placed to plug the gap.

"It's common knowledge the market is open and there's a lack of fruit around. We are seeing higher price levels both for Hass and the green varieties. There's been an upward trend in the last few weeks."

However, he refused to be drawn on exactly what wholesale prices were in the main markets of the U.K., Western and Eastern Europe.

Westfalia accounts for 45 percent of total exports from South Africa with other major shippers including Univeg, H L Hall & Sons and Afrupro Exporters.

This year export volumes are expected to show a 63 percent year-on-year rise at 48,000 metric tonnes (MT). Exports last year were a mere 27,600MT due to extensive hail storms.

South African Avocado Growers' Association (SAAGA) chief executive officer Derek Donkin, says this season's crop is similar in yields to 2010 when 47,600MT of avocados were exported.

"We have had very good weather for picking and fruit growth in most regions, and because we have a heavy crop this goes hand in hand with good internal fruit quality."

Donkin says South African growers are busy expanding their plantations with 250 new hectares devoted to the fruit every year, describing the product as an "excellent" one with a good future.

News from Around the World continued

The harvesting season started earlier this month with picking for export set to continue until the beginning of October.

Avocados are grown in the north eastern part of the country in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces with Hass accounting for 56 percent of crops and the remainder made up of the green skin varieties of Fuerte, Pinkerton and Ryan. Source: www.freshfruitportal.com

NZ: Governor General’s avocado tour

Avocado orchardists Andrew and Maria Watchorn were pleased when the Governor General visited their Omokoroa orchard to get a first-hand look at the Bay of Plenty’s avocado growing industry. The Watchorn’s hosted Governor General Sir Jerry Mataparae on Thursday, where Maria says they were amused by the fact the Governor had never seen an avocado tree before.

“He came to visit our orchard, and it was the first avocado tree – he had never seen an avocado tree until he came onto our property. I think he was quite shocked, I don’t think he thought they were going to be such lovely, lush trees. We worked hard to get the orchard looking pristine. He really thought avocado trees were beautiful trees.”

Also as part of his tour, Sir Jerry visited the Zespri HQ in Mount Maunganui before going on to the Apata packhouse and Watchorn’s orchard on Prole Road, Omokoroa.

Maria says the Governor General is a “lovely, warm, approachable” person who really likes avocados. “He got a tray of avocados to take back to Wellington with him.”

This season’s avocado crop is looking good for the Watchorns, but they don’t know about their fellow growers.

“I cannot say that about the whole industry, because of the on-off seasons for people. Because of bi-annual bearing, some people are not able to produce a crop every year. There are some growers out there that have a very, very light crop, if any at all. We are fortunate enough to get another really good crop, good fruit, good sizes. The season for us has been very good.”

On the orchard, Maria says they use a range of innovative techniques to improve fruit production. “We have fully automated frost protection systems in place and the water comes from a bore that is slightly warmed, that is fully automated computerised system.”

Apata coolstore manager Ian Tangney speaks with the Governor General. The last season was one of the largest Australia had ever known, though sadly this had an effect of diminishing returns somewhat as the excess volume flooded the markets with low cost produce. “As a grower, the impact is the price. Our normal tray payout has been

reduced.”

Maria says although they have not received the final payout, it is estimated returns will be down by \$5-\$7 per tray, compared to last year.

“With the Australian market swamped by both New Zealand and more Australian fruit than anticipated, it has brought the price down.” Source: Fresh Plaza

US: Program helps avocado handlers implement GAPs

A growing number of California avocado grower-shippers are certified or are in the process of being certified for good agricultural practices.

The Irvine-based California Avocado Commission launched a program to help growers complete a GAP inspection about a year ago, and growers started achieving certified status late last year.

Gaining more acreage

All of the major handlers have bought into the program, and by early February, up to 15% of the state’s avocado acreage had been certified, said Ken Melban, the commission’s director of issues management. The commission has not set a specific acreage goal, but Melban said the organization would like to see “a sizable amount of acreage” certified by the end of year.

“We’re very pleased with how the industry is tracking on it,” he said.

Consumers, retailers and the federal government are driving the process, he said. The commission is not mandating the inspection. The commission has developed a policy and procedures manual to help handlers become GAP certified, he said. The program focuses on key areas to mitigate and reduce potential bacterial contamination, including human contact, animals, soil and inputs, such as water. The commission believes so strongly in the value of the GAP certification that it has set aside funds to reimburse participating growers up to \$300 toward the cost of the audit.

Minimal modifications

Escondido, Calif.-based Giumarra Agricom International LLC has signed onto the program, said Jose Tostado, director of field operations. The company only had to make a few modifications to its procedures to comply with the GAP program.

“It wasn’t something drastic — that really was very different from what we were doing,” Tostado said. Much of the process consisted of ensuring that documentation

is on file, he said. "It's another expense," he said, but it could be worthwhile down the road as more buyers demand that their suppliers implement good agricultural practices, he said.

Del Rey Avocado Co. Inc. in Fallbrook, Calif., is making sure it complies with good agricultural practices as it completes a remodeling program, said partner Bob Lucy. The company's packinghouse and its growers are abiding by the GAPs, he said. The firm has hired Gerardo Huerta to help its growers ensure that they are in compliance. The process doesn't require jumping through a lot of hoops, Lucy said, "just diligently keeping track of records."

Santa Paula, Calif.-based Calavo Growers Inc. also involved in the program. "The Calavo GAP team and some of our major growers helped lead the process," said Rob Wedin, vice president of sales and fresh marketing. As of early February, more than 25% of the company's large growers were certified, and Wedin expects 85% of Calavo's California volume to GAP certified by July. "We've made some tremendous progress," he said.

Industry takes the lead

Many of Temecula-based Eco-Farms Corp.'s groves have been certified as part of an ongoing program, said Steve Taft, president and chief executive officer.

"It's a must," Taft said, adding that it's better that the industry take the lead than the government. "Who knows avocados better than those in the business?" he asked.

The industry has done a good job setting up the guidelines and getting out the word to growers, Lucy said. Melban said he is encouraged by how quickly growers have adopted the program in just the past two to three months. The first workshops took place in February. Source: www.thegrower.com

Mexico tripled avocado exports in five years

Mexican avocado exports tripled in the last five years, attracted by U.S demand; a country where this fruit is stronger in its population's diet and fast food chain business strategies.



In 2011, external avocado sales jumped by 47.1% to reach USD 990 million. This amounted to three times more than the amount reached in 2006, of USD 338 million.

Grower Member Application Form

Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

For Associate and Affiliate membership application forms please go to www.avocado.org.au or call 07 3846 6566

Member Details

Business name and/or trading name: _____

ABN: _____

Key contacts: _____

Preferred address (postal): _____

Address of property (if different): _____

Contact Details

Business phone: _____

Home phone: _____

Fax: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Corporate Structure

How would you describe the nature of your operations (please circle)?

- Individual Partnership Company Trust
 Lessee Cooperative Other (please specify) _____

Please indicate the area of property that you crop for avocados (please circle)

- 0.5 - 5 ha 6-19 ha 20-49 ha 50-99 ha
 100-149 ha 150-199 ha 200-499 ha 500 ha+

Special Interests

Please tick your main areas of interest from any of the following:

- Consumer information Production management
 Environmental management/ sustainability Quality Assurance
 Organic farming systems Technology/innovations
 Water management Marketing
 Field days Supply chain management
 Pest management Key political issues
 Food safety Other (please specify) _____

Grower Member Application Form continued

Payment Options

Grower Membership of Avocados Australia is \$143 pa (including GST). You can pay your membership by cheque or credit card.

To pay your membership fee, please choose one of the following options:

Cheque

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$143.00 made payable to Avocados Australia Ltd.

Please charge \$143.00 to my credit card. Details are listed below.

Credit card (please circle):

MasterCard Visa

Credit card number: _____

Name on credit card: _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Privacy Options

Avocados Australia Ltd adheres to privacy rules with respect to the way we collect, use, secure and disclose personal information. Please indicate below (tick) if you do not wish to receive additional information.

I do **not** give Avocados Australia Ltd permission to allow my postal contact details to be accessed by other organisations other than Avocados Australia Ltd which offer beneficial products and services.

•NB - No personal details other than name and postal address will be given out under any circumstances.

Once you have completed this form please place it in an envelope addressed to:

Avocados Australia
Reply Paid 8005
Woolloongabba Qld 4102

(no stamp required within Australia):
For more information or assistance please go to
www.avocado.org.au or call on **07 3846 6566**



News from Around the World continued

Burger King and Subway have added avocados in their menus in the last year and other companies such as Wendy's and Smashburger, joined the list of restaurants that use this produce in 2012.

Mexico, where the avocado has its origin, ranks as first producer and exporter of this fruit. Archaeologists estimate that the avocado's origin dates back to 7,000 and 5,000 years before Christ. Its name comes from nahuatl ahuacatl, which also means testicles.

Mexican avocado shipments to the United States recorded a customs value of USD 794 million in 2011, covering a 80.1% share in total exports, followed by those targeted to Japan (86 million), Canada (58 million) and Costa Rica (16 million).

"Consumers tell us they are willing to try new products, so we have created an exciting flavour that will awaken their taste buds," said Gerard Lewis, vice president of Wendy's product development.

"The demand for avocados in the U.S. has been outstanding and now they are available all year in all 50 states, this growth will be exponential," said the Association of Avocado Producers and Packers of Michoacán (APEAM). Source: Eleconomista

SAAGA adopts tactical approach to get more avos into SA kitchens

With locally grown avocados hitting market shelves a little earlier this year, the South African Avocado Growers' Association (SAAGA) will use the opportunity to encourage more South Africans to increase consumption of avos.

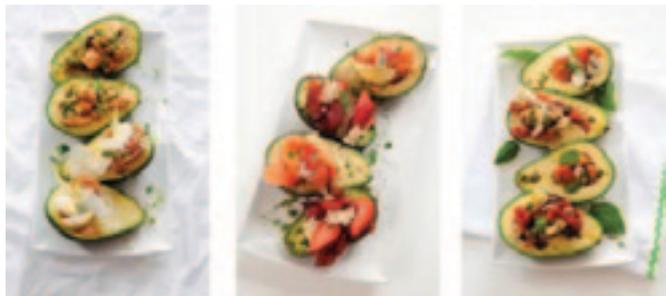
SAAGA has upped its local marketing spend significantly, and will be promoting local avos and their range of culinary uses to consumers through an integrated media campaign. The campaign will include advertorials; online advertising; a presence on social media platforms; editorials and regular contact with relevant food media.

"SAAGA will really go all out this year to promote avos and growth in the local market," explains Derek Donkin, CEO of the South African Subtropical Growers' Association. "The association's ultimate aim is to get more people eating more avos."

The campaign will also raise the profile of local avos



through high consumer visibility. This will be achieved through retail promotions in numerous large retailers, including in-store promotions and in-store display competitions. Consumer and retailer research surveys will also be undertaken, to better understand consumers' perceptions, awareness and usage of avos.



SAAGA last conducted consumer research in 2008, and there has been extensive promotional activity among consumers since then. This latest research aims to uncover how consumers have changed since 2008, establish current consumer attitudes and behaviours regarding avocados, and investigate ways to encourage increased purchasing.

Consumers will be engaged through focus groups, in-store interceptions, social media analysis and annual tracking studies. Retail research will comprise face-to-face or telephonic interviews with buyers in selected retailers to establish retailer and shopper buying behaviour.

The association will once again be looking to spark interest around avos in the food service industry through a competition focusing on student chefs. For the past couple of years SAAGA has hosted this competition among junior chefs, which sees them having to design original recipes using avos. The competition aims to encourage chefs to use avos more in their regular dishes, and to explore their own creativity by conceptualising imaginative avo recipes.

It's anticipated these efforts will go a long way to further raising consumer awareness of local avos, and encouraging them to stock up more on the fruits.

Source: Fresh Plaza

US: Hass Avocado board elections scheduled Board reaffirms proactive diversity policy

The Hass Avocado Board (HAB), which conducts generic avocado marketing for foreign and domestic suppliers of Hass avocados in the United States, is scheduling its annual board elections for vacant domestic Hass avocado grower and Hass avocado importer members as well as alternate seats.

In mid-April, announcement of open seats will be mailed to all eligible producers and importers of Hass avocados, with a deadline for receipt of nomination forms on May 11. The HAB expects to mail ballots to producers and importers by June 1 with a June 29 deadline. New members and alternates will be seated at the board meeting in November 2012.

The HAB also has reaffirmed its proactive policy of seeking board members who reflect the demographics of the avocado industry while supporting the Board's membership diversity goals. "The HAB has a history of making considerable efforts to emphasize the participation of qualified persons for Board and committee positions without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or other basis protected by law," said Emiliano Escobedo, Executive Director.

"Like many institutions, HAB benefits by having a broad and diverse membership so we encourage women, minorities and persons with disabilities to seek nomination to the Board and actively participate," he added.

In addition to regular monitoring of board composition, the HAB will encourage diversity by publishing information about the policy prior to board elections, ensuring notification in internal and trade publications. Source: Fresh Plaza



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