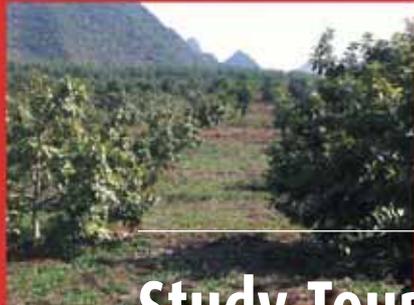


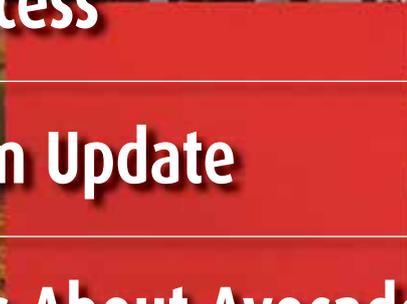
TALKING AVOCADOS



Study Tour to China a Success

Fruitspotting Bug Program Update

Spreading the Good News About Avocados



Avocados Australia Limited

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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.

In this issue

Chairman's Perspective	3
CEO's Report	4
Around Australia	6
Industry Matters	10
Fruitspotting Bug Project Update	22
Spreading the Good News about Avocados	26
Maximising Bee numbers in Avocado Orchards	31
Member Profile - Peter & Robyn MacIntosh	34
Study Tour to China	36
Industry Profile	
- Measurement Engineering Australia (MEA)	42
Marketing Update	45
News from Around the World	47

Cover: Images from Avocados Australia's study tour of China, November 2013.

Chairman's Perspective



Success can be such a good thing. Success can bring satisfaction and reward but it can also promote lethargy and cause some problems.

The avocado industry, our industry, is seen by our growers and the general horticulture industry as being very successful. This is because we have seen in the last six years an increase in production of 140% (2006/07 to 2011/12) matched by an increase in consumption of 160% over the same period.

This is wonderful news and it reflects the reason for the high returns that growers have received in recent years.

The numbers for one more year on, i.e. 2006/07 to 2012/13 show an ominous change. In this extra time the production increase increased to 150% and the consumption increase dropped to 144% (mainly due to a New Zealand off year).

The unprecedented increase in new plantings by existing and new growers in most regions is certainly going to add to the production in 3-5 years' time and it may be difficult to lift consumption to above the current 2.54 kg/head (12/13) at a rate equivalent to increased production. In 06/07 consumption was 1.92kg/head.

Although we have very good short term information through Infocado (amongst the best in Australian horticulture), the problem I see coming is that our industry does not have sufficient information on the number of trees planted, which region, or which varieties for longer term planning. The nursery industry is not keen to share

planting information and some growers seem to have the same inclination.

It is a serious problem because our industry success is based on making R&D and Marketing decisions based on the requirements for the future, and the forecasts for levy funds available to plan these projects.

Somehow, our industry has to gather this important information into ORCHARD INFO. The AAL office is putting significant effort towards this, but the data is only as good as what the growers provide.

I appeal to all growers, old and new, to consider the consequences of not having accurate tree information and production data and accurate forecasts.

This saying sticks in my mind and I hope in yours as well: *"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail"*. Perhaps we all should think back to the industries we exited when we decided to get into avocados.

We have a wonderful, successful industry and I appeal to all stakeholders to work to continue this success.

Best wishes to you all for 2014.

Jim Kochi

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia

ANVAS ACCREDITED NURSERIES

ANVAS accredited trees can be purchased from the following nurseries:

<p>Anderson's Nursery Graham & Vivienne Anderson Duranbah Road Duranbah NSW Ph: 02 6677 7229</p>	<p>Avocado Coast Nursery Greg Hopper Schulz Road, Woombye Qld Ph: 07 5442 2424</p>	<p>Birdwood Nursery Peter and Sandra Young 71-83 Blackall Range Rd Nambour Qld Ph: 07 5442 1611</p>	<p>Turkinje Nursery Peter & Pam Lavers 100 Henry Hannam Drive Walkamin Qld Ph: 0419 781 723</p>
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CEO's Report

A look back at 2013

As I reflect on 2013, the weather set the scene early with another deluge along the east coast from ex tropical cyclone Oswald which unfortunately impacted many growers in these regions. Hopefully, these orchards are now well on their way to recovery. Extreme weather events also impacted parts of WA during the year, reducing fruit availability across the summer. The forecasts for 2014 indicate most regions are predicting very good crops this coming season.

Levies management

In early 2013, the avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that recommends to Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) how your levy funds are invested was restructured in line with HAL requirements. This committee has a very important role and Avocados Australia continues to work closely with HAL and the IAC to ensure industry priorities are appropriately addressed. A major review of HAL was also commissioned in 2013 with the final report to be presented by consultants ACIL Allen in May 2014.

Progress towards a Single Voice for Horticulture

Moves to form a national whole-of-horticulture representative body were progressed during the year and the new organisation is expected to be incorporated by February 2014. Peak Industry Bodies, such as Avocados Australia, will form the membership of this new, lean organisation which will provide a single voice in Canberra on key issues affecting all horticultural industries.

Changes within Avocados Australia

Avocados Australia had some changes of directors with the addition of two new directors representing the Central NSW Growing Area and the WA/NT Growing Area. Following a review by the Avocados Australia Board, a second director position was created to represent the WA/NT Growing Area which currently remains vacant.

We undertook a review of our communications program earlier in the year which revealed a high level of satisfaction amongst our stakeholders (83%) and provided a solid foundation for further improvements to our communication activities which we are implementing over time.

The successful launch of the Qualicado program and the extension workshop series (that will benefit the whole supply chain) have been spreading the word about adoption of best practice to improve fruit quality. An

analysis of monthly retail survey data showed that retail quality has improved 38% from 2008 to 2012, which is a great result.

However, there is still more we need to do to deliver on consumer expectations.



Increased engagement

During 2013, we improved our engagement with growers and stakeholders. We ran a series of teleconferences across all growing regions earlier in the year to make contact and identify issues for action. We followed this up with field days at the Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland and Northern NSW, a grower meeting at Comboyne in central NSW and an R&D planning workshop at Manjimup in WA. In September, Qualicado was launched on-farm at a field day in North Queensland with the second held at Robinvale in Victoria. We also held our first wholesaler workshop and training session in the Melbourne markets.

An R&D workshop was held with key stakeholders including researchers, consultants, the IAC and Avocados Australia Board focussed on reviewing and planning future productivity research. We are continuing to work with HAL to ensure that a clear, well planned productivity improvement R&D strategy is developed.

The 5th New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' was well attended in New Zealand and about 100 Australians made the trip across the Tasman for a great program of events. Among those in attendance were the Avocados Australia's Study Tour group that reported back to industry in the last edition of Talking Avocados magazine.

Progress with exports

Avocados Australia continued to progress market access issues. Unfortunately, Thailand introduced new (unworkable) protocols which effectively prevented trade of Australian avocados from 19 July. We are continuing to work with the Department of Agriculture to seek changes to the protocol as soon as possible. I had a rare opportunity to present to the Thai officials in November and stressed the conditional non-host of fruit fly as a workable protocol that we would like to see implemented.

In late November, I participated in a trade mission to China along with Avocados Australia director Daryl Boardman. This included a presentation at the 5th China-Australia Workshop on Horticultural Cooperation in Beijing. The workshop was attended by the China Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association (CIQA), Chinese importers and Australian Government representatives. Avocados

managed to get special attention when the health benefits for expecting mothers and the role of avocados as a first solid food for babies was mentioned – exposure that you cannot buy.

Plans for 2014

Early crop forecast data for 2014 indicates a good crop across most regions and New Zealand. It will be important that flow of supply is carefully managed across the year and Infocado will help packers with their forward planning.

It will be another exciting year, also with some staff changes at AAL. Our Supply Chain Program Manager, Julie Petty finished up with Avocados Australia in December to take on a key role with Meat and Livestock Australia. Julie has done a great job managing the program over the past three years and we wish her all the best in her new role. Program manager Joanne Embry will also be leaving in February to pursue the family business. She has played a key role in establishing the processes and reporting that underpins the supply chain program. We sincerely thank her and wish her well. Joining our team is

Nathan Symonds who takes on the role of Supply Chain Program Manager. The team at Avocados Australia has hit the ground running in January and we look forward to continuing the rollout of the Qualicado program in 2014.

A new export plan will be completed early in the New Year and will help guide future export development. Avocados are now the top Australian priority for horticulture market access to Japan and Avocados Australia will be working with the Department of Agriculture to advance our market access submission. We are also now number two on the list for access to China. We will also be continuing to work with the Department of Agriculture to seek a workable protocol for re-access to Thailand.

Finally, the new avocado marketing campaign will be launched in March 2014 with an exciting new television commercial to be released. The campaign, developed over the last 12 months, is based on extremely robust research and analysis, has been executed by an excellent team of marketing strategists and creative designers. We expect it to really hit the mark and continue to drive increased consumer demand for Australian avocados.



Costa Farms is the central market presence of the Costa Group where we market our own Avocados from our farm in Renmark (SA) alongside that of our closely aligned 3rd party grower base. We follow the principle of providing our aligned Avocado growers with quality service and strong financial returns because we understand the challenges of growing from the grower’s standpoint due to our direct investment in the industry, from growing to ripening to marketing within our national footprint.

Costa Farms maintains a solid commitment to the grower base and we continually strive to provide our growers with the latest industry information. We support our growers from the standpoint of being a grower ourselves and work diligently to develop long-term, trusting and sustainable relationships that are mutually beneficial. Costa Farms strives to be known by our customer base for consistently the highest quality products in the marketplace.

Melbourne Wholesale Market
West Melbourne VIC

Brisbane Wholesale Market
Rocklea QLD

Adelaide Wholesale Market
Pooraka SA

Perth Wholesale Market
Canning Vale WA

Contact:
David Costa **0412 990 241**
John O’Leary **0412 948 700**

Around Australia

Central Queensland Report

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



The weather conditions in Central Queensland have been, so far, very hot and dry and growers here are irrigating extensively.

There is also lots of fruit drop occurring because of the hot weather. Growers here have their full water allocation so can water as much as needed.

The Redshouldered leaf beetle (*Monolepta australis*) has also been making an appearance after the bits of rain we received recently. The beetles tend to feed on the surface layers of the leaves and also feed on the fruit removing the surface layers of the fruit skin.

Despite the hot conditions, the trees are looking alright. Once we get rain it will make a world of difference.

The avocado market for the summer has been high with the market as we speak achieving sales of \$60. The temptation will be for growers to get in early on this market but we must make sure that before we pick that the dry matter of the fruit is correct. If it is not then not only will the individual grower suffer but all growers in the market at the time.

Tri State Report

By Barry Avery, Avocados Australia Director for the Tri State Growing Area



Before we face another year I'd like to reflect on 2013. 2013 was a year of good returns but perhaps one of the most difficult growing seasons I have ever encountered. October saw two weeks of strong winds (we experienced wind speeds of up to 70 kilometres or more often) which caused havoc with the Reed crop, plus caused a lot of damage to the actual trees.

This was followed in November with cold days, colder nights and conditions that did not favour a good set, however, Mother Nature surprised everyone with an enormous fruit set - the best I have ever seen in 30 years. When I started writing this report we were experiencing the start of the fruit drop.

The Qualicado field day held in Robinvale attracted over 50 people and judging by the feedback everyone appreciated

the information that was made available. Hopefully, we will be able to hold similar information days on a regular basis.

I would urge all new growers to the industry, to attend these events as it gives a great opportunity to network and build contacts which are invaluable as you develop. New growers were able to access plenty of information to assist them with their decision making on new plantings, marketing and other valuable topics.

I will take this opportunity to wish everyone all the best for 2014. I hope this year treats us with the same returns that this past year provided.

North Queensland Report

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



The normal summer wet season has taken a holiday this year and North Queensland has been left with a long dry period from Spring right up to mid-January. This is the second year where the wet season has failed (to be really wet) and normally the growers here do not complain about less rain but the area has been put on 75% allocation of irrigation water due to the failed wet season of 2012-13 and it looks like water allocations will be cut further if the 2013-14 season does not top up aquifers and Tinaroo Dam.

There have been many new growers planting trees here in the past 2-3 years as these growers exit or diversify from their traditional crops (potato, peanuts, maize) and this will add to the production in 2016 and beyond. Also, there have been changes in farm ownership as some growers have sold to existing growers who wish to expand their enterprises.

The variety Shepard still dominates in the Mareeba-Dimbulah area but inroads are being made by plantings of Maluma Hass and Turner Hass so it will be interesting to watch the progress of these new varieties.

The wet is still to come with February and March so there is still hope.

The dry spell will mean less anthracnose so quality should be good and with growers adhering to the minimum 21% dry matter requirement for Shepard the season should start with a good line of fruit in early February. Growers are hoping for a continuation of the good prices seen over the summer months.

South Queensland Report

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



South Queensland has had, like most regions in Queensland, a very dry period to date. Fruit quality looks alright due to low pest pressure but size may be a problem if we don't see some good falls of rain. Although there have been storms about I have not heard of any major damage through hail or other storm related issues.

The crop for South Queensland looks to be smaller than last year and it seems to be reflected in the early infocado forecasts.

In November last year I travelled to Beijing, China with John Tyas to attend the China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair (China FVF) with Australia Fresh. On the way we also visited an avocado growing region located in southern China. The industry is very small and from the soil types and varieties we saw it looked like they have a long way

to go to getting anything substantial happening.

What we did see while at the trade show was the degree of interest in avocados. Consumers there were very interested and had good knowledge of the health benefits of our product. This interest seemed much greater this year compared with last year.

Please read the report in this edition about our China FVF experiences. China is a very important market for Australian avocados into the future and continuing to attend these events are very important if the industry wants to gain direct access to this market.

An interesting point that was made during one of the official meetings which gives a perspective on the size of this market was that there are 180 cities with a population of more than 3 million people, included in this are the likes of Beijing that has - alone - a population of 30 million people.

Anyway... food for thought.

I hope you have all had a great Christmas and new year and wish you all the best for 2014.

Trees suffering the effects of waterlogging? Sub-surface drainage may be the answer



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For more information contact **Richard Gloyne**
on 0428 528 054 or
richard@draintech.net.au



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Around Australia continued

Sunshine Coast Report

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



As at mid-January, the Sunshine Coast weather conditions since September flowering have been more favourable than for several years, with regular rain but not too much and plenty of sun but generally not too hot or windy. Let us hope that this pattern continues through to harvest. Let us also hope that these conditions enable the many trees still suffering from the last few very wet summers and autumns to return to healthy production.

Growers have recently noticed swarming Redshouldered leaf beetles (*Monolepta Australia*). It is worth keeping an eye out for these, if necessary referring to the Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide (page 147).

The Sunshine Coast Qualicado Workshop and field day will be happening in March so look out for Avocados Australia's Growers Notice and newsletter (Guacamole)

for the details. If you are a commercial avocado grower and do not receive email updates from Avocados Australia I recommend that you contact them and provide them with your current email address. This email communication is a great way to stay up-to-date on news, market information and research updates of relevance to our industry. The workshop will have some excellent speakers so I look forward to seeing you there. Please let me know beforehand of any topic you would like included in the discussion. You can email me at p.annand@avocado.org.au.

Tamborine and Northern Rivers Report

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



The 2014 crop in the Northern Rivers Tambourine growing area is best described as patchy. Even geographically close farms can be either feast or famine. The prolonged dry spell from August 2013 to now has had little respite besides patchy storms around November, some of which brought catastrophic hail to a number of farms. Poor fruit set following from a good flowering can be caused by many factors, however the need for good soil moisture during this high water use period is well documented and critical. It has been difficult to justify spending money on irrigation capacity in recent years, however the current situation reminds us of the frailties and demands of a producing avocado tree and the need to maintain and upgrade irrigation even if we haven't had to use it for about 4 years!

For farms with fruit, quality appears to be quite good, insect pressure and rots appear to be low, though some sun burn has occurred on exposed sides of the tree



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following some 40 degrees plus days. Fruit size may also become an issue if the dry weather continues.

I sincerely hope all growers had a good break over the festive season and are rested and ready for 2014.

Central New South Wales Report

By Ian Tolson, Avocados Australia Director for the Central New South Wales Growing Area



As reported in the previous edition of Talking Avocados, the variation in fruit set amongst local orchards in the Central New South Wales growing region is incredible. Some growers will be maintaining their orchards in the hope that next season is their turn for the bumper crop, others have a satisfactory crop, then there are the fortunate few with that elusive above area crop. Much speculation and discussion will continue as to why growers in this region struggle with fruit set. To date fruit drop has been minimal and the fruit is sizing up quite well.

Weather is such an integral yet uncontrollable part of farming. A lot of time is spent looking skyward and wishing that it would either rain or stop raining. At present

the wish is for rain. A few cloudy days have only produced drizzle. Orchards without irrigation systems will be starting to struggle through these hot, dry conditions.

Mid to late December had Comboyne growers on tender hooks as they were subjected to a cluster of hail storms. Most growers had finished harvesting so only had next season's crop to worry about, those still harvesting must have been very nervous with this season and next seasons fruit on the trees. Fortunately damage was minimal.

Western Australia Report

By David Duncan, Avocados Australia Director for the Western Australia Growing Area



Spring has been kind to Western Australian avocado growers with good fruit set occurring in orchards. This has been reported from most areas.

The preliminary crop estimate is 3 million trays compared with 3.5 million and 2.1 million trays from the previous two years. However with New Zealand estimating a total production of 5.8 million trays this season there will be pressure on both domestic and export markets.

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Industry Matters

Engaging with Growers:

Tristate Growers hear from experts

Nearly seventy growers and packers attended the Tristate Qualicado Workshop that took place in November last year at Bonyaricall Vineyards in Robinvale in Victoria. All of the avocado growers and packers that attended heard how to achieve maximum shelf life, and were provided with an overview of the tree growth cycles and canopy management. Many of the growers were particularly interested in the three sprayers that were demonstrated on the day.

We would like to thank Barry Avery, the AAL director for the Tristate growing region and owner of Bonyaricall Vineyards, for hosting the day. We would also like to thank all of the speakers that took part including: Terry Campbell from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Alec McCarthy from Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia; Lisa Martin, Ripe Horticulture; Denis Roe, the Senior Manager of R&D and Innovations at Birdwood Nursery; and Tim Myers from Barham Avocados.

Our thanks also go to Propak Industries, the regional sponsor for the Tristate workshop. Our thanks also go to the organisations that sponsored speakers on the day. This includes: Sunrise Ag, Gallard Services & Interlink Pumps and Sprays.

The next Qualicado Workshop for growers will be held in the Sunshine Coast growing region in March this year. More information with the details will be sent out by email.

Here are some of the photographs taken at the Tristate Qualicado Workshop in Robinvale last November:



A Tristate grower joined by researcher Alec McCarthy from the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia.



WIN TV journalist interviews Barry Avery, AAL's Director for the Tristate growing region.



Spray demonstrations.



Tristate growers hearing from researchers.



Lisa Martin from Ripe Agriculture.

Industry Matters continued

Attention Brisbane Wholesalers, Ripeners & Transporters!

On Thursday the 20th of February Brisbane avocado wholesalers, ripeners and transporters will be able to learn more about how avocado bruising occurs in the supply chain and find out ways to get the most shelf life from ripening practices at Avocados Australia’s “**Brisbane Qualicado Workshop**”. The morning workshop will be held from 8.30am to 11.30am in Training Room 2 on the ground floor of the Fresh Centre at the Brisbane Markets on 385 Sherwood Rd, Rocklea.

Proposed Agenda:

8.30am	Complimentary coffee and tea on arrival
9.00am	Welcome and Program Overview John Tyas, CEO Avocados Australia
9.15am	Overview of Qualicado Program Nathan Symonds, AAL Program Manager
9.40am	Avocado Bruising Research Update Daryl Joyce, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, Faculty of Science, University of Queensland
10.10am	Break
10.25am	Handling and Ripening – What you can do to minimise risk Terry Campbell, Qld Dept. of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
10.55am	Infocado Program Update Nathan Symonds, AAL Program Manager
11.15am	Avocado Varieties Denis Roe, Senior Manager: R&D & Innovations, Birdwood Nursery
11.30am	Finish

Purpose of Qualicado:

Through Qualicado, support and monitoring systems are being developed to empower industry members to implement changes and track their progress in improving quality. Qualicado represents a program of continuous improvement for avocado industry members. Growers, packers, wholesalers, ripeners and transporters are encouraged to participate in this system with the overarching goal being to improve quality for the end consumer. For more information about the Qualicado program visit the Avocados Australia website (<http://industry.avocado.org.au>) and click on “Qualicado” in the “Services” menu.

The Brisbane Qualicado Workshop is the second in the series of events that has been tailored to specifically meet the needs of the wholesaling sector. To view up dates about the Brisbane Qualicado Workshop event go to the Avocados Australia website (<http://industry.avocado.org.au>) and click on “Events” on the menu bar and then on “what’s On”.

To RSVP to attend a Qualicado Workshop contact Nathan Symonds on 07 3846 6566 or supplychain@avocado.org.au.

Melbourne Qualicado Workshop tackles top issues

Wholesalers, ripeners and transporters learnt more about how avocados bruise at the Melbourne Qualicado Workshop held at the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Market. By learning how avocado bruising occurs in the supply chain and finding out ways to get the most shelf life from avocados via ripening methods the workshop aimed to focus on the top issues of relevance to wholesalers, ripeners and transporters. This workshop was the first in a series designed to provide information relevant to wholesalers, ripeners and transporters.

Those wholesalers, ripeners and transporters that attended the event said they found the day useful and learned new helpful information.

We would like to thank all of the speakers that took part on the day. Our particular thanks go to Terry Campbell from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Daryl Joyce from the University of Queensland; and Denis Roe, the Senior Manager of R&D and Innovations at Birdwood Nursery.

Acknowledgement of our Qualicado Program Sponsor

Qualicado has been funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd using the national avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government. Avocados Australia is also proud to acknowledge the support from the following Qualicado Program sponsor:



Message from Birdwood Nursery - New Avocado Varieties Available from Birdwood Nursery

Birdwood Nursery is proud to be associated with the Qualicado Program as a National Sponsor. Of interest to consumers are good quality and new eating experiences. New avocado varieties are a way to achieve this and consumers may soon be seeing some in grocery stores. These include Maluma™, Carmen™ and Gem™, all black-skin varieties available from Birdwood under grower agreements.

Maluma™ is a variety suited to warm, early regions in the north, and potentially where Hass is unable to size up. Fruit quality and size are good and the tree has a low vigour, upright growth suited to higher density plantings. Fruit are ovate and larger than Hass.

Carmen™ is a good 4 weeks earlier than Hass, producing fruit identical to Hass. There may be a tendency to have extended or out of season flowering which may be advantageous or not.

Gem is about 6 weeks later than Hass and would suit later regions (south/west) to increase the length of the harvest season. Fruit is good quality, ovate shaped with attractive white lenticels, and slightly larger than Hass.



Please contact Birdwood Nursery at (07) 5442 1611 or info@birdwoodnursery.com.au for further details.

QUALICADO Program Event Calendar

The Qualicado program will be presenting useful information and tips about fruit quality at events targeting growers in every growing region across Australia. The program will also reach wholesalers, ripeners and transporters at events taking place in metropolitan regions. Those interested in attending any of these events can refer to this calendar and all enquiries can be emailed

to supplychain@avocado.org.au or call toll free 1300 303 971. Check your email updates for the details closer to each event. To add your contact details to Avocados Australia's communications list email them to co@avocado.org.au.

QUALICADO Program Event Calendar – 2014

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS:

(Suitable for avocado growers, packers and other orchard staff.)

Sunshine Coast,
Queensland: March 2014

Mt Tamborine/Northern
Rivers NSW: April 2014

South Queensland:
May 2014

Central New South Wales:
June 2014

Western Australia:
July 2014

Central Queensland:
September 2014

Tristate (VIC, SA, NSW):
November 2014

METROPOLITAN WORKSHOPS:

(Suitable for avocado wholesalers, ripeners and transporters.)

Brisbane:
Thursday 20 February 2014

Perth: July 2014

Sydney: March 2014

Adelaide: April 2014

Melbourne:
November 2014

Avocados Australia hosts Export Planning Workshop

Another important event held in November last year was Avocados Australia's Export Planning Workshop that was held to progress the development of an Avocado Industry Export Plan. The workshop reviewed the work completed to date by consulting team Agnes Barnard and Garry Goucher from Oliver and Doam through a Horticulture Australia Ltd funded avocado levy project. With exporting to Asia one of the main topics for discussion the aim of the workshop was to investigate what work has been done to date in this area and to examine what the industry should focus on in the future.

John Tyas, CEO of Avocados Australia believed that the workshop was both constructive and positive.

Industry Matters continued

"The analysis that has been undertaken so far is very detailed and informative including some economic scenarios regarding future supply and demand dynamics," he said.

The Export Plan is expected to be finalised this year.

Avocados Australia met with Chinese Delegation

On the 12th of November 2013, John Tyas CEO of Avocados Australia and Daryl Boardman AAL Director for the Southern Queensland growing region, met with a large delegation of research scientists, senior agronomists and research leaders visiting from China. The delegates were from the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and their interest in coming to Australia was in seeing the integration of water and fertiliser technology in agriculture.

The sixteen delegates represented a number of leading Chinese agricultural research agencies or work units based in the Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan, Guizhou, Guangdong and Hainan Provinces as well as a region of inner Mongolia.

The meeting provided Avocados Australia with the opportunity to build a relationship with members of the group and to encourage interaction between both parties. John Tyas provided an overview of the Australian avocado industry and this was followed by a presentation from Sonja Van Wegen from Measurement Engineering Australia (MEA), designers and manufacturers of environmental monitoring systems (see their Industry Profile on page 42).

The meeting also provided all of the Chinese delegates with the chance to try avocado, something that many of them had not eaten before.

Daryl Boardman believed that the meeting was useful for both parties, "it provided us with a chance to establish a relationship with respected figures in the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, to show them an overview of our own avocado industry and to gain their interest in avocado," he said.



Best Practice Resource Users - New features!

The Best Practice Resource authors have added three new items under the heading "Other Diseases" and one new item under the heading "Other Insect Pests" in the "Growing" section of the website. Under the heading "Other Diseases" you will now find information on how to identify and treat/prevent Cercospora spot, Bacterial soft rot, and Algal leaf spot. Under the heading "Other Insect Pests" you can now see how to identify and treat/prevent Thrips (red banded).

If you haven't applied to access the Best Practice Resource yet now is the time. If you are an Australian avocado grower (or packer, wholesaler, transporter, ripener or retailer) and you do not as yet have access enter this website address in your web browser:

<http://bestpractice.avocado.org.au/Login.aspx> then click on "Apply to access" and complete the online form. For assistance email co@avocado.org.au or call toll free 1300 303 971.

Julie Petty resigns as Program Manager at Avocados Australia



It is also with regret that we announce that our Supply Chain Program Manager, Julie Petty, has resigned from her position at Avocados Australia. Julie started employment at Avocados Australia in 2010. She worked closely with Joanna Embry on helping to establish systems and to develop and put into place procedures for running the supply chain program.

Her interest in goat farming and her own family's involvement in this area may have prompted Julie's decision to move into that sector and to join Meat and Livestock Australia.

"Julie played a key role in helping to launch and roll-out the Qualicado program in its first year and I thank Julie for her professionalism and dedication," said John Tyas.

Avocados Australia would like to thank Julie for all of her hard work over the last three years and we wish her all the best in starting a new phase of her career.

Nathan Symonds joins Avocados Australia



Nathan Symonds has now replaced Julie Petty as Avocados Australia's supply chain program manager. We welcome Nathan and know he will be a valuable addition to the team. Nathan's family once owned a cattle, grain and sheep property in Liverpool Plains near Tamworth. He completed a Bachelor of Applied Science in Agronomy from the

University of Queensland (Gatton campus).

Nathan's previous role was as a project officer at AgForce where he worked on a vegetation management project

which covered the entire state of Queensland and involved travelling the state and holding workshops to educate landholders on the current law of vegetation management. Prior to this he worked as a sales agronomist providing fertiliser and chemical technical advice to growers on behalf of the Wamuran & District Fruit Growers Co-Op Association Ltd.

Nathan is interested in assisting farmers to produce better quality produce, and keeping up to date with best practice to assist Australian farmers to be more competitive in Australian and overseas markets. Nathan also likes to see technology and innovations in use enhancing Australian farming practice.

"It's good to see farmers becoming more sophisticated taking up new ideas, whether it's technology or marketing of their produce," said Nathan Symonds, Avocados Australia's new supply chain program manager.

Nathan is now the main contact to speak with regarding all aspects of the supply chain program including Infocado and the Qualicado program. You can email Nathan at supplychain@avocado.org.au or call 07 3846 6566.

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Industry Matters continued

Avocados Australia farewells Joanna Embry



Joanna Embry is leaving Avocados Australia after eight years. Joanna joined Avocados Australia in 2006 at a time when the supply chain project was just about to get off the ground. Joanna is a trained agricultural economist. She completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Queensland (St Lucia) and after graduation

worked in the Ord River Irrigation Area in Western Australia as an agricultural economist. For a time she worked overseas in Vietnam before heading back to Australia to work in Queensland for the melon industry and then Avocados.

At Avocados Australia Joanna had a direct hand in designing and establishing the many processes and reporting systems that the current supply chain program relies on for its Infocado, OrchardInfo, Maturity Monitoring, Retail pricing and other reporting.

Joanna regards the work that she has done in pulling together the Avocados Australia supply chain program and rolling out the Infocado system (to be the comprehensive data flow collection and reporting system that is today) as her career highlights to date. Joanna will now concentrate her efforts on the family business and caring for her two young children. She hopes that when her children are a little older she may return to the horticulture sector in the future.

"We would like to thank Joanna Embry for all her assistance over the years and thank her for her substantial contribution, we wish her well in her future endeavours," said John Tyas Avocados Australia's Chief Executive Officer.

Bureau of Meteorology weather forecast

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has posted online its future climate and water outlook between now and April. You can access the rainfall and temperature outlook, the Seasonal stream flow forecasts and Water Storage trends. To stay up-to-date about weather alerts and other information you might like to bookmark or add the BOM website to your favourites in your web browser the address is: <http://www.bom.gov.au/>.

CEO attends PMA Fresh Summit Convention and Visits in California

The PMA Fresh Summit Convention and Expo – presented by the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) in the United States – was held in New Orleans from 17th to the 23rd of October 2013. John Tyas Chief Executive Officer of Avocados Australia attended the convention and expo and undertook avocado industry visits in and around California.

The PMA Fresh Summit Convention and Expo is perhaps one of the most important events for members of the produce industry. With more than 18,000 people participating, the PMA Fresh Summit provided an opportunity to learn about emerging global trends, products and services that may have an impact on the Australian avocado industry. This year the PMA Fresh Summit was regarded by some as one of the biggest trade shows to be held in North America. More buyers of fresh produce were represented at this event which also saw an increase in international buyers from China, South Africa, Australia and other countries.

Approximately 60% of the global produce retailers were represented at the event. 80% of attendees were involved in the purchasing process, and 35% of attendees were top management personnel.

APVMA extends permit for use of Fenthion

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) have extended the permit that allows for the use of Lebaycid Insecticide (Fenthion) until the 30th of October 2014. This permit affects avocado and mango growers' ability to use Fenthion as a post-harvest treatment for Queensland fruit fly (QFF). To view the details of the permit (PER13808) type this website address in your web browser: <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER13808.PDF>

APVMA would like growers to note that the Fenthion review is on-going and further changes may result from the review at a later date. For updated information regarding the Fenthion review, please regularly access the APVMA website: <http://www.apvma.gov.au/products/review/current/fenthion.php>

Levy Payers can access free training to boost leaders

Australian Horticultural producers and their teams can access free on-line Business Training from now and until the end of March this year. This training is available as part of the "Horticulture the Next Generation" program that has online training components still running from the 2013 program. You can register immediately for these courses.

The eight course titles available include: Business Improvement Process, Continuous Improvement Process, Marketing and Sales Process, Sales Performance, Self Confidence, Personal Improvement Process, Team Development Process, and Leadership Development Process. Registrants will also receive free access to the Rapid Problem Solving online short course.

Each person that registers can complete two of the eight courses that are on offer. For more information please refer to the "Horticulture The Next Generation" website: <http://www.horticulture-nextgeneration.com.au/industry-on-line-training/>.

All courses must be started and completed by 28 March 2014.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd as part of the across industry program and matched funding from the Australian Government.

Brisbane hosts the International Horticultural Congress in August!



The 29th International Horticultural Congress (IHC2014) will be taking place in Brisbane from the 17th to the 22 of August at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. The theme for this congress is "Sustaining Lives, Livelihoods and Landscapes".

This congress is particularly significant to the International Society for Horticultural Science as it marks one hundred and fifty years since the first International Horticulture Congress that was held in 1864 in Brussels. Given that

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Industry Matters continued

the Society received over 4,000 abstract submissions this congress promises to deliver a quality program of some of the best speakers, this result reflects how much interest is being generated amongst our colleagues and what a positive community response there has already been to the Congress.

An extensive program of plenary sessions, symposia, workshops, training schools and tours are expected. The Congress program will include 43 symposia covering a wide range of topics on all aspects of horticulture, arboriculture and medicinal and aromatic plants.

A diverse range of plenary sessions will also be included in the program. These will run in the opening sessions on each day of the Congress. Delegates will have the opportunity of hearing from some leading experts in their fields from around the world. Topics will include horticulture in relation to food security, food safety, the environment and health.

Don't miss your opportunity to be a part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations – register now by going online to: <http://www.ihc2014.org/registration.html>.

For more information and to view the speakers' information go to their official website: www.ihc2014.org

or contact the Congress Secretariat on 07 3255 1002 or email info@ihc2014.org.

Robert Gray moves on from OneHarvest



Robert Gray is leaving OneHarvest after 24 years of service to move on to explore new opportunities.

During his time at OneHarvest he worked on bringing a number of new products to the attention of Australian consumers. Specifically, Robert was involved in setting up

the initial programs that were important to the market development of Shepard avocados.

Talking Avocados spoke with a number of members of the Australian avocado industry to say a few words to recognise Robert Gray's contribution to the industry thus far.

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Jim Kochi, Avocados Australia's Chair, said that Robert *"assisted in establishing the first programs that were essential in progressing the Shepard variety, setting up early quality assurance programs, cross merchandising and in giving it some critical mass and in building confidence in the marketplace."*

"Robert also helped to set up the programs with Woolworths in the early stages and ensured that it was a good experience from the beginning."

"He was a good leader of the team," added Jim Kochi.

Don Lavers from Lavers Orchards also appreciates the contribution that Robert Gray has made to the development of the Shepard variety.

"The Lavers family appreciated his input in so many ways to the industry. Apart from his contribution to Shepard Australia and the Shepard variety, but also to the Food Quality Program which was a main turning point in relations between marketers, retailers and growers," said Don Lavers of Lavers Orchards.

"Robert was also involved in another innovation in the form of Harvest Executive Link in which Robert was a major player, a jointly organised initiative run by RCS and the Harvest Company," said Don.

Don Lavers also added that Robert helped the avocado industry using his Harvest clout and his close association with Barry Ross from Woolworths in promoting Shepard avocados.

A number of growers have said that Robert's part to play in the Food Quality Program was also a major milestone in the new relationship between marketers, retailers and growers. Through the efforts of Robert and his team Shepard Australia was highly successful. Many industry members agree that Robert's 2009 Avocados Australia Order of Merit award was well deserved. The award recognised Robert as a driving force in establishing the Shepard as a significant variety in the marketplace.

"Avocados Australia wishes Robert well and thanks him for the significant contribution he has made to the Australian avocado industry thus far, we wish him well in his future endeavours," said John Tyas, Avocados Australia's Chief Executive Officer.

North Queensland Avocado Grower slows down

After thirty four years of growing and packing avocados, Dell, Don and Peter Lavers of Lavers Orchards in North

Queensland have decided to wind back their activities and involvement in the industry.

The Lavers family recently announced that they have decided to reduce their active involvement in horticulture. Recently they sold one title of the property containing avocados and leased the remaining blocks of avocados to Lakeshore Pty Ltd. Lakeshore will be using the Lavers Orchards' pack-house to process avocados from this and their other orchards.

"Since we planted our first trees, the avocado and mango industries have come a long way and we have greatly enjoyed our participation as both industries have progressed and matured," said Don Lavers.

"The avocado industry in particular, through its peak body Avocados Australia, has shown initiative and vision in the way it has managed grower funded R&D and promotion thus keeping public demand in line with our ever increasing supply and for that we congratulate them."

Avocados Australia wishes Dell, Don and Peter Lavers all the very best for their future endeavours and thanks them for their contribution in playing a key role in the industry and an active part in the North Queensland growing region.

"As chairman of the Northern Avocado Growers Association (Shepard Australia), I would like to thank Don, Dell and Peter Lavers for their leadership and contribution to the whole avocado industry and especially for their work with the Shepard variety," said Jim Kochi, Avocados Australia's Chair and regional director for North Queensland.

Retail Prices Report

Retail prices continue to be collected on a weekly basis from a variety of stores in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Information collected includes: variety, pack type, fruit weight, price, display location and type, country of origin and type of price special (if any).

A range of stores are surveyed in this program including Coles, Woolworths, independent supermarkets, independent fruit and vegetable stores and chain fruit and vegetable stores. This information is reported in the Weekly Infocado Reports and on our industry website on a weekly basis. To view the latest retail price data please log onto avocado.org.au and click on the industry tab and then services, retail pricing. To view past Weekly Infocado Reports which include the retail pricing data for that week please log on to avocado.org.au and click on the industry tab and then services, Infocado.

Industry Matters continued



Figure 1: Screen shot of Avocados Australia website

Below are recent examples of the updated information you will receive by following the steps above.

There have been recent reports in the media regarding the high price of avocados in retail outlets.

We thought it timely to give a snapshot of how the retail prices in 2013 compared with the 2012 season on a weekly basis.

Below you can see comparisons by capital city. In brief these show that in Sydney Hass prices have been at least 50c higher than 2012 over the whole year (figures 2a and 2b). In Brisbane interestingly prices were higher in the first half of the year but stayed fairly similar to 2012 levels in the second half (figures 3a and 3b). Melbourne, like Brisbane showed a more distinctive difference in prices in the first half of the year but prices averaged slightly higher in the second half (figures 4a and 4b). Perth was similar to Sydney in being at least 50c higher across the year than in 2012 (figures 5a and 5b).

Figure 6 illustrates the overall comparison across all 4 markets and including all varieties displayed in the surveyed retail outlets across the 2 years.



Figure 2a: Hass retail prices in Sydney 2013



Figure 2b: Hass retail prices in Sydney 2012



Figure 3a: Hass retail prices in Brisbane 2013



Figure 3b: Hass retail prices in Brisbane 2012



Figure 4a: Hass retail prices in Melbourne 2013



Figure 4b: Hass retail prices in Melbourne 2012



Figure 5a: Hass retail prices in Perth 2013



Figure 5b: Hass retail prices in Perth 2012

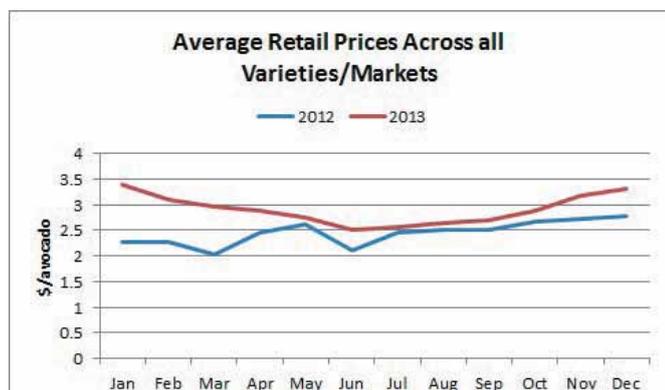


Figure 6: Average Avocado Retail Prices Across 4 capital Cities

For more information please contact Nathan Symonds on 07 3846 6566 or supplychain@avocado.org.au

ORCHARDINFO – Contribute and better plan for the future!

For those of you who didn't read it in the last issue of Talking Avocados Peter and Vicky Jones of Irymple Victoria and Kim and Claire Skoss of Manjimup Western Australia last year each won a brand new iPad as a reward for taking the time to return their 2012 OrchardInfo forms to us by the end of September. Everyone who did so went into the draw.

All growers who contributed their data for the 2011 season should have received the OrchardInfo report summarising tree numbers by your specific region as well as for the whole industry by variety. These would have come by email or if you don't have email, by post. If you have contributed your data but did not receive a report contact Nathan Symonds at the Avocados Australia office by calling 07 3846 6566 or emailing infocado@avocado.org.au. If you did receive a report and have feedback, either positive or negative, please also contact Nathan at the above number/email. We want to get this right because of the importance of the information to both individual businesses and the industry as a whole.

Remember that when you provide your data to OrchardInfo you provide Avocados Australia – your peak industry body – with the means to more accurately assist with monitoring production trends, allow for future planning and forecasting. If all of Australia's commercial avocado growers contribute reliable data into OrchardInfo it benefits the industry as a whole, and YOU. That is why it is within your own best interests to help us make this a comprehensive and accurate database. Once you contribute you are eligible to receive the Annual OrchardInfo Reports. These reports provide you with better information regarding estimated future production that can assist you with long term business decision making. The data you submit will also ensure that as an industry we are well prepared to market future volumes of fruit.

OrchardInfo Prize Offers – Be in on the chance to WIN!

The 2012 OrchardInfo Reports will be available by March this year. Step up to the plate and make sure that you contribute your data for the 2013 season. The following prize offers are available if you provide your survey forms by the deadline. OrchardInfo Forms will include the details of the following offers and will be mailed out soon:

Those who are eligible	Prize Offer
All Growers that get their OrchardInfo forms in to AAL by the deadline.	Will be in on the draw to win an Apple iPad. Two are up for grabs!
Growers who have never contributed before, or contributed in past years, who submit their 2013 data (not including yield information) to AAL by the deadline.	Will be in on the draw to win an Apple iPad (32GB Wi-Fi) valued at \$649.00.
Growers who contribute their yield information for 2013 to AAL by the deadline will have the chance to win our most valuable prize.	Will be in on the draw to win an Apple iPad (64GB Wi-Fi and 3G) valued at \$899.00.

If you have any questions regarding the form or this system please don't hesitate to contact Program Manager Nathan Symonds on 07 3846 6566 or infocado@avocado.org.au

Fruitspotting Bug Project Update



The damage to avocado flesh caused by Fruitspotting bug.

MT10049 - A Multi Target Approach to Fruitspotting Bug Management

The Fruitspotting bug (FSB) research project team is now halfway through delivery of this 5 year project. As such it recently underwent a mid-term project review. This review is an important activity for all HAL projects, as it provides an independent assessment of project achievements to date and helps focus the project team on actions and issues to ensure the project delivers the maximum benefit to investors by project completion. As a result of the review the Steering Committee has endorsed some changes to the project. This update is to inform you of the achievements of the project to date and outline the changes to project activities for the remaining 2 years of the project.

There are two species of spotting bug. The *Amblypelta lutescens* species is found in northern regions only. Whereas the *Amblypelta nitida* species is found in both northern and southern regions.

I. Project achievements to date

The project has achieved a number of outcomes for investors. These include:

- *A. lutescens* pheromone fully optimized
- Steps towards commercialization of a lure and trap for *A. lutescens* are currently underway
- New pheromone compounds for an *A. nitida* lure are currently being tested in Qld and NSW.



- One new insecticide is progressing towards commercial registration.
- A second new insecticide also looks promising and discussions with chemical industry are underway to work towards commercial registration.
- A range of new chemistries have been sourced and will be screened in the near future.
- Mass-rearing of egg parasitoid *Anastatus* has progressed and produced semi-commercial quantities
- Trap hedges from selected farms give indication of monitoring potential and will be integrated into a FSB management systems in the second half of the project
- A series of articles have been published in industry journals keeping the industries involved up to date with project progress
- One spray application workshop has been conducted in the Northern Rivers and there is a plan to deliver additional workshops to industries over the next two years.
- A YouTube video covering general information on the pest and project has been released
- A literature review on *Amblyopelta* spp. has been published as part of a PhD project.

2. Project work plan going forward

The review provided a number of recommendations to focus project activities for the remaining two years of the project. The project Steering Committee considered the review recommendations and provided some guidance to the project leaders (NSW Department of Primary Industries), who have now prepared a revised work plan. This was presented to the Steering Committee on 30th October 2013. The following presents a summary of the key changes and activities for the project moving forward.



The impact of Fruitspotting bug on avocado skin.

- The review highlighted that the project should, in order to deliver against its objective, narrow its scope and focus on the delivery of two central outcomes – developing effective insect thresholds and developing suitable chemical control options for FSB.

Improved collaboration and coordination of activities

- The project team, which comprises a number of researchers conducting specific activities, will be

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Fruitspotting Bug Project Update continued

brought together more often to foster a greater level of collaboration and ensure activities are complimentary and research outcomes are fully integrated.

Chemical control

- The project will continue to scan internationally for suitable pesticide options and will increase chemical screening activities to try and identify chemistry that will compliment an IPM approach to the management of FSB.

Pest ecology and thresholds

- Develop a pest ecology model for FSB to assist in determining FSB population development throughout the season.
- In line with the development of monitoring tools, identify FSB thresholds for each crop.

Pheromones and trap development

- Continue work on developing the pheromone for *A. nitida*.

- Identify a commercial partner and finalise design of the *A. lutescens* trap and lure.

Biological control

After just over a year of mass releases of *Anastatus* indications were that this wasp was able to make a useful contribution to FSB control at some sites. However, due to technical difficulties encountered in the *Anastatus* mass rearing process, a large quantity of the egg parasitoid *Anastatus* can no longer be supplied in the short term. As a result of the significant reduction and reliability of supply of *Anastatus* for use in field evaluations, BioResources determined that the most appropriate course of action was to cease field investigations within the Project until the mass rearing issues can be resolved. The Steering Committee concurs with this decision being the most appropriate course of action, given the circumstances. It is likely to take another 12 months to determine if the larger scale mass rearing issues can be resolved. If so, BioResources will resume its larger scale field evaluations in conjunction with crop consultants and growers. In the meantime, BioResources will continue to conduct its own small scale studies into *Anastatus* behavior in the insectary and on farm.

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Taking account for the technical constraints of accessing *Anastatus*, the recommendations from the project review and the commitment to having a biological control element of the project, it was agreed that the pathway forward would involve NSW DPI continuing to investigate potential biological control options for FSB. Much of this work will be laboratory based. Depending on availability of *Anastatus* and other biocontrols of interest (reared through the NSW DPI laboratory), some limited field investigations will also continue. This will be assessed as the season progresses. The Steering committee also recommended that a PhD project to continue the study of biological control options for FSB would be appropriate. An outline for a PhD proposal has been developed and different universities have been contacted.

Trap crops

- Focus on trap crop monitoring for *A. nitida* to research the relationship between pest presence in trap hedges and crop damage.

- Fewer trap crop sites (4 maximum) will be monitored more intensively.

Area wide management

- Engagement with the PestWeb network on the NSW Northern Rivers to pilot online monitoring data collection.
- Close collaboration with consultants to establish pest thresholds to assist with management decisions.

Industry adoption

- Collate FSB extension material and develop into a FSB management manual.

For further information, please contact project leaders Dr Ruth Huwer or Mark Hickey on 02 6626 1200.

This project has been funded by HAL using the Avocado, Macadamia, Lychee, Papaya, Passionfruit and Custard Apple industries levy, with additional funding via the across industry program and matched funds from the Australian Government.

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Spreading the Good News about Avocados



"The Daily Spread" is the official blog of Australian Avocados (<http://blog.avocado.org.au/>.)

Educating consumers about the health and nutritional benefits of eating avocados helps increase their awareness of this nutrient rich food and gives them reason to consume it regularly. More and more consumers are turning to social media for quick facts about food and delicious recipes they can share. "The Daily Spread" is the official blog of Australian Avocados (<http://blog.avocado.org.au/>). Talking Avocados recently caught up with Lisa Yates, the consultant dietitian who regularly contributes to this blog.

Lisa Yates, an Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian, consults to Horticulture Australia for Australian Avocados. She started writing for Australian Avocados' official blog in 2011. As many of you may know, "The Daily Spread" provides articles from a panel of health, early childhood, and food service experts. It also contains Australian Avocado news, competitions, quick ideas, "how to" articles, avocado dish restaurant reviews, and more. Consumers can also comment and contribute articles, join a mailing list or connect with Australian Avocados using Facebook and Twitter.

An Australian dietitian, Lisa focuses on helping people achieve better health through preventing and managing various health issues such as weight, pre- and type 2- diabetes, heart disease, cholesterol, as well as gastrointestinal conditions. She is also a sports dietitian and assists amateur athletes with achieving their personal best.

According to Lisa, avocados are a delicious, nutritious, and versatile fruit, and avocados can contribute to making meal times an enjoyable experience. She has been creating awareness about the health and nutrition benefits of avocados for a number of years delivering an avocado health and nutrition education program primarily aimed at health professionals. This health professional program is eligible to be funded out of research and development funding and so receives government

matched funding through Horticulture Australia.

Consumers and industry members can be assured that Lisa has an excellent understanding of the essential health benefits of avocados. She has eighteen years' experience as a dietitian, a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Biochemistry and Pharmacology, and a Masters of Nutrition and Dietetics both from The University of Sydney. Lisa is also a credentialed Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian from the Dietitians Association of Australia and she was a Director on the board of the Dietitians Association Australia from 2011 to 2013. The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is regarded as not only a leader in nutrition but an authoritative source of information aimed at "better food, better health and wellbeing for all" (<http://daa.asn.au/>). Lisa still practices as well as contributes to Australian Avocados' blog (she sees patients one day a week) so she is aware of consumers' current needs/issues and, being a member of the Australasian Medical Writers Association, has the kind of credibility that can assure consumers' confidence.

Talking Avocados asked Lisa about why she chose nutrition as a career and how she goes about spreading the good

news about avocados:

If someone wanted to seek advice on ways to improve their health/lifestyle what should they do first?

Nutrition information is everywhere so it's easy to get confused about what's healthy and what's not so for credible nutrition advice, to help prevent or manage a health condition, see a dietitian first rather than the last resort. There is no need to get a referral from a doctor to see a dietitian you can make an appointment with a dietitian directly. However depending on why you need to see a dietitian sometimes it is better to see a GP first who can organise blood tests etcetera to help with diagnosis and treatment.

What qualities/attributes should a person look for when choosing a good dietitian?

People should always check the dietitian is an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) as it indicates they have qualifications and skills to provide expert nutrition and dietary advice. They are also bound by a code of conduct and must undertake 30 hours of continuing professional development each year so are up to date on the latest research.

All dietitians can also call themselves nutritionists however not all "nutritionists" are dietitians and hence able to provide dietary advice. Look out for the APD name and logo.

You need to be careful when writing and communicating about the latest nutrition and health benefits of avocados. Why is this so?

We want Australian Avocados to be seen as a credible, reliable source of information by our health professional target audiences. To ensure this we must make sure all nutrition and health claims we make meet the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSANZ) and can be substantiated. Claims must also meet conditions under the Consumer Act and not be misleading or deceptive.



Lisa Yates respected Australian dietitian and contributor to "The Daily Spread."

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Spreading the Good News about Avocados continued

What process do you follow to ensure the information is reliable?

Nutrient content claims such as "Avocados are a good source of folate" only require proof that there is enough folate in a serve of avocado to meet the food standards code criteria.

However to make a high level health claim such as "Avocados help reduce the risk of heart disease" requires a thorough review of all the medical literature - an assessment of the quality of the studies and an overview that there is enough evidence to substantiate such a claim.

This requires a third party to review and the industry to submit to FSANZ for approval.

Fortunately FSANZ has already undertaken some reviews and they have developed a claim for all of fruits and vegetables and reducing heart disease risk. So Australian Avocados can already make this claim: "A high intake of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet with a variety of foods such as avocado can help reduce the risk of heart disease."

There are some other requirements to making this claim and they are outlined in food standard 1.2.7 on the FSANZ website (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au>).

So the process requires that you know the nutrient composition of avocado, know the food standards code, and keep abreast of new research for avocados.

What have been your career highlights to date?

Firstly last year I was asked to speak at the New Zealand Australia Avocado conference in Tararua New Zealand and I had never been to New Zealand before. Such a beautiful country can't wait to go back. Secondly, it has also been gratifying to see government policies take

shape especially after making so many submissions. This was especially the case when the Australian Dietary Guidelines were finally released in February 2013 and avocados were named as a food to include to help reduce saturated fat intake in Guideline 3 (www.eatforhealth.gov.au).

What attracted you to the idea of working in the field of nutrition?

When I was 14 a dietitian visited my home science class in school and I realised her job was a mix of my two favourite subjects - science/biology and food/nutrition. From that point on I was determined to be a dietitian. Everyone experiences food every day and everyone has an opinion on what is healthy and unhealthy. This can mean well intentioned but misinformed nutrition information circulates creating confusion. For example some say "to lose weight you need to eat a low fat diet" meaning you should avoid eating high fat foods such as nuts and avocado. But how could anyone think a plant food from a tree would be considered unhealthy? Especially when the research shows that fats play an important role in appetite control. So I enjoy educating people, dispelling those myths which stop them from enjoying good food and leading healthier lives.

What has your experience been like creating awareness of the health/nutritional benefits of avocados? Are consumers receptive to the messages?

We have been mainly speaking with health professionals such as dietitians and they are such foodies they love hearing about the research into the health benefits of fruits and vegetables such as avocado along with recipes and tips. The idea is we educate the dietitians and they share this information with their patients and clients.

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What kinds of topics have you covered so far in “The Daily Spread” blog?

I have written over 50 blog posts to date with topics as varied as: the importance of individual nutrients in avocado such as healthy fats, to the importance of breakfast, to back to school ideas, to eye health, heart health, how to read labels and so on. There is a great library of information now available on the blog site so avocado growers Australia wide should be following the blogs and sharing them around to friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. Let’s all spread the good word on avocados and health.

What kind of reader feedback have you received so far to “The Daily Spread” blog?

It’s satisfying to see that one of the most popular blogs with 18,500 views is “Low fat diets don’t work”. It shows that people are confused about these issues and keen to read more on the topic.

Is a blog an effective means for communicating the avocado health/nutrition message?

A blog is a more friendly personal style of writing and can

be far more engaging than your typical news article. Blogs also enable readers to ask questions, receive answers, and create a community of people with similar interests. It is for this reason we use the blog to dispel myths about avocado and help spread the good word on why we should all eat avocado regularly.

To what degree do you think social media has impacted on the way health conscience consumers seek out information about whether a food is healthy/nutritious?

Years ago we all used libraries and books to find information. When the internet came along information was at our finger tips but it was still generated by people we didn’t know or necessarily trust. Now we have social media - blogs, Facebook and Twitter which allow people direct communication and interaction with companies, organisations and more importantly health professionals, friends and family - the people we trust. Social media has an enormous impact on word of mouth because it is so immediate. Journalists now use social media to find and break the stories first that later end up in traditional media - TV, radio and print.

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Spreading the Good News about Avocados continued

Social media is an important education tool for us. Dietitians use social media as a continuing professional development tool. There is a group of dietitians who get together on Twitter once a month to discuss a particular topic and we are planning on having an avocado "Tweet up" with this group this year. Don't underestimate the power of social media in generating health information and dispelling health myths.

What do you regard as reliable online sources of information for consumers interested in finding out health/nutritional information about different foods?

When reading health and nutrition information online it is important to know who is writing it. It is no longer acceptable to have "ghost written" information with no way of knowing who the author is. Make sure the authors are qualified to give advice. So for health and nutrition authors should be Accredited Practising Dietitians or General Practitioners (GPs). The Australian Government website eatforhealth.gov.au has loads of information based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The Dietitians Association of Australia has a Smart Eating Section with an A to Z listing of foods (www.daa.asn.au), Sports Dietitians Australia (www.sportsdietitians.com.au) has great information for the amateur athlete and weekend warrior alike, The Victorian Government Better Health Channel website at <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/> is a great library of health information and Nutrition Australia at www.nutritionaustralia.org is another good nutrition site.

For specific information on specific foods it is always good to visit the grower organisation sites such as Australian Avocado (www.avocado.org.au).

Of the range of known/proven health and nutritional benefits that can be gained by eating avocados which of these benefits seem to be the most appealing to health conscience consumers currently?

It depends on the age, gender and life stage of the individual. For example a woman wanting to conceive or a woman already pregnant will be interested to know that avocado is a good source of folate which is needed the month before and during the first three months after conception to help develop the infant's spinal cord. Whereas other men and women wanting to maintain their heart health will be interested to learn avocado's healthy fats plays a role in this. Even those wanting to lose weight will be interested to know that you can eat healthy fats foods on a weight management diet.

When would you recommend to a client that they should include avocado in their diet?

Everyone should include avocado in their diet regardless

of their health condition. They are a great source of folate for pregnant women - the other green veggie rich in folate that tastes better. Anyone concerned with their heart health (heart disease, cholesterol, diabetes) and weight should include avocado due to its healthy fats which help improve cholesterol and control appetite.

We need two serves of fruit and five serves of veggies a day and I recommend a 1/4 to a 1/2 avocado (50-100g) which provides 1-2 serves. Avocado is perfect in salads, with eggs at breakfast and a great alternative to butter or margarine too.

How do you like to enjoy eating an avocado?

I love avocado! The gorgeous green colour, the creamy smooth texture - what's not to love!?

My "go to" avocado recipe when entertaining is a dip - layers of chopped up avocado with tomato and onion (like you would make for a bruschetta) eaten with pita bread wedges toasted in the oven til they are like chips. Yum!



Maximising Bee numbers in Avocado Orchards

In the previous edition of Talking Avocados (Spring 2013, page 22 to 24) we ran an article entitled "The Value of Pollination". This article is a continuation on the topic however this time we look at information that relates to maximising pollination in avocado orchards.



Photograph by
Janelle Lendrum.

Bee numbers in orchards

In most areas there are not enough wild or feral honeybee colonies to provide adequate pollination. In addition to this, those bees that are available are often some distance from the orchard. In inclement weather they only fly short distances and therefore would not reach the blossom.

Many growers wanting maximum pollination need to hire honeybee colonies from apiarists to ensure satisfactory bee populations in their orchards at flowering. Use of a lower stocking rate will in most cases fail to provide maximum pollination.

The number of hives recommended per hectare of avocado orchard in different producing countries around the world varies from about two to seven. The rate will depend on the quality of the hives themselves, the presence of feral bees and the presence of other flowering plants in the vicinity.

The Varroa Mite threat

Australia is one of only a small handful of countries in the entire world that doesn't yet have varroa mite. *Varroa destructor* is a serious bee parasite that decimates feral hives and requires special management by apiarists to keep their hives healthy. State government agencies along with Plant Health Australia and the Australian Honey Bee Industry are actively engaged in the "National Bee Pest Surveillance Program" to try and keep it out of Australia and detect its entry as early as possible should this occur. Already it is in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Varroa mite has dramatically changed the way bees are managed overseas and has impacted on the available colony numbers for pollination. Its arrival and spread in Australia would necessitate much closer management of bees for crop pollination.

Pollination contracts

When bees are introduced into orchards for pollination purposes, growers should satisfy themselves that colony populations of adult bees are adequate for the job and that active brood rearing is in progress.

As a rough guide, colonies should have at least six and preferably eight combs of brood and the appropriate population of adult worker bees. This will ensure that the colonies have a good number of foraging bees actively seeking nectar and pollen. The more bees in a hive the greater the number of foragers that will effect pollination.

Some apiarists and growers prefer to use a written pollination contract rather than an agreement by handshake. Copies of a suggested contract are available on request. A pollination contract sets out the responsibilities of both grower and apiarist.

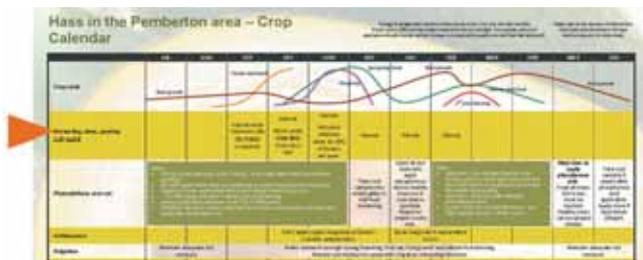
Location of colonies

Colonies of bees should ideally be located and evenly distributed within the orchard to obtain best pollination, placing single hives throughout the crop. However, if it is necessary to apply insecticides that are harmful to bees during flowering then bee hives must be re-located away from the orchard. Alternatively some insecticides could be applied after dark when bees are not foraging but this will be determined by the particular insecticide used and its "user class". Seek advice on specific applications from a specialist. Ideally hives should be evenly distributed over the whole area so that all trees are within 100-150 metres of a colony. This is not always practical due to transport and topography restrictions. In these situations it is more practical to site colonies in small groups evenly throughout the area.

When to encourage/introduce bees

By accessing the Avocados Australia Best Practice Resource (BPR), Australian avocado growers can find out the recommended time/s of the year in which to introduce/encourage bees into avocado orchards in each growing region. This information appears on Crop Cycle Calendars that can be accessed from the Avocados Australia website located here: <http://industry.avocado.org.au>. Click on the top menu bar where you see the words "Best Practice" then enter your email address and password to log in. Once you are logged-in move your cursor over the maroon menu bar to "Growing" and select "Crop Cycle Calendars" (the third item down in the Growing menu). Then click on the Crop Cycle Calendar relevant for your region.

Maximising Bee numbers in Avocado Orchards continued



Crop Cycle Calendars can be viewed from the Avocados Australia website.

Growers should arrange spraying programs so that pesticides need not be applied during the time bees are in the orchard. Many pesticides are hazardous to bees so large numbers of bees can be killed by the application of pesticides while they are foraging in the orchard. When this is not possible, notify the apiarist at least 48 hours in advance of spraying so he can remove the colonies from the area. The grower and apiarist should agree before spraying is conducted to a fee for temporary hive removal. Spraying a chemical with a low residual toxicity to bees, in the evening when bees are not foraging, may alleviate the need to remove the colonies.

Orchard layout and cross-pollination - In Theory

In both the cooler growing regions of Australia and in orchards where 'B' flowering type varieties such as Shepard, Sharwil and Fuerte are grown ('B' types are more sensitive to cool temperatures at flowering), a yield response is sometimes shown from the inclusion of pollinisers (varieties with the opposite flowering type to the main variety). This is more likely to happen in seasons when temperatures are cool during the flowering period. In an ideal world, where cross-pollination is required, the orchard layout should be carefully planned with the inclusion of pollinisers. Polliniser varieties must flower at the same time as the main variety and pollinisers should ideally be located adjacent to the commercial variety.

Theoretically, for effective cross-pollination to occur, the best orchard layout as far as bee activity is concerned is to have polliniser grafts in each tree. The fruit in the polliniser should be thinned or totally removed to promote strong flowering in the next season.

Pollinisers - Typical Approaches Used

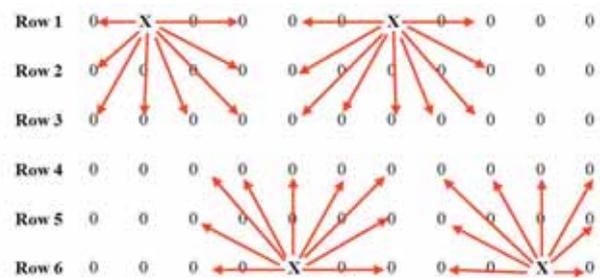
In practice, commercially viable approaches may differ from the ideal approach outlined above.

In past years research activity took place that included a study of orchards and the use of "Pollinisers". The

following information was communicated to growers at a study group meeting a few years ago. Here are some of the options that were presented about where pollinisers may best be placed in a block:

In older blocks a program was started to top work some of the trees to pollinisers to improve pollination and thus fruit set (especially for years when pollination is poor due to cool weather at flowering for example). The study assumed that the cross pollination effect reaches 2 trees in any direction from the polliniser. If this is so then the configuration could be that every 5th tree in every 5th row should be a polliniser (Figure 1). This means that one in every 25 trees (4%) is a polliniser.

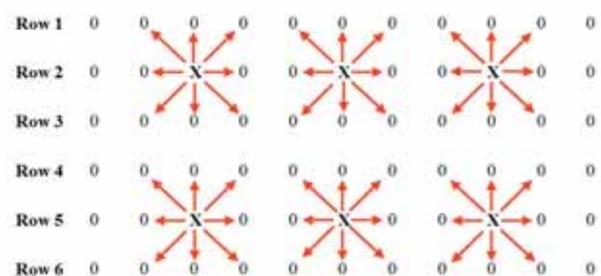
Figure 1. Layout of polliniser trees (X) amongst Hass trees (0), every 5th tree in every 5th row



Pollen transfer via bees from polliniser variety to 'Hass' trees

Another approach that was examined was for every 3rd tree in every 3rd row to be a polliniser so that every tree had a direct uninterrupted line to a polliniser (Figure 2). This meant that one in every 9 trees (11%) would be a polliniser.

Figure 2. Layout of polliniser trees (X) amongst Hass trees (0), every 3rd tree in every 3rd row



Pollen transfer via bees from polliniser variety to 'Hass' trees

Information about which varieties to use as pollinisers in different regions of Australia is limited but growers have started to experiment. Two varieties that are being tried for Hass (and which have been used successfully overseas) include Edranol and Ettinger. These have the 'B' type flowering pattern which complements the 'A' type of Hass. The most important feature of a polliniser variety is of course that it must flower at the same time

as the variety that you want it to pollinate. However, just because the two varieties have synchronised flowering in one region growers should not automatically assume that it will be synchronised in other regions or even that it will synchronise every season. Growers are advised to experiment on a small scale with a few different options for a few years before introducing pollinisers on a larger scale. Sometimes the flowering time of a polliniser variety can be manipulated by using practices such as cincturing, however these practices need to be researched.

Where Shepard (a 'B' type) is the main variety, it has been found that the presence of Hass ('A' type) growing nearby has in some seasons improved the yield of Shepard within a close radius indicating that Hass could act as a polliniser in this situation.

Overseas experience is that a good polliniser can increase production of the main variety, more than compensating for having a percentage of trees in the orchard that are not mainstream.

When planning the orchard layout, one should also remember that where spacing of trees across rows is greater than along rows (this is the case in the majority of Australian orchards), the bees will tend to work along rows, not moving across to adjacent rows. So if some rows don't contain polliniser varieties the fruit set in these rows may be disappointing compared with those with them.

Planting of polliniser varieties within the row will overcome this problem but can create additional problems during harvest. Little information is available regarding the optimum spacing between polliniser trees within a close planted row such as a hedgerow.

Conclusion & where to find Further Information

It must be pointed out that this subject is a specialist area and still requires further investigation. However, we do know that it is preferable for the polliniser and main crop varieties to be similar in form and appearance as bees tend to stick to trees with a similar form in the one foraging trip.

To find out more about the pollination research currently underway in Australia, Avocados Australia recommends that you visit the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) website. Enter this website into your web browser www.rirdc.gov.au/pollination. On that same website you will also find a copy of the Pollination Aware report.

More than \$1 million has been invested in the Pollination

Program since 2007 as part of a multi-industry research effort to ensure industries are protected from exotic pests. The majority of funds supporting the Pollination Program come through HAL, including from the avocado industry. Other funds are provided by the Honeybee Research and Development Program through the RIRDC. There are also matched funds from the Australian Government.

Acknowledgements:

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More information about maximising pollination can be found on Avocados Australia's Best Practice Resource (BPR) website.

Once you have logged in just move your cursor to the "Growing" menu and click on "Study Group Minutes". You can then view the pollination presentations in these regions: Tristate, Central New South Wales and Western Australia.

For more information about the BPR call Avocados Australia on 07 3846 6566 or email co@avocado.org.au.

Member Profile

Peter & Robyn MacIntosh

Boreray Pty Ltd, Robinvale, Northern Victoria

Tristate avocado growers Robyn and Peter MacIntosh took up this opportunity to share their experiences as avocado growers. Robyn and Peter share their story with Talking Avocados:

What prompted you to become a member of Avocados Australia?

In 2008, after having just planted my first avocado trees, I attended the Avocado Conference in Cairns. I picked up some literature from the Avocados Australia stand and found it to be classy, professional and informative. I have always believed in strong representative industry organisations.

What value do you gain in being a member of Avocados Australia?

Information about production and markets are critical to the successful production of avocados. Avocados Australia provides part of this information.

Would you encourage other avocado growers to join Avocados Australia?

Absolutely. All industries have their problems. You need a strong voice to attend to these problems when they arise.

What attracted you to the idea of becoming an avocado grower?

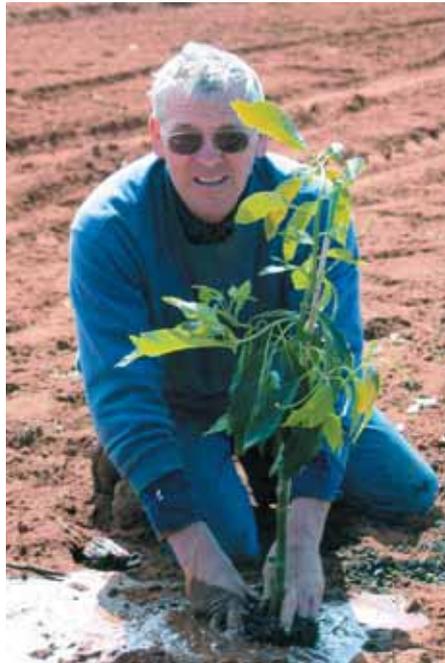
Having weathered the serious drought, having to abandon vines, a dysfunctional wine industry and the dried vine fruits industry, a great Australian industry, being murdered by imports and rising costs, I was looking for an industry that grew a good product, was moving upwards and provided a challenge to a 60 year old failed grape grower. A conversation with Barry Avery, our Avocados Australia regional director, further encouraged me to have a go.

How long have you been an avocado grower?

I planted our first trees in 2008, but had some experience with a small patch on one of our properties that was purchased at the height of the wine boom. I regret pulling them out!

What avocado varieties do you grow and why?

We grow mainly Hass plus a small quantity of Wurtz trees which are concentrated on a lower point of our property that is more frost prone.



Northern Victorian grape grower Peter MacIntosh, now also planting avocados, says "you are never too old to plant avocados".

How much of your land is dedicated to avocado farming?

Approximately 50 acres has been planted to avocados. Currently we have 2000 trees planted. We are optimistic that we can further expand our plantings.

Where did you obtain your rootstock when you set out to grow avocado? What rootstock do you use?

The majority of our trees have been purchased from Birdwood Nursery and Anderson's Nursery, with some also from our local Sunraysia Nursery. We have been happy with all our trees from these sources. I am baffled though as to how there can be quite a difference between tree growth rates even though they look very similar when planted.

The majority of the rootstocks are Velvick, Zutano, Ashdot, Dusa, and some Edranol pollinators.

The challenge for growers in the Tristate growing region is to better evaluate what are the most suitable rootstocks going forward. I am concerned that the walking frame or wheelchair might happen quicker than an answer to this question. So far though, all the better rootstocks appear to work well. Velvick and Ashdot have both performed well. Dusa looks good and seems to have a greater tolerance for the cold. Zutano, the most commonly used stock in our region, has also been a good performer. Recently we planted some Haas on Reed with closer plantings, as well as a small patch of Gems.

I think the adoption of better management practices has more influence than stock selection. My consultant, Lisa Martin, may disagree with my observation.

Originally the properties in our area were set up as Soldier Settlement blocks which were planted to Dried Fruit varieties – sultanas, currants and raisins – with smaller patches of citrus and stone fruits.

We purchased more blocks after our son, Ross, came back on the land in the late 1990s. Another form of child abuse he has been heard to say! We subsequently expanded into growing more wine grapes, whilst still retaining our interest in producing dried fruit. More recently we have also expanded into the table grape production.

We have now separated the business and Ross has taken

over the viticultural side of our business, whilst I am wandering into the twilight with our trees.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learnt about growing avocados? Is it a case of being an on-going learning process?

The most valuable lesson in learning how to grow a new crop is to forget about what you used to grow particularly concerning grapes, which are really just "woody-stemmed weeds". I have been fortunate that Lisa Martin, who worked in Robinvale for another avocado grower, decided to set up a consultancy business. We engaged her to provide us advice and a work program. She is a hard taskmaster.

I have also been fortunate that Barry Avery, a grower of avocados in our region for nearly 30 years, and a good friend, has been generous with his advice and experience.

Growing avocados is definitely an on-going learning process.

What approach do you take in deciding time of harvest?

We harvest according to dry matter testing and have had no trouble achieving good results.

What in your opinion is the main challenge that you need to overcome in successfully running an avocado farm in your region?

Growing avocados, or any crop, in any region has particular challenges. In our region, cold weather and extreme dry summer temperatures are our biggest challenges. Consequently we use frost fans and irrigation to ameliorate these problems.

What are the soil types like in your growing region?

Sandy loams with a limestone base are the main soil types in our region. We have to be conscious to not plant trees in soils that are too limey. Fortunately the properties we have chosen for avocado production are good sandy loams with a depth of up to 800 cm before we strike any limestone.

How do you obtain pickers to assist you at harvest time?

Being a young orchard, we have experienced no problems with harvest labour. As Robinvale has a large table grape industry, there are always people in the district looking for work. Is there an easier crop to pick than from young avocado trees?

How long does it take to harvest your fruit and when do you do it?

The two commercial crops that we have so far grown have harvested have been in mid to late August and stretched

for only a couple of weeks. I expect harvest time to be extended as our trees mature and younger trees come on stream.

Which pests are of most concern to you in your orchard at the moment?

We have few pest problems in our region, although some thrip damage has been observed at the fruit set stage. It is possible some snail damage, as well as light brown apple moth, may cause problems in the future.

What do you think are the biggest opportunities for the avocado industry in Australia?

I think the biggest opportunity for the Avocado Industry is to continue to grow consumption. I believe the direction the Industry has been going in this area to be commendable. The other area is exports. Sure as night follows day we will need some good high value export markets to absorb future production increases.

What do you think about the "Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide"?

Publications like the "Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide" is a valuable resource.

Do you enjoy eating avocados yourself?

Robyn and I, our four children, their "other halves", and eight grandchildren all eat avocados ... oops with the exception of number eight grandchild, who refuses to eat solids yet! We believe that you are never too young to eat avocados and never too old to plant them!

Generally, we eat avocados in their purest form in salads or as a substitute for butter.



"You are never too young to eat avocado" say Peter and Robyn McIntosh, here is their grandchild Hamish (7 months). Photograph by Donna Christie.

Study Tour to China

Development of new markets is a priority for the Australian avocado industry. John Tyas and Daryl Boardman from Avocados Australia undertook a study tour to China in November last year that included an assessment of the avocado industry in China and participation in a China trade mission with **Australia Fresh**.

The main objectives of the tour were to:

1. Gain an understanding of the avocado industry in China
2. Gain an appreciation of the markets in Beijing
3. Explore the potential for Australian avocado exports to China
4. To raise the profile of the Australian avocado industry with Chinese government officials and Chinese fruit importers

A key component of the trade mission was the Australia Fresh Pavilion at the 5th China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair (China FVF) in Beijing.

The China FVF trade fair is a major horticultural exhibition for the region. It is also an ideal opportunity to network with Chinese Government officials. The Administration of the Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) is one of the supporters of the event and the China Entry & Exit Inspection, and Quarantine Association (CIQA) are also a major sponsor.

Chinese avocado industry

China is considered a great market opportunity for Australian avocados. However, there are also records of an emerging avocado industry in China and we were keen to learn more about it.

Our first visit was to Nanning, in the Guangxi province in southern China. We met with a range of people from the Guangxi Vocational and Technical College, the South Asian Tropical Science Institute of Guangxi and the Guangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

The industry in China was previously located in Hainan but is now based mainly in Guangxi, where the climate is more suitable. Plantings have been established on land previously used for sugar cane or potato production.

Hass is the main variety grown, but researchers are working on selecting their own new (green skin) varieties adapted to local conditions and with extended seasons. Hass is harvested from November to February and other varieties are harvested from August to November.



Three new green skin selections



Inspection of field trial site at Guangxi Vocational and Technical College

The industry is very much in its infancy and production systems are very rudimentary.

We visited a farm at Liao Ping, about 180 km north east of Nanning. This farm (about 65 ha) was established in 2009 with about 70% Hass and the remainder local selected green skins. The farm is a private concern with the land under a medium-term lease from the government.



As the above images show plants are raised in seedling beds.

There is limited knowledge of basic production systems. For example, it appeared that there was no knowledge of standard phosphorus acid treatments for phytophthora management.



Evidence of phytophthora losses.

Fruit from this farm is sold to Shanghai and the wholesale price is about 120 Yuan per box (\$22AU/5kg).



Box of Chinese Hass avocados.

Conclusion

The Chinese avocado industry is very much in its infancy. Soils that are currently under cultivation appear marginal. Extensive areas of cane land could potentially be converted to horticultural production, but its suitability for avocado production is questionable.

Limited government support is available for non-staple crops such as avocado.

Production systems are rudimentary with limited expertise.

China is many years away from becoming a significant supplier of avocados domestically throughout China or other parts of the world.

Fresh China Mission

Xinfadi Wholesale Agricultural Products Markets – Beijing

The delegation visited the Xinfadi Wholesale Agricultural Products Market, the largest wholesale market in Beijing, and one of the biggest in the world including a new electronic trading platform founded in 2010. About 10% (400M RMB) of all produce traded in the market is currently traded through the trading platform.



Electronic trading platform.

Study Tour to China continued

The markets also include a showroom which has recently been opened. The showroom showcases the produce from each of the provinces of China.

The values of produce on the market floor were surprisingly high. Avocados from Mexico and Chile were selling for 160 Yuan per box (\$30/5.5kg).



Avocados from Chile.



Market trading floor.

Supermarket visits

The delegation also visited retail outlets including: Walmart; BHG Supermarket, a high end supermarket chain; and Jenny Lou’s Supermarket, a small grocery catering to expats. The retail prices of avocado is surprisingly high, particularly in the high end stores.



BHG Marketplace - Avocados for 108 RMB/kg (\$19.80/kg).

5th China – Australia Workshop on Horticultural Co-operation

One of the main reasons that Avocados Australia participated in this trade mission was to present at this workshop. The workshop continued the regular series of forums that have been held as part of the memorandum on cooperation between the China Entry & Exit Inspection, and Quarantine Association (CIQA) and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL).

The Office of Horticultural Market Access (OHMA) and CIQA jointly organised the workshop which was led by Mr Ge Zhirong, President of CIQA, and Professor Rob Clark, Deputy Chairman of HAL. The workshop, chaired by Madam Guo Lisheng (senior advisor of CIQA) was well attended by industry representatives from Australia and China, as well as government officials from the Department of Agriculture in Canberra and Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People’s Republic of China (AQSIQ) in China.

Avocados Australia CEO, John Tyas, made a presentation on behalf of the Australian avocado industry. He provided an overview of the Australian industry, highlighting the benefits of avocados and in particular, the strengths of Australia as a supplier. Special mention was made of the nutritional properties and the potential role of avocados in China for expecting mothers and young babies particularly in light of the recent relaxation of the one-child policy. This sparked considerable interest and discussion around the health benefits of avocados.



John Tyas presenting at the 5th China - Australia Workshop on Horticultural Co-operation.

China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair

The China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair (China FVF) is the sole official fresh produce trade show in China. The Australian Avocado industry has been represented at China FVF in 2011, 2012 and now 2013. A key component of the mission was the Australia Fresh Pavilion at the 5th China

World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair (China FVF) in Beijing.

The trade fair is a major horticultural exhibition for the region. It is also an ideal opportunity to network with Chinese Government officials as the Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) is one of the supporters of the event and the China Entry & Exit Inspection, and Quarantine Association (CIQA) a major sponsor.

This year Australia Fresh had seven co-exhibitors. Citrus Australia and Victorian Cherry Exporters joined Australia Fresh members - Apple & Pear Australia, the Australian Table Grape Association, Summerfruit Australia, Avocados Australia and the Australian Lychee Growers Association.

Australia's continued and consistent support was recognised by CIQA, who presented Australia Fresh with the Best Exhibitor Award for 2013.

Although the Australian avocado industry does not yet have access to China, the exposure of the industry and the opportunity to network with the Chinese government officials is an important part of our long term market access strategy.



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* STANDARD 5.5KG TRAY WITH INSERT - LOCAL AREA



Study Tour to China continued



John Tyas and Daryl Boardman manned the Avocados Australia stand.



Avocados were given a rare opportunity for even more exposure when AAL CEO was asked to give a TV interview as part of local news coverage.



Avocados were well received by Chinese consumers with a frenzy around the sampling table. Plain, savoury (pepper and salt) and sweet (honey) samples were offered.



Madam Guo Lisheng, senior advisor of CIQA (pictured with her grandchild) is a real fan of avocados and is keen to see Australian avocados in China.]



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Madam Guo Lisheng, senior advisor of CIQA with her grandchild with Daryl Boardman and John Tyas.

Conclusion

There are enormous opportunities for Australian avocados in China and these are expected to grow as China continues to develop. However, considerable investment

by industry and commercial players will be required to develop this market over a long term period.

Other countries have made inroads into the Chinese market already. Mexico has access and other countries are pursuing applications.

Avocados Australia has a China market access submission in place which is due to be progressed by the Australian Department of Agriculture in the near future (after the lychee industry). Avocados Australia will continue to push for this to be progressed as soon as possible and ensure any supporting data and analysis are provided.

Australian avocado industry participation in trade missions such as this helps to demonstrate industry commitment to export development and engenders support from the Australian Department of Agriculture for avocado market access.

The industry should continue to attend China FVF and the China-Australia workshops to build on the relationships that have been formed and to ensure Australia is seen as a reputable and committed future supplier of avocados.



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Solutions for the Growing World

Industry Profile:

Measurement Engineering Australia (MEA)



Fiona and Daniel Habermann, early adopters of MEA's Plexus soil moisture monitoring system, use it to improve water use efficiency and productivity.

MEA is an Adelaide-based soil moisture and climate monitoring technologies provider specialising in the agriculture sector. Founded in 1984 by engineer, Dr. Andrew Skinner, MEA applies innovative technological solutions to agricultural systems in order to increase control and optimisation of the use of natural resources. This year they celebrate 30 years of operation. At a time when Australian farmers need to lower production costs and improve fruit quality, MEA presents a number of cutting-edge solutions.

Talking Avocados spoke with Sonja van Wegen from MEA's Business Development team about their Australian-designed and wholly Australian-owned innovations and how they can bring value to the avocado orchard.

What does MEA do that is unique?

MEA works with customers to develop solutions to their problems. This is evidenced by the release of products which are truly new concepts, not just imitations of existing tools. Plexus, our most recently released product, is designed and manufactured in Australia and incorporates

ideas which Australian growers have requested.

Plexus is unique in the use of the latest wireless technology to allow mesh networking of data, a method which makes the capture of soil moisture data more certain and cost effective.

In designing Plexus we listened to growers who insisted on a pricing framework which they feel is affordable. We met that demand and have a financially attractive proposition.

MEA has a very strong culture of supporting the customer and offering the very best after sales support. We are unique in developing a distribution network which provides the best level of support to our customers.

What we want to do is engage with our customers and understand what makes their farming operation difficult. Where those problems involve the measurement of climate and soil moisture, MEA will offer a cost effective, innovative and practical solution.

With respect to the soil moisture monitoring system how did this technology come about?

Our engagement with the farming community and agricultural researchers commenced shortly after the company started. We have been a supplier of innovative products, particularly in the measurement of soil moisture. This low cost data recorder made soil moisture monitoring an economic proposition for all irrigators. In 2008 we released the GDot, a unique and simple soil moisture display followed in 2013 by Plexus, radio based system software in the cloud.

This inventive role has been possible because we remain in close contact with growers and researchers.

What other services does MEA provide?

We specialise in environmental measurement with particular emphasis on climate and soil moisture monitoring. Our networks of weather stations straddle Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria.

Are all of the technology solutions currently in use by MEA (for the soil moisture monitoring system) Australian innovations? Are they unique in anyway?

Our soil moisture products are proudly Australian designed, Australian made.

There are three major products in our range. The GBug made soil moisture recording affordable to all growers.

Similarly, the GDot introduced a simple to understand moisture indicator sufficiently sophisticated for the professional market. It is software free and its intuitive interpretation makes it suitable for every grower or contractor.

After three years of development we released Plexus in 2013, a sophisticated, wireless, networking system which pushes data to a website allowing irrigators to view data on their personal computer (PC), tablet or phone.

MEA's products are industrially designed to be robust, and they are developed in consultation with the farming community.

What can you tell me about the Plexus system? How does it work and what is involved in its installation?

Plexus is a radio soil moisture monitoring system which consists of:

1. Soil moisture sensors » attached to...
2. Field Stations » which read sensors, stores and sends data to...
3. A central Hub » that collects, stores and transfers all the data to...
4. Green Brain » a software application in the cloud (internet).

MEA's affordable new wireless soil moisture monitoring system allows you to create a network of sensors that covers a few – or hundreds – of hectares

Field stations hop data from station to station along an optimal path until the Hub is reached.

Each field station can store its measurements locally. This means that if any link in the relay chain breaks, measurements continue until the mesh can heal itself.

The surrounding radios simply look for the next closest station and form a new network! This makes for an ultra-reliable network which can deal with its own problems and operate in complex terrain without losing your vital soil moisture readings.

When measurements reach the Hub, they are sent to the clever Green Brain Web Application, which lets you check your data on your computer, tablet or smart phone. Working together, Plexus and Green Brain deliver up to-date soil moisture the palm of your hand, wherever and whenever you want.

Plexus is low maintenance and powered from its own solar panel, charging an internal lithium-ion battery.

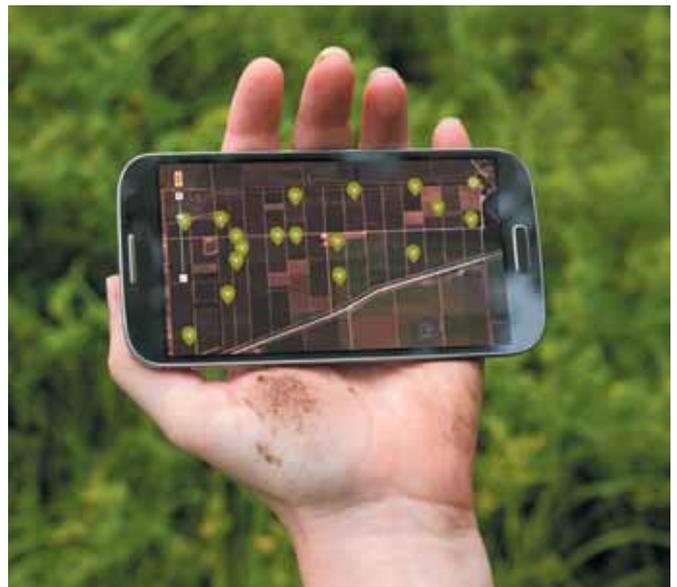
There are a number of sensor options available to the grower based on their budget and technology preferences. Plexus can utilise gypsum blocks, EnviroPro and Aquacheck probes, which gives growers access to soil moisture

tension, soil moisture content, soil temperature and soil EC (a measure of salinity)

Installation is performed by MEA or fully trained MEA distributors.

How could an avocado grower benefit from using this technology/system in their operations?

Plexus gives growers immediate access to soil moisture information, when and where they want it.



MEA soil moisture information in the palm of your hand.

Knowing soil moisture levels is important for backing up that decision of when to irrigate and for how long.

This information is really important for avocado growers as their trees are shallow rooted, have no root hairs and are extremely sensitive to soil moisture conditions – avocado crops will suffer from both water stress and water logged conditions

Getting irrigation regimes wrong and under watering at critical fruit set and flowering times negatively impacts on yields and fruit quality. Water logging of avocados increases the risk of **Phytophthora**, reduces tree vigour and in worst case scenario, can result in tree death after as little as 48 hours.

What kind of investment would an avocado grower need to make in order to establish an MEA soil moisture monitoring system in their orchard?

For a small Plexus system, monitoring 2 sites, with the cheapest sensor options you would be looking at just under \$5K (excluding installation).

Each system requires a Hub which controls the network and transmits the data to the cloud where it can be viewed using the Green Brain software. Soil moisture

Industry Profile continued

sensors are attached to Field Stations which take the measurements and send them back to the Hub. The more places you want to measure the more Field Stations you require.



Green Brain software in action.

And what kind of ROI is possible by using the system over time?

The major financial benefit is improved fruit quality. Monitoring water application gives the grower the certainty that the tree is optimally watered. In many circumstances the capital cost of Plexus can be recouped within the first growing season.

The secondary benefit is reduced operating costs, primarily of water and energy. Where the cost of water is low but is limited in supply, the proper application of the free but scarce resource is realised through fruit quality and quantity.

We believe that a 100% ROI is feasible.

How different is the installation approach used for an avocado orchard compared with, for example, grape vines?

The installation of the sensors and the setup of the Plexus network is identical. The key difference is in the type of mounting used for the Field Stations in each of these crops.

The typical avocado tree is significantly taller than a grapevine canopy and successful communication of data through the Plexus network requires that Field Stations sit above the height of the canopy. The standard 2m posts which would be utilised in grapevines would be completely inadequate for avocados.

We have developed a safe and convenient tall tree mounting system which elevates the Field Stations up to 8m in the air to clear the tree canopy and ensure good

transmission of soil moisture data.

Is the MEA soil moisture monitoring system currently in operation in any avocado orchards in Australia?

Yes. We currently have 4 Plexus systems installed in avocado orchards in Queensland around the Bundaberg area (belonging to 2 growers) and we recently installed a Plexus system in an avocado orchard in Western Australia.

We also have numerous GDots® in use in a number of avocado orchards throughout Queensland.

How can an interested grower go about sourcing your technology? Do you do trials? What are the first steps?

Following the recent successful launch of Plexus®, MEA have recognised the need for further investment in the Queensland market. We recognise that Queensland is a state that requires local knowledge and insight and a unique approach. In response to this, on January 28, 2014 MEA opened a Queensland office having employed Justin Clarke to run its local operations.

Justin's appointment is important as having the right person in place is essential. This is a major milestone for MEA as we haven't previously employed anybody outside of our home state of South Australia. Justin will be strengthening our key reseller partnerships with Waterbiz and Growcom.

Avocado growers in Queensland will have access to knowledgeable, well trained local staff, now with the strength of a local MEA office for regional support.

Interested growers can contact Growcom, Waterbiz or MEA for more information about MEA products and technology. Or visit the MEA website at: www.mea.com.au.

We currently have a trial Plexus system in Queensland in vegetables. Future trial work will be coordinated by Justin at the Queensland office. If a case can be made by the Avocado industry to Justin, there is no reason that a trial could not be conducted for your growers.

For more information about MEA and their technologies:

Growers can explore the Green Brain software by visiting www.greenbrain.net.au and enter the user name: demo@mea.com.au and the password: demo

If growers would like to know more about soil, soil moisture and the difference between soil moisture tension and content they can visit our learning centre: <http://mea.com.au/soil-plants-climate/soil-moisture-monitoring/learning-centre>

Marketing Update

Improving consumer understanding on how to select, store and ripen Avocados

With an increasing focus on maintaining avocado quality through the supply chain, there has been limited exploration of consumer understanding and awareness of the optimal approaches to avocado selection, handling, storage and ripening.

To this end, BDRC Jones Donald was contracted to conduct a multi-faceted programme of research that will inform the development of educational materials supporting positive avocado behaviour patterns.

Key Findings

1. Many consumers lack confidence in their ability to end up with 'The right Avocado' on their plate

Of the five avocado segments of the population, or target audiences that buy avocados, 'Avocado Lovers' (the most loyal group of avocado buyers) are the only segment to display high levels of confidence in their ability to select or ripen avocados. That being said, all consumers have experienced 'bad' Avocados. Lower volume segments limit their purchasing only buying what they need.

Getting a bad Avocado is accepted by most as just 'one of those things' that consumers experience.

2. Selection remains tricky, particularly when considering different Avocado varieties

Avocado selection is based on a multi-phase process whereby consumers 'Look', and then 'Touch'. This is best illustrated in the three stage process below:

Avocado selection is based on a multi-phase process whereby consumers 'Look', and then 'Touch'



Most buyers (with the exception of 'avocado lovers') lack confidence in their ability to pick avocados, regardless of variety. Shoppers universally squeeze the body to check ripeness, testing up to three Avocados for each one they choose and purchase.

3. Storage and ripening is the most confronting stage; failure here is just 'one of those things.'

Consumers vary their approach to avocado storage depending on the feel of the fruit at the time of purchase. Most consumers store hard avocados on the kitchen bench to allow them to ripen; in the cupboard or in the fridge are other alternatives.

Consumers are divided on how to best store ripening avocados. Most consumers store soft avocados in the fridge or a cupboard.

Many consumers remain unsure about how they can speed up the ripening process, which suggests an opportunity for communication programs on 'tips and tricks for ripening.'

4. Effective education can underpin increased consumer confidence and drive sales growth

There is an appetite across most consumer segments for increased avocado purchasing. This is a very positive long term trend for the industry for the viability of industry growth fuelled by increased organic demand.

While consumers don't see an explicit need for education until they are exposed to it, they are very much open to reassurance and validation of their decision making.

- Regular avocado purchasers accepted that they couldn't always get it right when choosing avocados, BUT they weren't aware of (nor were actively looking for) resources that could help them make better decisions.
- The 'how-to' chart (below) was received with general agreement that it made sense.



During the research, consumers were exposed to a range of educational stimulus, covering avocado selection, storage, ripening and usage. Consumers responded very positively to this stimulus.

Importantly, exposure to educational tools exponentially increases consumer confidence across all stages of the process. As a result most avocado purchasers,

Marketing Update continued

approximately 60%, said they would increase the amount of avocados purchased if they were supported by effective education materials.

When asked about educational materials, in-store beside the Avocado display is the preferred location for materials, but ideas for usage offers some potential for greater diversity of communication channels, such as web site and digital channels.



5. Implications for moving forward

<p>1</p>	<p>Communications need to overcome a fundamental gap in consumer understanding of Avocados</p>	<p>The research revealed that consumers currently accept ‘bad’ Avocados as an unavoidable reality. A key element of any communications should therefore be revealing that they can exert a higher level of control over the ripening process. While current attitudes do not consciously limit consumption, successful execution of this should drive increased purchasing.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>A better selection process will limit damage, and improve the overall user experience</p>	<p>Most consumers currently test Avocados by squeezing them on the body. Transitioning them to a gentle press on the top by the stalk can reduce the extent of the damage caused, and increase end-user quality. ‘Touch the Top’ combined with an impactful graphic has the capacity to cut through and engage consumers.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Materials around ripening will interest consumers in all Avocado segments</p>	<p>Despite initial hypotheses suggesting support needs were greatest in the Enthusiasts, Challenged Buyer and Functional Buyer segments, the research showed that Avocado Lovers also face uncertainty, particularly around the ripening process. Education materials can therefore target fundamental subject matter without risking alienating higher volume segments.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Communications can leverage opportunities to move beyond the store and into the home</p>	<p>Most consumers assumed that they would find educational materials in-store, expecting them to be located by the Avocado display. Storage and Usage are seen however to have in-home value, offering the potential to expand campaign reach. A combination of online delivery and take home materials (e.g. fridge magnets) can help the campaign transition into the home.</p>

News from Around the World

New Zealand avocado benefit from public funds to support industry development

The New Zealand Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has allocated a package of four million New Zealand dollars to support the industry development plan, which is aimed at doubling avocado exports by five years' time. The funds will be used to finance research work aimed at better regulating the production alternation phenomenon, which is extremely marked in the country, and at extending the marketing window using Dynamically Controlled Atmosphere technology (DCA). New Zealand is producing volumes of between 15,000 and 35,000 tonnes in recent seasons. Exports, which represent approximately 50 to 60% of the harvest, are still mainly aimed at Australia, but shipments, to the high purchasing power markets in Asia are seeing clear growth (Japan and Singapore).

Source: New Zealand Herald

Colombian regional government slates US\$6M for avocado development

Colombia's regional department governments have autonomy to spend natural resource royalties as they please, whether it be on schools, highways or building houses, but the government of Antioquia has decided to invest in something quite different – avocados. Avocado open panorama

Antioquia Avocado Corporation (CORPOAGUACATE) executive director Juan Camilo Ruiz told www.freshfruitportal.com the department government has slated COP10 billion (US\$6 million) for a variety of avocado projects over three years, ranging from rootstock investigation to grower certification.

CORPOAGUACATE will play a major role in implementing the program at an industry level, while research will draw on resources from institutions such as the Universidad Nacional de Colombia's campus in Medellin.

"For example we will identify what possibilities there are for identifying a native rootstock with disease resistance, vigour and durability. We will find what areas are best for growing Hass avocados in Antioquia, what level of productivity an orchard should have, and so on," he said.

"We will promote planting, we will promote production, train workers in fruit development and prepare a group of growers to obtain Global G.A.P. certification."

For Ruiz, this last point was of tremendous assistance to a sector that currently has many growers who cannot export due to incompliance with international standards.

"We expect that with this project we will have the possibility of having 100 certified orchards by the end of 2014 under Global G.A.P. ready for the next season, and that exports will be double what we're doing now."

He said exports were going well with a lack of competition in the international market, with expectations that between 100-120 containers weighing 20 metric tons (MT) each would be shipped this season.

"In the next year, hopefully we'll reach 5,000MT," Ruiz said.

He highlighted that the department's Secretary of Agriculture, Miguel Sierra Botero, had been particularly active in supporting the industry.

"Sometimes, there are astral confluences that are very important. We have a Secretary of Agriculture in Antioquia that has a lot of interest in driving the development of the avocado industry. I have been trying to get people enthusiastic about avocados, and they appear to believe me, because Colombia is on path to leadership.

"The most important thing is the presence of the government, the presence of growers, the presence of exporters, the presence of universities and the scientific world working on this project. It's a very significant and large project."

He added that Colombia would also have climatic advantages in avocado production in the future, with the effects of climate change already taking their toll on growing regions like Chile and California through drought.

Source: www.freshfruitportal.com

Growers hope pest find won't disrupt NZ exports

The discovery of a Queensland fruit fly in Whangarei in the north island of New Zealand has the horticultural sector there on edge and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) working to ensure it is the only one.

A single male fruit fly was discovered in an insect trap in a surveillance trap near the Town Basin in Whangarei recently.

MPI head of compliance Andrew Coleman said the fruit fly is a very invasive pest and can be hugely damaging for horticultural crops.

Control zones have been put in place to stop fresh fruit and some vegetables being moved out of the area of Whangarei where the fruit fly was found and more insect traps installed.

Mr Coleman said the ministry needs the public's help. He said the Whangarei community will start to receive

News from Around the World continued

pamphlets in their letterboxes about the fruit fly and receive visits from officers fromASUREQuality and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Mr Coleman said there will also be signage and disposal bins placed around the community.

New Zealand's trading partners have been informed, but Mr Coleman said as long as no other Queensland fruit flies are detected, trade should not be affected.

A trapping system that had been set up found no more of the serious insect pests.

It's the fourth time a Queensland fruit fly has been detected in this country. Growers hope the fruit fly find won't disrupt exports

The national horticulture body says growers will be hoping the ministry's operation can be wrapped up without disrupting harvesting or exports in Northland.

Horticulture New Zealand president Julian Raine said that part of the country has kiwifruit, avocados and citrus which would be the biggest crops susceptible to fruit fly.

Mr Raine said it is well into the avocado picking season, and kiwifruit and citrus are not being picked yet, so it is hoped it will be cleared up before the main export season for New Zealand growers.

Mr Raine thinks a call for a halt to fruit and vegetable imports is premature, because no one knows yet how the pest got here.

Source: <http://www.radionz.co.nz>

Avocados from Mexico names new leader

Alvaro Luque is the new president of Avocados From Mexico Inc., the promotion group for marketing Mexican avocados in the U.S.

Julia Marino, spokeswoman for the group, said she could not comment or confirm the hire on the 31st of January but both Luque's LinkedIn profile and an industry leader with knowledge of the process confirmed the hire.

Mike Angelo, director of national sales at Calavo Growers Inc., Santa Paula, Calif., said people who know Luque are excited about his skills and what he bring to the position.

The people in our company that know him really well are very excited about him coming to Avocados from Mexico," he said. "I think he is going to be very, very good for the industry."

Avocados from Mexico combines the U.S. focused marketing efforts of the Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) and Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán (APEAM).

Luque is former marketing vice president in the U.S. for Gruma USA, a company that owns Mission Foods, makers of tortilla chips, tortillas and other foods. Luque was with Mission Foods from December 2010 to December 2013 and joined the avocado group in January, according to his profile on LinkedIn.

Angelo said Calavo had avocado tie-in promotions with Mission Foods and believes the company has been well run.

Luque helped repositioned the Mission Foods portfolio within the general consumer market, and developed a strategic analysis of immigration and acculturation trends to market to the U.S. consumers, according to his LinkedIn profile.

Luque succeeds Tim O'Connor, former leader of the U.S. Potato Board, who was hired as chief executive officer of Avocados From Mexico in April last year but was dismissed in September.

Source: www.thegrower.com

Peru's Hass avocado can now be exported to Chile

According to the head of Senasa in Peru, Jorge Barrenechea, Peru can start exporting Hass avocado to Chile because their agricultural health agency has issued a resolution authorizing it.



“The regulatory framework that allows us to export avocados to Chile is already established. It is now clear that the Peruvian avocado presents no technical or health risks, which is why it’s already being exported to USA, Europe and many other countries,” he said.

The official indicated that, even though some Chilean avocado producers opposed the entry of Peruvian products, Chile’s Agriculture and Livestock Service (SAG) had adopted the measure and had already notified the World Trade Organization.

“Peruvian Hass avocado is exported in different volumes between February and September. Chile’s window, however, is from May to July. Currently Chile has avocados, but if someone wants to start exporting right now, they can do it,” he said.

Source: elferrolchimbote.com

Israeli avocado exporter forecasts bumper crop

The avocado product manager of a leading Israeli fruit exporter is forecasting a bumper crop in the coming months, with the “hardest part of the season” now in the past.

Mehadrin’s Ronen Eisenberg spoke with www.freshfruitportal.com about his expectations for the season’s harvest, with predictions of a 15-20% rise on previous years.

He said the country’s total production for the forthcoming season was estimated at 90,000 metric tons (MT), with around half the amount set to be exported. Mehadrin plans to handle 55% of avocado exports, grown on 5,500 hectares of orchards from across the country, particularly in the Upper Galilee region and the coastal plain.

From this surface area, Eisenberg hopes to ship approximately 25,000MT of fruit, mainly from the most popular variety Hass, while the Ettinger stock will make up the bulk of local sales.

Over the last few years, more and more orchards have been planted and Mehadrin is starting to see the results coming through – a key driver for the bullish forecasts.

“We have been planting mainly Hass every year because this is the most wanted variety, and the percentage of the Hass is getting higher every year in our total basket of varieties,” Eisenberg said.

“The season is going well and the future months are looking very good. We are the largest exporter of avocados in Israel and the forecasts show we should be looking at a major yield increase on previous years.”

Mehadrin is focusing on expanding further in the European

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 tick)?

Individual Partnership Company Trust

Lessee Cooperative Other (please specify) _____

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

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 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: _____

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

market and forging stronger international export ties. Currently it deals with major British supermarkets like Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's, while also exporting to France, the Netherlands and Germany.

The company has also begun selling outside of Europe, exporting around 200MT of the Hass fruit to South Africa.

"We're pretty much reaching all points in Europe and have our export program set with a lot of supermarkets on the continent. We are now looking to work with more supermarket chains directly because we have the ability to fulfil their needs.

"As growers and exporters, we are giving supermarkets an added value; we are in charge of the fruits from picking to the shelf and this is a very valuable point for supermarkets to consider. We look after the avocados from the field onwards, including packing, logistics and so on and this aspect can be very attractive for supermarkets.

"There is definitely scope for us to do more outside of Europe."

The upcoming season comes ahead of traditional Shmita, a sabbatical year in a seven-year agricultural cycle when, under rabbinical law, no new planting is allowed to take place from September 2014.

"We have many new orchards coming through right at this moment which is, of course, increasing the volume of avocados for the forthcoming season. This will continue to be the case I am sure.

"Simply, we do not plant during this year (Shmita). All the fruit for export will be picked without change; it's not an issue for export. I know farmers and workers on the field have already planned to cover this."

Source: www.freshfruitportal.com

West Pak offers split box for avocados

West Pak Avocado Inc. based in Murrieta, California has come up with a split box to better serve the needs of foodservice distributors and wholesalers, said Doug Meyer, vice president of sales and marketing.

Typically, "splits" are packed at distributor or wholesale level, he said, but now the split box has become another pack in the company's regular line up.

The split pack adds convenience and cost savings for distributors that were doing their own splits, Meyer said. But more importantly, it enhances traceability, improves food safety and helps maintain cold chain integrity.

The company now offers a full, 48-count box, a single-layer or half box and the split box, which typically contains

eight size 48 avocados. The size and count combination varies.

"It works out really well for distributors who have customers with small usages and request several deliveries a week," Meyer said.

"It eliminates any question about traceability because it's packed at the source," he added.

The company also can precondition the product and pack the fruit to size. Foodservice distributors often need multi levels of ripening.

"We worked with our ripening team to make sure we have the right air-flow properties in the box," Meyer said.

A foodservice distributor might have one customer that asks for one set of specifications and another that requires another level.

"We can target different pressure ranges for a foodservice customer on the same purchase order," he said, so a

load may include pallets representing varying degrees of ripeness.

"It's become very sophisticated, and it is very exact in what the requirements are for ripening for the foodservice side of the industry," Meyer said.

"Most restaurants are on a very tight delivery schedule and just-in-time inventory, and they have limited storage capability at their facilities," he said, "so they are requiring specifications that are quite exact, based on what their usage is going to be."

Meyer said the company takes advantage of its ripening to differentiate itself from competitors.

"With our ripening technology and our ripening teams and regional locations, we're able to service major foodservice programs that reach across multiple regions of the country and involve multiple distributors," he said.

Source: <http://www.thepacker.com>



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