

Talking Avocados

Avocado R&D Road Show 2007 Report

Canopy Management Field Days

NSW Growers Study Tour to WA

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

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Chairman's Perspective

Supply and demand

As most of you will be aware, this has been a challenging year in terms of returns to growers for the sale of fruit. Figures to date indicate an increase of 20% – 30% in avocado production and the market has not kept pace with this. While this increase in production was expected, and will continue for some time into the future, it is a reminder that the whole industry needs to pull together to work towards an equitable balance between supply and demand.

The increases to levies has allowed the Australian industry to mount a more significant promotion and marketing campaign, and the essential thrust of this campaign is to increase the consumption of avocados in Australia. Initial indication (eg from consumer survey groups) is that the campaigns are having a positive impact on the market. There is an increase in awareness of the versatility and health benefits of avocados and more people are accessing the Avocados Australia website.

In addition to the marketing program, Avocados Australia is lending its support to several commercial entities which are looking to take advantage of opportunities in markets outside Australia. The Australian industry is participating in a number of national and international trade shows to showcase Australian avocados and also to keep up to date with the worldwide trends in the retail of fresh fruit.

Smarter marketing

The obvious flow on from the challenges of increased production figures is the opportunity to develop smarter marketing strategies. These need to take advantage of long supply lines and the fact that fruit is now available for the full twelve months each year. Programs can now be put in place with the confidence of continued supply. I believe the message of united marketing needs to stay strong and direct. While it may be unpalatable (or even painful) to some entities or individuals, it is clear that there are no viable alternatives in the environment of today's challenging markets.

Levies

As I mentioned earlier in this report, the increase to levies has proved to be a critical element in the goal to increase consumption of avocados. An upcoming challenge for Avocados Australia is to establish Federal legislation which will ensure that all imported avocados will be subject to the same levies as avocados grown in Australia. We strongly believe that this simply brings equity to the industry, aligning imported fruit with Australian fruit. This principal applies to current imports (eg from New Zealand) and to any future imports.

Road Shows

The Avocado R&D 'Road Show' 2007 program is now complete. Since July, seven Road Shows have been held in avocado growing regions across Australia - Atherton Tablelands (Mareeba), Bundaberg/ Childers, SE Queensland (Hampton), Northern NSW (Duranbah), Central NSW (Stuart Point), Tri State (Mildura) and Western Australia (Pemberton). This program was hugely successful with a total of 600 avocado

growers participating. It was a great opportunity to meet growers across all major growing regions and to ensure that all growers have access to up to date information about what is happening in our industry. The Road Show' included R&D outcomes, advances in technology relating to our industry, marketing and promotion programs, national and local issues, and environmental issues.



I would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in this significant project. A big vote of thanks to Antony Allen and the Avocados Australia team for the mammoth job of arranging the Road Show' and managing the complex logistics involved. Antony and his team did an amazing job, and the whole program ran exceptionally smoothly across all regions. Thanks also to all the presenters – Dr Tony Whiley, Ken Pegg, Dr Fiona Giblin, Joanna Embry, Dr John Leonardi, Antony Allen and the ACCC personnel. We are indeed fortunate to have such high calibre people involved in our industry. The Road Shows would not have achieved such success without the fantastic contribution of the hosts at each location. Special thanks to the families and staff of the Lavers, Donovan's, Boardman's, Anderson's, Tolson's, Mildura Ag Contractors and French's.

Canopy management and spray workshops

In addition to the Road Shows, several workshops have been held across Australia and this program will continue through 2007 and into 2008. The workshops include Canopy Management field days run by Dr John Leonardi, Spray technology workshops with Dr Henry Drew, and regional field days led by Simon Newett (Qld Department of Primary Industry). All these sessions will include information of benefit to growers and I encourage you to attend and support them.

World Avocado Conference in Chile

As we go to print, advice has just been received from the conference organizing committee that all papers submitted by the Avocados Australia team have been accepted and are now included in the program. Congratulations to Antony Allen, Joanna Embry and John Leonardi.

Henry Kwaczynski

Henry Kwaczynski
Chairman, Avocados Australia



Industry Matters

Written, edited and compiled by

Antony Allen CEO of Avocados Australia

Avocados Target Foodservice at Restaurant 07

Sunfresh and Simpson Farms have worked with Avocados Australia and HAL to make the Australian Avocados stand at *restaurant 07* on 13/14 August in Sydney a commercial success.

Sunfresh, Simpson Farms, Avocados Australia and HAL in partnership are putting together an exciting Australian Avocados themed food service trade stand. This is a great opportunity for targeting restaurateurs who attend *restaurant 07*, Australia's only trade event specifically geared to the needs of the restaurant industry.

restaurant 07 will showcase the very best in regional and seasonal produce, ingredients, and premium food products to visitors. Innovative new products and services to help restaurants grow their business and achieve greater profitability will also be on display.

Over 3,300 qualified industry professionals from a wide range of independent restaurants, restaurant chains, hotel and bar restaurants, member's club restaurants and contract caterers attended the very first *restaurant 06*. There was a significant increase in attendance at this year's event, held on 13-14 August 2007 at the Royal Hall of Industries, Moore Park, Sydney.



Avocado Promotion: Spotlight on Worth of Mouth (WoM)

The 2007-2008 promotion campaign is underway. A range of magazines, word of mouth, TV and online promotion make up this stage of the avocado campaign.

A large body of research shows that people gather information about products from marketing materials, including advertising and salespeople. Then in order to make a decision they talk it over with their friends, seeking recommendation on products that work.

Traditional methods of advertising such as TV commercials build product awareness with consumers but the decision to purchase comes once consumers are confident the product delivers. This confidence is gained once consumers have trialled the product for themselves in a non pressured environment or a friend has recommended it. Research has shown that grocery buyers respond in a more powerful and visceral way to channels that treat them like a market of one.

“Word-of-mouth has been proven as the single most effective medium to influence purchase decision”.

This will enable avocados to connect with consumers at the grass roots level, providing consumers with:

- product information
- products to sample
- an opportunity for marketers to tell the consumers what they want to tell them about a product
- an opportunity for consumers to tell marketers what they think of a product
- the presentations are interactive

The groups which are being targeted are segmented in two categories

- Mums Groups - Parents with babies and small children
- Lifestyle - Adult households/Empty nesters

WOM conduct 400 presentations per month across both groups, nationally. Presenters have been thoroughly educated on our product.

Word of Mouth was undertaken during July, August and September.

Disney launches new TV segment focusing on nutrition

The Walt Disney Company has announced a range of initiatives to help children around the world adopt healthier eating habits. A year ago, Disney committed to a healthier food policy across all its businesses and pioneering policies, to associate its brands and characters with a more nutritionally balanced range of foods.

While Disney already has a global focus on using programming to demonstrate behaviour displaying good nutrition and physical activities, they have now produced a series of short-form television segments focusing entirely on food and nutrition that aim to inspire kids and ‘twens by focusing on the preparation and nutritional benefits of one food item – for example - mangoes, rice, fish, tomatoes, bananas and spinach.

Called ‘Pass the Plate’, the series will premiere in Australia on Disney Channel on January 1 2008 at 8.25am during the show ‘Hannah Montana’. The series features young stars in Argentina, Australia, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, the UK and the US each telling a story about the way their cultures and families eat healthily.

In Australia, Disney Consumer Products has introduced new product lines featuring healthy food choices including, pure spring water with Coca Cola Amatil; dried fruits with Select Harvests Marketing; diluted infant juice with Heinz; fresh fruit and vegetables with Fruitcorp Fresh and bread with Coles Supermarkets.

Disney food policies limit the use of the company name and its characters to only those kid-focused products that meet specific guidelines, including limits on calories, fat, saturated fat and sugar.

Disney's food guidelines are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and were developed in cooperation with two child health and wellness experts. The next step is to develop operating guidelines

Industry Matters continued

for key regions based on appropriate local standards.

The Walt Disney Internet Group has also launched an educational website – www.Disney.com/healthykids – that gives kids the principles of the food pyramid and helps them learn about nutrition and activity through interactive games and favourite Disney characters. Source: Food Week

Fresh fruits and vegs retain antioxidants long after purchase

The next time you think about throwing out those aging strawberries or very ripe grapes, consider this: Belgian scientists report that fruits and vegetables do not lose any antioxidant content in the days after purchase, even as tell-tale signs of spoilage appear. In some cases, antioxidant levels actually rise.

The life of a post-harvest fruit or vegetable is traditionally defined in terms of visual appearance and texture. While this is good for aesthetics, these benchmarks disregard flavor and nutritional quality—especially with regards to antioxidants, which are affected by genetic, technological and environmental factors. “No important studies were done to evaluate the influence of storage on antioxidant capacity,” the authors said.

To that end, Claire Kevers and colleagues obtained various produce from the Belgian market, measuring its initial antioxidant content. They then stored the fruits and vegetables at room temperature or

refrigerated them at 39 degrees Fahrenheit, checking antioxidant levels at various times until the produce presented visual spoilage.

The results showed that, in the days following purchase, fruits and vegetables do not lose any phenolic compounds, ascorbic acid or flavonols -- a trio of chemical classes associated with antioxidant content. “Better, in some cases, an increase on the antioxidant capacity was observed in the days following their purchase, accompanied by an increase in phenolic compounds,” the researchers state.

The study “Evolution of Antioxidant Capacity during Storage of Selected Fruits and Vegetables” is in the Oct. 17 issue the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. Source: Science Daily

Expert criticises European carbon trading scheme

An international carbon trading expert has told a summit in Sydney that over allocations of carbon permits have been a major problem with the European Union’s carbon trading scheme.

The European Union scheme is the largest carbon cap and trade scheme in the world, covering two billion tonnes per year of carbon dioxide across the 27 members of the European Union.

But Climate Managers UK’s Francisco Ascui says Australia needs to be cautious because the European Union was too generous with its early allocations.

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Industry Matters continued

“No government wanted to be the first to penalise its industries relative to another member state and that’s always difficult because the sector is the one that has the best information but they also have an incentive to be very optimistic about their projections,” he said. Source: ABC

Avocado Co-operative Program - Export & Domestic Promotion

Horticulture Australia (HAL) and the Avocados Australia have committed to support the range of businesses that make up the avocado industry by allocating a budget for co-operative promotions in the 2007/08 season. The promotions must have similar goals and objectives to the national promotions campaign and meet required professional standards.

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

For more information please go to www.avocado.org.au/industry/news.asp or call Avocados Australia on 07 3391 2344

Blueberry wars

A north coast blueberry producer fears imports from Chile will destroy most of the state’s horticultural industry.

The Federal Government is considering a free trade agreement between Australia and Chile that would allow blueberries, stone fruit, apples and pears into the country. More talks are expected to be held in October 2007.

Blueberry producer Ridley Bell is worried the imports will be a lot cheaper than the home grown produce, which he says will cause job losses and a big drop in sales for the local industry.

Mr Bell says blueberry producers are worried about the impact because, “Chile’s production and labor costs are a lot lower than Australia’s. Chile is a dry climate, so growers don’t have the spray pressures that Australian producers do.”

Labor is also cheaper in Latin America explains Mr Bell, “The cost for farm labor in Chile is 20 dollars a day compared to nearly 22 dollars an hour for farm labor in Australia. These factors will make the imports cheaper to buy in Australia than the home grown blueberries.”

Ridley also thinks the current negotiations are unfair to Australian fruit growers, because they have to put up with imports yet can’t export their fruit to Chile. He says the deal appears to be very one sided and in favour of the Chilean blueberry growers.

It’s not just Mr Bell and his company feeling a little uneasy.

“The threat of imports, and concerns about climate change are very much on the minds of Australian growers. This year’s harvest on the North Coast of New South Wales is down on last year’s after a frost in July damaged a lot of plants, and production is down 40 per cent on last year’s harvest figures, say Bell.”

This has affected his export supply but he doesn’t think it will affect prices for blueberries in Australia, because other producers further south of the state didn’t suffer as much fruit damage in the severe frosts.

“I don’t know whether to attribute this winter’s unseasonal frosts to climate change, but it is something to consider, he says”

Mr Bell, who is also a breeder of blueberry plants says research is currently underway to make the plants more adaptable to growing in sandier soils and harsher drier conditions. There’s a big growth in blueberry production in California, Spain, Mexico, and Chile. In Australia, growers are wanting plants that flower later and have a shorter period from flowering to ripening.

Mr Bell hopes next year’s harvest will be better, but he has concerns that imports from Chile will hurt Australia’s horticultural industry. It’s a battle many growers will have to face if the Federal Government goes a head with the free trade agreement. Source: ABC

Record drought funding pledged

Farmers and rural communities have welcomed the Federal Government’s major \$750 million extension of its drought assistance package. With 65 per cent of Australia’s agricultural land now drought-hit, the Federal Government is covering almost all bases, extending its relief package beyond \$3 billion.

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Industry Matters continued

More than 23,000 farm families and 1,500 small businesses are already being helped. But many farmers have seen the value of their assets grow but are struggling to repay their bills and loan interest. So the Prime Minister, John Howard, says farmers will now be able to earn \$20,000 in off-farm income, while getting payments and having off-farm assets of up to \$750,000.

Access to assistance is also being extended to many more small businesses, with all businesses with some reliance on spending by farmers in drought-hit towns of less than 10,000 people now eligible. Murray Darling Basin irrigators will be able to claim \$20,000 grants to help them deal with vastly reduced water allocations this season which will see many orchards and vineyards die and dairy herds sold off.

Farmers have also been calling for more assistance for those who want to leave the land with dignity. The Government has doubled the exit grant to \$150,000 and farmers will be able to get access to it if they have assets worth less than \$350,000. Source: ABC

Bid to boost rural skills

A national summit in Sydney is looking at the impact of the drought, skills shortages and diseases like horse flu on the \$208 billion agri-food industry.

The sector, which employs 880,000 people, is trying to work out how to attract staff - and keep them - in the face of tough competition from the mining industry and a shrinking labour supply as the population ages.

Federal Minister for Vocational and Further Education, Andrew Robb, a former boss of the Cattle Council and the National Farmers Federation, told delegates he understands the labour crisis facing Australian farmers, but it's a worldwide problem.

Arthur Blewitt is the chief executive officer of the Agri-Food Industry Skills Council, which looks at training needs for 140,000 separate Australian businesses in the agricultural, rural, food processing, seafood, meat and horse racing industries. He says while the labour and skills situation is especially bleak in some areas, the summit is trying to look for opportunities that deliver more satisfying and better-paid jobs. Source: ABC

Avocado industry dips into new IBP

Plans to protect Australia's avocado industry from establishment of exotic plant pests and diseases were unveiled this week at the Avocado Research & Development Road Show, Donovan Farms, Childers, Queensland. The National Industry Biosecurity Plan (IBP) for the avocado industry presents the first nationally coordinated and consistent approach to managing and reducing the risk of plant pest incursions. "The IBP is a vital tool for Australia's avocado industry in the fight against pests and diseases which pose a constant threat to sustainability, profitability and viability. They provide us with a blueprint for taking the next steps to reduce the risk of incursions, improve pest and disease diagnosis and to develop contingency plans to deal with any outbreaks,"

"An outbreak could be devastating for this valuable and growing industry, for local communities and for Australia's economy. Pests have the potential to affect production, causing financial losses to industry and negative impacts on regional economies. They also threaten export market access, an industry grossing approximately \$95 million per annum*, as well as the environment.

Plant Health Australia (PHA) led the development of the IBP in partnership with Avocados Australia, HAL, the Australian Government and the state and territory governments.

"The significant linkages now established through the IBP will ensure that avocado growers are well placed to manage our most serious exotic pests and disease risks. As well as this it will help with our response readiness. While there are many people working hard to ensure we don't see any breach of our border biosecurity, there can be no guarantee that we will remain free of these threats. The IBP provides insurance that our industry will be properly prepared to respond to an outbreak." Mr Allen said.

PHA Chairman, Mr Andrew Inglis AM, said "PHA is delighted with what has been achieved with the development of this plan. It contributes to world class biosecurity arrangements for managing and minimising risks, and responding effectively to any exotic pest threats across our plant industries."

The development of the IBP involved identifying the pests that affect the avocado industry worldwide, and prioritising them according to their risk to Australian producers.

The risks posed by pests and diseases such as the Small avocado

WARNING

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

If you are using a "Heart Tick" logo from anyone other than the label companies "Label Press" or "Compass Labels" you are acting illegally. No other label printers are able to legally print the "Heart Tick" for use on avocados.

Avocados Australia is undertaking a clean up of the "Heart Tick" printing. We will lose access to the "Heart Tick" logo if it is used illegally.

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

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

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



CERT TM

Industry Matters continued

seed weevil (*Conotrachelus aguacatae* [Barber]) were analysed, and measures identified to reduce the chance of any pests reaching Australia's borders. Strategies were also identified to minimise the threat posed by these pests in the event that they reach our borders.

The IBP was officially launched by the Chairman of PHA, Mr Andrew Inglis AM, and received by the Chairman of Avocados Australia Mr Henry Kwaczynski. The event was also attended by Avocados Australia CEO Mr Antony Allen, members of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, avocado researchers, and the ACCC.

PHA is the peak body for plant biosecurity in Australia, working in partnership with its 41 industry, government, and industry service Members. More information on the avocado IBP and the 16 others currently in place is available on the PHA website. Source: Plant Health Australia and Avocados Australia

Researchers say that avocados can fight oral cancer

Researchers say they've only tested the avocado in oral cancer, but other types of cancer grow in similar ways. So if scientists can figure out exactly how it works, this one fruit could help fight other forms of cancer too. The next time you reach for the guacamole and chips, you'll be doing something good for your body. Avocados are loaded with healthy monounsaturated fat, and now researchers say they might also help your body fight off cancer.

Renee Bean always tries to make fresh fruits and vegetables a part of her recipes. As a chef, she says they can make her dishes taste better. As an oral cancer survivor, she believes they might actually help her feel better. "I try to eat things that are supposed to keep you from getting any recurrences. Lots of berries and broccoli," says Bean. And now there's a new fruit Renee may want to add to her diet - the avocado. The green meat inside is rich in more than 20 vitamins and minerals, and it may offer much more than that.

For the first time, researchers at Ohio State University's Comprehensive Cancer Center have discovered that certain compounds in avocados have the ability to find and destroy oral cancer cells, even before they do any damage.

"It's significant in that the compounds that we're interested in will only target the pre-cancerous cells and potentially the cancerous cells and not affect the normal cells," says Steven D'Ambrosio, PhD at Ohio State's Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Researchers still aren't sure exactly how the avocados do it, but they think it has something to do with phytonutrients and their ability to help regulate the signals that your body sends to certain cells. "Signals that tell cells to grow, live or die. And we're looking at the potential targets of these phytonutrients from the avocados," says D'Ambrosio.

Researchers say they've only tested the avocado in oral cancer, but other types of cancer grow in similar ways. So if scientists can figure out exactly how it works, this one fruit could help fight other forms of cancer too.

In addition to their potential cancer-fighting power, experts say avocados are loaded with nutrients. Two tablespoons have 50 calories and 4 grams of fat. That's better than using butter, sour cream, cheddar cheese or mayonnaise on your next sandwich. Source: Nutrition Horizon

Court case will test ban on managed investment schemes

In a move welcomed by grower groups, the Australian Tax Office has confirmed that no new managed investment schemes will be allowed after July 1 next year.

It's expected that the schemes will now present a test case to the Federal Court to challenge the tax office's ruling.

The chief executive of one scheme, Rob McGavin from Boundary Bend Limited in Victoria, says he's glad there will be a court case.

"The tax department I think have been working actively with industry so that they can expedite something to the courts, to work out who's right and who's wrong", he says.

"That's probably something that we knew was going to happen and something we welcome, as far as getting some clarity on the situation."

Grape prices surge as concerns over vintage grow

Wine companies are starting to offer big prices for grapes, as they try to convince growers to persevere with a tough season and low water allocations.

Hardy's Wine Company is offering growers in South Australia's Riverland 50 per cent more than last year for their fruit.

It's also the first time prices have been set so early, typically they're announced in January, ahead of the vintage.

Grower Jim Caddy says growers should be able to make a profit, even

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Industry Matters continued

with water at record highs.

"Yes they should be able to, it looks like it's going to cost somewhere around about \$3,000 a hectare to bring in water so that they can produce a crop, but even with that expense taken into account, there will still be enough left in it to make a profit on a normal average yield," he says.

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will still be enough left in it to make a profit on a normal average yield," he says.

Food Innovation Grants available

Preliminary applications for the next round of the Australian Government's revamped Food Innovation Grants Program, which offers funding of support of up to \$2 million for food companies to undertake innovative R&D projects, are currently being accepted.

The program has been allocated \$54 million over the next four years to encourage Australian-based food businesses to invest in research and development and innovative projects that will make the Australian food industry more competitive and profitable.

For more information call 1800 631 715.

Sustainable farm families

There's no point in having a healthy bottom line if you're not around to enjoy it.

That's the catchphrase of the amazing Sustainable Farm Families project currently run out of Victoria.

I say amazing because the project shows clearly the toll farming takes on the health of farm couples, but has had great success in helping those couples improve their health.

Avocado Growers



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Industry Matters continued

The project wants farmers to take their health as a personal and business priority so that they can manage their properties more productively for longer.

Farm couples in the three year program attend a two day workshop where they have a 30 minute physical assessment, develop an action plan to improve their health, and then attend one day workshops in the following two years to check their progress.

The physical assessment is a major drawcard for participants, many of whom said that a full and detailed assessment is not provided by modern medicine.

So far the project has looked at the health of broadacre farming couples and dairy couples.

Initially, more than 60% of men and 70% of women had to be referred on for further treatment to GPs. While more than 90% of both men and women reported their health as good to excellent, 70% of men and 50% of the women said they suffered from muscle, joint pain and back pain, and 30% of the men and 20% of the women said they suffered moderate to very severe body pain.

A third of all participants said their health interfered with their daily life. 70% of the men were overweight; while 21% of broadacre women and 47% of dairy women were overweight.

Interestingly, most participants said they did at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days, but none of the men and few of the women were assessed as technically fit, that is regularly doing activities that

increase the heart rate. One farmer is now increasing his fitness by parking his ute 50 metres from gates, running to the gate, opening it, and running back.

The project has revealed substantial farm health issues concerning mental health, alcohol consumption, body pain, poor work practices and substandard OHS practices.

Results from the second and third year of the program have shown significant improvements in participants' body mass, cholesterol, blood pressure and waist measurement.

All participants say they would recommend the program to others and many have found it to be a life-changing experience. The Western District Health Service has won awards for its project, and has now been funded to work with farming couples in cotton, sugar and remote regions.

The Sustainable Farm Families project has important implications for everyone working in agriculture.

Agriculture is not just about making money; it also requires healthy people and healthy natural resources if it is to continue into the future. This project has shown just how crucial it is to look after the social aspects of sustainability.

If you'd like to know more about this project, go to www.sustainablefarmfamilies.org.au or email Stuart Willder at stuart.willder@wdhs.net



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10 tips for better health and better farms

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2. Take time to relax each day.
3. Take a minimum two-week holiday away from the farm each year.
4. Participate in physical exercise five times per week.
5. Have a yearly check up with your doctor.
6. Be aware of your family health history.
7. Reduce health risks like weight, cholesterol, blood pressure and stress.
8. Address farm safety.
9. Prevention is better than cure.
10. Laugh often!



Talking Avocados

Nutriology and the science of growing Avocados.

Nutriology is the study of nutrients, to produce crops at high yields and top quality in a sustainable way.

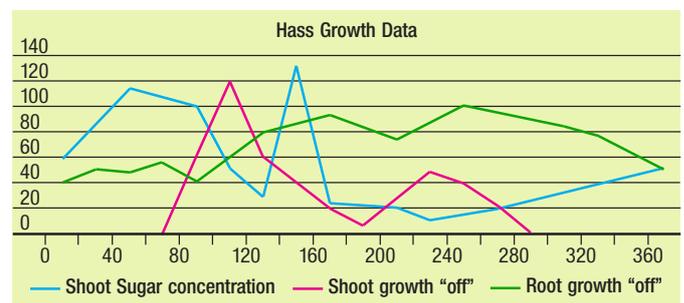
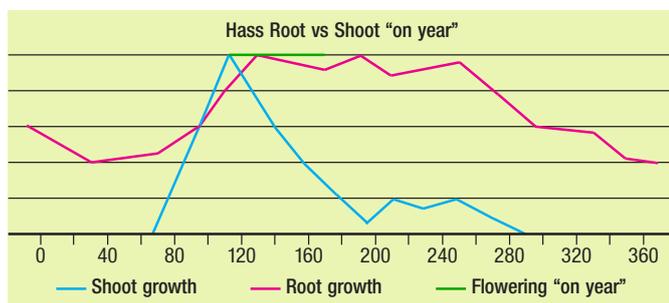
Avocados, like other orchard crops deplete nutrients through fruit and wood removal from the orchard and must be replaced in some way. Fertilizing N, P, and K is not enough to sustain a long term orchard and that is why old orchards start to die. In Omnia we have developed a comprehensive and encompassing approach to Nutrition. We address all the aspects of Nutrition making sure the tree is able to produce to its full potential. Omnia Soil testing and OmniSap technology is an invaluable part of managing top crops. An Omnia Agronomist will help you to identify and treat limiting factors in your orchards.

Avocado trees have very shallow and sensitive root systems. The management and growth of these roots are critical in good fruit production. Omnia products like Mega-Kel-P have specifically been designed to treat this phenomenon. Good nutrition is built on correcting soil structure and well

balanced Cation ratios. It is of utmost importance that the grower gets an Omnia soil sample and gets his local Omnia representative to interpret the information. Our high quality Australian made K-Humate 26 liquid humic acid has proven results for increasing nutrient efficiency, improved root growth, improved soil characteristics and is a good source of carbon and microbial food source. 20lts/ha K-Humate during September and October is the correct time for application.

One of the other common problems in avocado production is the rapid growth of new leaves that coincides with late fruit set. This triggers a fruit drop and leads to last years leaves dropping as well.

Fruit abscission mostly ceases after new leaves are fully expanded. The main source of carbon for young developing fruit is the previous season's leaves. This situation puts the current fruit at a disadvantage and reduces crop potential and fruit quality.



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Omnia Crop Science Pty Ltd

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North Queensland: Troy Morgan 0429 897 074

Australian Roundup

Central Queensland Report

By Lachlan Donovan and John Walsh Avocados Australia Directors for Central Qld Growing Area



Well hallelujah, Central Queensland has finished its largest crop and there is nothing quite like the feeling of finally finishing your harvest. True, prices have been lower than in previous years but certainly quality and even size has been very good. These factors along with the increased promotional spend have certainly had a huge impact on consumer confidence and the increase in consumption.

This has been a very busy few months with the Avocado R&D Road Show, Canopy Management Field Day, Study Groups and Spray Workshop Day all been held over the last few months. All have been very well attended and my thanks go to all the presenters and the farms and work that everyone has done to facilitate these events.

Water is still a major issue in this region with surface water allocations at time of writing 3% on the south side of the Burnett River and 47% on the north side. Ground water is still basically the same as what we started with in the previous water year. I don't believe the lack of water will have too much of an effect on the coming crop but if the dry continues it could have a major effect not only on the avocado industry but the whole horticultural industry in the Wide Bay.

At this stage the flowers have set very and with all the young trees out there all looking fantastic there is every possibility that next years crop will be bigger than what we have just harvested. Of course we have many hurdles to cross and anything can happen but lookout.

North NSW Report

By Tom Silver Avocados Australia Director for the North New South Wales Growing Area



Firstly, I wish to sincerely thank Peter Molenaar for his service and representation within the avocado industry, including his admirable ten years of service on the Avocados Australia Board. Peter's friendly nature combined with his intelligent and comprehending style made him a popular representative amongst the regions growers and an excellent mentor for me. I do not however wish for this to sound like a eulogy, Peter is still well and truly with us and though he is moving into representing other areas of his horticultural concerns, we hope he will continue to be a regular face and guiding voice at future avocado meetings.

To the members of the North NSW Growing Area, thank you for the opportunity to be your representative, even if I did seem hesitant when first nominated. Please feel free to contact me with anything you wish to raise or discuss.

Since Peter's last report, the region has been treated to an excellent Canopy Management Field Day presented by Dr John Leonardi at "Gala Orchards", Alstonville. Local growers were joined by a number of growers from neighbouring areas wishing to learn more about canopy management issues and inspect the pruning regime of "Gala Orchards" and its impressive results. Thankyou to all involved, especially Alan and Leanne Davis for their invaluable knowledge, hosting and catering.

The northeast NSW area received brilliant, soaking rain in August which has turned around the prospects of both this season's and next season's crop. However, despite irrigation allocations not being as of

a big issue in this area, growers will be counting on continued follow up rains to top up the catchments and allow the current, generally very heavy flower set to develop.

Many growers started picking slightly later this year in the hope that the fruit would hold on and that prices may improve. Despite this most growers appear to be past halfway through the harvest. Fruit quality is quite good with much lower levels of pepper spot and fruit spotting bug damage than previous years. Smaller fruit size remains a problem especially from older orchards.

Thanks again to Peter Molenaar, we wish you well Pete. To growers, all the best for the remainder of the harvest and into next years growing season.

Farwell from Peter Molenaar

I would like to apologise for my last report being incomplete. Due to unforeseen technical issues my final report did not make it to the Avocados Australia office.

Can I take this opportunity to thank the local growers for the support you gave me over the years that I was your Director. Your support made the job both enjoyable and rewarding. I trust that you will give Tom Silver, your new Director, the same level of support. Peter

South Queensland Report

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



Picking is well under way in the region with most people having small crops and small fruit size.

This is due to the lack of rain throughout the growing period. Things don't seem to be changing for the better in this regard either.

The flowering for next season's crop is enormous on most orchards so some timely storms without "lumps" would be very much appreciated to help set the crop.

If nothing goes wrong it looks as though this region is heading for a big crop in 2008.

I would like to thank Antony, Henry and all the dedicated team for the work and effort that they put into the Avocado R&D Road Shows over the past months.

I think that the information presented was extremely good and well presented.

These kinds of information and networking events are an important part of building a great industry, which I believe the Avocados Australia team has done a great job in facilitating. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of this region to thank all involved, it has been a huge job.

All the best with the remainder of picking and lets hope that we have a great fruit set for the coming year.

Sunshine Coast Report

By Henry Kivaczynski Avocados Australia Director for the Sunshine Coast Growing Area



The harvest on the Sunshine Coast is coming to an end, and from all indications the crop will be close to the predicted estimate of 750,000 trays.

Unfortunately the prices have not been kind to our region and many growers achieved probably the worst returns in a decade.

On a brighter note, the local association, Sunshine Coast Avocado

Australian Roundup continued

Growers' Association (SCAGA) again created and hosted a display stand at the Brisbane Rural and Agricultural Exhibition (the 'Ekka'). This stand always receives significant interest. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ian Goodall and Beris England, who have been the creators and builders of this display for more years than anyone can remember. Thanks to both of you. The stand is staffed each day by volunteers and I would like to thank these people for freely donating their time and energy.

This year, Avocados Australia supported the Ekka by arranging cooking demonstrations based on avocados. A team of people created a sweet avocado recipe and offered samples to the public. From all accounts, this was a very successful initiative and hopefully we can continue with this concept in future years.

Flowering and fruit set for next year appears to be very good. I am sure all growers are hopeful that returns are somewhat better in 2008.

North Queensland Report

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



North Queensland has just completed the final Avocado R&D Road Show for this year and over 55 growers attended. The presenters, as always, provided an excellent programme and we all came away with new knowledge. Thanks also to the Lavers family who so generously gave their time and facilities, as they have always done for our industry.

The NQ crop is now showing fruit set and by all accounts the Shepard crop should be a good one and the Hass crop a large one also. Whilst we all welcome the large crops the experience of the market in the middle part of this year causes us some concerns. If supply runs ahead of demand we will suffer a low price market. Those attendees at the Avocado R&D Road Show should now be confident that the Marketing and Promotion Plan and the Infocado Forecast and Supply System is in place to grow consumer demand and to protect the market price.

I am always amazed that so many growers from all areas are not fully aware of the volumes of avocados that come from their own area as well as all the other regions in Australia and New Zealand. All this fruit finds its way into the market and many regions supply at the same time. No one has a supply niche anymore.

The NQ region has always tried to forecast our production accurately because we have always had to compete against the professionals from New Zealand at the beginning and Bundaberg at the end of our season. However after many years we can still get the numbers

wrong. The forecast for the 2008 crop for NQ was 1.1 million 5.5 kg eqv trays but a review of transport despatches out of Mareeba depots puts the volume at 1.45 million eqv trays. This is an increase of 30% above estimate and now we are heading into the 2008 crop with an even larger crop.

The supply figures by month are:

Feb 210000 trays March 533000 trays April 324000 trays
May 220000 trays June 140000 trays July 22070 trays

We can now understand why the market stalls in March when we have a peak in supply from NQ with additional supply from New Zealand, Bundaberg and some really keen operators from the more southern regions.

I wish all growers safe passage through the summer season and happiness through the festive season.

Tri State Report

By Colin Fechner Avocados Australia Director
for the Tri State Growing Area



The drought and water restrictions are having a devastating effect on growers in this area. With a 16% water allocation, growers are making the big decision of what to irrigate.

Growers are picking their crops early and then just irrigating enough to keep the trees alive. Most have had to lease extra water just to let them harvest this season's crop, let alone to set and hold a crop for next year. With leased water costing over \$1000 per megalitre, this is a huge expense for growers to cover. Growers are making the very hard decision of turning the water off of large areas of orchard and putting that water onto crops that will have an income for next year.

On a brighter note the Avocado R&D Road Show was a great success. Held in Red Cliffs (south of Mildura) on John Eastoe's property, 75 people came along and had a very interesting and informative day. The growers talked and asked questions with the presenters and other growers and everybody left with more knowledge about the avocado industry and problems/solutions in our area.

The Royal Adelaide Show was held from the 7th – 15th of September. The crowds were down due to lack of money and the equine flu. There were no horses at the show this year. The first few days were quite busy and then it got quieter. A lot of growers spend a day or two helping on the stand with a lot of others, mainly grower's kids who are studying/working in Adelaide. Overall it was a successful Show and we again promoted avocados and talked to consumers about different ways avo's can be eaten.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

A wake up call to Aussie avocado growers *“the fierce independence and consequent lack of volume cohesion will continue to be a thorn in the side of Aussie growers until they get to understand co-operatives and pooling and co-ordinated marketing.”* quoting the Chairman of Avoconnect, New Zealand, accurately and succinctly describing Aussie growers. New Zealand avocado growers, thus, have reason to be confident of a good market for NZ avocados in Australia.

Surely, the warnings from Avocados Australia over the past several years are penetrating Aussie growers' heads that production is escalating and returns are diminishing. So Aussie growers should follow the lead of Cool Fresh WA, Natures Fruit, Sunfresh and the huge Bundaberg growers, i.e., million tray pack houses and so addressing the Timbercorp observation of the Aussie horticultural industry *“UNCOORDINATED, UNCOOPERATIVE AND DISORGANISED.”*

Henry Kwaczynski, his predecessor, Rod Dalton have signalled the need for rationalisation of the avocado industry. Voiced most recently in the Avocado Australia AGM report “Smart Marketing” by Henry Kwaczynski, to quote *“I certainly encourage marketers and pack houses to think outside the square and to review and to evaluate current practices*****” “The message of united marketing needs to stay strong and direct.”*

Reports from National Australia and Macquarie Banks, BIS Shrapnel and ABARE all give explicit rationale for the reduction of the number of brands and pack houses: most recently is an ABARE report on the grape industry 17 Sept 07.

\$30,000 spent on a pack house 15 years ago would be worth nothing in 2007 by depreciation and maintenance. The same sum invested in stocks or property would be valued at \$115000. (as of 6 months ago, Goldman Sachs JB Were) There is no way a small pack house has the economies of bigger, year round, pack houses except by giving their labour for free.

Quoting “The Diplomat,” June 2007 *“Enlightened collectivism is unlikely to appeal to the individualistic, famously resilient, Australian farmer. But if they are to compete in the global economy, it will be a minimum condition.”* Chile simply has to land 10% of its current avocado exports in Australia to severely undermine the Australian avocado industry. It has been said by a major Aussie grower that Chile can make a profit at AUS\$10 a tray landed in Australia. At least shareholders in Woollies will be happy.

Understand, I am the writer of this letter, BUT, I am not the author of the ideas it expresses. However, I am the author of the next bit – **do not shoot me! But take heed of what everybody is telling us, – consolidate grading, packing and marketing.– Even 100,000 tray pack house per year is small.**

Frank Ekin

Letters to the Editor are not necessarily the opinions of Avocados Australia or the Editor.

We are pleased to receive responses to any letters.

Dear Editor

I have only been growing avocados for several years and although we as growers are in a changing market, I have noticed that some things never change. Every year, I have attended most of the various field days, avocado meetings, etc and invariably during the meeting or when standing in various little groups while having morning tea, the topic of conversation will turn to New Zealand. “The Kiwis have a big crop. – The Kiwis are coming in a month or 2 earlier this year. – The Kiwis are going to take our market with Coles and Woolworths.” Coles and Woolworths account for 60% of the Australian avocado market and when the Kiwi fruit arrives on our shores, Australian growers lose all access to Coles and Woolworths and are relegated to the central markets, i.e. 35% of Australian market and they then have to share this market with the surplus Kiwi fruit that Coles and Woolworths can't or won't handle. Every year I hear the same old complaint and whinge “Why doesn't somebody do something about it?”

I am sure no other group of growers anywhere in the world would tolerate or allow another group of growers especially from a foreign country to invade and steal their home market without a BLOODY BIG FIGHT. I cannot think of any other National Government that would allow a group of growers from a foreign country to dominate their local market at the expense of their own local industry. It also surprises me that the duopoly of Coles and Woolworths is allowed to discriminate against / and ignore the local Australian avocado growers, but free trade agreements are now a fact of life.

What have we done about this situation in the past? – Answer, not much except whinge to each other. At the levy vote meeting held at Nambour Queensland on the 24/11/05, a number of members present were complaining to Antony Allen and Rod Dalton about the New Zealand fruit invasion and what were Antony and Rod going to do about it? A similar situation occurred at a field day workshop held at Balmoral packhouse, Cabarlah, Queensland. Rod Dalton again had to answer questions relating to New Zealand imports and what was Avocados Australia doing about it? I did get up and speak at that meeting to make the point that as a relatively new comer to the avocado industry, I just couldn't understand how we, as growers, could just sit back, and allow New Zealand which is a foreign country to invade and steal our markets. We just look on and whinge to each other. I managed to get a few laughs when I said that I knew that if they came to pinch our women or our beer, we would be waiting for them on the beaches. BUT WOULD WE?

I attended The Avocado R&D Roadshow held at Sunnyspot packhouse on 10th July 2007. Again similar questions and concerns about New Zealand imports were asked. This time Antony Allen and Henry Kwaczynski answered the questions. Nothing has changed except Rod Dalton has moved on and Henry Kwaczynski is now in one of the hot seats.

I think the question that has to be answered is “What is Avocados Australia's role and how much can they achieve? But the more important question is “What as growers is our role and what can we achieve?”

Letters to the Editor – continued

I have already said that I am a relative newcomer to avocado industry but looking from the sidelines, a number of points just seem so very obvious to me. Firstly Antony Allen and Henry Kwaczynski cannot do much by themselves except address meetings and give advice to members but they cannot DICTATE to members. Now if growers do not act on that advice, THEN NOTHING CHANGES. Antony Allen pointed out one of the problems. There are approximately 1200 avocado growers in Australia and over 250 different brands of Australian avocados in the central markets. Now this is RIDICULOUS AND FARCIAL. What would be an even bigger joke is if we had 1200 BRANDS.

No doubt it is a source of personal pride and achievement built up over a period of time but as Graeme Thomas of G.L.T. Horticultural Services Pty. Ltd. has pointed out during talks and written articles, that unless a packhouse is producing 150,000+ trays and has a means of spreading season over most of the year, you need to be marketing with somebody who does. The other benefits from being with such a organisation include (a) access to all markets – generally at a higher price than can be achieved by an individual. (b) Minimising quality assurance expenses. (c) Better freight rates. (d) Better packaging rates. (e) Payment security (f) packhouse field days where members can learn and share information with each other as friends, not competitors, for the common good of the packhouse. – These are just some of the benefits of being a member of a larger organisation. It amazes me when I visit Ma & Pa farms/ packhouses who pack their own. I see the capital investment that is tied up in their packhouse, cool rooms,

grading equipment, etc and it is only used for part of year. If that capital was in an off farm investment, what would it earn or appreciate to? The packhouse is just depreciating and needing to be maintained.

Why do they keep packing and marketing their own brand?

The answer is – Most of them think that their fruit is the BEST. Why? Because their AGENT has told them that (a) their fruit is the best and has a unique flavour/taste, etc. (b) He has no trouble selling their fruit and that several buyers will only buy their fruit. (c) The AGENT is always on the phone pestering them for their fruit because everyone is asking for it and he even takes them out for lunch whenever they visit the markets. I have heard these or similar stories from numerous growers from all areas of Australia and even overseas. These growers believe their fruit is better than anybody else's, that they are the only one who can grow a half decent avocado because their AGENT reinforces this belief every time they speak on the phone. When I have asked about the premium they receive for their fruit. – Generally I receive a blank look.

The reality is, and I was told this best bit of advice when I joined Avocado Industry by a very experienced grower. "Grow a good healthy tree and you will grow good healthy fruit and the secret to growing good healthy trees is BEST MANAGEMENT AND FIELD PRACTICES. Now if we were to receive fruit from the 250 different BRANDS, grade them to same size and standards in identical trays, i.e. Black boxes, I defy the brand owner or his AGENT to pick out his so called best fruit.

Packing costs are another reason. Packing costs at packhouses vary between \$3 and \$4 per tray including cost of tray and liner. (Ma & Pa packhouses still have to provide their own tray and liner so I will use \$3 per tray for following calculations. However at larger packhouses like NFC, after rebates, and after subtracting the cost of tray and liner, the cost to sort, grade and pack fruit may be around the \$2 per tray mark.) Most Ma & Pa packhouses think that if they pack themselves and pack 10 trays per hour then they are paying themselves \$30 per hour. If they pack 50 trays per hour, they are paying themselves \$150 per hour. If they pack 10,000 trays for the season, they are \$30,000 better off. But, are they? – At this point, it is important to step back and look at margins, ie. The difference between gross income and costs. Larger packhouses have economies of scale in packaging, freight, and achieve better market returns especially with smaller fruit. Most growers can quote their best price from their agent (size 20 premium which might only be 10% of their total season crop), but are vague when it comes to the smaller sizes and this is where they are diddled and most don't realize it. I have also been told by some growers that they pack their own because when they sent it to NFC, they had a high percentage of rejects. When they pack themselves, they have a much higher pack out, ie. More trays and fewer rejects and in some cases no rejects. This would be one of the reasons for quality concerns experienced by consumers.

Coles and Woolworths (60% of avocado market) do not and will not deal with 250 suppliers. – They are reducing the number of suppliers they deal with all the time. They would not want to rely on only one supplier, probably only 5 or 6 at most. Therefore we have to unite to supply fewer but larger packhouses to supply this market, but

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Letters to the Editor – continued

Australians are by nature independent. We have had the benefit of a home market, we haven't the need to unite and work together to supply an export market. We have looked over the fence and seen our neighbour as our competitor. This is not the case any more, OUR COMPETITOR IS NEW ZEALAND. New Zealand has 1 brand (no confusion here) and when they tell Coles and Woolworths that they are ready to export to Australia, Coles and Woolworths sever all ties and loyalties to Australian growers without a second thought. Australian growers are then relegated to central markets in capital cities. New Zealand takes full advantage and benefit of all Avocado Australia advertising programs without contributing ONE CENT. THE TERM BLUDGER OR FREELOADER COMES TO MIND. When our New Zealand competitors sit down at their board meetings to plan their marketing strategies, they must have a good laugh and shake their heads in disbelief at our 250 brands competing with each other. They have no opposition to compete against in Australia and all their advertising is in place without costing them ONE CENT. When they stop laughing, they would be referring to us as DUMB, DUMBER, AND DUMBEST.

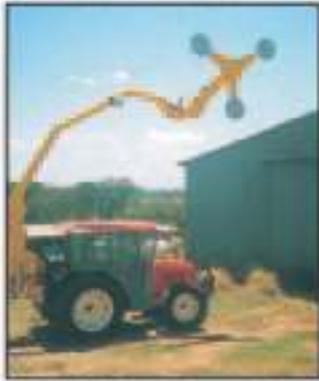
The answer is Simple; WE have to and MUST unite. We have to step back from our personal, individual brand. We have to meet the requirements of the Coles and Woolworth's markets. A number of the bigger packhouses (150,000+ trays) who probably already supply the duopoly for part of the season have to get together, talk to each other, trust each other and coordinate whatever supplies of fruit the duopoly

wants. Do it for them just like New Zealand does. I think this is the role for Antony Allen and Avocados Australia to invite the owners or directors of the bigger packhouses to a meeting chaired by Antony. The Agenda is to coordinate and organise our industry so that we take back control of our markets. We could make it very tough for the Kiwis and relegate them to the scraps. When Australia plays Rugby Union against the All Blacks, at least we have a team on the field, but when it comes to marketing, New Zealand runs onto the field unopposed. Because they are unopposed, they have become arrogant, maybe in the past, they may have been polite, knocked on the door and asked when it was convenient and opportune to enter our market. (Team Avocado with NFC) Not anymore, now they just come in and take over. Their message is "SCREW YOU" We are to blame for this situation, it is our fault and at the risk of repetition, we must unite to take back control of our markets. The hard part will be encouraging and convincing the ma and pa packhouses to change, to pack and market or at least market their fruit through one of these larger packhouses. This alliance of larger packhouses would be able to guarantee supply of fruit to all markets. They could regulate supply of fruit to perhaps 2 or 3 agents at Central Markets at a negotiated rate. If you visit Sydney Markets, you will find that every agent has avocados for sale. This is ridiculous. It would be better if we could, as an industry, control the supply of fruit to 2 or 3 chosen agents. It may even be better to have only 1, perhaps a talk to Timbercorp and The Costa Group.

I am a grower member of Natures Fruit Company and all of my fruit is

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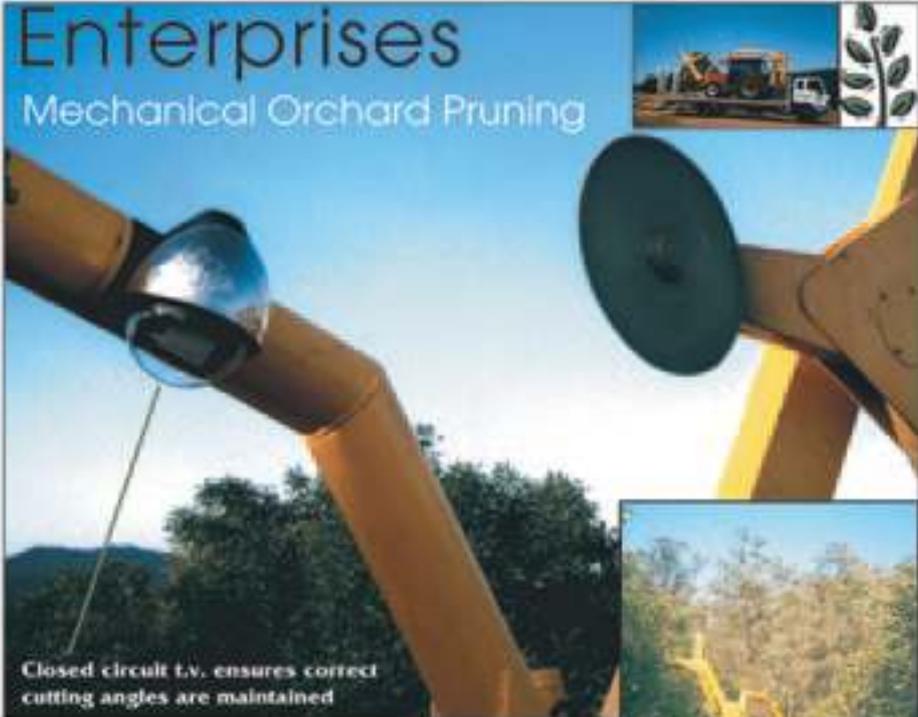
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Email: kerross@ozemail.com.au




Letters to the Editor – continued

packed and marketed through them, so I do practice what I am trying to preach. This is not meant to be an advertisement for Natures Fruit Company (NFC) but I can recommend NFC to any grower who wants to change for the better. NFC is grower owned, has recently purchased a 72 acre property at Coonowrin road, Glass House Mountains, Queensland where it is building a large packhouse. It now has an asset base for its member share holders. NFC has field days where members learn and share information to assist them in improving fruit quality, to meet as friends not competitors. NFC packs and markets fruit by size and grade to all markets in Australia with costings for every consignment. All transactions are completely TRANSPARENT. I have found every query to be acted on immediately by General Manager, Andrew McKillop. NFC is also very fortunate to have a very competent Board of Directors chaired by Mrs Ros Smerdon. I can see a few big potholes along the marketing road in the years ahead but large volume packhouses like NFC are the way to miss most of them and keep moving forward. I THINK IT IS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD.

If New Zealand is not enough to convince growers to unite, then give a thought to Chile and Mexico wanting to export avocados to Australian markets. Give another thought to the fact that there are approximately 1,500,000 avocado trees already planted in Australia and 39% of them are under 6 years old and more and more trees are being planted every year. Try to imagine the volumes of fruit entering the market in next couple of years. Try to imagine the prices you will receive for your fruit if we don't make some changes NOW. The time is fast approaching or may already have arrived (2007 prices for small fruit that is not premium quality) when the prices received per tray may not be worth the time and effort involved in picking let alone packing. This will be the leverage point where some growers may exit the industry and the remaining growers are forced to unite and market together. Another BEST bit of advice from the same very experienced grower and consultant was "Growing the avocado tree was the easy bit. – Marketing the fruit was the most important bit. It is the difference between success and failure." WE CAN DO ALL THE OTHER STEPS WELL BUT FALL OVER AT THE LAST HURDLE.

It is too late to have the necessary changes in place for 2007 but hopefully next year 2008. However we shouldn't sit back and make it easy for the Kiwis. I am advocating that when New Zealand avocados enter our shores next month (September); when Coles and Woolworths restrict and sever their relationship with Australian growers, then Avocados Australia ,on behalf of all its members puts in place as soon as possible an aggressive advertising campaign to inform the Australian public :

- (1) That most avocados for sale in Eastern Australian Coles and Woolworths are of New Zealand origin.
- (2) That Australian avocados are available. – Infocado will show the benefit of all the time and effort put into collating all the various inputs of information from individual packhouses.
- (3) That the duopoly of Coles and Woolworths is discriminating against the local Australian grower in preference to a foreign grower for their supplies of avocados and the excuses for their

actions.

- (4) Arrange a meeting for a delegation to see Federal Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Peter McGauran, to inform him of the situation that is happening in the marketplace with Australian fruit and the discrimination being shown to Australian growers and ask him "what does he intend to do about it?"
- (5) Inform all Federal Members about the situation especially Mr. Kevin Rudd and The Labor Party and ask where they stand on the issue. It is an election year. Labor has already indicated that if elected, it will set up an ACCC inquiry into costs and prices charged by Coles and Woolworths. Perhaps they could extend the inquiry into discrimination against growers. Coles is also under new management (Wesfarmers) perhaps they may be more Australian biased in their management outlook.
- (6) Every time you are in fruit section of a Coles or Woolworths, check the fruit section and when it is only N.Z. fruit (should have country of origin labelling) – Ask to speak to manager and inform him that you only want to buy Australian avocados and what is he going to do about it?

I visited New Zealand in September 2005 to attend The Australian / New Zealand Joint Avocado conference in Tauranga. I must admit that I enjoyed myself and found the New Zealand hosts very friendly and hospitable. At the conference, I understood that the question of New Zealand supporting our national advertising campaign to increase the size of the "pie" for the benefit of all growers was the sensible way to proceed and they would pay their fair share. Now it seems that they want a bigger slice of the "pie" – without contributing anything towards it. The Theme of The Joint Australian /New Zealand Conference was "PROFIT TOGETHER", in hindsight it should have been called "PROFIT AT AUSTRALIAN GROWERS EXPENSE"

I hope that this letter stirs up enough resentment among Australian growers to make them want to change, to make them realise that New Zealand growers are kicking our arses in our own market place. The New Zealand growers are treating us like a joke and showing us no respect. They are taking advantage of our complacency, our reluctance to unite and trust one another, our inability to organise and supply our own markets, and our inability to see The Big Picture beyond our farm gate. Its time we did something about it and the time is NOW. Remember that old saying "UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL" – WELL, WITH OVER 250 DIFFERENT BRANDS, WE ARE TRULY DIVIDED.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Bailey.

August 2007.

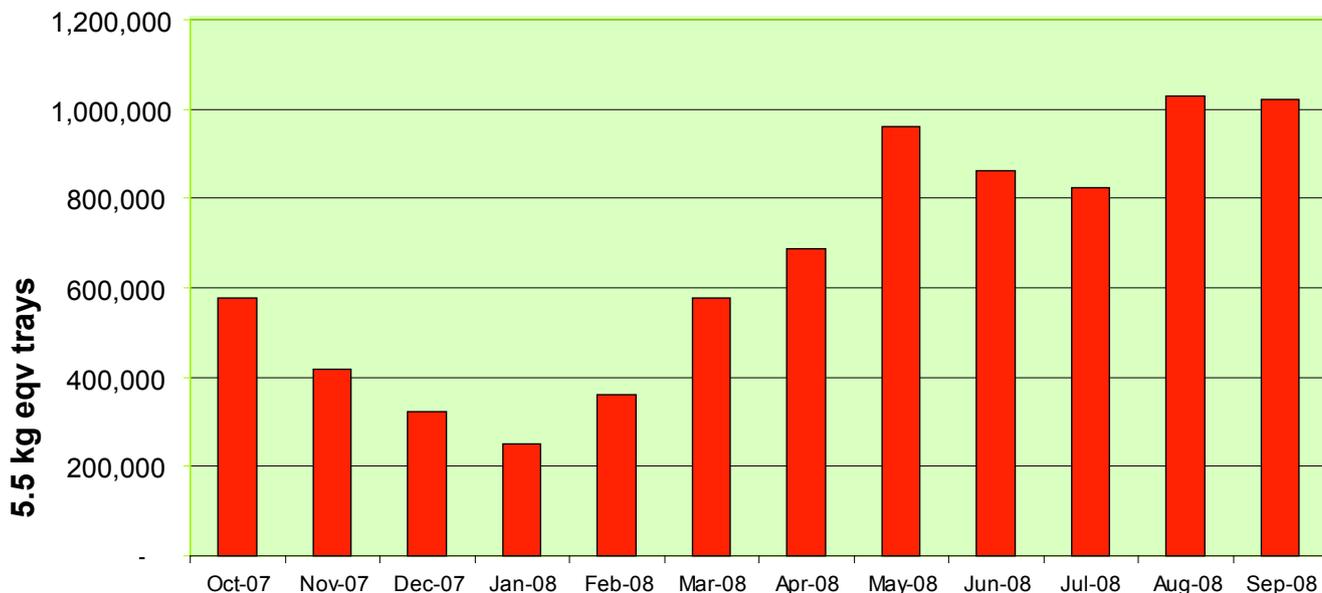
Letters to the Editor are not necessary the opinions of Avocados Australia or the Editor.

We are pleased to receive responses to any letters.

Infocado Update

12 month forecast for Australian Avocados

**Australian Avocados - October 2007 to September 2008 Forecast
(Total 7,893,094 5.5kg trays)**



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Infocado update
continued

During the 3 months (July through September) the Australian market has absorbed approximately 190,000 trays of avocados per week. The estimate for the coming 12 months will result in Australia producing another record crop for the 2008 year.

Crop forecasts by growing region for the year October 2007 to September 2008 (as at 30th September 2007)

October 2007 to September 2008 Australian Avocado Production Estimates 5.5kg eqv trays	
North Queensland	1,309,601
Central Queensland	3,363,164
Sunshine Coast	778,729
Southern Queensland	808,598
Northern NSW	311,941
Central NSW	491,906
Tri State	199,675
WA	629,480
Total	7,893,094

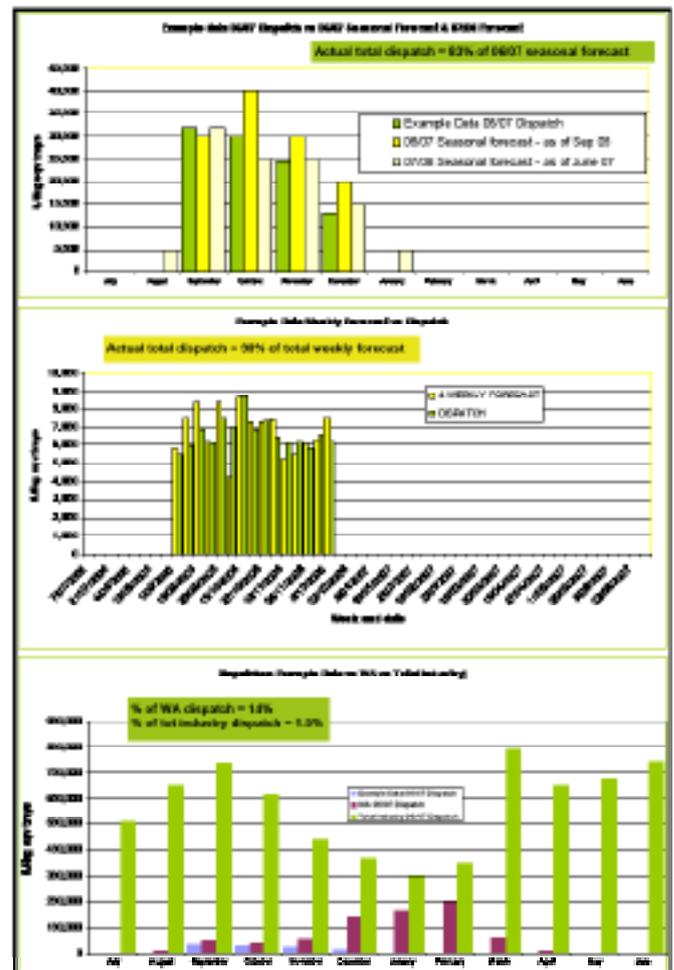
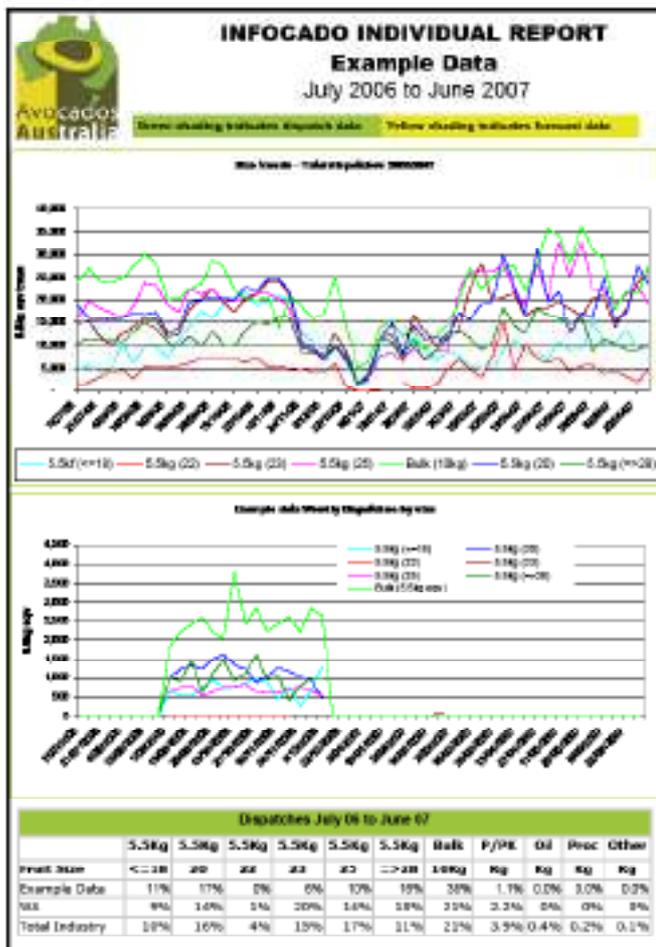
What's new with Infocado

Retail price data

All Infocado contributors could soon be receiving improved retail price information. Avocados Australia is working on a collaborative project with a number of other horticulture industries to collect regular retail price information from a range of retail stores including the major retailers but also the independent supermarkets and green grocers. This information would provide packhouses with timely retail price information.

Individual Infocado Reports

Western Australian Infocado contributors were the first to recently receive a personalised report comparing their own individual packhouse against both the regional and the national industry. The comparisons included size trends, dispatches vs forecasts and total volumes of dispatches. Depending on feedback these reports will be rolled out across all other growing regions for Infocado contributors. An example report (including example data) is included below.



Regional Study Groups proving Popular

By Simon Newett & Peter Rigden
of QDPI&F

NSW Mid North Coast group and NSW Central Coast group have met in October the first round will be complete.

Since the last report in Talking Avocados three more study groups have met and priorities have been set for forthcoming meetings. Once the

The following tables outline the meetings already held and those planned.

Table 1. First round of workshops

Group	Topic	Presenters	Venue	Date
Sunshine Coast	Preparing for harvest	Dr Roberto Marques Simon Newett	Neil & Joss Donovan's orchard, Bellthorpe	4 Apr 07
NNSW/ Gold Coast hinterland	• Irrigation	Gary Creighton Simon Newett	Tom & Veronica Silver's orchard, Alstonville	23 May 07
Tristate	• Irrigating with limited water • Nutrition	Lisa Martin Nick Hobbs Simon Newett	Ben Dring & Nigel Lloyd AgriExchange's Warwilla orchard, Renmark	1 Jun 07
NQ	• Integrated <i>Phytophthora</i> control	Simon Newett	Eric & Tracy Battistin's orchard, Mareeba	21 Jun 07
West Moreton	• Irrigating with limited water • Biennial bearing	Graeme Thomas Scott Wallace & Graham Cripps Simon Newett	Ken & Kathy Kereczko's orchard, Ravensbourne	26 Jul 07
WA (combined 1st meeting)	• Flowering • Pollination • Biennial bearing	Jonathan Cutting Alec McCarthy Simon Newett	Paul & Maria Bidwell's orchard, Donnybrook	14 Aug 07
CQ	• Irrigating with limited water	Jan Toerien Simon Newett	Kevin Smith & Trevor Barr Ooloo farms, Bundaberg	14 Sep 07
Sunshine Coast	• Integrated <i>Phytophthora</i> control	TBA	TBA	19 Sep 07
NSW Central Coast	• Integrated <i>Phytophthora</i> control	TBA	TBA	17 Oct 07
NSW mid N Coast	• Irrigating with limited water	Gary Creighton	TBA	18 Oct 07

Table 2. Topics identified for the second round of workshops

Group	Topic	Tentative date
NNSW/Gold Coast hinterland	Integrated <i>Phytophthora</i> control & mulching	Autumn 08
Tristate	Fertigation, nutrition & mulching	Autumn 08
NQ	Insect management	Feb 08 (tentative)
West Moreton	Nutrition including composting	Dec 07(tentative)
WA metro	Irrigation	Autumn 08
WA SW	Irrigation	Autumn 08
Bundaberg	Integrated <i>Phytophthora</i> control	15 Feb 08
NSW mid N coast	TBA	TBA
NSW Central Coast	TBA	TBA

Regional Study Groups proving Popular continued

One producer from each region has kindly volunteered to be the grower representative for their group. This person is consulted when the next meeting for their group is being planned. Essentially, their role is to keep the program 'grower-centric'. The role is important but not onerous, many thanks to these volunteers.

Originally the plan was to hold half day programs but these have proven to be too rushed so most events now start with morning tea at 10:30am, followed by presentations till lunch then a farm walk in the afternoon, finishing by about 3:30pm.

Feedback and suggestions from the meetings indicate that growers have found the workshops worthwhile, well run and informative. They have found the material presented useful and the meetings good for networking. Growers report that one of the most valuable parts is the chance to hear and learn from other growers; this is encouraging because one of the main aims of this project is to provide the opportunity for growers to learn from each other and not just from the presenters.

Here are some quotes from growers about the workshops so far:

- *"Getting together is always worthwhile. It gives us all the opportunity to discuss ideas together and learn from each other. Having DPI specialists on hand gives us the opportunity to discuss ideas. Thank you."*
- *"Field day well worthwhile. You always think before leaving home you won't find out anything new...but always do! Great informative day & look forward to the next one."*
- *"Being so new to the industry, it was good talking to other growers about how they do things and how they are trying new methods. Thanks."*
- *"... a very useful day for both information and networking."*
- *"I thought the grower involvement in discussions was excellent"*



Host Paul Bidwell explaining his irrigation practices to the West Australia group

And a couple of suggestions for future workshops:

- *"...perhaps questions on notice prior to the workshop and a period set aside to address selected questions of general interest"*
- *"This is a great initiative and very useful for the industry. Suggest a benchmarking project using AVOMAN..."*

Detailed and illustrated minutes have been prepared and mailed out to growers following each workshop.

Acknowledgements

These workshops would not be possible without the great cooperation and hospitality of the growers on whose orchards the activities are held and they would not be as informative if it were not for the guest presenters and the growers who provide their time and share their knowledge. The local Avocados Australia Board members have also been very supportive. We thank all these people as well as the organisers from the various state departments of agriculture for their hard work in making the meetings happen. The project is funded by Queensland DPI&F, Avocados Australia, HAL, WA Dept of Agriculture & Food and NSW DPI.

For each group's first workshop, the invitations and minutes are being sent to all growers with the assistance of Avocados Australia through their Talking Avocados mailing list. After this the invitations and minutes will only be sent to those who indicate their interest in future workshops by providing their contact details to the project organisers.

For any questions about the workshops and to register please contact Simon Newett on 07-54449619 or email simon.newett@dpi.qld.gov.au.



West Moreton group networking over a sausage sizzle lunch at the Kereczko's orchard, Ravensbourne

Dimethote Fenthion Review Program Stakeholder Update

What trial work is being undertaken to support ongoing registration of dimethoate or fenthion?

A number of horticultural industries, through Horticulture Australia Limited, are currently investing in a range of residue trials designed to fill some of the data gaps, particularly for those commodities where there is either a lack of residue data or the existing residue data does not reflect the current pattern of use. The results from these trials will be taken into consideration by APVMA prior to the reviews being finalised.

Note that these trials are being undertaken to provide residue data for all crop uses for all pests as currently registered, and not just for fruit fly control to meet phytosanitary requirements.

Additional residue data trials are planned for the following commodities:

Dimethoate (pre-harvest)

Beans, Beetroot, Blueberries, Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Cabbage, Capsicum, Carrot, Cauliflower, Cherries, Chinese cabbage, Cucumber, Eggplant, Grapes, Lettuce, Lychee, Onion, Pea, Peach, Persimmon, Pineapple, Potato, Nectarine, Silver beet, Strawberry, Sweet potato, Tomato, Zucchini

Dimethoate (post-harvest)

Avocado, Cherries, Citrus, Cucumber, Custard apple, Eggplant, Melons, Papaya, Tomato, Zucchini

Fenthion (pre-harvest)

Capsicum, Cherries, Eggplant, Grapes, Nectarine, Peach, Persimmon, Tomato

Fenthion (post-harvest)

Avocado, Capsicum, Cherries, Cucumber, Custard apple, Mango, Melons, Papaw, Tomato, Zucchini

The strategy adopted with these trials is that around one-third of the total funding for each trial will be invested in 2007 to undertake limited treatment and residue evaluations. The results of the 2007 trials

for each commodity will be reviewed prior to any further investment in trials in 2008. If the 2007 residue results look promising, then full international standard trials will be undertaken for those commodities in 2008. If the 2007 trials identify a likely problem for a commodity, then that industry group will need to consider how to approach any further trials.

Do the review results for one crop or use affect the registration of all crops or uses?

An adverse outcome for a particular use of the chemical WILL NOT result in all uses being removed or changed. Each use of dimethoate and fenthion is being considered separately under the reviews, according to the data available or being developed for that particular crop or use type.

Therefore, if the review identifies a residue which exceeds the Acute Reference Dose for post-harvest treatment in one crop, it does not automatically follow that pre-harvest use in that same crop will be at risk. Similarly, if the review identifies that post-harvest dipping of fruit results in an unacceptable residue, it may be possible to retain the registration for post-harvest flood or low volume spraying IF there is adequate data to demonstrate acceptable residue results.

Can produce be washed after treatment to reduce residues to acceptable levels?

During the various stakeholder meetings over the past six months, several groups have asked the question: "If post-harvest treatment with dimethoate or fenthion results in excessive residues, is it possible to wash it off before packing?"

These post-harvest treatments work by allowing the product to permeate into the flesh of the fruit so that any fruit fly present will consume a very small amount of the chemical as they eat the flesh. Even though the resultant level of chemical in the flesh is extremely low, it takes time for the chemical to move into the flesh of the fruit.

The presence of these treatments on the fruit can also provide some level of protection to the packed product from post-harvest infestation by fruit fly.

For these reasons, it is important that Dimethoate and Fenthion are the last treatments applied to the commodities before packing. Washing commodities after applying the treatment reduces the level of the chemical and the opportunity for it to properly enter the flesh of the fruit, making it both less effective and unacceptable from a quarantine perspective.

Current market access protocols require that this post-harvest chemical treatment is the final treatment before packing for these reasons.

Managing Risks to Market Access

One of the challenges we face in seeking to develop and implement alternative market access protocols to the use of dimethoate or fenthion is that these chemicals have proven to be extremely reliable and



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Dimethoate Fenthion Review Program - Stakeholder Update continued

robust in delivering the required phytosanitary outcome. Plant health regulators are highly confident that such treatments deliver adequate risk mitigation regardless of whether the produce represents a high, moderate or low risk of transmitting fruit flies. From a regulators perspective, this single-step disinfection process has been easy to manage and audit, thereby further increasing confidence in the level of risk mitigation afforded by these treatments. In order to identify and gain acceptance of alternative protocols, it will be necessary to re-examine the real levels of risk which commercially-traded produce poses to the entry, establishment and spread of fruit flies into pest free areas.

Using the international standard Pest Risk and Pathway Analysis process, Plant Health Committee and the Domestic Quarantine & Market Access Working Group will be looking to better define the "risk gap" – the risk which remains between the level of protection required and the level of risk represented by commercially-produced host material – and then determine what composite measures can be applied to bridge this gap. The desired end result of this process will be a "toolbox" of mitigating measures which (within reason) can be mixed-and-matched to provide the level of mitigation required in each situation to bridge the gap.

This systems approach will take some time to fully develop and gain acceptance, so a number of other approaches are also being taken to seek alternatives to the current phytosanitary use of dimethoate and fenthion.

For example, it may be possible to vary the current pattern of use so that these chemicals can still be used in some crops as the main market access treatment. Data from numerous previous R&D trials has been assembled to identify where it may be acceptable, from both residue and phytosanitary perspectives, to apply a different concentration or rate of chemical to still meet market access requirements. Several options in this area have been identified with industry groups, and may be further investigated through industry-funded HAL projects.

In other cases, it may be possible to retain the integrity of current market access protocols by substituting an alternative measure or measures for the "offending" chemical use. For example, where a current protocol requires numerous pre-harvest applications of dimethoate or fenthion and it is anticipated that this will result in unacceptable chemical residues, it may be possible to retain some pre-harvest application of the pesticide while substituting (for example) scheduled bait spraying and pest monitoring to demonstrate that the likelihood of infestation

by fruit fly remains acceptably low.

Rather than seeking a new "magic bullet" solution to replace dimethoate and fenthion as a one-step disinfection process, the focus for developing new market access protocols is moving towards a step-by-step assessment to provide mitigation consistent with the real risk of fruit fly transmission in the traded produce.

Update forum on the Dimethoate Fenthion review program

An open forum on the national dimethoate and fenthion review program is planned for mid-2008, similar to the open forum held in May 2007. This forum will provide an update on the progress of the chemical review, and any available results from dimethoate and fenthion residue trials being conducted, as well as developments in addressing market access issues associated with the review outcomes.

Further information on the Dimethoate Fenthion Review Program

Further information on the Dimethoate Fenthion Review Program is available from the following websites:

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF)

Background information on the Dimethoate Fenthion Review Program, reference material and stakeholder updates.

www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/plant/publications/dimethoate_fenthion_review_program

Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)

Provides details on chemicals currently being reviewed (including Dimethoate and Fenthion), information on the chemical review program as well as review news.

www.apvma.gov.au/chemrev/chemrev.shtml

Plant Health Australia (PHA)

The National Fruit Fly Strategy and Priorities (NFFSP) Project website. As well as other aspects, the strategy builds on current research and development and market access programs to manage fruit fly. More information on the project can be found at:

www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/fruitfly/public.asp?pageID=243



Canopy Management Field Days

By John Leonardi
of Avocados Australia

Canopy management continues to be one of the major production issues facing the avocado grower. Developing cost effective strategies to optimise light penetration, maximize and maintain fruit quality and yield, and improve efficiency of harvesting and spraying operations is a difficult challenge.

Avocados Australia conducted a number of field days as a component of the extension activities of the national canopy management project (AV04008). These field days gave growers an opportunity to observe a range of canopy management strategies and identify systems that may be suitable for their own production situations.

Regional Summary

Since May 2007 canopy management field days have been held in 10 locations across Australia. A summary of each field day and a description of the canopy management systems being adopted in each region are outlined below:

Renmark 9th May (27 attended):

Strategies involving selective pruning, plant growth regulator application (Sunny®) and high density plantings were discussed. At one site trees were selectively pruned in autumn to remove summer growth that would not flower in the spring. This technique not only reduced tree size and maintained orchard access but also maximise light interception for flowering and cropping. At the second site a high planting density strategy was being implemented on more upright varieties such as ‘Lamb Hass’. The use of cincturing/scoring of branches in autumn to reduce vegetative growth and increase flowering and cropping was also discussed by the group. This technique involves cutting a fine groove (no thicker than a hand pruning saw width) around the branch.

Mildura Region 12th May (17 attended):

Observed selective pruning techniques on younger trees used to reduce tree height, maximise light interception for flowering and cropping, and maintain orchard access. Strategies on managing a block of large trees including tree removal, staghorn/stumping and major limb removal were also discussed.

At both the Renmark and Mildura field days managing limited water resources was one of the main concerns. Several growers have either stumped or are considering stumping large trees to minimise water use. When to stump and how long before stumped trees come back into production were the main issues discussed. Trees are normally cut back after harvest (Oct-Dec in this region) and exposed stumps should be immediately painted to protect them from sunburn. In this region stumped trees may take 3-4 years before they become commercially productive.

Pemberton 16th May (40 attended):

Selective pruning and major limb removal strategies on large trees

were demonstrated. The main reasons for these operations were to reduce tree height, improve harvesting efficiency and maximise light interception for flowering and cropping. The timing of pruning operations was one of the main concerns. In this region (and also in the cooler regions of southern Qld, northern and central NSW and the Tri-State region) it is normal for the tree to carry two crops for a period of time (mature fruit from the previous season as well as the current season’s fruit). The decision on when to prune is often more difficult. At this site trees were pruned after harvest (Feb-May) when trees were going into an “off” year so branches can be pruned with minimal fruit loss. However due to the light crop (in an “off” year) managing the regrowth from these pruning operations can be more difficult. The use of Sunny® to control regrowth and follow-up pruning techniques were discussed.

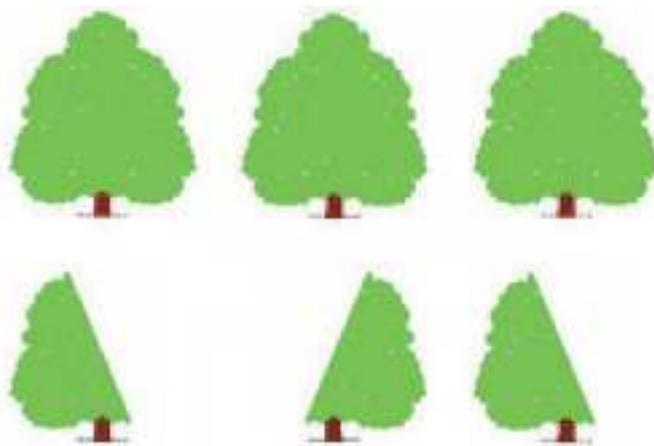
The use of cincturing/scoring of branches performed during autumn to reduce vegetative vigour and improve flowering and cropping was also demonstrated. The effect of this technique on flowering and fruiting in 3 year old trees will be monitored.

North Queensland 24th May (44 attended):

Strategies involving selective limb removal, selective and mechanical pruning and Sunny® application were discussed. At the first site selective limb removal techniques on ‘Shepard’ trees were demonstrated. This technique was used to reduce tree height, to improve the efficiency of spraying and harvesting operations and to maximise light interception for flowering and cropping. At the second site mechanical pruning of ‘Hass’ trees was demonstrated. Trees were hedged with a mechanical pruner. Selective pruning techniques to keep trees open for light penetration and cherry-picker access were also discussed.

Sunshine Coast (17th July) (60 attended):

Several techniques were demonstrated including mechanical and selective pruning, staghorn/stumping and plant growth regulator application. Results of the trial established at this site to investigate the effect of Sunny® on shoot growth, flowering and yield in stumped ‘Hass’ trees were also discussed. Trees stumped after harvest in June



Examples of Canopy Management Techniques

V-shape pruning

Canopy Management Field Days continued

2005 were treated with foliar applications of Sunny® in February 2006 to young vegetative growth and in May 2006 prior to floral bud development. All Sunny® applications significantly reduced shoot growth and increased flowering and tended to increase yield when applied in May.

Central Queensland (19th July) (24 attended):

Selective limb removal, mechanical pruning and plant growth regulator application were discussed in both 'Shepard' and 'Hass' trees. In this region trees are pruned after harvest and prior to flowering (May-June for 'Shepard' & June-August for 'Hass'). Selective limb removal techniques to reduce tree height and width and application of Sunny® at flowering in September to reduce the spring growth flush and increase fruit size were outlined.

At the second site looked at major limb removal technique where trees were pruned on one side (the eastern side) after harvest in June. Minimal pruning occurred on the other side to allow fruit production. The western side of the tree will be pruned when regrowth on the eastern side produces a crop. The use of Sunny® to control regrowth and increase flowering in pruned trees was also discussed. Mechanical and selective pruning strategies on younger trees were also demonstrated. Young trees are tipped pruned after harvest and internal branches are removed to allow light penetration into the tree.

Northern NSW 17th August (50 attended):

Selective pruning and limb removal techniques were demonstrated. This strategy involved pruning the tops to reduce tree height and pruning trees to 2-3 major limbs. The main reasons for these operations were to maximise light interception for flowering and cropping, to improve the efficiency of spraying and harvesting operations and to improve fruit quality.

Mid North Coast NSW 21st August (20 attended):

Strategies involving mechanical pruning and major limb removal were demonstrated at this site. Mechanical pruning is used to maintain

orchard access, maximise light penetration into the orchard for flowering and cropping, and improve the efficiency of spraying and harvesting operations. In the larger trees where orchard crowding was an issue major limb removal techniques like the "V" shape prune were discussed.

Central Coast NSW 23rd August (12 attended):

Systems being used in the region include selective limb removal, major limb removal ("V" shape prune), mechanical pruning and use of Sunny® at flowering. The issue of timing of pruning operations was also examined because trees in this region can carry two crops for a period of time (mature fruit from the previous season as well as the current season's flowers and fruit).

Southern Qld 25th October (25 attended):

Several canopy management strategies were demonstrated including selective limb removal, tree removal and staghorn/stumping. The timing of pruning operations were also discussed because in this region trees can carry two crops for a period of time. Results of a trial established at this site to investigate the effect of Sunny® on shoot growth, flowering and yield in stumped 'Hass' trees were also discussed.

The final field day in the series will be held on Thursday 6th December in the Perth region. To register please visit the Avocados Australia website www.avocado.org.au and look under the Events section.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who have hosted the field days including Agriexchange Pty Ltd; Chinoola Orchards; Rob Farnsworth Pty Ltd; D & D Roche and Son; Lavers Orchards; Tinaroo Falls Avocado Trust; Smerdon Enterprises Pty Ltd; Donovan Avocados; I & R Philpott; Gala Orchards; Coastal Avocados; S & S Peruch and Balmoral Orchards. This project is funded by using avocado grower R&D levies which are matched by the Australian Government through Horticulture Australia.



Staghorning/stumping of large trees



Major limb removal



Mechanical pruning

How are the retailers performing?

By Joanna Embry
of Avocados Australia

The results of recent consumer quality testing were published in the Winter edition of *Talking Avocados*. That work identified and quantified what consumers are willing to accept in terms of quality (specifically regarding maturity, ripeness and internal defects) at different price points and how that impacts on their future purchasing choices. In order to build a complete picture however with the longer term aim of addressing quality issues to maximise returns to the industry we need to measure how we as an industry currently stack up in terms of the quality consumers are receiving now.

To achieve this, Avocados Australia has recently employed assessors in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to survey 16 retail outlets in each city including Coles, Woolworths, independent supermarkets and independent green grocer stores.

The aim of this activity is to assess fruit over a 12 month period, comparing quality between seasons, capital cities and retailers. In conjunction with the consumer testing results this information will then be used to build an economic argument to present to members of the supply chain (specifically to retailers) as to how improving quality, at given retail price points, can have a positive impact on sales and therefore returns along the supply chain. There will also be the opportunity to showcase those retailers who are already delivering a high quality product to consumers.

Both the store display and individual fruit will be assessed. The fruit will be assessed for internal quality defects including bruising, rots, vascular browning and diffuse flesh discolouration and the display will be assessed to measure the proportion of fruit at different levels of ripeness, the price of fruit, whether fruit is on special, where the fruit is situated in the store and how the display is stacked.

At the same time as the retail store surveys are being conducted, a concurrent survey is being conducted in the Sydney wholesale market to measure fruit maturity. Fruit is being collected on a monthly basis – randomly selected from wholesale stands and fruit tested for DM%. Once again this will provide data to determine how the current level of maturity available to consumers stacks up against consumer preferences as determined in the consumer testing earlier in the year.

Interim results from the surveys will be reported to the industry midway through the survey period.

Supply chain mapping

Avocados Australia has recently completed a supply chain mapping project to complement the consumer testing and quality surveys.

In conjunction with the retail surveys its aim is to specifically identify where the industry currently sits in terms of quality and efficiency and identify points in the supply chain where further work is required to make improvements in these areas.

In this project, the supply chain is defined as production through to consumer and includes ripening, wholesaling, independent retailing, specialist produce distribution, food service distribution / catering, and processing functions. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken with wide range of businesses across avocado supply chains, to develop an understanding of the nature of supply chains in the industry and the resources available to the supply chain sectors. As a result, Avocados Australia has:

- mapped the various types of supply chain types that currently exist in the industry and identified the main businesses within these supply chains,
- conducted an audit of all the relevant research related to best practice at each point in the supply chain and resources that are currently available to supply chain participants that support the improved flow of avocados through to the final customer,
- developed a database of information that industry can utilise to improve business management practices, and
- where possible, identified gaps in research, resources and support that has an impact in regard to the efficient development of supply chains.

These findings are significant for the industry as it allows Avocados Australia to identify future investment needs related to improved supply chain efficiency, product demand and / or consumer satisfaction.

A series of recommendations have been made including:

- developing a knowledge portal for industry, and improving the knowledge of industry participants in relation to desired quality parameters and marketing issues,
- undertaking further research related to benchmarking key production, harvesting and packing activities at an enterprise level, and developing a fruit quality benchmarking system for the industry,
- the extension of Infocado information system into the wholesaling sector of the industry,
- the recognition of enterprises across the supply chain that adopt 'best practice' to facilitate improved fruit quality, productivity and supply chain efficiency, and
- the requirement for Avocados Australia to engage more consistently with all supply chain members and other stakeholders to improve the flow of communication related to supply, promotion and other industry development activities.

These recommendations are being incorporated into the future phases of both the supply chain project and Infocado as well as other sectors of the Avocado Industry Research and Development and Marketing programs.



NSW Growers Study Tour to WA

By Alison Tolson

Twenty New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD) avocado growers and affiliates visited the two main avocado producing areas of Western Australia (WA), Carabooda north of Perth and Pemberton in the south. The tour extended from the 26 to 31 March 2007.

From the growers' perspective, the aim of the tour was to investigate cultural techniques employed by the Western Australian avocado industry in view of improving competitiveness within the industry. For the DPI&F researcher present, the objective of the tour was to familiarize with the WA avocado industry, the cultural practices and to identify areas of grower concern which may present future research opportunities for the DPI&F.

The tour commenced with a visit to the Perth Central Market in Canning Vale. Approximately 85% of the avocados traded at the Perth Market are sold within WA and the remaining 15% is transported to the eastern and southern states. The market adheres to a Mandatory Code of Conduct and is presently developing a Standard Terms of Trade.

Avocado growing conditions in WA are vastly different to those of the East Coast. The harvesting season extends from September to March which is counter season to that of the East Coast. In WA fruit set and early development occurs during the cooler wet winter months. Most of the fruit development and all of the harvesting occurs over the hot dry summer months. The hot dry conditions minimizes the insect pest and disease pressure and results in high quality fruit being produced with very little crop loss and minimum chemical intervention required.

Seven avocado farms were visited during the tour, all of which rarely experience any post-harvest fruit quality problems. Another possible contributor to the excellent post-harvest quality achieved in WA is the short cold storage period of the avocado fruit. Being counter season to the major avocado producing areas in Australia, demand often exceeds supply during the WA avocado harvesting season. Fruit move rapidly through the market which mitigates fruit quality problems.

Most of the avocado growing areas visited were on sandy soils requiring frequent irrigation. The well drained soil also contributed to the low incidence of phytophthora root rot in this region.

In the Carabooda area most of the irrigation water is obtained from aquifers and due to the reduced rainfall over the past few years, the water quality is deteriorating. Salt burn was evident on avocado leaves and is apparently common in the autumn months.

In the Pemberton area irrigation water is obtained from the winter rainfall runoff and stored in large farm dams. The water quality is good but winter frost damage is of concern to the growers in the South.

As with East Coast avocado growers, canopy management is one of the WA growers' greatest concerns. Various canopy management techniques are being utilized in WA ranging from tree stumping, tree removal, mechanical hedging and selective limb removal. The success of these techniques varies and the Avocado Australia has commenced canopy management trials in the area.

Some of the farms visited packed and marketed their own avocado fruit

2007 Election Avocados Australia Results

I am please to advise you that the election process for the 2007 Avocados Australia Limited has been completed for the following Growing Areas.

1. Central Queensland Area
2. North Queensland Growing Area
3. North NSW Growing Area

The Election has resulted in the following Directors for each of the Growing Areas:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Central Queensland Area Director: | Lachlan Donovan |
| 2. North Queensland Growing Area Director: | Jim Kochi |
| 3. North NSW Growing Area Director: | Tom Silver |

As only one nomination was received for each of the above Growing Areas and in accordance with Avocados Australia Limited Constitution - Rule 12.7(f) each of the above were appointed to the Avocados Australia Limited Board for a term of not more than three years from the close of the 2007 Annual General Meeting.

The Avocados Australia Board for the 2007-2008 year is:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr Lachlan Donovan | Mr John Walsh |
| Mr Daryl Boardman | Mr Tom Silver |
| Mr Henry Kwaczynski | Mr Jim Kochi |
| Mr Chris Nelson | Mr Colin Fechner |
| Mrs Jennie Franceschi | |

I thank the nominees for there continued commitment to the Australian avocado industry and look forward to working with them over the coming years and thank you for your support of your Industry Association.

Antony Allen
Company Secretary
Avocados Australia

but many belonged to cooperative groups. Communication between growers, packshed managers, marketing managers and the product recipient is to be commended. In view of the expected future increase in avocado production throughout Australia, the eastern and southern states producers would be well advised to follow the WA model of effective communication and cooperation.

Avocado R&D Road Show - 2007

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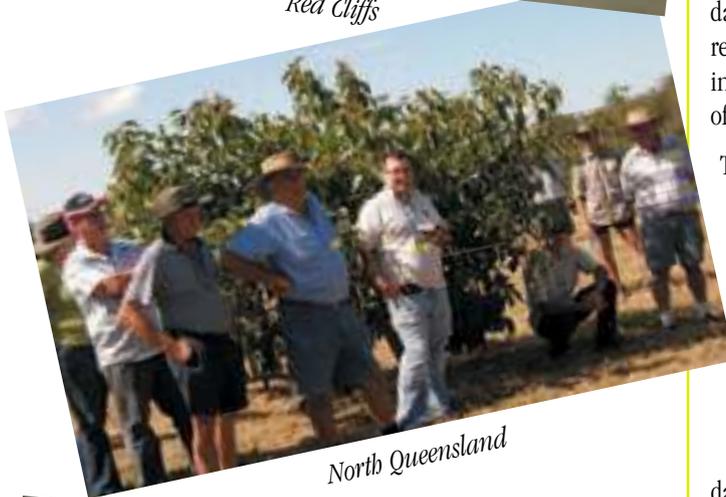
Avocado R&D Road Show - 2007
continued



Bundaberg



Red Cliffs



North Queensland



Central New South Wales

This Road Show is made possible through the through the active participation of the sponsors and the speakers as outlined in the program. It has been partially funded using avocado grower levies which are matched by the Australian Government through Horticulture Australia. It has also been funded through sponsorship contributions and the generous support of the venue host.

**Avocado R&D Road Show 2007
Successfully Completed**

All seven Avocado R&D Road Show 2007 have now been successfully completed, the Avocado R&D Road Show 2007 has delivered a wide range of project and industry information to avocado growers across Australia. From the Road Shows, researchers have received a constant stream of follow up phone calls and emails from growers who have attended. Presenters have also all learnt from many of the over 600 growers who attended each Road Show about regional issues and problems/solutions on farm

The concept of a national Avocado R&D Road Show was first undertaken in 2003 by Avocados Australia. Your Board saw the need to give the growers a chance to travel short distances to a regional day that would also allow the researchers an opportunity to see the regions and interact with growers across the Australia.

Few Australian horticulture industries undertake a national R&D Road Show. There have been industries that have undertaken one or two field days, but a R&D field day at seven locations across Australia including reports from the major R&D projects funded by the industry, along with industry reports on marketing and the organisational structure is out of the ordinary.

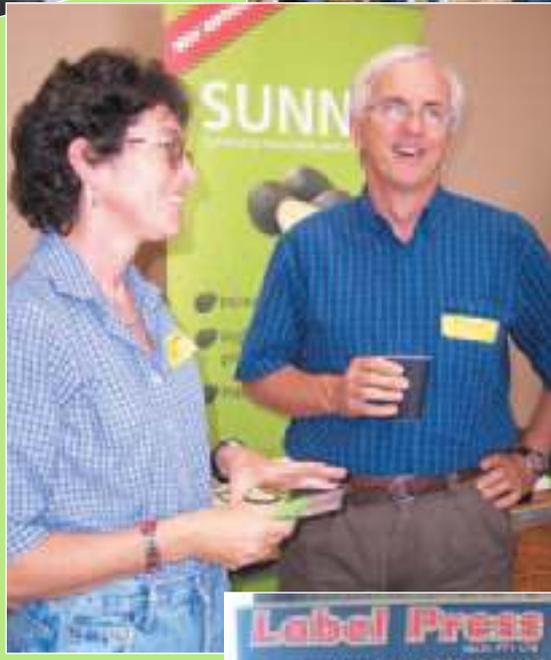
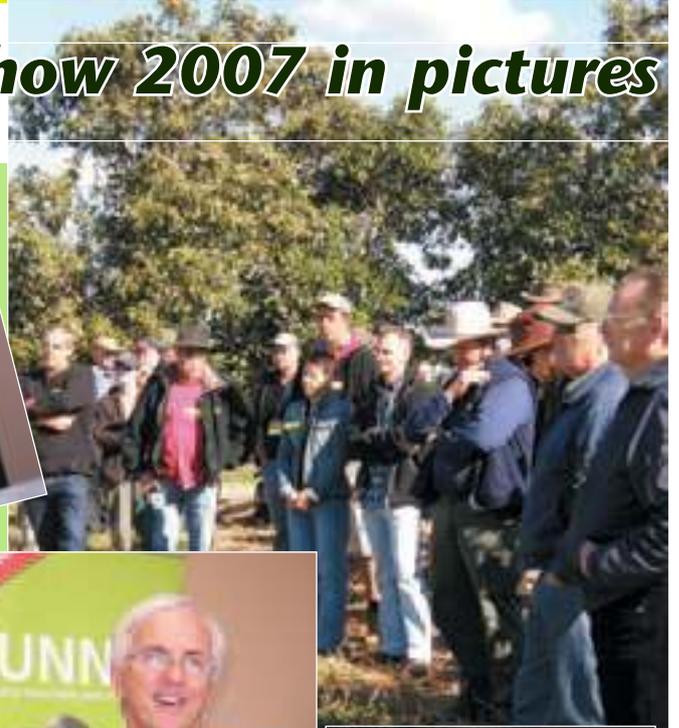
The Australian Avocado industry is very lucky to have committed team of R&D people who have given up a large amount of time to travel the great distances that are necessary to cover all major regions. We at the Avocados Australia would especially like to thank their families who have allowed them to commit to the program of seven Road Shows.

The Avocado R&D Road Show 2007 has been a great success for all who attended, the presenters, the Sponsors and Avocados Australia. We all thank the growers how made each the Road Show days a success and look forward to seeing them at future avocado events.



Roadshow Presenters

Avocado R&D Road Show 2007 in pictures





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Protecting Livelihoods and Lifestyles



Partners in tackling emergency plant pest threats

The essence of the partnership between industries and governments for tackling exotic pest threats is contained in the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). Avocados Australia was involved in negotiating the groundbreaking agreement with federal and state/territory governments and signed the EPPRD on 26th May 2005.

Becoming a signatory delivered industry and growers immediate protection, conveying a pre-agreed plan for incursions. The EPPRD remains a world-first in securing a partnership between government and industry in combating pest and disease incursions. This agreement has been regarded as a model partnership between government and industry for combating biosecurity threats.

“Despite the assistance from government it was not an easy process. But I am pleased to say that this agreement is one which truly benefits our industry”, said Antony Allen, Avocados Australia CEO. “We now have an assurance of government involvement and support in managing/eradicating outbreaks of exotic pests. And more than that, the EPPRD covers how governments will help if an exotic pest incursion occurs, and outlines how each party is involved in the decision-making process. This is extremely important and the most valuable benefit we could have”.



Canker Inspectors

Then and now

In the past, every outbreak of an exotic pest was dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There was no certainty of government support and sometimes industries were unsure of their role. The situation left industries at risk and everyone unclear on who was responsible for what during an emergency.

Now, the EPPRD sets out very clearly:

- A collaborative approach to decision making by government and industry
- Roles and responsibilities in the event of an outbreak (called an incursion).
- Agreed ‘reimbursement’ provisions (known as Owner Reimbursement Costs) where a grower has their crop or property destroyed as part of an agreed response.
- An agreement by governments and industry to work together to help prevent new biosecurity threats to Australia
- Funding arrangements for responses to outbreaks, including how much governments and industries will contribute for different pests.

Our involvement and undertakings

Through the EPPRD, the Avocado industry is able to be involved in every step of developing and deploying an incursion management program. Two high-level management committees take control in the event of an incursion – the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests, with government plant health and industry representatives (in our case the CEO of Avocados Australia) and the National Management Group, with agriculture department CEO’s and industry representatives (in our case the Chair of Avocados Australia). The industry or industries affected have representatives on each committee and no decisions with impact on the industry are taken without the unanimous agreement of the committees.

Every partnership involves action and in this EPPRD there are some activities we as an industry must adhere to. Critical among these are prevention and early detection. First, we must encourage all growers and others, to report any unusual or unknown pests that they see. The sooner an exotic pest is detected and reported, the more likely we are to contain and eradicate it. Secondly, we must actively inform and educate growers on the on-farm practices they can adopt to



*Protecting Livelihoods and Lifestyles
continued*

ensure good biosecurity and thereby reduce the risks of introducing unwanted pests to their property and the industry.

Who pays and how much

Containing and hopefully eradicating an incursion takes people, time and money.

The Deed sets out a formula for who pays what share of the cost of eradication.

It's a sliding scale, with shares divided between government and the industry.

For example, if the new pest has potential for great public impact (say the environment or regional economies/communities) then the governments (state/territory and federal)

will pay a higher proportion. On the other hand,

if industry is primarily affected by the incursion (e.g. increased production costs) then we pay more of the total cost.

The formula for determining shares will be different for each pest and each incursion as agreed in advance in the EPPRD. Industry is involved in the decisions about cost shares. This is on-going based on the priority pests identified in Industry Biosecurity Plans.

The Industry Contribution

Where an industry must contribute, there are different ways they can generate the funds. In the Avocado industry's case, a special biosecurity levy has been established. It is set at zero, and activated only if it is needed to fund an agreed incursion management plan.

If an industry must contribute and do not yet have the funds, the Australian Government has committed to help. They will initially

pay the industry's contribution on the undertaking that the industry will repay within a certain time (usually no more than 10 years). All industry signatories have a legally binding commitment to ensure they have the means/mechanisms to repay the Australian Government.

Protecting your business

Businesses in the Avocado industry are more protected and trade more secure as a result of the EPPRD. "It's like a unique insurance policy for the industry" said Antony Allen. "We get government support to deal with an incursion. We're involved in the process every step of the way. And we don't have to pay the 'premium' unless we make a claim".

Want to know more?

If you would like to know more about the EPPRD and what it means for our industry, just contact:

Antony Allen
Chief Executive Officer
Avocados Australia
P: 07 3391 2344
or email on ceo@avocado.org.au

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News from around the world

'California avocado crop largely intact' reports the California Avocado Commission

Wildfires that swept through Southern California this week affected the state's largest avocado growing region, but the California avocado crop remains intact, according to the California Avocado Commission. "Our primary concern has been the personal safety of our growers and their families," said Commission President Mark Affleck. "Some growers have suffered losses and we will do everything possible to help them through this difficult time."

Although damage reports are still coming in, and fires continue to burn in portions of San Diego County, accounts of avocado losses have been overstated. "Early reports from other sources stated that 20,000 acres of avocados were lost in the fires in San Diego. This information was incorrect," said Guy Witney, the Commission's Director of Industry Affairs. "The actual area affected is expected to be only a fraction of that amount."

Before the fires, California was expected to produce about 365 million pounds of avocados during the 2007-08 crop year. The Commission is now reevaluating the crop, which is likely to be 10 percent smaller than initial projections because of the fires and Santa Ana winds.

"We'll know more in the coming weeks," Witney said. "The Commission will issue an updated crop estimate once all the information is in." Source: CAC

The firm Carmen from Michoacán promotes new variety of avocado

A representative of the firm Carmen, Carlos Illsley, is in New Zealand to study the potential market for the variety of avocados so-called "Carmen Hass". This is a patented variety in 10 countries and is looking to open markets out from Mexico, where this variety has more than 15 years in production and already reached 4,000 hectares. Carmen, Carlos Méndez Vega and Brokaw Nursery's from Santa Paula Ca. have co-ownership of the patent, which will be commercially liberated in New Zealand, Australia and other producing countries.

The firm is its first stages of constitution, declares Mr. Illsley, but the idea is join avocado growers from the region of Michoacán which are currently harvesting this intervarietal selection in order to reach the scale of production. One of the most important advantages of this avocado is its earlier harvesting which is two months previous to the beginning of the campaign. Naturally, this is an advantage on prices in the low-season and give growers the possibility to have a broader market. In addition, the avocado "Carmen Hass" shows a higher production potential if compared with the traditional Hass. Source: Fresh Plaza

New Zealand firm to continue with \$2.5m factory in Kenya

Olivado, the New Zealand company which is investing \$2.5 million in a Kenyan avocado oil extraction factory, has said it will still go on with the investment, despite the recent murder of one of its engineers in Nairobi in a robbery incident.

The engineer, Julian Nathan, was recently bludgeoned to death by robbers in an apartment complex in Nairobi where he and two other employees of the firm were staying. The surviving employees, both also engineers, have since flown back to New Zealand where they told the press they were unwilling to return to Kenya.

Olivado was to open its Nairobi plant the week the engineer was killed, but this has now been rescheduled. The facility would have been the company's third. The other two factories are in New Zealand and Australia.

Avocado oil is used as a healthy food dressing or cooking oil, as well as an ingredient in beauty formulations. The Olivado facility will be the first specialist avocado oil extraction plant in the region.

News of the attack on the investors has rekindled debate on the security costs of doing business in Nairobi, which some investors say compare unfavourably to other investment destinations in the region and the continent.

According to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, these costs, as well as those associated with a weak infrastructure — poor road network and unreliable water and power systems — have pushed up business costs to uncompetitive levels.

Two weeks ago, for example, Reckitt Benckiser, the global home and personal care giant, announced that it was closing most of its

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News from around the world
continued

production lines in Kenya to cut costs and improve efficiency in its African markets.

The closure will see the end of the company's 40-year long operations in Kenya and result in the retrenchment of nearly 40 workers. Nearly a dozen manufacturers have pulled out of Kenya in the last decade citing similar reasons.

The government says it is working to improve the business environment through the provision of better infrastructure, reduction of licences and tax incentives, to give investors a leg-up.

Olivado's top officials have on their part expressed concern that the murder incident involving their executive, just days after arriving in Kenya, had dented their morale to see the Nairobi plant running. "What makes it quite hard to accept is that this is going to be really good for the people growing avocados in Kenya," said Olivado marketing director John Ellegard. Source: Nation Media

Frost damages affect produce growers in Chile

A recent cold wave has seriously hurt produce growers in the Central Valley in Chile in Region IV to VI in the North of the country. According to Juan Carlos Sepúlveda of grower federation Fedefruta producers from Region IV have already requested the Ministry of Agriculture to declare the region a disaster area.

According to preliminary reports the losses generally reach 50%. In Region IV 40% of the papaya, avocado, citrus and vegetable crops are reported lost and 30% of the cherimoya crop. According to the agricultural development institute Indap the production of avocados and tomatoes in the Central Valley have been affected seriously, even like the grape crop in the North of Chile. According to Indap director Hernan Rojas almost 100% of the avocado production around Petorca and Quillota in Region V.

Grape exporter Eduardo Valenzuela of Alfredo Chimenti Agri from the Metropolitan Region commented that in that area the consequences of the frost on export volumes will mostly depend on later frosts that are expected in August. If the present situation is topped by more serious frost next month, the volumes could be lowered and production rotation could suffer delays.

Adolfo Ochagavía president of the Chilean Hass Avocado Committee said the Committee is still evaluating the exact damages, of which the results are expected in about two weeks. Weather or not the export volume of Avocado will suffer and to which extent can not yet be determined.

According to regional agricultural secretary Cristián Sáez , the government is prepared to take action, but first the scale of the damages will have to be quantified. At this moment the Ministry of Agriculture is doing everything it can to evaluate it, said Sáez.

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News from around the world continued

According to Sepúlveda it will take some time before the supply is back to normal, but the market will adapt to the situation. Spokesperson of the Ministry Cecilia Leiva has warned traders not to speculate with produce prices, as there will be sufficient supply to make any drastic price increases superfluous. Besides normal seasonal price changes, no adaptations are presently needed, said Leiva. Source: Fresh Plaza

APEAM services, promoting avocado exports to the US

Mexico has been exporting avocados to the US for more than 10 years. However, only since February of this year, it has total year round access to all US states. There were phytosanitary access restrictions, particularly with regard to the plague "Conotrachelus aguacatae". Ten years ago exports from Mexico were only allowed to 19 Eastern States and 4 Western States. In the last years, restrictions were lifted in all States. The last ones were California and Florida. This achievement is the result of joint efforts by the Asociación de Productores y Empacadores de Aguacate del Estado de Michoacán (APEAM), which coordinate activities of phytosanitary support for producers and packers.

According to the engineer José Luis Bustamante, director at APEAM, phytosanitary activities are time-consuming and very exigent for the US market. Certification is made by individual farms with the participation of several national agencies: Secretary of Agriculture, Phytosanitary Committees (national and local). All together guarantee farms free of plagues and diseases. In addition, farms have to be

evaluated for US phytosanitary agency (APHIS). In packaging, there is also a rigorous analysis and an arduous certification process. Currently, APEAM has 28 certified packing stations to supply the US market.

Avocado production in Michoacán (Mexico) reaches 80,000 hectares, representing 80% of the total Mexican cultivated area. More than 50% of Mexican exports come from Michoacán (44,200 hectares). APEAM concentrates its efforts in the US market, but it has a growing interest in European (mainly France) and Far East (mainly Japan). Source: APEAM

Grupo Coliman shares its experience as exporter of avocados

Barranquilla – Since 1998, the division of avocados from the Grupo Coliman exports to the French, British and Costa Rican markets. Exports are also in a process of consolidation at the demanding markets in Asia and the US, the latter with a 40% share. The firm is in all the stages of the value chain. Since the 1970s avocados are produced by Coliman, however, only when the marketing division at the Northeast of the country is created, Coliman begins its consolidation and subsequent exports.

Mr. Gustavo Almanza, Manager at the avocados division declares that the major advantage from Mexico in front of its competitors in Latin America (Peru and Chile) is that "they (competitors) don't sell the year round". But with other countries the situation is more complex. If Mexico wants to export to Europe, exporters have to compete with



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News from around the world continued

growers from 12 different countries. In fact, they lost already some market: "the Mexican producers sell to a fixed price, other countries sell for commission or deposit" declares Mr. Almanza.

In Asia, exports began 5 years ago. This task has not been easy. For example, China has high tariffs and taxes to imports. In spite of the difficulties at the Asian market, Coliman is already in Japan, Hong Kong and South Korea. The 90% of avocados in Japan are from the group, in Hong Kong this figure reaches 100% and in South Korea, Coliman was the first starting exports after Mexico and South Korea signed a protocol of understanding in phytosanitary issues. In China exists a lot of potential, quantities are low if compared with the number of consumers. The fundamental is "to educate consumers (...) prices are very favorable and consumers are more interested to consume new products with higher nutritional value" finishes Mr. Almanza.

Source: Grupo Coliman

Profound division among avocado growers in Mexico

At the meeting of the Association of Growers, Packers and Exporters of Avocado from Michoacan (in Spanish APEAM) contradictory parties asked the association for the distribution of resources for promotion and the representation quotas. There already is a demand imposed by Alejandro Álvarez, vice president of APEAM, in US courts against members of the filial association of avocado growers MHAIA, who's directors are also members of APEAM.

Sadly, as the growers Agustín del Río and Jorge Flores Viveros claimed, some time ago the association helped to fight against phytosanitary restrictions from the US and nowadays Mexico is the only country who freely exports avocados to the US.

Highest quarterly revenues for Calavo

Calavo Growers, Inc., Santa Paula has announced that revenues for the third quarter ended July 31, 2007 reached the highest level for any three-month period in company history.

Third quarter revenues totaled \$91.3 million, up \$12.4 million, or 16%, from \$78.9 million in the corresponding quarter of fiscal 2006, fueled by double-digit sales with percentage gains in both fresh and processed avocado operations. Net income was \$2.2 million, equal to \$0.16 basic and \$0.15 diluted earnings per share in the three months ended July 31, 2007. The company reported earnings of \$2.9 million, or \$0.20 basic and diluted earnings per share, in the like period of fiscal 2006.

Earnings for the period, while substantial, trailed the year-earlier total due to the unusually high cost of Mexican avocados used in the processing operation. The high cost was primarily the result of shipping delays of Chilean avocados to the U.S. due to the freeze in Chile in July. The cost of Mexican avocados has since decreased significantly.

The company, a global leader in the packing and marketing of fresh and processed avocados and other perishable foods, reported nine-month results that set new record highs across the board including sales, gross margin, operating income, net income and earnings per

Grower Member Application Form

Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

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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: _____

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100-149 ha	150-199 ha	200-499 ha	500 ha+

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

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental management/
sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Assurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organic farming systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology/innovations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water management | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field days | <input type="checkbox"/> Supply chain management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pest management | <input type="checkbox"/> Key political issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |

Payment Options

Grower Membership of Avocados Australia is \$110 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 \$110.00 made payable to Avocados Australia Ltd.

Please charge \$110.00 to my credit card. Details are listed below.

Credit card (please circle):

Bankcard MasterCard Visa

Credit card number: _____

Name on credit card: _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Privacy Options

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

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

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

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

**Avocados Australia
Reply Paid 663
Stones Corner Qld 4120**

(no stamp required within Australia):
For more information or assistance please go to
www.avocado.org.au or call on **07 3391 2344**



News from Around the World
continued

share. Net income for the nine months advanced 38% on an 11% sales increase.

Revenues for the first nine months of fiscal 2007 increased \$20.8 million to \$217.7 million from \$196.9 million, from the corresponding period one year ago. Net income for the period climbed \$1.7 million to \$6.1 million from \$4.4 million in the previous year. Year-to-date basic and diluted earnings per share advanced 39%, to \$0.43, versus \$0.31 per basic and diluted share in the initial nine months of fiscal 2006.

Nine-month gross margin totaled \$24.7 million, an increase of 13% from \$21.9 million last year. Operating income for the period rose 41% to \$10.5 million from \$7.5 million.

“With our all-time best sales quarter, Calavo continues to demonstrate that we have created a formidable engine for growth, propelled by multiple sales platforms to offset seasonality, adverse weather and other market conditions. I believe the third quarter would have produced record results had it not been for the effect on processed product earnings caused by the Chilean shipping delays noted above,” says Lee E. Cole, chairman, president and CEO.

“Our fresh operations achieved sales growth of 16% in the quarter, driven by a highly favorable pricing environment for avocados. Drawing on international sources, we registered this increase despite a cyclically smaller California avocado crop, which was further impacted by the severe frosts of last January. Consumer demand for avocados, both fresh and processed, continues to expand briskly, reflecting growing awareness of their taste appeal, nutritional benefits and ability to enhance a vast array of recipes and menu items.” Source: Calavo

Prime Produce International opens office in Uruapan, Mexico

Prime Produce International Continues to Gain Momentum and Projects Year-End Sales of Avocados from Mexico to Nearly Triple 2006 Totals

Prime Produce International, LLC, (PPI) recently opened a new office in Uruapan, Mexico, which is being managed by General Manager Carlos Illsley. In addition, the domestic office was recently upgraded with new computer technical systems to accommodate the expansion. PPI continues to expand its resources and will nearly triple its sales volume of Mexican Hass avocados over last year’s level. The total Mexican avocado industry’s share of Hass avocados in the USA is projected to double as well.

“We are extremely proud of our accomplishments and are hitting new records due to the success of our Mexican Hass avocado sales program and the need to supply the market,” said PPI President and CEO Avi Crane, “Our team continues to supply quality fruit and build relationships with current and new customers.”

Even in the wake of supply shortages elsewhere, both Mexico and the Dominican Republic will help fill market demand on the East coast, Midwest and West coast markets. The industry is also anticipating a steady California crop next year, which is needed to supply total market demand.

News from Around the World
continued

This past year PPI experienced organic growth and revolutionary change within the company. PPI moved its corporate offices and cold storage facility to an historic packing house and cold storage in Orange, California. This grand opening received notoriety from Huell Hower and was featured in May and June on one of the most popular TV shows in the state.

One of the most important things for us is the promise to always meet or exceed our customer's expectations, and we will continue to keep that promise," adds Crane. Source: Prime Produce International

Fresh-cut Fruit: Fresh avocados from the freezer

Mantrose-Haeuser Co., Inc. the creators of NatureSeal® introduced their newest technology for "Fresh Frozen" fruit at PMA in Houston, TX on Oct. 13. These new NatureSeal formulations, which maintain the taste, texture and color of IQF apples, pears, avocado and guacamole, are slated to create a whole new revolution in the fresh-cut produce industry.

NatureSeal has already solved the problem of enzymatic oxidation and texture degradation of fresh-cut produce over a period of time; however seasonality of fruit was still a barrier to having a particular fresh-cut fruit year round. With NatureSeal's new Fresh Frozen formulations

the juiciest Honey Crisp apple, the most luscious Bartlett pear and the creamiest Hass avocado can now be quick frozen to retain all of nature's goodness. Pre-made, fresh, frozen guacamole can be processed, shipped to market and stocked year-round without the worry of browning and more importantly without any harsh chemicals.

The benefits of this new technology to fresh frozen processors, and as a result to the foodservice industry are endless. Your specialty dessert with apples or pears or that one of a kind dish with the smoothest avocado can be served in any season...and the quality will be consistent because the fruit was picked and frozen at its peak of flavor.

The scientists at Mantrose continue to forge ahead into new territory turning what was once impossible into an every day convenience. Source: Mantrose-Haeuser



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- 3. Easier to use.**
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* Quoted by Tony Whitley, Industry Consultant at the Australian and NZ Avocado Growers Conference 2001

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