

TALKING AVOCADOS

**Managing avocado orchards affected by
wet weather**

Managing Groundcover in Avocados

Avocados Marketing Activity

AUTUMN 2013

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

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Cover: Hass avocado on the tree at Bellthorpe orchard, Sunshine Coast, QLD.

Chairman's Perspective

At the AAL Board meeting held at Nambour in November 2012 the board recommended using teleconferences to establish what topics growers want covered in more formal face-to-face regional meetings. Since that time changes have occurred to the structure of the Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and many grower concerns have been voiced.

The AAL board has embarked on a programme of regional teleconferences (hook-ups) as a way of quickly talking to growers in all regions and having the discussions that concern each region. The topics for discussion are set by growers from each region and may be different between regions as well as some common topics from the AAL office.

I have been impressed by the way growers, the AAL office and the Board have taken up this medium. It is a very economical way, in cost and time for all parties, to have a discussion about topics of interest.

I would encourage all growers to participate in these teleconferences, even if you just listen in, because it is a very convenient way to hear what is going on in our industry first hand and you have the opportunity to voice your opinion if you choose to. Also I have made a commitment to join each and every teleconference as have

all the AAL board members. Your AAL board is committed to hearing your concerns from each region and across every region. These issues will then be taken to the next AAL Board meeting or to the next IAC meeting for further discussion.

I fully understand that some growers prefer face-to-face meetings but we have to consider cost and time and both of these are limited commodities. For example, a recent face-to-face meeting in Central NSW involved three people traveling by air, hire cars, accommodation and salaries for two days for a proposed 3 hour meeting. Meetings in TriState or WA are a minimum three day event. Also, the growers themselves in each region have to travel great distances just to attend a central venue, sometimes up to six hours. All of this time and expense can be avoided by using the medium of teleconferences.

As always, my contact phone number (0422 133890) and email address is in Talking Avocados , page 2, for any grower that may want to contact me personally.

Jim Kochi

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia



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Letter to the Editor

Crescent Plateau Holdings

ABN 81 358 981 335

Crescent Plateau Avocado Orchard
Sustainable Native Timber Forest

Alan Hartley

Loh Ai Tee
158 Crescent Hills Road
Pretty Gully NSW 2469
Australia

25 February 2013

The Editor
Talking Avocados
PO Box 8005
Woolloongabba Q 4102

"MAUSWARA MEN"

Melanesian pidgin describes people who thump the table, pound the podium, shout their messages in a spray of spit and dribble, but who do nothing as MAUSWARA men.

The February 25th edition of the industry e-newsletter Guacamole contained the startling news that 70% of the new season Shepard fruit tested was immature, some down to 13.55% dry matter. Come on Jim – what are the North Queenslanders growing? Shepard or Shoko? What was the Avocado Association's response – a limp wristed "...disappointing experience for the consumer..." Where is the naming and shaming of packhouses, growers, handlers?

The marketing debacle of September 2011 caused untold financial damage for growers marketing quality produce at the time. What followed was a wave of workshops, meetings, joint ventures by industry movers and shakers and fervent declarations that never again would the industry be de-railed by shonky presentation and intelligence.

This latest debacle goes much further than simply destroying consumer confidence in Australian avocados as a product and making a lie of millions of dollars being poured into promotion. It proves to the produce managers of major retail outlets that the Australian avocado industry still hasn't got its act together, still can't be trusted when it comes to the crunch and is as likely to impede effective marketing as it is to be a partner in industry promotion.

So much for the great move forward – so much for the movers and shakers – so much for the grand alliances – so much for the promises!!

Bloody MAUSWARA men.

Alan Hartley



Note from the Editor:

Dry matter results during the last couple of months have certainly triggered a lot of discussion. Policing when and where growers harvest and supply their fruit to packhouses presents an interesting challenge and acting to take steps to ensure that only mature fruit goes to market is a complex issue. To address Alan Hartley's letter we have produced an article called "Dry Matter Causes a Stir" you will find it on page 15. We welcome your views about addressing this issue. You can email your feedback to co@avocado.org.au.

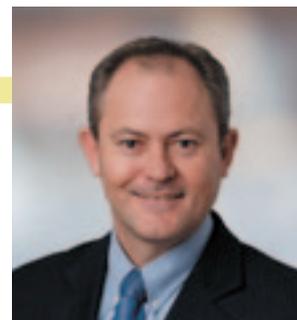
CEO's Report

Since the last TA, the new HAL Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that provides advice to HAL in relation to avocado marketing and R&D investments has been appointed by HAL. In this issue we have provided an explanation of the process that has been undertaken to make these changes. The IAC has a very important role, particularly given the value of the investment that it oversees. However, the IAC is not expected to be the font of all knowledge. It draws on expertise from various sources including HAL portfolio managers, independent experts, research providers and any other source required to make the best informed decisions.

While the structure and membership of the IAC is important, the processes of the IAC and the information available to it, have a significant impact on the investment decisions and ultimately the outcomes from the investment. We are keen to work with HAL to continue to improve processes that bring together the best information and knowledge to guide good decision making. These processes extend beyond the formal IAC itself.

The AAL directors, as the elected industry leaders, have an important role to play, not only in relation to R&D and marketing, but wider issues that cannot be addressed through the HAL system. Directors provide a conduit with the growers and other industry stakeholders through to the Board where issues can be discussed and prioritised. They also provide a mechanism to help disseminate information back to the wider industry. It is important that the HAL IAC doesn't work in isolation from the elected industry leaders. Therefore, processes are needed to ensure issues can be fed up through to the AAL Board. Those issues that have implications for R&D and marketing investments need to be taken to the IAC for further consideration.

Unfortunately, following the announcement of the new IAC, two of our Directors resigned – Russell Delroy, representing the WA/NT Growing Area and Chris



Nelson, representing the NSW Growing Area. It is important that these regions are represented on the Board and we immediately invited expressions of interest from all AAL members in these regions. It is disappointing that no applications have been forthcoming. Although AAL directors are no longer automatically appointed to the IAC, there is a significant role for all directors in providing industry leadership and ensuring effective communication and industry engagement.

Over the past few months, AAL has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve our communication and industry engagement. We commissioned a review of communications which will be reported on in the next TA. The data collection phase is now complete, we are now at the assessment and analysis stage. PRISM, the external consultancy, undertook 51 in-depth telephone interviews whereby 30 of those interviewed were growers located in each of Australia's avocado growing regions. A total of 125 responses were received by PRISM to the Avocados Australia online communications survey from people in the Avocado industry, a response rate of nearly 20%.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the in-depth telephone interviews and the AAL online communications survey. The Avocados Australia caps have been mailed out to the first 50 respondents and the winner of the \$500 FREE travel voucher is Janelle Lendrum from Stuarts Point in NSW.

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CEO's Report continued

We have received the Communications Review Final report. Its findings are very positive and provide evidence that our communications efforts are succeeding. We are now looking at enhancing the way we engage with our stakeholders.

We have been undertaking a series of regional teleconferences to provide all growers with the opportunity to raise issues with AAL. The agendas for these teleconferences have been based on feedback from growers in each of the regions. We have been pleased with the level of participation in most regions and appreciate those who have taken the time to dial in. Of course, these teleconferences are not a substitute for face to face contact. All AAL directors (where possible) and myself have attended all of these teleconferences. I have attended two regional grower forums in March with others planned in the coming months. Please contact your regional director for input into these forums to ensure the issues important to you are discussed.

Over the past 12 months, we have been working with HAL to review and plan a new three year marketing plan. The

depth of analysis and rigour in planning the next phase of the marketing program has been of the highest standard. The research highlighted the success of the previous campaign which was focussed on a rational message on 'versatility'. Results have confirmed that Australians are using avocados in more ways than ever before – on average, in 7.1 different ways.

The industry is in good shape, the envy of many other industries. Consumption has doubled over the past decade and Australian per capita consumption is at about 2.5kg/head, amongst the highest in the developed world. Exports have increased ten-fold over the past decade (albeit off a small base) which further helps strengthen the domestic market. Average returns to growers for the most part have held up over this time. This scenario is far from the norm in Australian horticulture and the avocado industry leaders should be proud of the current state of this industry. We need to continue to build consumer demand, improve on-farm productivity and work to ensure a favourable operating environment to support a profitable and sustainable industry for many years to come.



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Around Australia

Central Queensland Report

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

As mentioned in the previous edition of TA this region is still seeing the effects of the damage caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald. There have been incidents of tree deaths due to anoxia and the decline in the health of trees in the region. This has definitely impacted on this year's crop.

The QRAA is offering special disaster assistance to affected growers such as concessional loans of up to \$250,000, eligible primary producers across Queensland can use these funds to assist with recovery and re-establishment of growers' enterprises following the flooding. I recommend that you find out about these disaster assistance options by going to the QRAA website: <http://www.qraa.qld.gov.au>

Despite all this the harvest for Shepards has gotten underway and will soon finish. The market pricing has been maintained from the WA season and these returns will somewhat compensate for the reduction in crop. Despite the rainfall the quality of fruit within the market has been reported as good. We are about to transition into the Hass season and it is hopeful that the outlook for prices will be maintained.

AAL has a very comprehensive marketing/promotion program which is continuing to evolve. Following research in 2011, the campaign evolved to 'dial-up' the 'buy Australian' message, supported by the Kangaroo label that has been rolled out. A major review of the campaign was undertaken over the past 12 months in preparation for a new marketing strategy. The new strategy will be rolled out from July and growers will see information about the campaign in future Avocados Australia's communications, in Guacamole and the Talking Avocados magazine.

Avocados Australia (AAL) recently finished conducting regional phone hook-ups with growers based in all eight growing regions across Australia including Central Queensland. The Phone Hook-ups gave AAL the opportunity to have a two-way exchange with as many growers as possible in a short timeframe. The phone hook-ups are not a substitute for face-to-face engagement in fact the phone hook-up allows growers to decide on the face-to-face engagement activities they want in their area and that is precisely what was discussed in the CQ Phone Hook-up.

Central Queensland growers who took part in the phone hook-up on Wednesday the 3rd of April had a chance to



hear from AAL's CEO John Tyas who provided an overview of AAL's activities. Growers talked directly with AAL's directors about the issues affecting them. Topics that were discussed included: an update on R&D activity concerning Fruit Spotting Bug; ideas for running a soil workshop in Central Queensland for growers; a review of Dry Matter results; a reminder about Disaster Assistance options for flood affected growers; and the impact of fruit rot and bruising.

The phone hook-up was a good opportunity for growers to fact-find and talk with other growers. Importantly, the phone hook-ups gave growers a chance to hear about how their levy funding is being spent and to ask questions. I strongly recommend growers in my region to take part in future phone hook-ups. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary from the CQ Growers Phone Hook-up discussion that recently took place email co@avocado.org.au or call 1300 303 971.

Tri State Report

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



As I sit and write this report, it is hard to believe that summer has finished and we are about to head into winter. Reports from different areas indicate a huge difference in cropping levels, from basically "disaster" to "not bad", making it essential that the tri state areas try to get some method of accurate crop forecasting.

Growers should be aware that the South Australian Annual General Meeting will be held on the 22nd May, with guest speaker Peter Young from Birdwood Nursery to speak on available rootstocks. Hopefully John Tyas from Avocados Australia will field questions on the organisation and how our Levies are spent.

Growers should be looking at their options regarding frost control and preparing ground for spring planting. Tree availability seems to be a major problem and growers should be aware of the need to order well in advance, as the days of being able to order your requirements at the last minute are well and truly over.

Careful planning of your orchard with regard to avoiding frost pockets and poor soil quality, are essential to avoid much grief in the future. The number of times I have heard "we don't get frosted here and don't need a fan" is amazing, only to find that the grower loses trees plus crop to that one frost. The same applies to cooling systems, something that I believe is essential in order to grow avocados in the dry summer heat that we have.

Around Australia continued

Good luck to growers for the winter months and I hope to see a good attendance at the South Australia Annual General Meeting.

North Queensland Report

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



Each year we seem to have some early runners in the start of the Shepard season and some growers may have already received some notices advising of the dry matter results from samples taken from the markets.

The success of our great industry depends on ONE factor, and this ONE factor ONLY, and that is the willingness of the consumer to buy and successfully use our avocados as an enjoyable food experience.

Immature fruit is a bad experience for consumers and has the effect of stopping future purchases for the next 2-4 weeks. Consumers today do not have the luxury of wasting money on unsatisfactory fruit. A bad report on Facebook or Twitter can reach a great number of friends instantly so the slowdown becomes greater and faster than it has ever been in the past. Five years ago could spread to seven people in a week. Today this bad experience can spread to 100 in a single minute and then spread to 100 more from each person in the next minute. If a bad experience goes “viral” then we face a very serious problem.

If you do not understand what I am saying then please have it explained by one of your children or grandchildren because they understand the power of the digital media.



The results of DM sampling at the markets is summarized in Infocado and the offending growers are advised when DM results are low. The major retailers are also aware of these results and are expressing concern about immature fruit and this could lead to changes in specifications for supply into that market. The wholesalers are aware also and may become more active in telling growers to observe DM recommendations. Some growers are even calling for a “name and shame”, such is the concern within the industry.

While I singled out Shepard growers the same applies to those Hass, Reed, Maluma Hass and Lamb Hass growers who guess at their DM levels.

The days of “jumping at the starters blocks” is coming to an end so please be aware of your responsibilities to the future of your industry.

Tamborine and Northern Rivers Report

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



Following a large flowering and favourable weather conditions, fruit quality appears to be excellent at this early stage assisted by a warm, dryer than average summer, tree health also seems to be bouncing back with the favourable conditions.

Things went a bit awry after this, coastal orchards were lashed by 48hrs of cyclonic winds, and half a meter of rain, and this was followed 3 weeks later with an afternoon of winds in excess of 100kms and another 200mm of rain. Orchards away from the coast did not suffer as bad winds but still received the rain. Crop losses vary between 5 and 15%, with the long term effect of wind rub, leaf loss and tree health still to be seen.

Despite the weather, the crop still appears to be a good one and growers need to be planning their 2013 harvest. This includes accurate crop forecasting and a programmed harvest and supply working with Infocado, marketers, agents, chains, etc. to ensure fruit moves through the system. I would expect that fruit will be in abundance throughout the northern NSW/Tamborine supply window with other growing areas also experiencing large crops, however I believe that with good forecasting and confident, planned supply it is possible to see a profitable 2013. The commitment of the chains to stock predominantly Australian product this summer has been excellent, and I congratulate AAL, industry and the retailers for making this happen. The large supermarkets’ ongoing support of

Australian avocados will be paramount in 2013, especially with NZ being on an 'on year'.

The excellent prices seen in 2012 was undoubtedly assisted by fruit flowing through the system, ensuring that the consumer was always getting fruit picked at the right time and spending as little time as possible in cool rooms, in transport, at depots etc. Any hold ups in the supply chain, be it being held too long on the tree, too long in cool rooms or excessively handled has a detrimental effect on fruit quality. It is a real chicken egg situation as poor quality fruit slows demand which in turn slows sales and therefore fruit flow. Minimum picked to plate time gives us the advantage over any imported product and will keep the consumer coming back.

Sunshine Coast Report

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



About 25 people came to Bellthorpe from as far as Beechmont and Kumbia for a field day in March. We discussed avocado growing, marketing and research

with Simon Newett from DAFF, John Tyas and Anna Petrou from Avocados Australia and Astrid Hughes from Horticulture Australia. A panel comprising Robert Price representing Sunfresh, Dan Cork of Nature's Fruit Company and Antony Allen of The Avolution shared views on marketing this year's Sunshine Coast crop. Sponsors Mark and Jenny Broderick of Glasshouse Tractors treated us to a machinery display and homemade refreshments.

Highlights for me included the discussion around Simon Newett's comparison of yield variations and the marketing panel's observations on the drivers of avocado price fluctuations. In essence, their message was to watch supply forecasts closely and not to flood the market when prices peak, because this can cause a sharp collapse and stubbornly low prices for a long time. Provided we resist this temptation, however, they agreed that the demand-supply outlook supports continuing good returns to growers.

Another field day will be held at a different orchard later this year. Please contact me if you would be willing to let 20 or 30 well-behaved fellow growers visit your shed - Avocados Australia will help organise speakers and logistics. Also please give me your feedback on ways to

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Around Australia continued

improve on the format and content of these meetings.

Shortly after the field day, the Avocados Australia board hosted a growers phone hook-up with Sunshine Coast growers as part of the series of phone hook-ups being held with each region. Some of these have focused on industry structure, others on regional production and marketing issues. Feedback and suggestions for these events, as a supplement to face-to-face meetings, would also be most welcome.

Avocados Australia posted invitations to the field day and the teleconference to all local growers on their mailing list. If you or someone you know did not receive one, and would like to in future, please contact Avocados Australia by calling 1300 303 971 or email your details to: admin2@avocado.org.au .

While most Coast growers survived ex-cyclone Oswald less badly than they feared, some were hit badly. The Sunshine Coast is one of the regions in which individuals can seek government relief funding - if you may be entitled to this, Avocados Australia has information about the disaster relief options available in the Grower Notices section of the Avocados Australia website go to <http://industry.avocado.org.au/Growers/Notices.aspx> and scroll down.

South Queensland Report

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



Southern Qld is still experiencing wet conditions and tree health is suffering. It is important all growers use all information and practices that are available to them to maintain tree health and viability.

We have the latest field guide which is a great reference tool and I would like to thank all that we're involved in putting this together. This is a true reflection of the quality of work our levy money goes into. Not all levy projects are as easy to realise the effort and hard work that goes into them, but this does and I hope everyone thinks the same.

Another great reference tool is the industry web site. We have the best practice section now on the site which everyone can get access to. Just go to the site and apply for a password and you will get access to another great resource that your levy \$ has developed. This site is an ongoing project and over time will have more and more information. Please take the time to have a look and if you see any problems or things you think can be added or done better please contact myself or AAL and let us know.

We are currently seeing good prices for large and med size fruit with Shepard the prominent variety. Small fruit is in plentifully supply and values are mixed for this fruit. With luck these prices will remain if supply is managed well and consumers get a good product to consume.

It's easy to want to harvest before fruit is at optimum maturity when you have markets calling and offering high returns. Please remember that the key to future sales and repeat buyers is getting an avocado that eats well. Please remember this before you harvest and try to resist the temptation of harvesting immature fruit.

Looks like a reasonable crop from the reports of growers on the regional telephone hook-up. I thank the growers who called in and hope that we can arrange to have these from time to time so that the AAL board can answer any questions you may have as well as convey any happenings within the industry.

As always if you have anything that you need to discuss or to be taken to AAL please don't hesitate to call.

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Industry Matters

Crop recovery after wet weather and floods

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald and flooding rains in January and February of this year brought an inundation of water and on-farm flooding and many growers say they are seeing tree loss. The onset of phytophthora root rot is also a major concern for growers at the moment with the possibility of more losses; extra treatments and close management is essential. John Tyas CEO of AAL encourages growers to refer to the Avocados Australia website for information to assist in the remediation process at www.avocado.org.au. Regularly check Growers Notices for updates and if you have received your copy of "The Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide" (by Simon Newett, Peter Rigden and Matthew Weinert) this provides a wealth of information to assist you in orchard management. In this edition of Talking Avocados we have also reproduced a useful fact sheet entitled "Managing avocado orchards affected by wet weather".

New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' Conference September 2013

The program for the New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' Conference is set to offer delegates excellent value and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the ASB Arena in Tauranga on 9-12 September 2013. The conference will offer a full quality program comprising three session streams dedicated to: marketing nutrition, orchard health and the value of a strong industry.

The Orchard Health stream will share the latest techniques and research on orchard management practices which seek to achieve a consistent supply of high quality fruit. Topics include tree nutrition, new cultivars, canopy management, irregular bearing, high density plantings, pollination, plant growth regulators, and pest and disease management.

The Strong Industry stream will provide delegates with an update on the current state of the avocado industry and discuss the issues important to the future of the industry. Topics include bio-security and market access, advances in post-harvest technology, quality systems and assurance, export ventures and systems, orchard finances and industry-led innovations.

The Marketing Nutrition stream will feature speakers presenting on topics that reinforce the amazing health properties of the avocado and look at ways to leverage these in the marketplace. The Australian and New Zealand promotion programs will be covered as well as consumer trends and case studies of other industries who are using nutrition to effectively market products.

The conference website is now live to view the program & register to attend go to www.avocadoconference.co.nz. See also the back cover of this magazine.

Avocados Australia is coordinating a study tour project to seek financial assistance for Australian delegates. If you are planning to attend the conference and would be interested in being part of this initiative please email co@advocado.org.au.

Avocados Australia engages a new Communications Manager

Avocados Australia has engaged the services of a Communications Manager after considering 48 applications for the position.

Anna Petrou, who was temporarily working in place of Courtney Vane, has been offered and accepted the permanent position of Communications Manager. Anna has extensive stakeholder, strategic marketing and communications experience.

While with the CSIRO she worked alongside researchers and industry stakeholders involved with the sugarcane and beef cattle industries. We are delighted to welcome Anna Petrou to the team and look forward to working with her to further improve our communication and stakeholder engagement processes. You can contact Anna by email co@avocado.org.au or call 07 3846 6566.



Announcing the Winner of Avocados' Online Communications Survey \$500 Travel Voucher

Avocados Australia is pleased to announce that Janelle Lendrum from Stuarts Point in NSW is the winner of the \$500 free travel voucher from FlightCentre. Janelle's name was drawn from 125 respondents that took part in Avocados Australia's Online Communications Survey. Fifty Avocados Australia caps have now been mailed out to the first fifty people who responded to the survey.

The outcomes from the overall Communications Review, which also included 51 in-depth telephone interviews, will be disseminated to Avocados Australia's stakeholders via our fortnightly e-newsletter 'Guacamole' and our quarterly magazine "Talking Avocados". Once we have considered the recommendations from the review we will incorporate the findings into our future communication planning. Your feedback helps drive a constant cycle of improvement in

Industry Matters continued

the way we undertake industry communications activity so thank you to everyone who took part and shared their views.

Disaster Assistance – Growers can still apply for relief

Avocados Australia would like to remind growers that they should make a claim for disaster assistance if they were impacted as a result of severe weather, rainfall and associated flooding from ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald. Growers can apply for funding as part of Natural Disaster Relief & Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) - a joint Commonwealth/State program – that provides Disaster Assistance.

Special Disaster Assistance (Grants):

Primary producers, small businesses and non-profit organisations may be eligible for grants up to \$25,000 for recovery efforts to pay for clean up and restoration costs arising out of direct damage.

Natural Disaster Assistance:

Natural Disaster Assistance is available in selected Local

Government Areas to affected primary producers and small businesses in the form of concessional loans of up to \$250,000 to assist recovery efforts.

For more information, or to apply for assistance, visit to the Australian Government Disaster Assist website at www.disasterassist.gov.au. Growers can also visit the Industry section of the Avocado Australia website under “Growers Notices” to see a list of the range of disaster assistance available.

National Soil RD&E Strategy Online Survey

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry recently announced that a national research, development and extension (RD&E) strategy is being explored with a focus on improving soil management. The Primary Industries Standing Committee endorsed the development of a national, cross-sector soil Research, Development and Extension strategy under the National Primary Industries RD&E framework on 23 March 2012. The strategy is to be developed by a partnership of the Australian, state and territory governments; the CSIRO; rural research and development corporations; industry; and the tertiary education and consultancy sectors.

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The intention of the Soil RD&E strategy is to build a framework so they may collaborate across industry sectors and research and extension organisations, and aims to improve the return from national soil RD&E investment by setting agreed priorities, avoiding duplication of effort, and expanding the sharing of knowledge and expertise between industries, regions and organisations. The long-term goal of the initiative is to ensure that Australians have access to the knowledge and skills required to sustainably and profitably manage their soil assets for the benefit of current and future generations.

To better inform their strategy the partnership is investigating ideas, opportunities and challenges associated with improving soil RD&E in Australia, and invite growers to complete an online survey. The views and opinions of researchers, industry, farmers and other providers and users of soil RD&E are taken into account. To find out more or to take part in the online survey go to the following website: <http://daff.gov.au>

Avocado Best Practice and Training Site Key Tool for Industry

The avocado industry now has access to an exciting new website housing all information relating to best recommended practices for each sector of the supply chain. Online training modules are also available for staff members to work through and employers can monitor their staff member's progress through the training.

The Australian Avocado Best Practice Resource (AABPR) is available from the www.avocado.org.au website. Simply click on the tab at the top of the page. If you have not already Registered just type your email address in, click "Apply for Access" and follow the prompts.



Figure 1: BPR log in page.

Content is separated into the different supply chain sector. Content is currently available for growers, packhouses, wholesalers, transporters, ripeners and retailers and these topics as you can see in the below image are listed across the screen. The packhouse section for example includes information on fruit grading, handling, storage and maturity. Materials and further reading relating to each section are displayed on the right hand side of the screen for you to download. The most recent articles uploaded onto the site also appear on the right hand side of the screen for easy reference. If you are looking for more specific information a search bar is available on the right hand side of the screen as shown below. Simply type in a key word and search results will appear.



Figure 2: Business owner/manager homepage.

This system is live and updates will be constantly made and new content uploaded. The Growing section in particular will 'grow' over the next 12 months as will Export. Simon Newett Principal Extension Horticulturist, Peter Rigden Extension Officer and Debby Maxfield Project Support Officer at Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) have been busy generated and uploading content to the Growing section in the last few months.

Within the Growing section there is a wealth of useful information including:

- Crop Calendars by growing region detailing suggestions of when to undertake monitoring and tests and when apply treatments (see below example).
- Mulching recommendations
- Information about Anthracnose and Phytophthora Root Rot

Industry Matters continued

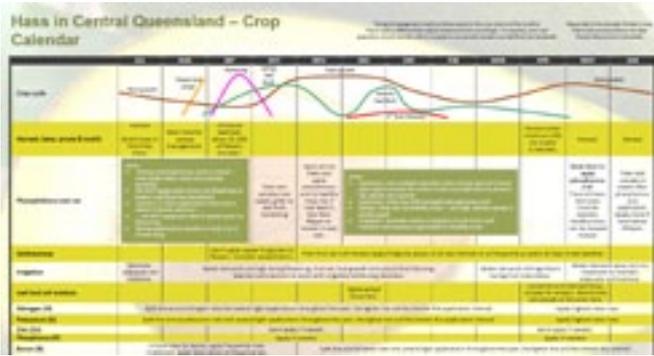


Figure 3: Central Queensland Hass Crop Calendar

Should anyone have questions about how to use the site or have other feedback they would like to provide to Avocados Australia, you will be able to do so through the site or by contacting the Avocados Australia office.

This site is designed to evolve and change over time with new content to be added on an ongoing basis. Over time, based off user feedback alterations may be able to be made to system as needed so your feedback is very important.

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

Dry Matters Causing a Stir

Dry matter results during the last couple of months have certainly got people talking. Below is a brief summary of the North Queensland Shepard results in February and March.

Test Date	Percentage of Immature Shepard	Lowest Reading	Highest Reading	Average Reading
13 Feb	70%	13.55%	27.12%	19.64%
27 Feb	48%	16.50%	27.10%	21.31%
13 Mar	33%	14.69%	28.60%	22.45%

A number of industry members have contacted Avocados Australia following the publication of these results, concerned and frustrated with these readings. The Dry Matter benchmark for Shepard is 21%. This recommendation is based on consumer research which showed that immature fruit was a big disappointment to consumers and affects repeat purchases.

While the Dry Matter results in the last couple of months are extremely frustrating, unfortunately ongoing testing has shown that most growing regions are guilty of supplying immature fruit at the beginning of their seasons.

Several growers have also contacted Avocados Australia to question the accuracy of the Dry matter results as they had commissioned their own Dry Matter tests prior to harvesting. Their testing indicated that the fruit was in some cases mature or almost mature. Depending on the circumstances they then waited two to three weeks before harvesting.

Matthew Weinert, Senior Extension Horticulturist at the Mareeba Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) office oversees the Dry Matter testing at that lab. He indicated that this season it has been very difficult to identify and pick mature fruit in the field. This is in part due to the staggered Shepard flowering, where in some cases there has been a three to four week gap between flowering.

“This means that fruit maturity can vary significantly even on the one tree as some fruit may be four weeks older than others” stated Matthew. “The younger fruit has also in some cases sized up very quickly and is approximately the same size as the older fruit making even more unreliable than usual to use size as a guide. It makes things very difficult for the picker.”

While naming and shaming can be counterproductive, every packhouse who has fruit sampled is notified of their

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individual results. Where possible the grower identification number noted on the tray is recorded and sent to the packhouse for further traceability.

Unfortunately at the moment there is no Government legislation that can be used to control maturity levels as it's a free market. This is an issue the whole supply chain needs to deal with and take some responsibility for, not just the growers. Avocados Australia is planning to expand education in the supply chain to improve everyone's appreciation of the market consequences.

Last year Avocados Australia investigated the possibility of implementing a supply chain accreditation scheme which was designed to target this issue amongst others. At this point in time there is insufficient industry interest to move forward with accreditation so we will continue to focus on education across the supply chain.

Of course we should also remember that in some instances picking immature fruit is an honest mistake and many growers are trying to do the right thing by commissioning their own Dry Matter tests to help determine when they should begin harvesting.

Below is some background on how fruit are chosen

and tested as a part of the Avocados Australia maturity monitoring program.

How are fruit chosen?

- Fruit are purchased at random each month from the Sydney Wholesale Markets by an independent contractor
- Only Australian fruit are purchased
- Only Hass and Shepard varieties are purchased
- Fruit is sampled from a variety of wholesalers, growing regions and growers to ensure a good mix of product
- Fruit must be hard as softening fruit is more difficult and costly to test

Fruit is sent via overnight courier to the Maroochy Research Station for testing. At the lab the following steps are taken:

- Numbers on fruit are checked to make sure none have been missed
- All fruit is weighed
- Containers are weighed and labelled for samples. The container weight is recorded.

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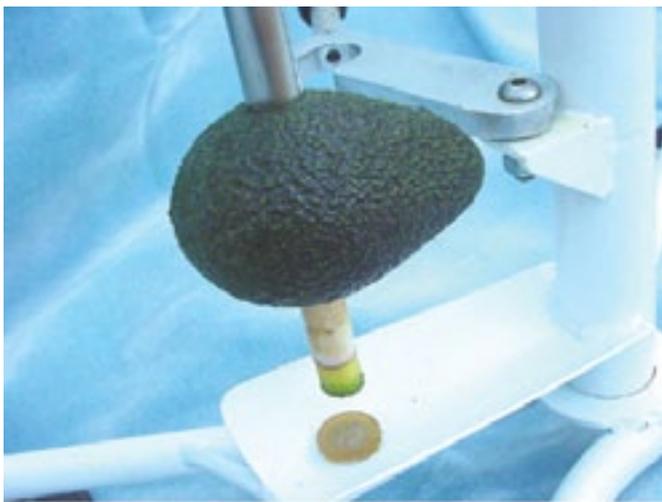
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Industry Matters continued

- Plugs are taken from the widest, central part of the avocado using the Hofshi plugging machine.



The Hofshi Corer



The Hofshi Corer machine in action.



A core sample of fruit taken by the Hofshi machine

- Both ends of the plug are removed as is the seed. The flesh is diced and placed into the labelled container corresponding to the fruit number.
- The container is weighed with the fresh sample and the weight is recorded. It is then placed in the food dehydrator.
- The dehydrator is set at 65°C and allowed to run for at least 48 hours.
- After this time several samples are weighed and the results recorded.
- Several hours later the samples are reweighed to double check they are at constant weight and not still losing moisture weight.
- If at a constant weight, the samples are removed from the dehydrator and immediately weighed.
- Dry Matter is calculated as follows:

$$\% \text{ DM} = ((\text{DW} + \text{CW}) - \text{CW}) / ((\text{FW} + \text{CW}) - \text{CW}) \times 100$$

DM = dry matter

CW = container weight

DW = dry weight

FW = fresh weight

The above photos were taken from Woolf A, Clark C, Terander E, Phetsomphou V, Hofshi R, Arpaia ML, Boreham D, Wong M, White A (2003) Measuring avocado maturity; ongoing developments. *Orchardist* 76, 40-45.

Should you have any questions or concerns please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566 or email supplychain@avocado.org.au

Infocado Update

As everyone would be aware there have been extreme weather events directly affecting some major avocado growing regions over the Australia Day long weekend. By now all packers and growers will have had a chance to assess the damage to their orchards and have an idea about the longer term effects of things such as water logging. The seasonal forecasts packers are submitting now will take these issues into consideration.

Originally we had intended to release another 'quarterly' report in February to try to account for fruit loss from January and provide a more accurate forecast for the 2013 season. Unfortunately a number of packhouses indicated that they would not have an accurate forecast in time for a February report so it was delayed.

All growers starting their 2013 season are reminded to begin entering their four weekly forecast as they get closer to harvest.

Please note that when entering your dispatch data if you are supplying another packhouse with fruit and that packhouse also contributes to Infocado then to avoid your data being counted twice in the system please include those volumes in the consolidators row of your dispatch form. For a list of weekly report contributors please see page four of the report or contact the Avocado Australia office for clarification.

Should you have any questions or concerns about Infocado please contact Julie Petty on supplychain@avocado.org.au or 07 3846 6566.

OrchardInfo

Growers in the Central New South Wales, Tristate and Western Australian growing regions will be receiving follow up calls and emails about their OrchardInfo data in the coming weeks. As growers know, the OrchardInfo forms are used to collect orchard information including tree numbers, tree age, varieties, rootstocks and overall production.

Like Infocado, the information collected is designed to be aggregated and distributed to contributors on a season by season basis. It is designed to assist individuals and the industry a clear understanding of how many trees of different ages are in the ground and therefore provide the information necessary to generate long term forecasts for the industry. Due to a range of issues including low grower participation, Avocados Australia has been unable to aggregate and publish the data collected. Without more growers contributing the data is currently too misleading. Because of this we strongly encourage you to fill out the forms to the best of your ability and return them to us as the more people who participate, the more accurate the reporting will be.

In the coming months changes and improvements will be made to the OrchardInfo system to make it easier and simpler for growers to submit their data. Only tree numbers, number of hectares, variety and age of trees will be collected. More detailed productivity information will be gathered with the help of a sub sample of growers for each growing region doing an annual productivity check. These changes will be rolled out from March onwards and will apply to the 11/12 season's data collection.

For more information please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566.

Retail Prices Report

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

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

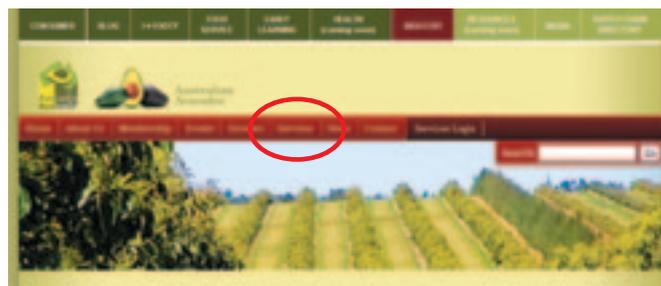


Figure 1: Screen shot of Avocados Australia website

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

Who do you know is a good crop forecaster?

Forecasting crop volumes is difficult, particularly for the longer term. Most growers and packers would agree with this statement. It's an issue which can cause long lasting effects in the market place and can cost people a lot of money.

Avocados Australia has started a project aimed at assisting growers to improve their forecasting practices. There are obvious advantages to the grower in being able to do this in terms of planning and cash flow management but there are also advantages to packhouses and the whole industry in the improved accuracy of seasonal forecasting.

Avocados Australia will be completing a number of case studies for each growing region to outline the most effective forecasting methods for that area. This information teamed with researched forecasting methods

Industry Matters continued

used in other countries will then be used to set up a number of validation trials in the future.

Packhouses who pack for a number of growers in their area are well placed to identify people who consistently and accurately forecast. If you know of someone who fits into this category please contact Julie Petty at Avocados Australia. Once these people are identified Avocados Australia will be contacting them to find out if they would be willing to share their methods and participate in the development of case studies.

Avocados Australia will not be asking for any specific production information from either the packhouse or the grower involved. For more information or to nominate a grower please contact Julie Petty on supplychain@avocado.org.au or 07 3846 6566.

The Rise of Mexican Fast Food Chains – Food that loves avocado

In the March edition of Restaurant & Catering magazine a spotlight was placed on the emergence of Mexican food chains and Mexican cuisine in Australia. According to the Sydney Morning Herald Mexican cuisine is “the new

black”. Around the same time this article was published the Weber Shandwick annual food trend report “Food Forward 2013” stated that “Mexican foods and flavours will continue to boom” and they believe will become a culinary fixture to Aussie kitchens. With Taco Bill winning the 2010 I Love FOOD Awards popular vote, and franchises like Zambrero Fresh Mex Grill and Guzman y Gomez growing in outlet numbers and popularity, it is clear proof that now is the perfect opportunity in which to highlight Australia’s fresh avocado produce as the perfect compliment to Mexican cuisine. After all, where would fajitas and burritos be without lashings of guacamole?

This edition of Talking Avocados includes an update on the Avocados Marketing Activity and shows what messages are being communicated in the marketplace to consumers. Take a look at how the avocado message is getting through to Australian families. To source a copy of the Restaurant & Catering magazine article (entitled “Mexican Wave”) contact Restaurant and Catering Australia by email restncat@restaurantcater.asn.au or phone 1300 722 878.

After all where would fajitas and burritos be without generous servings of guacamole?

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Avocado Industry IAC – The Changes that took place and why

By John Tyas, CEO

Recently Avocados Australia engaged with growers from each and every growing region to discuss the issues and interests of importance to them and a common topic raised by many growers related to the recent changes that were instituted resulting in the re-structure of Horticulture Australia Limited's Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). This article aims to clarify why the changes took place and outlines the process that Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) implemented in order to bring the changes about.

The IAC's role & expectations

The Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is a committee of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). The key role of the IAC is to provide advice to HAL in relation to investment of industry and government funds for R&D and marketing, activities managed by HAL. The re-structure of the IAC took place as a result of a request from HAL to address what they regarded as a conflict of interest arising from the fact that Avocados Australia Limited (AAL), whose directors made up the majority of the IAC, also receives some HAL funding for specific projects delivered by AAL.

IAC's are established under HAL's constitution for each industry sector with a statutory levy with annual income exceeding \$150,000 per annum. IAC's are the mechanism by which industry provides direct advisory input into the programs managed by HAL and are extremely important in capturing the expertise required to shape industry investment in line with the industry's strategic investment plan (SIP).

The IAC philosophy is to focus on outcomes from the investment of avocado levies and Australian Government matching funds in response to industry's needs.

As set out in HAL's constitution, the IACs' responsibility is to:

- a) Advise HAL on the R&D and Marketing program investments as they pertain to the avocado industry,
- b) Oversee, subject to HAL's direction, marketing and R&D program design and development for the avocado industry,
- c) Ensure that a Strategic Investment Plan and an Annual Investment Plan are prepared for the avocado industry for submission to HAL for acceptance and implementation, that is subject to HAL's annual and long term strategic planning

- d) Prepare an Annual Report for the avocado industry for submission to HAL.

In fulfilling these responsibilities it is expected that the IAC:

- Take a broad industry perspective, not that of particular industry groups
- Meet the needs of the industry, taking into account any differences
- Develop plans that address the industry priorities
- Work in collaboration with AAL and HAL

HAL's request for change & AAL's response

Late last year HAL sent a directive in writing to AAL to remedy what it saw as a conflict with the IAC in relation to the proportion of AAL directors on the IAC. AAL was advised that the IAC structure needed to change to ensure that the ratio of peak industry body directors on the avocado IAC was less than 50%. This requirement is not isolated to the avocado IAC and all industries will need to meet this new requirement. HAL advised that the change needed to be in place by 28 February such that the Avocado Annual Investment Plan for 2013-14 would be recommended by the new IAC.

AAL considered various options for a revised advisory mechanism that would be efficient, effective, and address the concerns identified by HAL. AAL was concerned to ensure the structure would satisfy the AAL Board's commitment to maximising the R&D and marketing funds allocated to projects rather than to administration. Following exchanges of views between HAL and AAL, a final IAC structure recommendation was submitted to HAL.

AAL's recommended structure would comprise two tiers (IAC and Project Reference Groups/Expert Panels).

AAL recommended that the Avocado IAC consist of:

- 4 Independent IAC members selected through an Expression of Interest process
- 1 HAL appointed member (for governance compliance)
- 1 Independent IAC Chair
- 5 AAL directors (recommended by AAL)

All IAC members would be full voting members.

AAL recommended that Project Reference Groups or Expert Panels would provide additional input of expertise to the IAC process and that this additional layer of expertise should be appointed on an as-needs basis. These groups would provide critical advice to the IAC at a more detailed level. The formation of these groups would be initiated by the IAC and formed as temporary advisory structures to provide specific advice sought by the IAC from time to time.

Industry Matters continued

AAL believes the main benefits of this structure are:

1. All IAC members are fully aware of all aspects of the investment at a strategic level and understand the linkages between R&D and marketing activities aimed at achieving industry outcomes

The industry strategic plan identifies specific issues and outcomes that need to be achieved. Some of these may be achieved through R&D funding, some of these may be achieved through marketing funding, and some will require a coordinated investment across both marketing and R&D. A single, cohesive group with appropriate industry knowledge and skills is well placed to oversee the total investment at a high level.

2. A wide range of expertise can be engaged to assist with planning or reviewing specific R&D and marketing projects at appropriate times

The IAC is not expected to be the font of all knowledge, but it needs to have the ability to think strategically, ask the right questions and make good decisions that will address industry priorities. It can only undertake its role effectively with input from others who have specific expertise.

It is not possible to encompass all areas of R&D and marketing in one, or even two, committees. However, it is possible to engage a wide range of expertise using a flexible mechanism whereby relevant experts can be called upon to assist with decisions around specific topics at a particular point in time. Relevant experts can be brought together on an as-needs basis to provide additional input to the IAC decision making process whether it be planning new investments or reviewing past investments.

3. The proposed structure is efficient and cost effective as it doesn't require regular travel and accommodation for numerous members. Groups with relevant expertise can be brought together as and when is required. Also, experts would only be engaged in relation to subject matter in which they have an interest. For example, a plant pathologist would have much to offer in relation to planning disease management research, but little to contribute in relation to planning promotion activity, and vice versa. Even within the sphere of R&D, an entomologist would be very useful when planning pest management investments, but may have little to offer in relation to planning projects dealing with plant nutrition.

The Process of Re-structure

AAL and HAL agreed that an Independent Selection Panel (ISP) consider all applications for the independent positions (i.e. independent from the AAL Board) received through the joint AAL-HAL expression of interest process. The Avocado IAC ISP consisted of:

- Independent Chair of the Avocado IAC – Mr Bob Granger
- A representative of the HAL Board – Mr Darral Ashton
- A representative of HAL Operational staff – Ms Astrid Hughes
- Members of the Prescribed Industry Body (AAL) – Mr Jim Kochi (Chairman) and Mr John Tyas (CEO)

HAL arranged and managed the rigorous selection process which included:

- Advertising of the positions available and the core competencies required of the IAC in regional newspapers, the HAL website and the AAL website
- Assessment of the written applications by an independent recruitment agency
- Telephone interviews by the recruiting agency with each of the applicants
- Assessment of each of the applications by the ISP against agreed criteria

The advertised core competencies that were sought for the IAC were:

- Understand key strategic avocado industry development objectives
- Knowledge of all sectors of the avocado supply chain
- Understanding of regional avocado production issues
- Expertise in marketing strategy
- Commercial knowledge of domestic avocado marketing
- Commercial knowledge of export avocado marketing
- Practical research knowledge and experience
- Practical extension knowledge and experience
- Broad understanding of the Australian horticulture research capacity and capability

The ISP met face to face to consider all applications and provided a recommendation to HAL and AAL for the four positions. This recommendation was endorsed by the AAL Board.

In order to decide which AAL directors would be nominated for the remaining positions on the IAC, the AAL Board

agreed to undertake a voting process. The Board agreed that the AAL Chair should be an automatic nomination to the IAC and the voting process was undertaken to decide on the other four members.

The final recommendation to HAL for the new Avocado IAC members put forward by AAL were:

From the independent selection panel process:

- Mr Wayne Franceschi (grower, WA)
- Mr Anthony Walsh (supply chain/export, Qld/national)
- Mr Neil Delroy (grower, WA)
- Mr Jack Archer (grower, NSW)

Nominations from the AAL Board:

- Mr Jim Kochi (grower, North Qld, AAL Chairman)
- Mr Lachlan Donovan (grower, Central Qld, AAL Director)
- Mr John Walsh (grower, Central Qld, AAL Director)
- Mr Daryl Boardman (grower, Southern Qld, AAL Director)
- Mr Barry Avery (grower, Tristate, AAL Director)

HAL appointed Officer:

- Ms Christine Hawkins (consultant, Sydney)

Independent Chairman:

- Mr Bob Granger (consultant, Sydney)

The HAL Board considered this recommendation and formally appointed the IAC at the end of January 2013.

Mr Jack Archer, one of the four independent members selected for the IAC, found the recruitment process to be very thorough and is pleased that he has been selected to take up the position with the Avocado IAC.

“It is a privilege to be a part of the committee and I look forward to working with the other members to support a strong future for our industry,” said Mr Archer.

In approving the new membership of the Avocado IAC, HAL noted that certain aspects of technical expertise in both marketing and R&D may need to be drawn upon to further support and underpin the investment decision process. It was requested that the exercise of identifying any technical support expertise that is required be one of the first tasks that the new Avocado IAC undertake at its first meeting.

The current situation

Now that the new IAC structure has been put in place the new members held their first meeting over two days in February of this year. The meeting was both productive and positive with the new IAC agreeing on the Annual Investment Plan for 2013-14 and endorsing a new three

year marketing plan.

Barry Avery, Avocados Australia Director for the Tristate growing region and continuing IAC member, commented that he was “very impressed” with how the meeting was run.

“When it comes to marketing and R&D, Tristate growers and the rest of industry can look to the future with confidence,” he said.

Recent changes

One of the IAC members selected through the ISP process, Mr Neil Delroy, was unable to attend the first meeting of the IAC in February and since advised that he did not wish to take up the IAC position.

The ISP reconvened in March to consider a replacement, and recommended Mr Simon Newett (Extension Horticulturist, DAFFQ) to fulfil this position. The AAL Board endorsed the recommendation which has now been approved by HAL.

Next Steps

As recommended by the IAC, HAL has commissioned a short study to provide recommendations on how best the new IAC can access and utilise R&D and Marketing technical skills to assist it in undertaking its role. This is expected to be completed within a few months and the recommendations will be provided to the IAC for consideration.

The new IAC is expected to meet again in July to start developing R&D priorities for 2014/15. An R&D forum is also being planned to coincide with this meeting which hopes to engage a wider group of experts to assist with reviewing and planning R&D aimed at improving productivity and on-farm fruit quality.

HAL is also currently developing Terms Of Reference for the new IAC which will address issues such as terms of appointment for IAC members and procedures for renewing IAC membership over time, in order to engage new IAC members but at the same time maintaining an appropriate level of continuity.



How to pick avocados

What do I need to know when picking avocados? That question was front of mind during a recent film shoot in Childers. A video is being developed by Avocados Australia Ltd in conjunction with Applied Horticulture Research (AHR) to target avocado pickers and is being designed to be used in staff inductions. It focuses on the key things pickers need to be aware of when harvesting fruit.

The main messages were to ensure fruit is handled gently to prevent damage and to listen to instructions and ask for more information if you need it. The Avocado Harvesting: Pickers poster was the inspiration for the video.

Jim and Lois Carney generously allowed the film crew to shoot on their orchard just outside of Childers. They also volunteered their Orchard Manager John Delisser and picker Nathan Livingstone to be the film's stars.

"It was very interesting watching the filming process" stated Mr Carney. "I think this video will be extremely helpful for inexperienced pickers. It will be very handy for us as well as it will be available on YouTube and we will be able to forward the link to our contacts across the country and overseas for them to watch before coming to our orchard. It will give them an idea of what to expect and what they will be doing on our farm".



Picker Nathan Livingstone showing the correct method for snip picking Shepard fruit.

The finished video will be available on YouTube before the end of May 2013. This project also funded the development of "The Case of the Bruised Avocado" film which was published in December 2012. Through this project one more video is scheduled to be made and it will also be available by the end of May.

The Avocado Harvesting: Pickers poster was developed through a now finished project funded through Horticulture Australia Ltd and grower levies. This project was funded by levy funds from the Australian avocado industry and by Horticulture Australia Limited.



Picker Nathan Livingstone, Orchard Manager John Delisser and owner Jim Carney having a quick break between filming.



The Worlds Most Compact Telehandler

Ausa have just released the first in Australia of their latest Telehandler the T144H.

This is the world's most compact Telehandler, it is Narrower than a Skid Steer loader, and comes with a variety of options such as Buckets , Bale Handlers, and 4:1 Attachments to name a few.

Powered by the latest Tier 2 rated Kubota Diesel engines , and with the added combination of Ausa Hydrostatic drive systems, this new machine is in a world of its own and is a must to see and drive.

With our Specialty finance services available through HHH Machinery, we now have the Flexibility for the customer to Tailor finance to suit the needs of their Seasons, hence you pay as you earn, and are not stuck with finance payments when the Seasons harvest is finished.

For more information on the Ausa range contact Andy Hunter on 0408 767352 or 1300 455525 for a free demonstration of our new Telehandler

Latest in Forklifts

HHH Machinery is the distributor for the Ausa range of Rough Terrain Forklifts and Telehandlers for the Northern region of Australia.



We Have just released the latest in Forklift Technolgy for the Grower who needs to move a lot of product in a short period of time.

Andy Hunter of HHH Machinery says, this latest design from Ausa allows the customer to handle a variety of loads with the touch of a button.

Some of the larger Forklifts are Fitted with the twin pallet handling attachment, the forklift is able to handle single pallets up to 3 high, and then switch to a twin pallet handler and have the flexibility to move up to 6 bins of produce in a single operation. The majority of Rough terrain and four wheel drive forklifts on the market have the turning ability of a double decker bus, which makes them very difficult to operate when they are in confined spaces, with the New Ausa Forklifts, they have a Patented Full Grip system, which once again at the touch of a button changes from normal 2 wheel drive, and engages 4 wheel drive when it is required.

Along with the Heavy duty Kubota diesel motors, Ausa use the latest in Hydrostatic transmissions from Rexroth, and ZF Drive trains to the wheels, servicing is as simple as it can get, we have no brakes to worry about, and regular scheduled service intervals are maintained with our new Ausa Care maintenance program.

When you need a Forklift that will devour the rough terrain, Ausa is the only answer, try before you buy we have demonstration units available in both Darwin and North Queensland.



For further information or to arrange a demonstration, contact Andy Hunter on 0408 767 352 or 1300 455 525

Managing groundcover in avocados & macadamias



Orchard pre-trial

By Growcom's Burnett Mary Field Officer Robert Doyle

Addressing ground cover along the tree line is a project Anton and Jennie Fick from Gympie have just completed. The Ficks farm macadamias and avocados in the Mary Valley.

Until recently they managed the avocado canopy floor by slashing the inter-row mulch and directing it along the tree line.

“Even with mulching from the slasher the tree line would only have about 60 per cent of its ground covered,” said Anton.

To keep the weeds controlled in both macadamia and avocados an application of either Roundup or Basta would be made four to five times per year. The farm also has about 40 ha of grassland of its own, a good source of mulch for the orchard.

The Ficks submitted two applications for funding through the Reef Rescue program. One project was to purchase



Swivel mower

equipment to harvest mulch from their farm and distribute it along the tree line. The second application was to purchase a machine that would allow them to mow their tree line rather than having to use herbicide on it.

They researched what machinery was available via the internet, through machinery dealers, in newspapers and magazines. In the end they purchased four items including a second hand forage harvester, a forage wagon and a side throwing mower with a ‘swinging’ mower attachment on one side.

Although the forage harvester and forage wagon were structurally sound, they did require some maintenance to prepare them for their impending workload.

Anton also modified the side-shoot conveyor on the cart to make it suitable for delivering mulch to the avocado tree line.

The ‘swinging’ mower attachment takes a 700 mm cut and is designed to swing in and out along the tree line as it comes up against obstacles such as trees.



Side throw slasher



Forage harvester and cart unit



Orchard after trial

This machine is intended for use in the macadamia blocks. The unit will simply cut weeds growing along the tree line, eliminating the need for using herbicides.

By improving ground cover along the canopy floor both projects will achieve many outcomes. Among these are the retention of precious top soil and reduced weed pressure leading to less herbicide use. The extra mulch will increase moisture retention and therefore improve water use efficiency. The additional organic matter will stimulate soil biological activity and in the long term will help to reduce the use of artificial fertilizers.

“We had been thinking about doing these projects for some time,” said Anton, but the capital costs involved meant they were on the back burner. However when we

heard about the funding available through the Reef Rescue program we decided to take advantage and get them done now.

“It took a bit more effort than I thought to get all the machines working well, but we are glad that we have done it.”

The Reef Rescue Grant has been extended for another five years. AAL welcomes this news as it will mean a commitment of a further \$200 million to continue the Reef Rescue program. Since it began in 2008, the program has proved successful at reducing soil and chemical runoff into the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. To find out if you are eligible and for further details go online to: www.grants.gov.com.au or freecall 1800 733 437.



Grower Profile - Anton & Jennie Fick

from Latara Farms

Anton Fick was a furniture manufacturer in South Africa before he established an avocado orchard at Marys Creek in the Sunshine Coast Queensland. He and his wife Jennie established Latara Farms. They work as a team growing avocados and macadamias and now Anton's love of trees and working the land is a dream come true.

Anton bought the farm nine years ago with 450 trees. They later bulldozed the original trees as they were on a steep hill and they were difficult to tend. They then planted another 3000 trees in a different location. The last three wet years have taken their toll and Anton and Jennie have lost around 1000 trees due to the severe weather conditions. At Latara Farms nearly 6 hectares out of their 80 hectares is dedicated to avocado farming and they now have around 2000 Hass avocado trees. Anton believes that farmers need to proactively manage tree health if they are to adequately respond to the increasing wet conditions.

"We have been impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald and lost a lot of trees due to drowning. We had a lot of run-off but believe a great amount of soil was saved due to our mulching program," said Anton.

Both Anton and Jennie are keen to minimise the amount of chemicals in use in their farming and when they heard about the Government's Reef Rescue program funding they took advantage of the opportunity to gain efficiencies and savings in the way they run their orchard.

They found out about the Reef Rescue program through a fellow macadamia farmer who told them how during the previous year by using the grant he was able to implement approaches that in turn helped him to reduce his herbicide usage. Anton and Jennie have now put their Reef Rescue grant to good use (see adjacent article "Managing Groundcover in Avocados") and have a groundcover management program in place.

Now that they manage their groundcover along the avocado tree line using mulching (rather than previous methods) Anton and Jennie estimate they will save around \$1000 per year by not using artificial fertilisers and herbicides. However their main motivation in using biological methods and laying down mulch was for promoting tree health.

Anton and Jennie were attracted to the idea of becoming avocado growers because avocado fruit can stay on the tree for long periods. Anton says that this has many benefits to the farmer. Prior to growing avocados they grew mangos these needed to be harvested as soon as they were ripe.



Anton and Jennie Fick of Latara Farms say it's a team effort managing their avocado and macadamia orchards.

Anton believes that the most valuable lesson he has learnt about growing avocados is the importance of site selection, specifically in relation to soil type. In the Mary Valley the soil types are extremely varied from reds through to heavy blacks through to creek flats with alluvial soils.

Anton waits for favourable market conditions before deciding to harvest. He stays informed and in touch with his agents who in turn relate to him how the market is fairing.

Harvest time at Latara Farms takes three months and they use family members and university students as their pickers. They use a Queensland packhouse and sell their avocados to Fresh fruit markets around Australia.

The main pest of concern to Latara Farms at present is Fruit Spotting bug. Anton is keen to find out more about the R&D work looking into controlling fruit spotting bug when he receives the next issue of Talking Avocados.

Anton and Jennie proactively look for chemical free methods for managing their farm and use their copy of the "Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide" that was sent to them this year.

"We have received a copy of the guide and both of us find it an outstanding resource. Simon Newett, Peter Rigden and Matthew Weinert should be commended for their hard work in putting together this exceptional guide," said Mr Fick.

The biggest opportunity for the avocado industry according to Anton is the growing export market. On the other end of the spectrum an on-going challenge for industry is avoiding flooding of fresh fruit in the market by individual growers.



The Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide is already at work on the ground.

Both Anton and Jennie and their family love eating avocados as much as growing them and they eat them most nights in salads. A favourite family recipe that they would like to share with readers is 'Avocado stuffed with potato'...

Avocado Stuffed Potato.

- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 Avocado,
- 2 rashers of bacon, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic
- Grated cheese
- 1 teaspoon oil
- seasoning

Bake whole the unpeeled potato in 220c oven till soft .

Saute the onion, garlic and bacon till crisp. Remove avocado pulp and mash. Cut evenly the potato in half. Scoop out soft potato flesh, leaving the potato case intact. Mix the avocado with the potato flesh and season. Stir through the onion mix. Replace potato mix back into cases and top with grated cheese. Bake in oven till cheese in golden on top.



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* STANDARD 5.5KG TRAY WITH INSERT - LOCAL AREA



Grower Profile – Rob Price, The Price Farm

Rob Price was one of the participants who attended the Field Day held at Peter and Mary Annand’s Bellthorpe property recently. Avocados Australia took time out to ask Rob about his experiences in the avocado industry...

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

When we purchased the property it was with the objective of entering the horticulture industry as a producer, but we had no particular sway towards one crop or another. The decision to grow Avocados was promoted because the property had a grove of 80 Avocado trees that had been planted for about 20 years, were not irrigated or looked after in any way, in fact the cattle used to camp under the trees and kept the lower branches eaten back. However despite the lack of care they were very healthy. It was a fair assumption that Avocados would grow well on this farm.

How long have you been an avocado grower?

We have been developing the Avocado orchard for 10 years.

What did you do before you became an Avocado grower?

I was a sheep, wool and beef producer until 1982, when I then changed paths and became an Information and Technology professional up to 2002.



Rob Price, The Price Farm

How much of your land is dedicated to avocado farming?

10 hectares

How many avocado trees do you have?

We are currently growing 3300 trees including Hass, Sharwill and Pinkerton varieties.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learnt about growing avocados?

Never underestimate the ever present phytophthora fungus.

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

Value adding the product, whether that is oil, cosmetics or prepared food. Clearly there is still some R&D and serious promotion required to make it viable but it would give the grower some control over what they receive for their work. I don’t say it’s easy but there is an opportunity out there.

What do you think are the industry challenges?

Imports from South America and receiving a fair price for the goods to at least maintain parity income with the rest of the Australian community.

Have you used your Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide?

I have used my copy of the Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide. It’s very good.



Bee Centre central to food security

The role of bees has long been recognised as being extremely important within horticulture, with pollination central to growing a large range of food crops and flowering plants. Recent years have, however, seen a concerning decline in bee colonies in North America and Europe, due to a host of factors including disease and parasites, agricultural practices and climate and environmental factors.



A bee is attracted to a flower in the blooming strip.

One of the greatest threats to honeybees is the parasitic Varroa mite, whose impact on honeybee populations can be seen in significant international incidents spanning the past five decades.

Research has been conducted throughout the world on the Varroa mite and attempting to arrest the population decline of honeybees, but until recently, there has been little centralised, focused work. Enter the Bayer Bee Care Centre in Monheim, Germany. Established in 2012, the Centre employs a team of specialists and beekeepers, dedicated to heightening understanding and awareness of bee-responsible practices and developing solutions that improve bee health.

AUSVEG CEO, Richard Mulcahy, visited the Centre in late 2012 and said he was extremely impressed by the facilities.

“The Bayer Bee Care’ Centre is a modern example of an organisation leading the field in a vital area of research,” said Mr Mulcahy.

“Our own Industry is bracing itself for disruptions to local honeybee populations, so research such as is occurring at the Monheim Centre will be vital to future industry sustainability.”

The Centre aims to stimulate increased communication and interaction with stakeholders with the ultimate goal of improving bee health.

In December of 2012, it was announced that a second Bee Care Centre will be developed in the south-eastern American State of North Carolina.

Scheduled to be opened in July this year, the Centre forms part of Bayer’s broader Global Bee Care Program. It will house a full laboratory and research apiary, in addition to workshop space needed to conduct bee health research and to support a practical apiculture.

This article appears courtesy of Vegetables Australia magazine.



Blooming strips in front of the Bayer Bee Care Centre.

Engaging with Growers Face-to-face, online and offline

Bellthorpe Field Day at Sunshine Coast, QLD

There is no substitute for face-to-face engagement with members of the Australian avocado industry according to John Tyas CEO of Avocados Australia. John recently took part in a Field Day hosted by Mary and Peter Annand at their property at Bellthorpe on the Sunshine Coast.

There, inside a shed nestled alongside avocado orchards, he was joined by around 25 people to hear the latest developments in research projects looking at managing Fruit Spotting Bug, production improvement and product quality. The day was well received by growers in the region. It was a chance for growers to also hear from their local packhouses and to hear how the region is performing in the industry.

The field day was supported by local business owners, Mark and Jenny Broderick, from Glasshouse Tractors who put on a machinery display and provided complementary afternoon tea for growers. The field day provided Glasshouse Tractors with the opportunity to meet local business men and women while growers could see first-hand the latest machinery ideal for use in an orchard environment.

“It was great to be able to meet growers from our region and to show them the latest tools and equipment that’s out there and able to make growers’ lives easier,” said Mr Broderick.

More field days are in the pipeline. If you are holding a field day in your region let us know so we can help promote the event and report on its outcomes using Avocados Australia’s communications (via Talking Avocados, Guacamole E-newsletters and Grower Updates) just email the details a month in advance of the event to co@avocado.org.au. Growers interested in holding a field day on their property can register their interest by emailing co@avocado.org.au to assist with planning future field day events in your region. Businesses that would be interested in supporting a field day event in a growing region are also welcome to make contact.

Face-to-face Meetings

Jim Kochi Avocados Australia’s Chairman of the Board of Directors and John Tyas travelled to Comboyne in NSW recently for a face-to-face meeting with Central NSW



*Peter & Mary Annand,
hosts of the Bellthorpe Field Day.*



*A view of the sloping fields that are the
avocado orchard at Bellthorpe.*



*Jenny & Mark Broderick,
sponsors of the field day and locals.*

growers at the local War Memorial Hall. The face-to-face meeting was scheduled as an outcome of the recent Avocados Australia’s Central NSW Phone Hook-up (part of an initiative that we elaborate on further in this article).

The face-to-face meeting provided growers and Avocados Australia management with the opportunity to discuss in detail the changes that occurred with the Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), and to cover other issues of concern to growers. Avocados Australia is committed to responding to growers' needs and face-to-face meetings are just one of the ways Avocados Australia can ensure that its operations and activities remain transparent. Another way is to provide up-to-date information via email and links to online reporting for growers to access anytime, anywhere.

Part of the discussion that took place during the WA Grower Phone Hook-up was the idea of Avocados Australia organising a face-to-face workshop with Western Australian growers to explain the current Avocado R&D strategy and marketing plan that is currently under way and to workshop the possible R&D priorities for WA so that these can be fed back into the IAC. In this way growers would have a direct hand in what R&D takes place in the region to ensure it meets Western Australian growers' specific needs. To register your interest in attending the proposed face-to-face workshop please email co@avocado.org.au.

Online communication – visit Avocados Australia online

No doubt most avocado growers would rather spend their time in the field ensuring their trees are bearing quality

fruit and reaching the market at the right price but there are times when growers need to take time out to gauge the industry and fact find. Information searches online are of course one of the fastest ways to stay in the loop. Avocados Australia proactively ensures that avocado growers have access to the latest reports and information online. Growers are encouraged to visit the website regularly at www.avocado.org.au to view notices, news of R&D, marketing and other information.

Growers' Phone Hook-ups

Some of you may know that Avocados Australia has just completed a grower engagement initiative using Grower Phone Hook-ups. Targeting the hundreds of growers based across the nation, the phone hook-ups provided AAL directors, the CEO John Tyas, and growers with the opportunity to discuss the issues on the ground in each of the eight growing regions. The aim was to speak with as many growers as possible in a short time frame and the phone hook-ups provided the fastest and most convenient way to reach growers directly. Without the need to travel to a central location, growers could hear from and talk with Avocados Australia's management and have their say, ask questions and provide input on current issues. Phone hook-ups took place with growers from Central NSW, WA, the Sunshine Coast, Tri State (NSW, VIC and SA), Central QLD, Southern QLD, North QLD and Tamborine/Northern Rivers regions. Growers wanting to receive a summary of the Phone Hook-up discussion that happened for your region can email co@avocado.org.au or call 07 3846 6566.



Peter Annand talks to growers, researchers & other industry contacts at his farm, the location of the Bellthorpe Field Day.

Managing avocado orchards affected by wet weather

By Simon Newett

Please note that this article was written in January this year to assist growers. This useful article has been reproduced from a fact sheet available online. Avocados Australia directed growers to it earlier this year via a Growers Update and notice on our website. Autumn/early winter is the most appropriate time to apply phosphorous acid to avocado trees for *Phytophthora* root rot control in Australia. For further information consult your copy of the "Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide" and the Avocados Australia Ltd Best Practice Resource website, see Author's Note below.

Inundated fields

Avocado trees are sensitive to inundation, and if flooded for about 48 hours will die from lack of oxygen to the roots. Examples of this problem have already been reported and are not necessarily confined to flatter parts of the orchard.

When it is safe to do so, inspect the orchard as soon as possible and mark (e.g. with coloured pegs) the areas that are affected by poor drainage. If possible, immediately take steps to improve the drainage of these areas so that the water can get away, e.g. dig drains to let water get away quicker.

In the longer term decide whether you can significantly improve drainage for the affected trees (e.g. mounding, improved surface drainage, installation of subsurface drainage). If not then remove avocado trees from the area and use it for some other purpose. Building better mounds for future tree rows may help in marginal areas as long as they are orientated to allow the water to get away and not dam it up.

Phytophthora root rot

Avocados are very susceptible to *Phytophthora* root rot which thrives in saturated, cool soils. After several days of cool, cloudy weather the ability of avocado trees to resist the disease is even lower because they haven't been able to photosynthesize adequately to build up reserves of carbohydrate to fight against the disease and grow new feeder roots.

Phosphorous acid application

Application of phosphorous acid in January is not recommended. The timing of phosphorous acid applications must coincide with when root growth is taking place (phosphorous acid will go to the parts of the tree that are growing at the time of application).

Applications applied in January for example will result in most of the chemical ending up in the new summer leaf flush and not in the roots where you want it. The next effective window of opportunity for phosphorous acid applications is once the summer leaf flush has fully

expanded and hardened (from about March onwards depending on your area).

Recent research and observations have indicated that the end of autumn/start of winter is the best time to apply phosphorous acid because this is when root growth is strongest. Phosphorous acid can be applied by injection or foliar spray but only use the foliar method if the trees have a full and healthy canopy of leaves (this is needed to permit sufficient uptake of the chemical).

In other cases use the trunk injection method, the only exception being if the trees are too young to inject in which case use enough foliar spray volume to thoroughly wet the bark as well as the leaf canopy.

Metalaxyl (eg. Ridomil®) application

Metalaxyl directly kills *Phytophthora* in the soil once its spores start germinating and invading roots. The timing of applications isn't as critical as it is for phosphorous acid so it can be applied under the tree canopy now, however, growers should be aware that metalaxyl is easily leached beyond the root zone by heavy rain.

This chemical is expensive so do your sums on the cost/benefit before committing yourself. Consider treating the worst affected areas. Also bear in mind that each subsequent application is less effective as micro-organisms that degrade it build up in the soil.

Anthraco-nose on the fruit

After a lengthy period of rainy weather sprays against anthracnose disease are likely to be behind schedule.

Amistar® has some reach-back effect and can be applied 3 times per season (the restriction in the number of



applications is part of the anti-resistance protocol) so it would be a good strategy to get a spray of this fungicide on as soon as you are able to.

Leached nutrients

Three of the important nutrients for avocados are prone to leaching from the soil and as a result of the high rainfall are likely to be low, these are:

- Nitrogen
- Potassium
- boron

Growers need to adjust their fertiliser applications to make up for expected shortfalls, typically rates are raised by up to 20% above normal but be very careful with boron (especially on light sandy soils) not to overdo the rates since this element can easily reach toxic levels. With the likelihood of continued heavy rain, fertiliser rates are best split into frequent applications of small amounts, this means that the amount that can potentially be lost with each rainfall event will be lower and the levels will be topped up sooner with the next application.

For more information contact Simon Newett Principal Extension Horticulturist for Agri-Science Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry phone 13 25 23 or visit www.daff.qld.gov.au.

Acknowledgements

Content for this article has been sourced from a fact sheet located at <http://www.business.qld.gov.au/> and is reproduced courtesy of The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Author Note

Simon Newett is a co-author of Avocados Australia's latest new resource "The Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide". Avocados Australia recommends that growers refer to this guide as it contains a wealth of useful information, including handy tips and techniques. To obtain a copy contact Simon Newett directly by email at simon.newett@dpi.qld.gov.au. Please also refer to the Australian Avocado Best Practice Resource (AABPR) available online www.avocado.org.au.



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Infopest – Agvet pest solutions now available free online

Australian Avocados has received positive feedback about the usefulness of the recently launched online resource called “Infopest”. Infopest is owned and managed by agricultural peak body, Growcom, for the benefit of anyone interested in finding Agvet solutions to their pest problems. Growcom are calling it Australia's premier information source on registered agricultural and veterinary chemicals and it has now become a free online website.

Infopest is a user-friendly easily searchable database of all nationally registered agricultural and veterinary (Agvet) chemical products, approved Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) off-label permits and their uses.

By using the powerful Infopest search engine users can easily locate Australian registered agricultural and veterinary products which:

- can be used on a particular host (crop, animal or other)
- can be used to control a particular pest (weed, disease, insect or other)
- are registered by a particular company (dealer)
- contain a certain active constituent
- have a particular product name (phonetic spellings can be used for both constituents or products)
- or any combination of these.

Chief Executive Officer Alex Livingstone said that Infopest was originally developed and distributed by the Queensland Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (formerly DEEDI) and supplied on DVD as a paid subscription service. This was continued when Growcom took over ownership of the product last year.

“Growcom recognises the importance of the Infopest database as a reliable tool for the agricultural and veterinary industries,” Mr Livingstone said.

“Over many years Infopest has been recognised as the go-to tried and trusted resource for helping Australia's primary industries and other agencies achieve disease and pest free produce and animals.

“However, modern work practices and tools dictated the need for a more convenient format. The new free online web version is accessible from a wider array of devices including desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones,” Mr Livingstone said.

“We are committed to continuing to maintain and enhance the benefits of the database free online. A team of people



at Growcom's Brisbane office update the data every week.”

Mr Livingstone expects that as the word gets out, the new service will attract many more people interested in finding out the agricultural chemical products available to solve their pest problems.

Current customers include farmers, agronomists, agricultural consultants, chemical companies, dealers, local producer associations and other primary producers, state and federal government departments, feedlots, industry bodies, research and crop services, teaching institutes and libraries, nurseries, veterinarians, golf courses, managers of playing fields and gardens, local councils and associations.

The website will also help employers to meet their requirements under Workplace Health and Safety regulations. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are included in the Infopest resource.

Reports are easily downloadable to be filed.

“Growcom recognises the importance of providing an effective pest management resource for agribusiness,” said Mr Livingstone.

“One of Growcom's major roles for the past decade has been to assist the horticulture industry with agricultural chemicals information and access to support through the Minor Use Permits scheme.

“Infopest enables us to expand this assistance to other sectors.”

Users will be able to register for free to access the resource online at www.infopest.com.au.

For information about the Infopest resource contact Growcom and Pest Management Industry Development Officer Janine Clark on 07 3620 3844.

Marketing Update

Autumn signals the final phase of the current annual marketing plan 2012/13 and maintains a continuity of activity that has been the strategy of the last 8 – 9 months. The marketing activity grid (pictured) summarises the combination of media activity being used over autumn 2013 where the Australian Avocados message of Add an Avo Everyday will be seen by our target consumers.

Free to Air Digital and Pay TV: A final burst of TV advertising in March will continue the strategy of focusing on relevant programs that target mums on the free to air Channel Nine Digital channels of GEM & GO! This is underpinned by the “always on” pay TV strategy via the Lifestyle channels package which features a minimum of 6 spots a day, every day. In April an advertising burst will be targeted at any food related program across the Lifestyle network for 3 weeks and will be supported by 10 second Everyday Meal “stingers” adjacent to the ads. A stinger is a mini 10 second ad that is developed by the TV channel that will present a fact about a particular product (avocados). It’s referred to as a stinger as it is intended to have a short sharp impact on the TV audience.

Magazines: April is the last month of magazine advertising for the 2012/13 period. As highlighted on the activity grid there are three insertions planned in food and female focused magazines; Womens Weekly, Recipes + and Super Food Ideas. Alternating full page placement ads with a new *one third* page format allows continuity cost effectively

through the period (examples pictured).

Digital Banner Advertising: Over the next 3 months Australian Avocados will continue to advertise on the leading recipe website Taste.com and its mobile phone app. Rotating banner ads (as pictured) will continue to appear on recipe relevant pages.

Search: We are maintaining a high level of website activity reaching out to our database with weekly content posts around the themes of recipes, quick ideas and lifestyle tips. We continue to extend our Google search support with keywords that drive traffic to the Australian Avocados website.

Facebook Advertised Posts: This is an ongoing and valuable marketing strategy that keeps avocados top of mind with our 63,000 (and growing) Avocados Australia facebook fans. On average we will continue to deliver 2-3 posts a week on the Australian Avocados facebook page with content that aims to be topical, relevant and timely to our avocado audience. For example when a chocolate avocado dipping sauce and churros was featured on the popular My Kitchen Rules TV program, the very next day it was posted on the Avocado Australia facebook page. Over 27,000 people saw the post and generated 673 likes plus many positive comments. Some recent posts during March included green shamrock (oven baked) chips with an avocado salad timed for St Patricks Day and another

AUSTRALIAN AVOCADOS ACTIVITY SUMMARY: AUTUMN 2013

MEDIA	CHANNEL	ACTIVITY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
DIGITAL TV	CHANNEL NINE	30' AD BURST NATIONAL			
PAY TELEVISION	LIFESTYLE CHANNEL	30' AD BURST & 10' STINGERS			
	LIFESTYLE CHANNEL	30' & 15' ALWAYS ON			
MAGAZINES	WOMENS WEEKLY	1/3 PAGE		On sale 24 th April	
	RECIPES +	FULL PAGE		On sale 10 th April	
	SUPER FOOD IDEAS	1/3 PAGE		On sale 29 th April	
DIGITAL BANNER	TASTE.COM	ROTATING BANNER SPONSORSHIP			
SOCIAL MEDIA	FACEBOOK	ADVERTISED POSTS			
SEARCH	GOOGLE SEARCH	KEY WORD TRAFFIC TO WEBSITE			
INDUSTRY MAGAZINES	FOODSERVICE	FULL PAGES	Hospitality	Food Service	Food Service

Marketing Update continued



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AVO0081_AWW_Third_Delicious

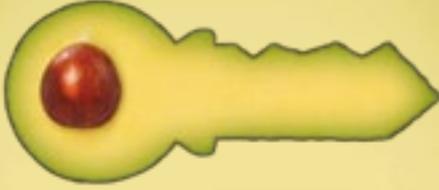
post featuring a delicious avocado BLT challenging users with “what is your ultimate sandwich?”. Taking a healthy approach also proved very popular with a post featuring a quinoa and avocado salad and stating “This salad is a no brainer if you want to make yourself something healthy and fresh!”. Over 74,000 people saw this post and over 1,100 people liked it.

Program Updates:

Health & Nutrition: The Nutrient Rich Fitness (NRF) webinar, presented by Matt O’Neil fitness industry guru and Lisa Yates accredited dietitian, reached over 200 fitness professionals in February. As detailed in the last edition of Talking Avocados this event is one of the core platforms of

the Australian Avocados Health and Nutrition program. Targeting fitness professionals with “healthy facts” about avocados so in turn they can educate their clients on the health and nutrient benefits is a powerful influencing tool.

Foodservice Program: It was a busy start to the year for the food service program. In early February the 12 finalists of the ACT & NSW Avocado Menu Competition (announced in February's Gourmet Traveler magazine) attended the official competition lunch hosted by the winning chef Claudine Balderstone of the Sydney Convention and



Unlock the goodness of your veggies.



Avos can help us to absorb the benefits and nutrients of other fruits and vegetables we eat.

A couple of avocados blended with pea and zucchini soup is a tough combo to beat.

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ADD AN AVO EVERY DAY  **Australian Avocados** 

For more quick ideas and recipes, visit avocado.org.au and [facebook.com/AustralianAvocados](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianAvocados)

Exhibition Centre. All finalists compared their notes while they enjoyed the avocado inspired dishes of the first and second place winners; a desert triple creation of avocado panna cotta with coriander avocado gelato and chilli avocado marshmallow. The second placed soy- and honey-glazed brisket with avocado mousse, cucumber kimchi and avocado yoghurt was created by chef Paul Cooper of Bishop Sessa, Surry Hills. The calibre of these dishes is an example of how the foodservice Masterclasses are providing an innovative platform for avocado usage at top end restaurants.

In February two Australian Avocado Masterclass training events were also conducted. The first focused on apprentices, students and cooking teachers was held at Southbank Institute of Technology in Brisbane and achieved an excellent 53 participants. The second event held at Sydney's East's Leagues Club was targeted primarily at club chefs. Conducted by Kate McGhee, together with Brian Steel this Masterclass showcased to the 27 attendees molecular gastronomy techniques using avocados. It was also the primer to involve potential entrants in the Chef's Table Competition which Australian Avocados has partnered with Clubs NSW for the last 2 years. This hands-on Masterclass event was also videoed and will be ready for the foodservice website by early April.

Over the coming months Restaurant Masterclasses will be held in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Nicky Reimer, Owner/Chef at Union Dining will host the event in Melbourne and in Sydney Lauren Murdoch will host as the new executive chef of the 3 Weeds in Rozelle. Both are exciting and well regard food venues. The Brisbane chef and venue will be announced shortly.

Strategic Marketing Plan Recommendation presented to the Avocado IAC

The strategic marketing review process that has been underway since April last year came to its conclusion with a presentation to the IAC of the Strategic Marketing Plan recommendation for 2013-2016. Presented at the IAC meeting on 13th February the plan was the culmination of months of consumer development work by HAL and

its research, media and creative agency partners. Based on the findings and insights from the consumer research (Project Accelerator) a new communications strategy has been developed to elevate avocado awareness and consumption over the next 3 years. The plan addressed the key issues and recommendations from last year's marketing review (the Review Partners) and was endorsed in principle by the newly appointed avocado IAC.




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Tips to avoid contracting illegal workers

Tougher migrant worker legislation introduced in 2010 meant the Department of Immigration could pursue criminal prosecution against growers using illegal workers. Now, the legislation not only prosecutes growers who use illegal workers it also includes administrative penalties.

Liz Mecham explains that taking a little extra time with paperwork could pay big dividends for growers wanting to ensure they avoid illegal workers from entering their property.

Individual fines of up to \$16,000 and company fines of up to \$66,000 are now applicable, and criminal prosecution also is still a possibility, if growers fail to check who is in their orchard picking fruit.

“We know growers hate paperwork and red tape, but at the end of the day, it’s your name on the fine if you get caught so taking that bit of extra time could financially be the best thing you do,” Growcom Commercial Services manager, Donna Mogg said.

“The legislation always has said it’s illegal to let people, who do not have the appropriate working visas work on your farm. The changes that now have come in are an extension of that legislation and now extend the penalties by increasing the fines and making company directors personally liable.”

Donna explained, however, that while relying on the contracting company won’t protect a grower from a fine, taking the time to double check the paperwork might.

“If the grower can show they have taken the steps to check the work visas of the people who are picking on their property, and yet they still get found to have someone illegal, then at least they can prove they have attempted to make sure everyone is above board and avoid prosecution.”

She said having a written agreement with a Labour Hire Contractor (LHC) was vitally important for those using contracted labour. It should include a requirement for the LHC to undertake the necessary visa checks and provide evidence of such a check.

“A lot of people use LHCS but it’s not good enough in the eyes of the Department to just take that contractors word for having checked the visas - ask for proof that shows checks have been done, or go out in to the orchard yourself every day and ask a few people their names and do the check yourself,” she added.

The Department of Immigration’s VEVO (Visa Entitlement Verification Online) service is a 24-hour; seven-day-a-week phone, fax and online visa check service which will tell you if an individual is legally entitled to work. Donna

also stressed that growers had no excuse not to check for themselves.

To help ensure all labourers are above board and to avoid visa issues, Growcom can assist in developing a Service Agreement that growers could use between themselves and the LHC, along with any other labour hiring issues.

She said these templates (on a fee for service basis) could be tailored to individually suit growers’ needs.

“It also keeps the hire contractors honest - these agreements check not only worker visas but also the contractor themselves making sure they are legitimate businesses in their own right,” Donna added.

“At the end of the day, it’s crazy to go into business with people without doing a bit of a background check on them, the labour hire contractors and their workers.

“If something does happen, providing you have the paperwork, either showing that the LHC has done the visa checks, and/or that you’ve checked yourself, will show that you are conscious of the issues with illegal workers and have been taking steps to try and ensure that you aren’t employing them.”

Donna stressed that: “If growers can show that they are taking on the responsibility and demonstrating they are checking their workers then our advice from the Department is that they will avoid prosecution.”

“It also will show contractors that growers take the issue seriously and hopefully weed out the dodgy operators,” she added.

“If contractors know you’re going to check up on them, the dodgy ones simply won’t work for you, the above board ones will.

“Some growers may be tempted by ‘cheap’ labour, but the fines imposed for employing illegal workers will far outweigh any saving you might make on wages.”



This article has been reproduced courtesy of Australian Citrus News.

News from Around the World

Colombia's growing avocado model

The formation of CORPOHASS marks an important milestone for Colombia in the avocado industry, as it moves from domestically focused sales to the international market.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the country was the world's fifth largest producer of the fruit in 2011 with 215,322 metric tons (MT), slightly ahead of Peru at the time and 60,631MT behind the fourth ranked grower Indonesia.

The FAO figures show its value in that year was US\$149 million, compared to the U.S. avocado value of US\$142 million. The department of Antioquia accounts for half the country's 5,500 hectares of the Hass variety, and has shown a major trend towards a growing export industry.

The Antioquia government has set this industry the goal of shipping 100 containers of avocados, or 600MT, to the European market.

In 2012 the entire country shipped just a quarter of that amount to the European Union, while this year Antioquia has already sent its first 10 containers to the Netherlands, with exporters reporting good results.

As part of this growing development, the industry will be hosting the Colombian Avocado Technical Tour in Medellin from May 20-26, with visits to the municipalities of El Retiro, La Ceja and Rionegro for participants to understand the process in development.

The event will be organized by Tecnogiras and Expoagrofuturo 2013, in collaboration with Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation (CORPOICA).

Article first appeared at www.freshfruitportal.com

Chile debates sunblotch risk from Peruvian avocados

The problem with Peruvian avocado is not the fruit itself; it is the fear of importing sunblotch, said Adolfo Ochagavía, president of the Chilean Hass Avocado Committee.

In an interview with www.freshfruitportal.com, Ochagavía explained that what concerns the Chilean industry is the possible entry of this viroid. The infectious plant agent is not currently present in Chile and has not been considered by the Agriculture and Livestock Services (SAG) in its evaluation of the possible Peruvian import.

"I would say that this is one of the only countries in the world without sunblotch. Others that don't have it are New Zealand and parts of Australia," he said.

Ochagavía said that the industry is in talks with SAG to give greater background on the viroid and to include it in phytosanitary protocol.

"This is the main point. Sunblotch can be dispersed in our industry and cause significant damage. An affected tree has 30% to 50% less production," he said.

From SAG's perspective, the risk of dissemination is lower than 2% for commercial plantations but Ochagavía said the industry has a different opinion.

"I think when two entities – in this case the avocado industry and SAG – have distinct perspectives, the best thing is that they get together and arrive to a consensus," Ochagavía said.

"The risk assessment that they envision is different than ours. We have different opinions but we have already agreed to come together and discuss the topic."

Ochagavía added that the committee is also in contact with industries in other countries that are helping provide more information.

"If they have sunblotch free orchards, let them bring all of their avocado to Chile. We are pro-business. We've done the same thing as the U.S., whose market grew thanks to the entrance of Mexico, Chile and Peru," he said.

The entrance of Peruvian avocado into Chile would complement the local supply. In Ochagavía's word, "this is good for local development."

"We are convinced that a greater offer from other sources will make the market grow. We have experienced that as active participants in the U.S. So it's unlikely that we would try to put up barriers for avocados when in the end, more fruit will mean Chileans eat 7 kilos instead of 5 and a half," he said.

Currently Chile imports fruit from Peru, which it subjects to a fruit fly quarantine system. Last year 700 MT came in, 45% of which stayed in the northern part of the country.

Article appears courtesy of www.freshfruitportal.com.

Free trade deal with China "just beyond both countries", says trade minister Craig Emerson

by Myriam Robin

A free trade deal with China which has been under negotiation for close to nine years may never happen, trade minister Craig Emerson told a forum in Melbourne recently.

News from Around the World continued

A comprehensive free trade deal, which would allow Chinese imports and Australian exports to cross into both countries without paying import duties, is “just beyond both countries,” Emerson told the Global Food Forum, according to a report in The Australian.

Instead, he said the government was focussed on an agriculture-only deal, similar to the one signed between China and New Zealand five years ago. The deal, the minister said, led to a tripling of its exports to China, led by dairy produce.

Leading Company contacted the trade minister’s office with a list of questions, but no response was received before deadline.

Peter Mace, the general manager of the Export Council of Australia, says it’s interesting the government is focussing on agriculture, as this has traditionally been one of the ‘sticking points’ in previous negotiations.

Perhaps because of this, China has reportedly responded to this agriculture deal by asking that it be allowed make investments worth up to \$1 billion in Australia without needing to pass the Foreign Investment Review Board’s ‘national interest’ criteria. This \$1 billion threshold is the same as the one currently given to America and New Zealand.

Emerson has rejected this, saying: “we can’t do that – the community would not accept it.”

Mace says even a trimmed-down deal would be “wonderful if it happens”.

“This would be a great opportunity for our farmers. We view agriculture as the next resources boom.”

However, sectors that would miss out from an agriculture-only deal include things like services.

“China has a need for things like legal services and architecture, where Australian firms are strong.”

Mace says that even if a bi-lateral free-trade deal fails, Australia could still get free trade with China through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which has been under negotiation since November 2012.

This proposed regional free-trade agreement includes the ten ASEAN member states, along with Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand

UNSW economics professor Tim Harcourt tells LeadingCompany SMEs now export more to China and South-East Asia than they do to Europe. “It’s not just about Woodside and Rio Tinto. There’s 10,000 SMEs exporting to China, if you include the ones going through Hong Kong.

“A free deal is necessary, but not sufficient. The most important thing for SMEs is assistance on the ground.”

Mace said a key issue for SMEs in China was finding suitable local partners

“In China, it’s still a matter of who you know, and who’s in the local government. It can be very difficult for small businesses to find their way around that. So getting to the good partners and distributors, and getting your intellectual property established so you don’t get copied, those are key issues for SMEs.”

Last week, China signed a free trade deal with Iceland.

Source: smartcompany.com.au.



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Latin American promise in the face of climate change

New climatic scenarios will have implications not only for food production but also global trade. Dr. Fernando Santibañez of the Universidad de Chile explained what lies ahead for climate change in Latin America at the Produce Marketing Association's (PMA) Connections Chile seminar on Wednesday.

Santibañez emphasized the situation was "absolutely manageable," although agriculture would face big challenges and greater threats.

"It is scientifically proven that the atmosphere is heating up. There is an increase of two parts per million of CO₂ content thanks to the 35 billion tons of greenhouse gases that the world is injecting into the atmosphere every year," he said.

"It is thought that these gases will take the current atmospheric temperature from the current 15° C (59°F) average to 18°C (64.4°F). Over 18°C there could be destabilizing effects that are difficult to predict."

So, what could warming mean in terms of agriculture?

Santibañez said a 2°C increase in the future could bring important changes across various economic sectors.

"It is foreseeable that some export zones could, during the adaptation process to new conditions, have weaker provider role," he said.

An example of an industry that will require adjustments is the Chilean wine sector.

"There is a part of the Chilean wine region that will have to change, not toward a different product line but there are probably white wine zones that will have to become red wine zones. But this will take a few years and will be reflected in trade," he said.

To stay competitive, each world region will have to look at their best competitive advantages, Santibañez explained, highlighting the American continent had a lot of future possibilities in a world hard hit by changing weather.

"America, primarily South America, will have a great opportunity in all of this. There is no doubt that it is going to have a much more prominent role as a world food supplier," he said.

"It has land and water that no other continent has and it has the natural condition to defend against climate change; the Southern Hemisphere is surrounded by large oceans that regulate the climate and they are going to impede climate change from having as great of force as in

Grower Member Application Form

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ACN 105 853 807

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

Member Details

Business name and/or trading name: _____

ABN: _____

Key contacts: _____

Preferred address (postal): _____

Address of property (if different): _____

Contact Details

Business phone: _____

Home phone: _____

Fax: _____

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Email: _____

Corporate Structure

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

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

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

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

Special Interests

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

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

Grower Member Application Form continued

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Credit card number: _____

Name on credit card: _____

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News from Around the World continued

the Northern Hemisphere.”

A big concern for South America will be water reserves. Droughts could increase in frequency and intensity. In southern Brazil there could be increased precipitation, as well as in the Rio de la Plata region and in northern Ecuador and Colombia.

Santibañez explained such effects were already underway. For example, precipitation has declined on the Chilean coast and rain has increased in northern Argentina and in the Rio de la Plata zone. Regarding temperatures, the continent is the least affected, especially in the Southern Cone due to the great quantity of water and the help from the Humboldt Current.

The professor said the main risks agriculture would face related to water supply and biological risks like insects, fungi and bacteria.

While productive zones are expected to shift, the continent continues to be an attractive production area, given that it adapts.

“We’re not talking about an absolute threat. We’re talking about something that is going to put us to the test,” Santibañez said.

Some changes that could help face climate change will be modernized water management, crop varieties changes, improved weather and warning systems, and better management of production.

Source: freshfruitportal.com

NZ fruit exports rose above challenges in 2011-12

New Zealand’s horticulture merchandise exports rose by 5.5% in the year to June 2012, according to data compiled by Plant & Food Research and Horticulture New Zealand.

The Fresh Facts 2012 report shows the sector’s shipments reached NZ\$3.6 billion, with around a third of all horticultural exports sent to Asia. In a release, Plant & Food Research CEO Peter Landon-Lane said the result had been achieved despite many challenges, including kiwifruit bacterial disease Psa and the tomato-potato psyllid.

“In both cases, coordinated responses across the industry, including growers, government and research, has allowed us to begin to combat these incursions, with the introduction of improved management practices and focusing our breeding programmes on resistant cultivars,” he said.

“There is still a long road ahead, but I feel certain that the industry as a whole is rising to meet the challenge and is confident for the future ahead.

“The success of our horticultural industry relies on the skills and dedication of people throughout the value chain.”

Fresh fruit exports actually rose above New Zealand’s horticulture average at a rate of 7.1%, reaching NZ\$1.560 billion (US\$1.31 billion), while processed fruit exports grew by 8.3% to NZ\$1.351 billion (US\$1.136 billion). Kiwifruit shipments experienced a large jump of 8.6% to NZ\$1.046 billion (US\$880 million), while avocado exports rose 88.9% to NZ\$96.9 million (US\$81.6 million). Apple exports declined by 5.9% to NZ\$341.6 million (US\$287.5 million).

Vegetables however did not fare so well. Fresh vegetable shipments were down 21.1% to NZ\$213.3 million.

Source: freshfruitportal.com

Demand on the rise for Mexican organic products

The Mexican government has claimed quality and promotion are behind a significant rise in demand both

domestically and internationally for the country’s organic products.

In a release, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) said 85% of organic production was destined for export, but the local organic market had been growing at a significant rate.

Jesús Ortiz Haro, secretary of government organization Impulso Orgánico Mexicano, said the number of organic growers had risen from 33,587 to 169,570 in the last decade, while the organic crop surface area had risen from 85,676ha to 351,904ha.

The release said around 50% of the organic area is dedicated to coffee beans, while aromatic and medicinal herbs, vegetables, cocoa and wild grapes were also common in the category.

Ortiz Haro said local growth had been driven by SAGARPA’s marketing campaigns, with growth of 20% in convenience stores and 10% in specialty stores.

Source: freshfruitportal.com



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It is our pleasure to invite you to join us for the 5th quadrennial New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' Conference

Hosted in the Bay of Plenty, the heart of the avocado industry in New Zealand, this conference offers you the opportunity to network and share knowledge with a wide range of national and international representatives from across the avocado industry.

Nutritional Values, the conference theme, represents an exciting opportunity for us to increase our awareness and knowledge of the amazing health and nutritional properties of the avocado and explore opportunities to leverage the nutritional benefits of this fruit.

Consumers and the media are placing increasing importance and value on "functional" and "super" foods; avocado fits effortlessly into this category but what does this mean for our growers, our marketing and our returns? What are the specific health properties of avocado? How do we increase the visibility of these attributes? And how does what we do in our orchards and throughout the value chain impact on the final product we deliver to consumers?

The Nutritional Values conference will explore these questions and more, while providing you with an opportunity to reconnect, make new connections and discuss your ideas with peers and experts.

The programme of international speakers including those from Australasia will present the latest knowledge and understanding of issues important to maximising value for the New Zealand and Australian avocado industries. Attendees will also spend time visiting a number of successful orchards and postharvest facilities in the Bay of Plenty.

Last held in New Zealand in 2005, this is an industry event not to be missed.

Save the date now and join us in Tauranga in September at the ASB Arena, Baypark. Registration details out April.



 facebook.com/nutritionalvalues2013
www.avocadoconference.co.nz



Nutritional Values

5th New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' Conference
9-12 September 2013

Conference organising committee:

Mr John Schnackenberg

Chairman of NZ Avocado Growers' Association Inc.

Mr Jim Kochi

Chairman of Avocados Australia Limited

Ms Jen Scoular

CEO, New Zealand Avocado

Mr John Tyas

CEO, Avocados Australia Limited

If you are interested in sponsorship or exhibition opportunities please contact Edwina edwina@nzavocado.co.nz

If you are interested in speaking at this event please contact Midge mmunro@nzavocado.co.nz

To be added to the Nutritional Values email update list please send your details to NZAAGC@nzavocado.co.nz

