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**28 November 2016**

**The latest industry news at your fingertips...**

'Guacamole' is the Australian avocado industry's fortnightly email newsletter delivering the latest news to the Australian avocado industry.

Due to layout changes prior to our new look being launched next year, please scroll down to view articles.



## **Backpacker tax: Coalition settles on 15pc rate for working holiday-makers**

*Source: ABC's Regional Reporter Lucy Barbour*

The furore over the backpacker tax could soon be over, with federal Treasurer Scott Morrison announcing the Coalition will compromise again on the rate, and push for 15 per cent.

Labor remains committed to a 10.5 per cent backpacker tax saying that is the only rate that will restore Australia's competitiveness and international reputation among backpackers.

Mr Morrison said the reduced rate would cost the federal budget \$120 million over four years and he accused Labor of being responsible for delaying a resolve.

"Frankly the Labor Party can go and take a flying leap," he said.

When asked what his message was to farmers who are furious at the Coalition for its handling of the backpacker tax, he replied: "The matter is sorted this week".

Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen called Mr Morrison "immature" and "cranky" and said "the price has been paid by regional and rural Australia."

However, the revised bill looks set to pass the Senate with the support of key crossbenchers including Derryn Hinch and those from the Nick Xenophon Team.

Senator Xenophon described the result as a "win-win" because the Government had backed his plan to allow Australian seasonal workers on Youth Allowance or New Start to earn up to \$5,000 without a penalty.

"It is a big breakthrough and removes the disincentive for people on unemployment benefits to do that seasonal work where there are genuine labour shortages," he said.

The backpacker tax debate has dragged on for 18 months and reached a tipping point over the weekend when Nationals MP Andrew Broad broke ranks and called for a 15 per cent rate.

The move infuriated many within the National party, who were confident that Labor would eventually agree to 19 per cent.

Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister Luke Hartsuyker, who has played a key role in backpacker tax negotiations, this morning told reporters that Mr Broad "for a very long time" advocated a 19 per cent tax rate.

He also reiterated his personal support for that figure.

### **Farmers welcome 15pc backpacker tax compromise**

National Farmers' Federation workplace relations general manager Sarah McKinnon threw her support behind the new rate and described it as "fair".

But she pointed out that a consensus could have been reached months ago, when the Government first announced its compromise rate.

"There is no question that no party has covered itself in glory on this issue," she said.

"It has been a disappointment. Farmers are let down by the political process that has seen games come ahead of the public interest."

## **New Board to guide Horticulture Innovation Australia's continuing growth**

*Source: Hort Innovation media release*

The nation's horticulture Research and Development Corporation welcomed new members to its Board today as the organisation enters into its next phase of growth.

Paul Harker has more than 20 years of retail experience spanning store operations, supply chain, and buying and marketing, including four years heading up the fresh produce buying team of one of Australia's largest retailers.

Jenny Margetts has worked in the horticultural industry for more than 25 years in a range of roles across the supply chain.

Selwyn Snell, an industry leader with more than four decades' experience in the agriculture, biotech and life sciences industries, was appointed a further term as Horticulture Innovation Australia Chair. Northern NSW grower Mark Napper was re-elected Deputy Chair.

Mr Snell said he was honoured to be re-appointed to the position by the Board, and is keen to work with fellow Board members to continue to service the needs of the nation's turf, nursery, fruit, vegetable, nut and cut flower growers.

"This is a really exciting time for the Australian horticulture industry. Growers have never been more innovative and there is so much technology coming online," he said.

"Consumers are also becoming increasingly health conscious so the consumption of fruit, vegetables and nuts is in the spotlight like never before.

He said on top of that, Hort Innovation is working hard with growers to identify and tap into new trade markets, with a number opening up in recent years.

"At Horticulture Innovation Australia we are progressing in leaps and bounds. The organisation is in a great place, working closely with industry and top national and international researchers, companies and government agencies to get tangible results for nation's growers."

Mr Snell said Hort Innovation has close to 600 projects in the research and development pipeline, and it is in the process of delivering more than 100 marketing projects.

"Over the past year, Hort Innovation has driven a host of wins for industry including streamlined and strengthened health and safety audits to save growers time and money when accessing major supermarkets and key overseas trade markets.

"A dedicated Hort Innovation Centre for Robotics and Intelligent Systems has opened with world leading technology being developed to improve farm efficiencies, and

commercialisation work underway.

“Last week with our partners, we also opened the world’s first sterile male Queensland fruit fly facility and we are on track to curb the impact of the pest on Australian trade and food waste.

“We are also driving the organisation’s largest ever horticulture recruitment drive with a multi-million co-investment into new university courses, internships, scholarships and leadership programs.

Mr Snell said there is plenty more to come: “I can’t wait to see what 2017 brings and I look forward to working with growers, industry representative bodies and research partners to continue to see never-before-seen advancements in Australian horticulture.”

The Board is charged with jointly managing \$120 million in research, development and marketing activities across the horticulture industry each year with funding from the Australian Government, grower levies and other sources.

Mr Snell welcomed the new Board members, saying it is made up of individuals who have a wide range of characteristics and valuable experience. The complete Board comprises:

- Selwyn Snell (Chair)
- Paul Harker
- Mark Napper (Deputy Chair)
- Stephen Lynch
- Prof Rob Clark
- Richard Hamley
- Sue Finger
- Jenny Margetts
- Peter Wauchope

Mr Snell welcomed the re-appointment of Professor Rob Clark and Peter Wauchope to the Board. He also thanked retiring former directors David Moon and David Cliffe for their hard work and commitment, wishing them the best of luck in their future endeavours.

## Australian govt offers assistance to disaster-hit fruit growers

*Source: Fresh Fruit Portal*

Australian Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources Barnaby Joyce has offered support to growers affected by thunderstorms in and around Mildura, across Sunraysia and the Riverland in South Australia.

Joyce, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, visited Mildura with Nationals Member for Mallee, Andrew Broad, to inspect damage to properties from the weather event that produced damaging winds, golf ball sized hail and heavy rain.

“There were power outages and damage to homes, businesses, farms and schools, with assessment teams from South Australia and Victoria still working to determine the extent of the damage,” Joyce said.

“Anecdotal reports are of (AUD)\$200 million (US\$150 million) worth of crop losses and farm damage, with severe damage to table grape and avocado crops in Red Cliffs, Cardross and Paringi, vineyards close to Waikerie and Kingston and nectarine, peach and almond crops around Berri, Lyrup and Pike River, SA.

“I understand fruit growers across the region were looking forward to a bumper harvest this season and some of these growers have now been robbed of their crops. The worst affected have been wiped out with 100 per cent crop losses.”

He said while responding to natural disasters was mainly the responsibility of state and territory governments, the Coalition Federal Government stood ready to assist in times of great need.

“As a farmer myself I am devastated for these growers who have copped such heavy losses. Events such as this one highlight the strength and resilience it takes to be on the land,” Joyce

said.

Under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), the Federal Government provides financial assistance directly to the states to assist them with costs associated with certain disaster relief and recovery assistance measures.

“This helps alleviate the financial burden on the states and enables fast-tracked assistance to disaster affected communities,” Joyce said.

Joyce urged growers impacted by the storm on Friday night to conduct damage reports on their properties to inform Agriculture Victoria about the extent of the damage to crops throughout the region.

## How many avocado trees are planted in Australia?

Well, if all growers tell us, we can tell you - it won't take long but is extremely valuable.

This week, all growers have been requested to contribute to the 2016 OrchardInfo Avocado Tree Census by 9 December.

This information is essential for future industry planning. The OrchardInfo Avocado Tree Census allows the avocado industry to collect and report key statistical information about the industry's growth. There have been many new plantings that will come into production in the coming years and planning for this change requires accurate data that can only come from growers.

Every grower who submits their data will have the chance to win one of 4 cash prizes of \$250.

This year we have simplified the system and are only collecting basic tree planting data to hopefully increase the level of contribution. Completing the online form should be much easier and much quicker. Of course, if you have made no changes since the last report, then it will only take you a few seconds to confirm this.

Those who contribute will be provided with a summary report of tree plantings in your region and nationally.

If you are aware of any growers who don't regularly receive communication from Avocados Australia, please forward this on to them and encourage everyone to provide their data.

## New Fruitspotting bug booklet - error note

*By Ruth Huwyer*

Erratum: In the recently released guide "Fruitspotting bugs 2016" there is an error in Table 3 on Page 23 entitled Registered chemicals for FSB control.

Table 4 on page 23 entitled Different chemical classes of the pesticides registered for control of FSB also contains the error.

The following statement reflects the current APVMA permit for Methomyl".



Methomyl is not permitted for use to control the pest Fruitspotting bug. Methomyl is permitted for use on macadamia, (in Queensland only) for the control of Banana Caterpillar. <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER12796.PDF>

Methomyl is not permitted for use to control the pest Fruitspotting bug. Methomyl is permitted for use in avocado for the control of ECTROPIS LOOPER only. <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER14597.PDF>

The updated booklet (PDF) can be found online - [click here](#).



## Photograph request - please send us your industry snaps

Avocados Australia is seeking photographs representing the avocado industry.

We would love to be able to display images of the whole supply chain - from the different varieties of fruit, to growing, picking, packing and marketing through to transport and distribution, particularly those depicting every day life in the industry.

We're trying to expand our photo library to cover the diversity of our wonderful industry and are particularly looking for photos we could potentially use for our new website.

So if you have some great photos of anything avocado-related that you're willing to share please send them through - we'd love to see and use them.

**Please submit all photos by this Friday 2 December 2016.**

Options for submitting photography include:

- Email small files (under 8mb) to [co@avocado.org.au](mailto:co@avocado.org.au)
- Dropbox larger files (over 8mb) to [co@avocado.org.au](mailto:co@avocado.org.au)

To discuss further options, please contact the office on 07 3846 6566 and ask to speak to Maree Tyrrell or Caroline Page.

## Hort Innovation Marketing Update

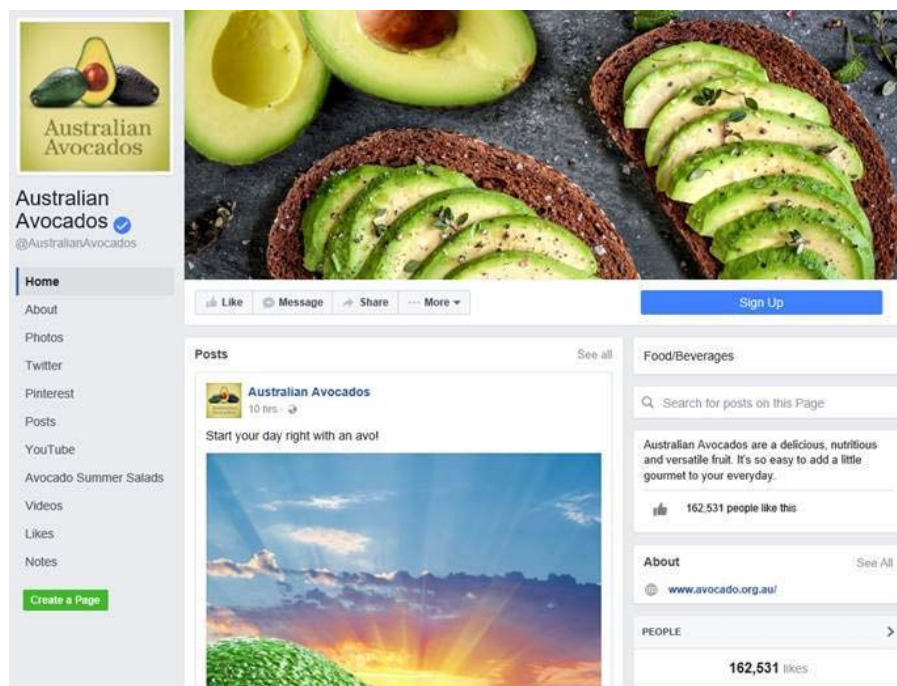
*By Hort Innovation's Claire Tindale-Penning*

### Australian Avocados Facebook page is officially recognised

Some great news to kick off on -the Australian Avocados Facebook page has received "verification status" which is recognised by a blue tick.

This tick means that Facebook confirms this is the authentic Page or profile for this public figure, media company or brand.

This verification status reinforces the credibility of the brand among users and the community as an authority/leader on a topic which is so valuable to our brand.



### Facebook snapshot

Throughout October, we saw a lot of avocado love on the Australian Avocados Page. This was greatly due to the #MakeBrunchNotWar campaign after comments made by Bernard Salt. The

reaction from fans was predominantly positive and stepped in to defend their right to a smashed avocado brunch. Many fans shared that they use Australia Avocados' recipes.

The Australian Avocados Page continues to build a community with fans regularly interacting with each other and the brand itself. Towards the end of October, due to the campaign, we saw fans joining threads to share their support and love for avocados!

The fans on the Australian Avocados Page are a positive community, who, for most part, can't imagine a life without avocados - "avocados are life".

Current Post: "Start your day right..." on 21st November

Ad Metrics: Reach - 50,797 / Comments - 56 / Likes - 1,428 / Reactions - 68 / Shares - 41



**Instagram**

The Current Shared Post (below): has received 71 organic likes



We're seeing lots of innovative and visually-stunning ideas with avocados being posted on Instagram.







### Top Performing Creative (Source Google Adwords)

The “Avocado and chicken recipes” ad was the top performing ad for Avocados in October with 563 clicks.



The “Australian avocados ad”; Avocados are The Healthy Superfood grown right here in Australia came in 2nd place with 512 clicks.

The Top 3 site links remain the same:

- Recipes - av. Click through rate of 0.42%, 524 clicks
- How to store your avocado - click through rate of 0.52%, 513 clicks
- How to select avocados – click through rate of 0.53%, 436 clicks

Definitions:

- **Reach:** the unique number of people who see your content.
- **Impressions:** the number of times your content is displayed.
- **Engagement:** the number of interactions people have with your content (i.e.: likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc.)
- **Shares:** people that share the post on their Face Book page
- **Comments** are where fans will respond to a post, such as intent to make a recipe, their thoughts and opinions or tagging a friend so they are sure to see the post too.
- **Reactions** was launched on Facebook in March this year and is an extension to the “like” button.
  - The **reactions** are: “love” “haha” “wow” “sad” and “angry”. The reactions are a faster way for people to express themselves over a post without having to take the time to comment.

## Get involved in research on knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about safety and risks of quad bikes for kids

Queensland’s Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety - PhD student Kim Vuong is undertaking research to understand parents’ knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about safety and risks of quad bikes for kids.

She is looking for mums or dads who have at least one child aged between 3 and 16 years old to participate in a 20-minute online survey (hardcopy is also available).

To participate, your child must have access to a quad bike (either your own, family and/or friends) and must also reside in Australia.

If you would like to complete the survey now please [click here](#).

For any questions, please email Kim: [click here](#). Please also feel free to forward this information to anyone you know who may be interested in participating in this study.

Please note that this study has been approved by the QUT Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 1600000996).

## Infocado and retail prices update

Past Infocado Reports and Retail Prices data are available for access from the Avocados Australia website. You can regularly access this information by going to the Avocados Australia website’s [Infocado](#) and [Retail Pricing](#) pages.

## Industry News

### Australian News

#### Avocado extract may prevent Listeria in food

A recent study published in the Journal of Food Science found that extracts and isolated compounds from avocado seeds can potentially be used as a natural additive incorporated into ready-to-eat foods to control microbes that cause Listeria, a foodborne bacterial illness that can be very serious for pregnant women and people with impaired immune systems. [More](#)

#### **Next generation Woolworths store unveiled**

Woolworths has opened its first next generation store at Warringah Mall on Sydney's northern beaches. The new store allows consumers to pick organic fruit and vegetables from the "largest organics range available" within a Woolworths. [More](#)

#### **Warning issued over work visa scams**

A report was recently published on the exploitation of illegal Malaysian workers on fruit farms in Victoria. Just a day after Free Malaysia Today published the report, the Australian Government issued a warning against false offers of Australian visas for sale. [More](#)

#### **Costa links up with investment firm**

Australia's largest fresh produce grower-packer-marketer, Costa Group, announced an exclusive non-binding agreement with leading agricultural investment group Macquarie Agricultural Funds Management to explore M&A projects during its 2016 AGM yesterday (17 November). [More](#)

#### **Connecting Queensland agriculture with the world in 2017**

TropAg2017, the world's leading tropical agriculture and food science conference, will showcase Queensland agriculture innovations and technologies in Brisbane on 20-22 November 2017. AgFutures conference will be incorporated into TropAg to showcase the state's latest developments and applications in digital and data platforms, robotics, satellites and biotechnologies. [More](#)

#### **Mareeba Nuffield scholar to study robotics**

It's not every day a farmer gets time off to travel the world but as a 2016 Nuffield Scholar, Mareeba's Matt Fealy has his work cut out as he explores emerging technologies in tree crop horticulture. [More](#)

#### **New weapon unleashed in fruit fly fight**

THE newest weapon against one of the world's worst horticultural pests has been unveiled in South Australia. The world-leading National Sterile Insect Technology (SIT) Centre will initially tackle the Queensland fruit fly, which costs the Australian horticulture industry more than \$300 million a year. [More](#)

### **International News**

#### **New Zealand fruit crops unscathed by earthquake**

Representatives of New Zealand's apple, kiwifruit and avocado industries have said the country's operations were unaffected by the recent powerful earthquake. [More](#)

#### **NZ expects record avocado exports during 2016-17 season**

The New Zealand avocado industry is set for its largest ever production and export volumes this year, according to an industry head. Speaking to [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com), New Zealand Avocado CEO Jen Scoular said the crop looked like it would end up around 7.2 million trays, with 5.2 million due to be exported. [More](#)

#### **New areas suitable for high-quality avocados**

The current high-quality organic avocado production in Sicily and Calabria does not meet market demand. Wholesale prices in the EU have been rather stable and highly profitable in the past few years. Demand is increasing constantly and is more and more focused on high-quality produce. Only a few varieties such as Ettinger, Fuerte, etc. experienced a drop in price, which coincided with the rise in popularity of the superior Hass variety. [More](#)

#### **The Hass Horn: Mexico's internal issues a greater threat to avocados than Trump**

NAFTA became effective on Jan. 1, 1994, during the Clinton presidency, and currently includes a population of 478.4 million people with a market GDP of more than US\$20 trillion.

Avocados from Mexico have always had access to the Canadian market, but the importation of avocados from Mexico into the U.S. was actually made a federal crime in 1914. NAFTA provided an opening to crash through the embargo. [More](#)

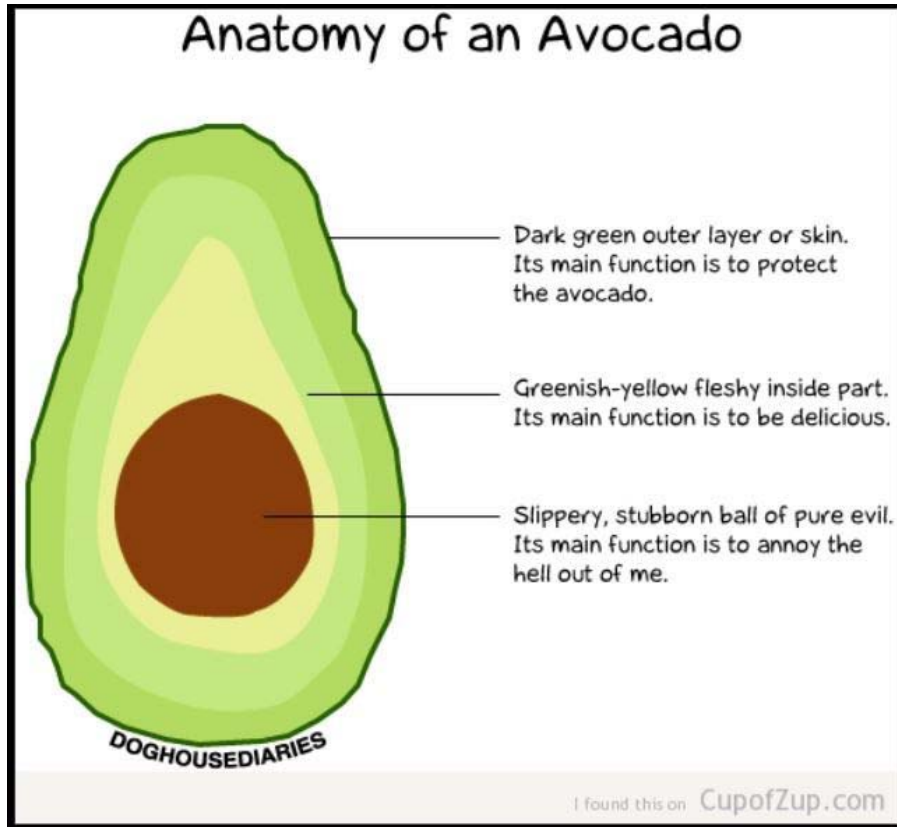
#### **U.S. NAFTA withdrawal would be 'disastrous', says Mexican avocado rep**

A representative of a major Mexican avocado association has said the industry is 'worried' about the potential consequences of Donald Trump's presidency, and hopes not all campaign

promises will come to fruition. President-elect Trump has been highly critical of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), describing it as “the worst trade deal maybe ever”, and has pledged to either renegotiate or withdraw from the deal. [More](#)

**Mexico: Morelia will produce 200% more avocados by 2019**

According to Cecilio Zamora Ramos, the director of Rural Development, the area devoted to avocado production in Morelia area will increase by nearly 200 percent over the next 5 years. The area devoted to avocado production is projected to grow, from the current 1,000 hectares, to 3,000 hectares in 2019. [More](#)



Can't wait for Guacamole? You can read all the latest [Avocado News](#) and industry-related [National & International News](#) on the Avocados Australia industry website.

This project has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited using the avocado levy and funds from the Australian Government.

**Horticulture  
Innovation  
Australia**

This email was sent by Avocados Australia, Level 1 / 8/63 Annerley Rd, Woolloongabba, Australia 4102 to [admin2@avocado.org.au](mailto:admin2@avocado.org.au)

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