

TALKING AVOCADOS

Australian Avocados
An update on nutrition and health



Update on Avocado Nutrition & Health

Marketing Update - The Love is Growing

Adopting Organic Principles in the orchard

AUTUMN 2015

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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: "Australian Avocados – An Update on Nutrition and Health Report" targets media and health professionals.

Chairman's Perspective

Over the past few issues I have written about the changes that are happening to all of Horticulture in Australia and that certainly includes avocado. The new structure Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited (HIA Ltd) is now the body responsible for administration of all levy money and for the direction of R&D and marketing through the allocation of industry levy monies and matching Federal money for each industry. This is close to the arrangement we had under Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) but there are some subtle differences.

Under HAL, avocado had an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that had AAL board members representing growers from most regions and three independent members who had avocado interests providing balance for the regions not represented directly by a board member.

The HIA model currently has had no advisory committee in place since November 2014 and the proposal for a new committee seems to be a possible two PIB (AAL) members i.e. CEO and Chair, and two other growers (specifically excluding any PIB (AAL board) growers) and other participants not yet articulated.

During all these deliberations your avocado levy money is being collected and is being applied to the projects that were in progress at the time of the change and to projects that have been evaluated to continue to the next stage. There have not been any meetings since November last year to discuss new projects in R&D or Marketing and there are none planned in the foreseeable future.

During this process of HIA deliberation your avocado levy money continues to be collected.

I, as a grower and Chair, the CEO and other growers have written letters to HIA Ltd, the Federal Department of Agriculture (DOA), and the Minister for Agriculture all explaining that avocado growers owe their success to the application of R&D and marketing levies to projects that benefit our industry and

that we have had people who have "skin in the game" interest contributing to the discussions and decisions.

These concerns have been noted but the reality is that the DOA is holding firm on the HIA model and the recommendations of the ACIL Allen report supporting the HIA model.

We have little option but to cooperate with this new system and to contribute in a positive and constructive manner to gain the best outcomes for our industry.

Our efforts at PIB (AAL level) are all but exhausted and the new focus of HIA is in the direction of grower-levy payer members and that means YOU. You, the levy payer needs to become a member of HIA so you can have a voice and influence in HIA and the direction it is taking in the application of your levy money. I encourage, very strongly, for all growers to apply for membership to HIA. You can apply online at www.horticulture.com.au/apply-for-membership/. If you register as a grower, you will be automatically incorporated into a dedicated grower register.

The success of our industry has been due to the active participation of growers who brought experience and ideas from past agricultural industries, from commercial business and from the scientific world. Avocado growers in all states, all 850 of you, have had your say at field days, conferences, workshops, over the fence, in letters to me, and I urge you all to continue your involvement and to lobby HIA, DOA, and even AAL with constructive comments that will lead to better outcomes for your industry.

Jim Kochi

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia Limited



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CEO's Report

Season update

As expected, the Australian market has experienced lower volumes from February to April during the transition from Hass to Shepard. Supply across 2015 is expected to be fairly steady with no major peaks or troughs forecast. This should support a fairly stable market which hopefully will lead to good returns for growers again this year.

Horticulture Forum in Canberra

Jim Kochi and I attended a Horticulture Forum at Parliament House on 19 March convened by the Department of Agriculture. The program included informative presentations from various sections of the Department of Agriculture (including Biosecurity and Market Access), Horticulture Innovation Australia, Voice of Horticulture and others. Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck and the Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP also presented. The day also launched the new organisation Horticulture Innovation Australia and the new industry body the Voice of Horticulture. While we were in Canberra, we also met with senior Department of Agriculture staff to promote the good story about the avocado industry and to discuss some concerns we have regarding the new Horticulture Innovation Australia.

Modern Horticulture Award Review

A four-yearly review of the Modern Horticulture Award by the Fair Work Commission is currently underway and the Voice of Horticulture is working on behalf of its members to defend the current Award conditions. The Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Workers Union are currently pursuing claims which would see significant labour cost increases for horticultural businesses. Australia's labour costs are already amongst the highest in the world and recent data from the avocado benchmarking project has confirmed that labour is by far the largest operating cost for most growers. Information will be provided to growers soon seeking support for this effort. We need to do everything we can to secure reasonable labour rates for horticultural businesses.

Export Committee

The new Avocado Export Committee held its inaugural meeting in March to review the Avocado Export Plan and to develop priorities for 2015. Although only relatively small volumes of avocados are currently exported from Australia (about 4%), it is expected that this will change in years to come. Based on OrchardInfo data, production is set to continue to increase and industry needs to stay ahead of the game to ensure the balance of supply and demand is maintained. Exports will increasingly



play an important role. There are new markets developing in Asia as other suppliers such as Peru, Chile and Mexico gain access and Australia is well placed to take advantage of these new markets. Our greatest challenge at an industry level is to ensure workable market access protocols are developed and accepted by our trading partners. Long lead times are required to achieve this, which is why we need to be working hard on this now and the Avocado Export Committee is committed to implementing our Export Plan.

New business plan for Avocados Australia

The operating environment for Avocados Australia has changed significantly recently, particularly as a result of the formation of Horticulture Innovation Australia. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that there will be clarity of the new business environment for 12-18 months or more. Nevertheless, the organisation needs a plan that will ensure Avocados Australia continues to achieve its objectives and meet the needs of its Members and other stakeholders. Avocados Australia is in the process of developing a business plan. Staff and the Board have been reviewing the internal and external environment and developing both short term and long term strategies for the organisation. Most of what Avocados Australia does is focussed on implementing the Avocado Industry Strategic Plan. This plan is also due for a review and update in 2016.

Update on Voice of Horticulture (VOH)

As advised in the last issue of Talking Avocados, a new national advocacy organisation has been formed to provide a 'single voice' for the horticulture industry in Australia - the Voice of Horticulture (VOH). Avocados Australia is a member and I am one of the founding Directors. The organisation was officially launched at the Horticulture Forum in Canberra in March which provided excellent exposure for the organisation and achieved strong recognition by government of the role that the VOH will play in representing the horticulture sector on key issues in common. KPMG has recently been appointed by VOH to maintain an 'issues tracker' and to coordinate lobbying activities in Canberra. Avocados Australia has also recently been appointed to provide administration support and manage the communication function for the VOH on a fee for service basis.

HIA update

We are continuing to work with HIA to try and progress the avocado levy program. One key issue is the formation of an advisory structure. Since Industry Advisory Committees were disbanded in October 2014, there is no mechanism in place to advise HIA on how the avocado levies should be invested. As an interim measure, HIA plans to identify a group of growers to provide them with advice, although there is no information



about the process they plan to use.

HIA recently called for submissions to the HIA Consultation Paper: Determining the Strategic Investment Priorities for the Australian Horticulture Industry. This paper is in relation to what they are calling the Strategic Co Investment Fund Pool (SCIFP) which does not involve your levy funds. It is intended to fund large, across-horticulture projects using non-levy funds matched with commonwealth funds. Avocados Australia made a submission on behalf of the avocado industry. Our submission noted, firstly, that the investment of the SCIFP should be directed by a properly developed strategic plan. This does not yet exist and no details have been provided regarding how or when it will be developed. Notwithstanding this, the areas of focus that were suggested in the Avocados Australia submission were: 1. Market access – overcoming fruit fly barriers to market access; 2. Health, nutrition and wellness; 3. Chemical access – registration of new, effective crop protection products; 4. Development of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technology; 5. Increasing R&D capacity in the area of plant physiology; and 6. R&D to support improved biosecurity systems.

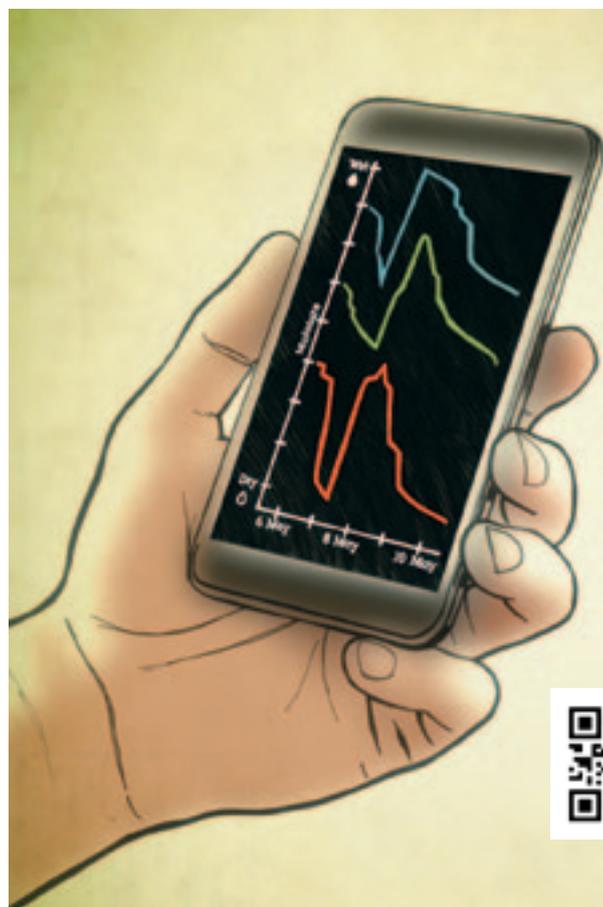
HIA is running a series of regional forums called Between the Rows. This is an opportunity to meet with HIA to hear firsthand how they plan to manage your levies. We will be providing information about these forums to growers in each region via electronic grower notices. I encourage you all to take the

opportunity to attend one of these sessions when they come to your region and make sure you ask lots of questions such as how the new company will work, how you as levy payers will have input and how the changes are expected to lead to better outcomes for levy payers.

New Work Health and Safety module on the BPR

The on-line Avocado Best Practice Resource (BPR) located on the Avocados Australia website contains extensive best practice information for all sectors of the avocado industry from growers to retailers. We currently have over 400 registered users of the site.

Over the past 18 months, Avocados Australia has been working with the Australian Centre for Agriculture Health and Safety and some avocado growers to develop a Work Health and Safety package tailored for the avocado industry. This has been designed to provide a number of tools to help growers and packers develop and implement WHS systems in their own businesses. Growers and packers will be able to use the various materials provided (guidelines, templates, checklists etc.) to develop a system that meet their individual requirements and their legal obligations. We will include a note in **Guacamole** once the system is on-line and ready for use.



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Around Australia

North Queensland Report

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



Usually this report is all about rain, cyclones and the miseries of growing avocado in the North Queensland tropics but for a change it will be about the opposite.

North Queensland is experiencing its driest summer for years and along with the dry comes a great improvement in the quality of Shepard. Field quality is very good and post-harvest quality is excellent. Hopefully the less wet conditions follow through the Hass harvest. Whilst we like the dry we also need the rain to replenish Tinaroo Dam and the aquifers around Atherton-Tolga because we are already at 75% water allocation from the aquifers. Prices have continued to be strong during the Shepard crop so happy times for all.

There have been significant new plantings in the Atherton-Walkamin area in the past two years and it will present some challenges in marketing for the crop to come in the next few years. Another fear is the issues with banana Fusarium TR4 looming to affect banana production there may be even more movement to plantings of avocado as an alternative to banana and adding even more pressure to the supply-demand situation.

Tri State Report

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



As I sit to write this report and reflect on what a difference a year makes. Last season saw growers battle with the most difficult growing season with extreme heat causing severe crop losses in many areas. Growers then had to endure one of the coldest winters for many years which has led to very poor fruit set in many areas. Both of these climatic events have pointed out the necessity of both heating and cooling systems that need to be in place for growers to be able to consistently produce avocados in this climate. It is interesting to note crop set on our trial rootstock patch is at last starting to supply us with some good information on cropping levels and tree growth. Most frustrating though is the long wait to obtain planting material with growers needing to plan their future planting needs very carefully to avoid being disappointed.

Our trials to date show both Ashdot and Dusa to be the planting material most able to handle our high PH soils and our severe climate. While still only early (four years) it is still encouraging to at last get some good feedback.

Growers should make a note that the South Australian Annual General Meeting will be held on the 19 May. Once again support from Qualicado will see guest speakers cover a range of topics relevant to our area. Hopefully we will be able to have updated market information available on the day. While not wanting

to sound bitter and twisted about the subject I am extremely disappointed in the attack that our peak body is being subjected to by the bureaucratic system. This has been ongoing through a change of government. So political parties cannot be blamed. Unknown faceless people have decided that grower peak bodies are not the best people to make decisions in the name of their members. Having seen the demise of the citrus, dried fruit and currently the train wreck that a once great wine industry was, it worries me that at a time when the avocado industry is looking so buoyant that we are going to be put under enormous financial pressure just to maintain the basic representation for our members. In finishing, I would like to wish all growers good luck through the oncoming winter. May we all emerge out the other end unfrosted given the good crops that are at present showing.

The VIII World Avocado Congress is being held this year from the 13th to 18th of September at the Westin Lima Hotel & Convention Centre in Lima Peru. Avocados Australia has been working on preparing a study tour to Peru and Chile that will include attendance at the congress (including a pre-congress tour) as well as on-farm visits to locations outside of Santiago in Chile. The study tour will take place if 25 or more members of our industry book the tour. More information about the World Avocado Congress and the study tour appears in an article located in the Industry Matters section of this magazine. You can also visit the VIII World Avocado Congress website online to view their preliminary program: www.wacperu2015.com.

Central Queensland Report

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



The actual level of Shepard production in the Central Queensland region has been less than expected, falling short of the forecasted figure. This combined with the crop levels from North Queensland have seen the Shepard market mirror that of 2014 with high returns. It would be reasonable to expect that the market through the winter will also be similar to 2014.

Fruitspotting bug (FSB) (*Amblypelta nitida*) activity has been a significant problem in the region this season. In fact the level of impact of FSB on fruit in orchards is perhaps the worst that we have seen so far in the region. FSB control continues to be among our top priorities for orchards in our region.

The Spring flush is looking very good and provides promising potential for a good season.

The first meeting of the Central Queensland Avocado Study Group was held on Wednesday 1 April and was well attended. The main topics covered on the day were "Orchards of the Future" and an update in regard *Phellinus noxius*. The study group meeting provided the means to inform growers about

the new research and development project entitled "Smaller trees and higher productivity". This is a project that has been funded by Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd using across industry funds. The day also included an inspection of the high productivity trial taking place at the Bundaberg Research Facility.

As the Chair of Avocados Australia has indicated, the Australian horticulture sector is moving in a new direction. The Minister for Agriculture has now declared, and welcomed in, Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) Limited as the new industry services body for horticulture. Growers are now being advised to apply to become direct members of the new industry services body in order to have a say on how the Avocado Industry levy will be spent. HIA say they will work in partnership with Australia's horticulture industries to invest more than \$100 million in research, development and marketing programs that provide benefit to industry and the wider community. But exactly how will avocado growers have a direct say? As avocado growers we have much at stake, and these are concerning times. Let us hope that by becoming direct members of HIA all this will become clear. It is very important that all avocado growers become members of HIA. At this point in time HIA has no established advisory mechanism in place to determine how the levy money is to be spent.

We encourage growers to apply for membership of HIA you can do this online at www.horticulture.com.au/apply-for-membership/.

South Queensland Report

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



Southern Queensland has had a reasonable growing period through summer. We have managed to get back some much needed leaf cover which will help for next season's crop. Crop yields are mixed due to hail, tree health and other factors.

I would like to put forward my take on the new Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) structure and how Avocados Australia (AAL) and avocados has been affected.

From an AAL point of view, and as your regional representative, it has been a difficult time for AAL and for me as a director to keep the ship heading in the right direction. It has seemed like we have hit an iceberg and have all been thrown into the life boats. Since industries gave the go ahead for the new organisation, and given assurance they would be consulted along the way, this just did not happen. It has been a disgrace to say the least on the way we have been treated.

What I am alluding to are the changes that the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and the Federal Agriculture minister have made to HAL and now the new HIA. As your representative, and a passionate avocado grower, I along with all other board



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Around Australia continued

members have been removed from being able to make decisions about how our levies are best spent. We are all conflicted apparently and now HIA are about to appoint new representatives somehow to take on this role. I hope that some of you do accept this role and get in and continue to drive this great industry forward the way I believe past representatives have.

We will all remain on the AAL board for the continuation of our terms and hopefully longer if we see that we can still all add value and input into the future of our industry. If we are not given that opportunity I myself will not be putting my hand up for another term as the South Queensland representative.

As some wise old person said to me, without conflict you have no interest. Please, whoever takes up these new positions make sure you have plenty of interest and challenge HIA if you feel you are being led in the wrong direction.

I am sure that somewhere along this stupid journey common sense will prevail, but remember this, you will all get told this new HIA is owned by growers. Up until now (for me) it feels like although we may own it, it is in fact being run by employees, which just doesn't feel quite right. Just remember that "it's a grower-owned company".

AAL will remain vital to the growth of the industry for many reasons which have probably been undersold for a long time. There is no better body to communicate industry information than AAL, through the likes of Qualicado, Guacamole, Talking Avocados and the like. HIA may think they can do this but they will give you the Swiss army style approach. It will try and cross over with other commodities and products and in the end you will only have a few useful tools like the bottle opener and the toothpick.

But in saying this, without AAL being able to manage the mentioned communication tools - not forgetting Infocado via levy funded projects - these may not exist into the future. It's up to us all to make sure that they do.

As you may read into this I am not happy about the changes that have been made. I am not happy that not only ours but all industries have been put on hold for nearly twelve months. That our Voluntary Contribution (VC) funded projects are now rolled

into a new "Pool 2 Research and Development fund". Also that we will get little say over how this is controlled and the fact that we have had the important consultation funding hijacked to run the all-important membership drive that HIA is currently running around the country.

To add to this, new accounting systems, HALO system, business cards, logos, web sites the list goes on. What a waste of money.

As your representative I will continue to do what we can to keep this industry vibrant and profitable and will do whatever I can to support the new levy advisory committee, however this ends up. For those that may end up on these bodies remember the vast knowledge AAL has and also remember to check when projects are put up to see that they have not been done before in the past. Under the new system there will be many that will be trying to get hold of our hard earned levy dollar so remember to ask plenty of questions and challenge if you feel something is not feeling quite right.

So, on a brighter note, avocado prices are still very good and look like they will hold into the future months. It is also great to see how many companies are using our great product, such as Vita-Weat, 7-Eleven, Vegemite, Subway, The Coffee Club and the list goes on. What a fantastic product we have.

I wish you all the best for a good season.

Sunshine Coast Report

By Robert Price, Avocados Australia Director for the Sunshine Coast Growing Area



The Sunshine coast area comprises a range of climatic conditions due to the geography of the area. So when reporting on weather conditions it difficult to give broad definitive results. That being said there are some areas close to the coast where costal rainfall in Nambour averaged 704mm April (last 60 to 70 days), Maleny averaged 1041mm and Mary Valley area average rainfall to April 537mm so we can see a 500mm (20 inch) difference across the areas. The rainfall has also been relatively sporadic, we have had good rainfall with some flooding followed by spells of hot dry conditions that dried out the soil and was beginning to burn off grass, again followed by good rain, the effect of this required careful monitoring and management of the irrigation regime.

Some feedback regarding fruit size and quality suggests that the fruit size is still under average for this time of year and that the fruit seems to be later in reaching maturity. I have seen some fruit on the local shelves which was obviously below dry matter content, however picking is beginning to ramp up in the area and there is some good robust fruit trickling through. The harvest this year will be comparable with last year's crop in quantity which indicates that the return to growers will also be similar.

With respect to Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA), the ongoing Government restructuring of a department (ex-HAL) which seems to have been pushing headlong with its agenda



of 'reform'. The critical thing I find missing at the moment is documentation stating explicitly the Department of Agriculture's role and extent of their responsibilities. How is the department to be held accountable? Organisations today set performance objectives with measurable outcomes, as a stakeholder we need to see those documented indicators and as a stakeholder have input to the objectives and outcomes. It worries me that the board of HIA seem to be running their own agenda while throwing the odd enticement to the levy payers.

I would urge everyone to visit the HIA website and even register as a member/stakeholder by going online to <http://www.horticulture.com.au/membership/>. There is some information on the site and you can receive promotional HIA information via email.

Tamborine and Northern Rivers Report

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



The weather conditions for our area continue to be quite

favourable. Rain fall has been adequate, and we thankfully missed the east coast low which hammered Sydney and the hunter in April. The first cool nights of the approaching winter have also been felt.

Thanks to all who attended the Qualicado workshop that was held in March near Alstonville. We had a great attendance and some excellent speakers. Thank you to the Avocados Australia staff and all the presenters and sponsors for putting on such a great show.

The Tamborine Northern Rivers growing area is set to have its biggest crop in years according to the Infocado forecast. For this reason it is important that all growers or packers on behalf of their growers make use of the Infocado system. Forecasts should be inputted into the system four weeks ahead of dispatching, and as accurate as possible forecasts and dispatch information should then be attained. The outputs of the system are only as good as the data entered. Good data allows pack sheds and consolidators, wholesalers and retailers to plan their marketing and ensure the best possible outcomes for us, the grower. I sincerely hope we all have a great harvest for 2015.



costa farms

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

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

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Contact: Simon Owen - 0401 711 606

 **Brisbane Wholesale Market**
Rocklea QLD
Contact: Ryan O'Keefe - 0427 604 211

 **Adelaide Wholesale Market**
Pooraka SA
Contact: Andrew Christophides - 0400 177 594

Around Australia continued

Western Australia Report

By David Duncan and Neil Shenton, Avocados Australia Directors for the Western Australia Growing Area

Western Australian growers, you may or may not be aware that things have changed, to what we are not really sure until Barnaby Joyce finally makes up his mind but what we do know is this Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), which used to fund research and marketing with your levies, matched by the Australian Government, was "controlled" by the Peak Industry Bodies (PIBs), of which Avocados Australia was one. HAL is now called Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd (HIA Ltd) and is to be controlled by you, the grower, directly. This means that to have a say you will need to become a member of HIA (<http://www.horticulture.com.au/apply-for-membership/>) so they can send you information on what is happening, including requests for research projects you may want done. You need to do this, don't ignore it!

HIA is in the process of establishing an interim avocado advisory group to provide advice on how the avocado levies should be invested over the next twelve months. The PIB will only be permitted two places which logically would be filled by the AAL Chairman, Jim Kochi and CEO, John Tyas. Other members will be appointed as determined by HIA staff. So your existing representatives Dave Duncan and I will be precluded by the structure set out by HIA.

Another body, called Voice of Horticulture, was set up, with much input from John Tyas, as a lobby to try to get intelligent outcomes when Barnaby Joyce started to change things. This body has now most PIB's on board, with the secretariat being run out of AAL offices. To keep up to date about the Voice of Horticulture's policies, news and activity visit their website (<http://voiceofhorticulture.org.au/>).

As things stand it looks to me that we are on a knife edge. While the existing model of PIB's holding regular meetings and



voicing their agendas could easily have been seen as inefficient and costly, I am not sure this is going to be any better, and will certainly be much, much worse unless you register and make yourself heard. There are huge sums of money involved, across all horticulture, and individuals, not necessarily with your interest at heart, and usually with no skin in the game, are waiting in the wings. Avocados have been a huge success in Australia and we need to ensure we don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

On a brighter note it looks as though a good crop is again hanging across most of the state, although most places are going through fruit drop. Always an anxious time! Probably a bit more than last season so support your marketers and packhouses who did such a magnificent job last season, the more information available to those who do the marketing on your behalf the better. And, if you do your own, please keep other marketers aware of your output. You can do this through Infocado, preferably, or with regular contact.

Central New South Wales Report

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



February, traditionally our hottest month, certainly lived up to its reputation. Combine that with further good rainfall and this gave us very humid conditions. Autumn has yet to produce much relief from these conditions.

Fruit is sizing quite well, most growers feel they have a better crop than last year. Unfortunately some areas are experiencing quite a large amount of fruit drop, so their crop expectations may not be realised.

At the time of writing this article, the last season's Hass harvest had come to an end, and the local Fuerte growers were about to commence their harvest.

The second Qualicado workshop for Central NSW will take place on Thursday 4 June. Claim the date in your diaries.

Planting Avocado Trees?

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Industry Matters

Industry Matters includes articles that have been published by various news sources and are acknowledged accordingly.

Tamborine Northern Rivers Qualicado Workshop hits the mark

On Thursday 26 March Avocados Australia and key avocado specialists presented growers and packers with the "Tamborine Northern Rivers Qualicado Workshop" a free and informative event aimed at covering a range of topics to assist avocado growers with fruit quality and productivity.

The Tamborine Northern Rivers Qualicado Workshop took place in an avocado orchard near Alstonville in New South Wales. Avocados Australia would like to thank Tom and Veronica Silver for hosting and supporting this event. Tom Silver is the Avocados Australia's Regional Director representing the Tamborine/Northern Rivers region and the event also provided growers in the region with the chance to hear their regional director's update on current news and issues.

Topics that were covered on the day included nutrition for healthy avocados, maximising profit in the avocado industry, avocado handling and temperature control, and how to leverage

Avocados Australia's Infocado reporting system. The day also provided growers with the means to track their performance using Grower Self Assessments. Presentations were followed by an orchard walk.

"Qualicado" represents a program of continuous improvement for avocado industry members. Growers and packers are encouraged to participate in this program because the overarching goal is to improve fruit quality for the end consumer. To find out more about the Qualicado program visit the Avocados Australia website (<http://industry.avocado.org.au>). Once at the website glide your cursor over the "Services" menu and then select "Qualicado".

Refer to the Qualicado Event Calendar to check your diaries for an event happening in your region.

Here are some images taken of the event.



Kathy Goulding from NSW DPI provided an overview of how to Implement the ICA30 Protocol.



Simon Newett from QDAF and host Tom Silver tour growers through his orchard.



Howard Hall from CDI Pinnacle Management presented on how to maximise profit in avocados.

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From left, Tom Silver, John Tyas (AAL) and Barmac's Ron Bollard, the sponsor for the day.

Qualicado Event Calendar for 2015

Those interested in attending any of the Qualicado Workshops can refer to the following calendar and all enquiries can be emailed to supplychain@avocado.org.au or call toll free 1300 303 971. Check your email updates for the details closer to each event. To add your contact details to Avocados Australia's contacts list email them to co@avocado.org.au.

Regional Workshops: (For growers and packers)	Metropolitan Workshops: (For wholesalers, proveedores, ripeners and transporters)
Tristate (VIC, SA, NSW): 21 May	Perth: 24 June
Central NSW: 4 June	Melbourne: 9 July
Western Australia: 25 June	Adelaide: 7 July
Central Qld: 6 August	

Avocados Australia's event information can also be viewed online visit our website at industry.avocado.org.au. Once there move your cursor over the maroon menu bar to "Events" then scroll down the list and click on "What's On".

Infocado

Infocado continues to play an integral part in assisting industry planning. As Western Australia and New Zealand finished their harvest season, volumes lightened as the North Queensland region had a slow start to their season (see Figure 1). The reduction in supply can be seen in Figure 1 when looking at the months of February and March.

The slow start to the North Queensland season can be attributed to slow fruit fill and maturation. Since March, dispatch volumes have increased and supply looks like it has steadied over the last two months. Infocado continues to track avocado supply well and, over the last 6 months, dispatch has been relatively close to forecast.

As seasonal conditions affect harvest periods the flow on effect to supply can be clearly seen in the Infocado graphs (see Figure 1 & 2).

As shown in Figure 2 the reduced supply in February and March 2015

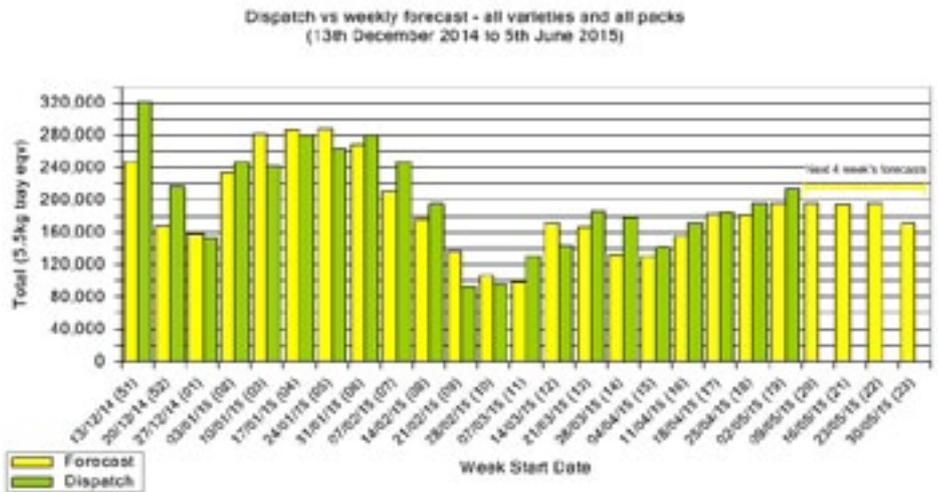


Figure 1: 6 Month Dispatch & Forecast Comparative Graph

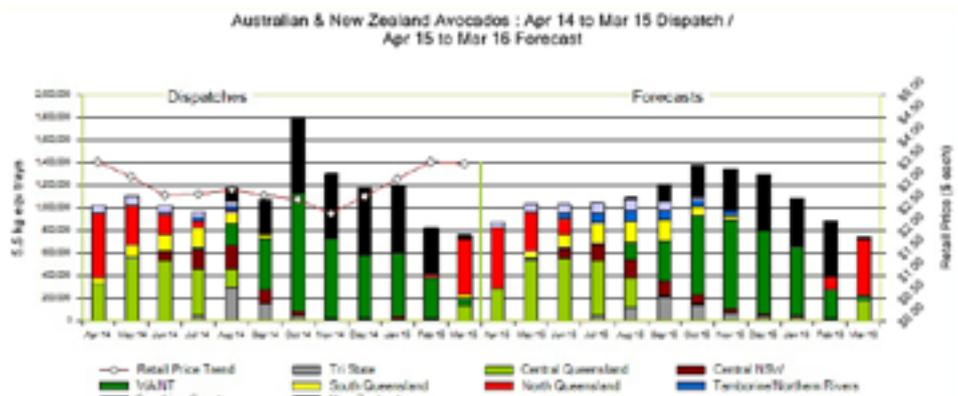


Figure 2: 12 Month Dispatch & Forecast Graph

is clearly evident when compared with previous months. The industry can still expect to see steady supply volumes throughout 2015 with no reductions to supply expected until February 2016 (see Figure 2).

As new plantings mature, Infocado becomes ever more important to assist growers and the broader industry in managing supply for sustainable returns and better fruit quality. We have seen that both under supplied and oversupplied markets can adversely impact on fruit quality. As past research has shown, once the quality at consumer level declines the repurchase of avocados also reduces. This would further exacerbate potential oversupply, so it benefits everyone in the supply chain to consistently deliver optimal quality.

Avocados Australia encourages all packhouses and wholesalers to contribute to Infocado. Contact Nathan Symonds supply chain program manager on 07 3846 6566 or email supplychain@avocado.org.au.

Retail Prices

Over the last six months the average retail price for Hass fruit, across all cities, has held steady despite the high and low supply volumes.

The average retail price for Shepard avocados has held steady when compared with last year's prices (Figure 7, 8 & 9).

The high prices recorded across Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne are similar to those recorded last year. The same can be said about the low prices that have recorded, except for in Melbourne which has recorded higher levels. This correlates with the supply of Shepard taking a little longer to become available to the Melbourne market.

Shepard volumes are yet to be seen in Perth with the local markets utilising the end volumes of the



Figure 3: 12 Month Sydney Retail Prices (Hass)



Figure 4: 12 Month Brisbane Retail Prices (Hass)



Figure 5: 12 Month Melbourne Retail Prices (Hass)



Figure 6: 12 Month Perth Retail Prices (Hass)

Industry Matters continued

Western Australia Hass season.

As the Western Australia season finishes we thought it an important point to reflect on how the retail prices compared with the volumes recorded through October and November 2014.

As everyone may remember the volumes through October and November 2014 were up to 75% higher than the volumes seen in the same months for 2014. Indications suggest that there was proactive engagement from industry members with the majors which no doubt helped move the large volumes. As can be seen from figures 10, 11, 12 & 13 the specials that were conducted over the last year saw fruit specials range from \$0.75 to \$2.25 / avocado.

The catalogue special graphs have been included for both Coles and Woolworths as a comparison for Perth and Sydney.

For more information on retail prices please visit the Avocados Australia Industry website at <http://industry.avocado.org.au/RetailPricing.aspx> where all current and historic data is uploaded.

OrchardInfo

Data collection for the season beginning in 2013 has now finished. Avocados Australia would like to thank all of you who took the time to provide their orchard data.

Avocados Australia would like to congratulate Russell Carey of Wemen Victoria and Victor Braun



Figure 7: 12 Month Sydney Retail Prices (Shepard)



Figure 8: 12 Month Brisbane Retail Prices (Shepard)



Figure 9: 12 Month Melbourne Retail Prices (Shepard)



of Ravensbourne Queensland, the winners of the incentive iPad prizes that were up for grabs.

The OrchardInfo program is designed to collect information about the total number of avocado trees growing in Australia. There are a number of benefits to individual businesses and industry. As a grower you will be provided with better information regarding estimated future production that can assist you with long term business decision making.

All the information submitted will now be aggregated and a summarised report will be sent to the OrchardInfo contributors. The data you submit will also ensure that, as an industry, we can better plan and be well prepared to market future volumes of fruit.

For more information contact the Supply Chain Program Manager, Nathan Symonds on (07) 3846 6566 or supplychain@avocado.org.au.

Best Practice Resource – Spotlight on Ripening

Do you know the steps that should be taken when ripening avocados?

Ripening avocados is a complex procedure in which factors such as the season, the growing district, the grower and fruit maturity need to be taken into account as well as a host of other factors. This information along with how to store avocados, conduct assessments, set and monitor ideal ripening conditions, and more can be accessed from Avocados Australia’s Best Practice Resource online.

If you are an Australian grower/packer/wholesaler/riper/transporter/exporter/retailer and you haven’t applied to access the Best Practice Resource apply for access now! To access the online application form and apply for access go online to: <http://bestpractice.avocado.org.au/register.asp>



Figure 10: 12 Month Coles, Perth Catalogue Specials (Hass)



Figure 11: 12 Month Woolworths, Perth Catalogue Specials (Hass)

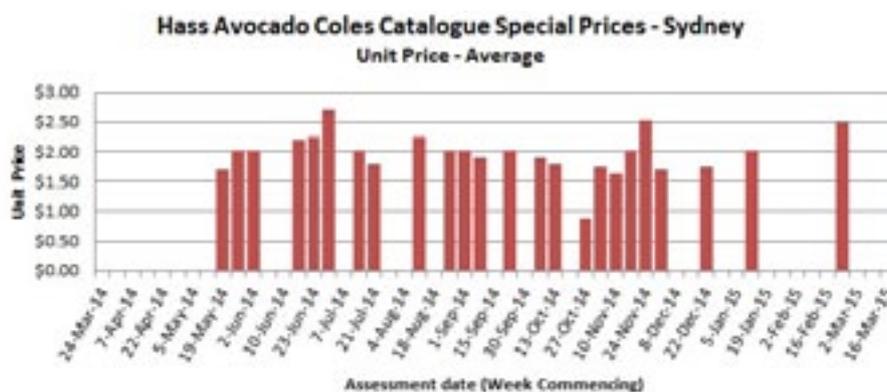


Figure 12: 12 Month Coles, Sydney Catalogue Specials (Hass)



Figure 13: 12 Month Woolworths, Sydney Catalogue Specials (Hass)

Industry Matters continued

VIII World Avocado Congress in Perú – 13-18 September



Lima in Peru, the host city of the World Avocado Congress.

The 8th World Avocado Congress 2015 (WAC2015) will be taking place this year from the 8th to 13th of September at one of the world's most exciting destinations, the city of Lima in Perú.

Lima, also known as "the city of the kings", is an excellent starting point when travelling to Peru and this congress is the most important event in the international avocado calendar. The congress presentations will take place at the Westin Lima Hotel and Convention Centre and pre and post congress tours are available in addition to the congress program.

To view the current VIII World Avocado Congress program see the official website online at <http://www.wacperu2015.com/program/preliminar-program/>.



The venue for the World Avocado Congress in Lima Peru.

The WAC2015 congress organisers have said that the scientific program for the congress will be inclusive of updated information regarding agricultural management and production and commercialisation. The congress will include new themes, such as Health and Human Nutrition amongst the research presentations which they say may influence the future of the industry.

South America offers an amazing range of adventures for travellers, and as an avocado production region South America (particularly Peru, Chile and Mexico) offers Australian avocado growers the extraordinary opportunity to see first-hand large-scale avocado production in action.

Snapshot of Production in Peru & Chile

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) FAOSTAT online resource data, in 2011 Peru produced around 213,000 tonnes of avocado. The avocado area harvested being approximately 20,000 hectares. In 2011 the top seven (7) producers of avocados in the world were, in order: Mexico, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, United States of America, Colombia, and Peru. ¹

Main Study Tour & Machu Picchu

Avocados Australia, in conjunction with Inca Tours (www.incatours.net), has been planning a proposed study tour of Peru and Chile to coincide with WAC2015. The Main Study Tour includes attendance at the congress, a pre-congress tour (to Trujillo, a short flight from Lima) followed by a program of activity taking place in Chile, using Santiago as a base. The on-farm visits, outside of Santiago, are within driving distance to locations near Llayquén and San Fernando. The Chile leg's on-farm visits will be guided with the assistance of two experienced agronomists based in the region. The study tour also includes sightseeing and the option to visit Machu Picchu in Peru.



A train ride through the Andes to Machu Picchu Village, Peru.



One of the wonders of the world, Machu Picchu in Peru.



Weavers Peru.

A stepping stone into South America

Attendance at the congress definitely provides delegates with the chance to visit so many other attractions and wonders within South America while there. Just in Peru among the main must-see locations are Machu Picchu, the Sacred Valley of the Incas, the Cuzco Cathedral, and Plaza Mayor in Lima. In Santiago in Chile there is La Moneda Presidential Palace (or Palacio de La Moneda), Plaza de Armas, and Santa Lucia Hill. The Main Study Tour includes a visit to one of Chile's famous wineries.



Palacio de La Moneda, Santiago, Chile.

For more information

For more information about Avocados Australia's proposed study tour to Peru and Chile please contact Anna Petrou AAL Communications Manager on 07 3846 6566 or email co@avocado.org.au.

Order your Kangaroo Labels

Avocados Australia manages the Kangaroo Label and a set of barcodes for use on Australian avocados.

To order Kangaroo Labels through our registered label companies, grower packers or packhouses should contact Avocados Australia so they may be issued with a Packhouse Registration Number. Contact Avocados Australia on toll free 1300 303 971 or email admin@avocado.org.au. Then source your Kangaroo Labels from a registered Kangaroo Label supplier listed below:

Registered Kangaroo Label Suppliers:

Aldine Printers: Ph: 07 4051 4330

J-Tech Systems: Ph: 02 6049 5001

Label Press Pty Ltd: Ph: 07 3271 2111

Warehouse Design and Packaging Pty Ltd: Ph: 02 9905 0963



Industry Matters continued

Acknowledgements:

Images provided courtesy of Inca Tours. We also thank Simon Newett from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for providing input into this article and his assistance with the study tour.

Sources:

¹ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) – FAOSTAT: Search for average avocado production for 2013. Retrieved: <http://faostat3.fao.org>

Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) Update

HIA Consultation & Membership

Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) has been undertaking a range of activities recently as part of their process of transitioning to HIA from HAL, which they say is due to be completed by the end of December 2015.

HIA has commenced the delivery of a series of events targeting growers around the country as part of their “Between the Rows” Regional Grower Meetings.

The first regional grower meetings were held in March and April. To view HIA’s “Between the Rows” event calendar go online to: www.horticulture.com.au/events/.

Information on HIA Model

A short brochure on HIA and its investment model has been made available online from the HIA website (www.horticulture.com.au). The brochure provides a brief overview on HIA, and includes details of the funding model for investments in Pool 1 (grower levies and matching Government funds) and Pool 2 (Government and investor funds).

HIA Avocado Advisory Mechanism and Procurement Process

Avocados Australia is continuing to work with HIA to try and progress the avocado levy program. One key issue is the formation of an avocado advisory structure. Since Industry Advisory Committees were disbanded in October 2014, there is no mechanism in place for industry to advise HIA on how the avocado levies should be invested. As an interim measure, HIA plans to identify a group of avocado growers to meet in June to provide them with advice.

Gem Avocado™ intellectual property development is licensed to SFFCS in Australia

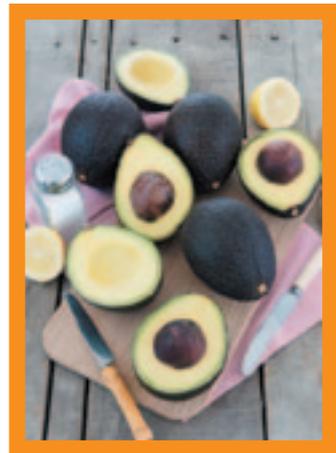
Queensland-based **Subtropical Fruit Farm Consultancy Services (SFFCS)** has been licensed to develop and manage the Intellectual Property of 3-29-5 (Gem Avocado™) in Australia. Denis Roe, owner of SFFCS is proud to be a key role-player in the further development of Gem Avocado™ in Australia.

Gem Avocado™ fruit are produced on a semi-compact, productive, vase shaped tree. Fruit skin colour turns from green (when on the tree) to a dark burgundy/black when ready to eat. The fruit are typically borne inside the canopy, mostly in clusters, thus protecting the fruit from the elements. The trees are also less prone to severe “alternate bearing” than ‘Hass’.

Harvest season of **Gem Avocado™** is later than that of ‘Hass,’ allowing for a later marketing window. In warm regions such as Bundaberg Qld, fruit harvesting will be from about July to September, in the cooler southern regions of NSW/Vic/SA harvesting about November or December, and in WA fruit will most likely hang until February. There are some 10,000 trees planted on Australian farms and these, together with future plantings, will form the nucleus of the future **Gem Avocado™ Growers’ Club**.

According to Dr Stefan Köhne, GM Research at Westfalia: “...it is encouraging to see the positive outcomes from independent taste panels conducted in the UK, where Gem Avocado™ scored better than late season ‘Hass’ in terms of eating quality. Gem Avocado™ trees also lend themselves to being planted at higher densities, and the compactness of the tree will allow for easier management of the trees...”

Gem Avocado™ fruit will be sold by only two marketing companies: **All Aussie Avocados** (Travis 0421 020 311), and **Natures Fruit Company** (Chris - 07 5496 9922). Nurseries or farmers wishing to grow **Gem Avocado™**, or growers looking for technical advisory services, can contact **Denis Roe** at 0401 546 107 or denisroe1@gmail.com, or visit the **Gem Avocado™** page on the website www.avocadofarmadvice.com.



Attractive Gem Avocado™ fruit produce an excellent eating experience!



www.avocadofarmadvice.com

HIA Consultation Paper re Strategic Investment Priorities for Pool 2

Submissions to the HIA Consultation Paper seeking stakeholder input on the strategic investment priorities for its Pool 2 strategic investment program closed on 31 March 2015. The Consultation Paper sought stakeholder input on the priorities for the HIA strategic investment fund. This paper is in relation to what they are calling the Strategic Co Investment Fund Pool (SCIFP) which does not involve your levy funds. It is intended to fund large, across-horticulture projects using non-levy funds matched with commonwealth funds.

Avocados Australia made a submission on behalf of the avocado industry. Our submission noted, firstly, that the investment of the SCIFP should be directed by a properly developed strategic plan. This does not yet exist and no details have been provided regarding how or when it will be developed. Notwithstanding this, the areas of focus that were suggested in the AAL submission were: 1) Market access – overcoming fruit fly barriers to market access; 2) Health, nutrition and wellness; 3) Chemical access – registration of new, effective crop protection products; 4) Development of IPM technology; 5) Increasing R&D capacity in the area of plant physiology; and 6) R&D to support improved biosecurity systems.

Where to now:

HIA is in the process of reviewing all of the submissions. They will prepare the draft White Paper that will explain how the co-investment funding pool will work, and identify the suggested priority research funding areas (based on input received via the Consultation Paper submissions). The white paper is expected to be finalised by HIA in June and will be based on all input received and published. Implementation of the findings of the white paper is expected to take place from July onwards. If you have any questions in regards the process or the operation of Pool 2, please contact John Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer, Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited, on 02 8295 2321.

Queensland researcher to map the avocado genome

A Queensland horticulture researcher is working to unlock the genetic mystery that is the humble Hass avocado.

Dr Alice Hayward, a scientist at the University of Queensland, said her project to develop the first public draft genome for the fruit will underpin future crop improvement.

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Industry Matters continued

"The need for a genome is huge and it will have such tremendous power for the industry," she explained.

"Finding genes that improve avocados' resilience to diseases will potentially help save growers years in breeding new varieties.

"If we find genetic factors that improve things like disease, or drought tolerance in avocado, we can look for them in other horticultural produce as well."

Dr Hayward's research has just received a \$40,000 funding boost, after she won both the Minister's Award and the Horticulture Innovation Australia Award at the 2015 Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The avocado-lover said the genome project will feed into a wider study program at UQ's Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation.

A team of scientists, led by Associate Professor Neena Mitter, is working on various avocado crop improvements including clonal propagation and disease resistance, particularly for the root-rot phytophthora which costs the Australian industry up to \$40 million in lost production.

"It's the biggest killer of avocado globally; it actually means 'plant destroyer' in Greek," said Dr Hayward.

Source: www.abc.net.au

Consultations start on food origin labelling

In early April the Australian Government announced that they would be beginning consultations and in-depth consumer research in order to deliver clearer and more consistent country of origin labelling for food sold in Australia.

Minister for Industry and Science Ian Macfarlane and Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce said the Government wanted country of origin labelling that gives consumers the information they

need without imposing excessive costs on industry.

The Ministers met with key food industry stakeholders at a roundtable meeting in Sydney today to discuss the next steps in introducing a clear and easy-to-understand food labelling system.

"During April and May we will consult closely with food manufacturers, retailers, agricultural producers and consumers and conduct national in-depth consumer research," Mr Macfarlane said.

"We will also consult extensively with State and Territory Governments, whose co-operation will be essential to implement changes in a timely and cost-effective way.

"Part of our discussions will be about ways technology could be used to provide even more information to consumers about the food they buy without cluttering up labels - including apps shoppers can download onto their mobile phones and other devices.

"The bottom line is to give consumers the information they are calling out for, without imposing excessive costs on industry."

Minister Joyce said the Australian people have asked for this change and that the Government would deliver it.

"Australian consumers have made it clear they want unambiguous and more consistent country of origin food labelling, so they can make more informed choices about the food they buy," Mr Joyce said.

"We hear clearly that consumers want more information about where their food has been grown and processed. I've received in the order of 26,000 emails and about 150 personally written letters asking us to make improvements to country of origin labelling, and more than a million Australians visited my website in response to the Government's announcement.

"Current labelling in many instances is misleading and people have a right not to be misled about the origins of the food they buy.

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"Simple, diagrammatic information on a package will allow people to tell at a glance what proportion of the food in a package comes from Australia – and it must be compulsory.

"The Government is taking action on this issue now and will steadily work through the complex implementation process. Of course there will be a phase-in period to ensure Australian producers have time to adjust to new labelling requirements.

"This was one of the key issues raised as part of the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper process and I'm pleased to see this important reform being progressed independently of the forthcoming White Paper."

A working group of Ministers representing sectors including industry, agriculture, small business, health and trade will develop the Government's position on improvements that do not impose excessive costs on industry.

Consultations will include a series of roadshows for businesses and consumers in both metropolitan and regional centres and consumer market research.

More information on the consultation and consumer research is available at: www.industry.gov.au/cool.

Source (excerpt): Australian Government Department of Industry and Science media release (1 April 2015).

BeeAware has the latest on honey bees and pollination



There are big benefits to be had from honey bee pollination, according to Plant Health Australia (PHA), and the best way to find out how is to check the crop-specific information on the BeeAware website and keep up-to-date by signing up for the monthly e-newsletter.

BeeAware is a hub of information for growers and beekeepers about honey bee biosecurity and pollination of a variety of horticultural and agricultural crops.

The BeeAware newsletter helps beekeepers and growers get the



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www.westnfresh.net.au



Industry Matters continued

latest news and information about beekeeping and pollination. Subscribe before 3 July 2015 and you will go into the draw to win a range of honey bee and pollination manuals and publications.

According to PHA's honey bee specialist, Sam Malfroy, BeeAware provides all of the information that growers need to know about pollination: how it works, use of pesticides, pollination agreements, how to prepare for Varroa mite and how to promote a healthy pollinator ecosystem in a farm or orchard.

"It's also a great place to learn more about honey bees, their biology, and the pests and diseases which affect them," Malfroy said.

A wide variety of crops including almonds, passionfruit, apples and pears, berries, cherries, stonefruit, melons, avocados and some vegetables are known to benefit from pollination by honey bees. Broadacre crops such as faba beans, sunflowers and canola also receive major benefits from honey bee pollination. BeeAware explains exactly how growers can gain maximum benefit from these helpful insects and receive valuable yield and quality improvements in the produce that they grow.

"Each crop has a page of its own," added Malfroy, *"which details the pollination requirements of the crop as well as giving useful links and fact sheets from Australia and around the world."*

Honey bee and pollination books up for grabs

Subscribers who sign up to the BeeAware newsletter before 3 July go into the draw to win a copy of the highly sought after RIRDC publications which cover major areas such as honey bee biology, pests and diseases and crop pollination in Australia. *"These books are a must-have resource for any beekeeper or grower in Australia,"* Malfroy said.

The site was developed by a partnership between the Australian Government, the honey bee industry and pollinator-reliant industries through the Pollination Program which is managed by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Horticulture Innovation Australia.

Visit the BeeAware website at www.beeaware.org.au

Barnaby Joyce welcomed HIA as new RDC for Australian horticulture

Earlier this year key representatives from the Australian horticulture industry attended Parliament House to officially welcome Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA) as the new grower-owned Research and Development Corporation (RDC) for

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...ISN'T IT TIME YOU CAME ON BOARD?

Australia's \$9.5 billion horticulture sector.

Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, recently hosted a Horticulture Industry Forum bringing together a number of fruit and vegetable industry representatives, at which he officially welcomed HIA as the new RDC body.

The event included presentations on some of HIA's major research and marketing projects that are shaping the future of horticulture in Australia.

"The forum provided key industry representatives the opportunity to discuss important horticulture issues with senior industry and government leaders, an event offering an ideal platform to formally introduce HIA," Mr Joyce said.

"This is an exciting time for horticulture growers who can now have a direct say on how their levy money is spent as for the first time, they are the owners of their RDC."

"The presentations on the latest R&D and marketing outcomes highlight the Government's shared commitment with HIA to drive greater farm gate returns for our growers and improve our global competitiveness."

HIA CEO John Lloyd said HIA is well on track to being fully established by the end of the year.

"The transition to a grower-owned RDC is the beginning of a new era for Australian horticulture," Mr Lloyd said.

"We are taking all necessary steps to implementing a new and improved investment model, with appropriate consultation mechanisms, which will be outcomes driven for our growers."

"The entire horticulture value chain now has the opportunity to have their say and let us know what they think should be the investment priorities for HIA, and help us address and solve critical issues in the horticulture industry, by making a submission this month to our Consultation Paper, which is available on our website."

The event featured a cooking demonstration by celebrity chef Matt Wilkinson showcasing the best of Australian vegetables and attendees were treated to a display of fresh seasonal produce

and samplings of Tasmania's organic Willie Smiths' apple cider.

Source: getregional.com.au

Coles to spend \$50m on farmers

Coles recently announced that they plan to spend \$50 million on nurturing farm businesses.

The "Nurture Fund" will help small Australian food and grocery producers, farmers and manufacturers to innovate and grow their business, with \$50 million allocated over five years in grants and interest-free loans to fund the development of new market-leading products, technologies and processes.

The Fund will be open to businesses with less than \$25 million in annual revenue and 50 or fewer full-time employees.

The National Farmers' Federation (NFF) said if implemented well, the new fund could be a win-win for all participants across the food supply chain.

"Strong, private investment in the farm sector offers many potential benefits, including better infrastructure, uptake of new technology and improved protection for seasonally-affected businesses from income volatility," NFF CEO Simon Talbot said.

"For example, a grower might invest in hydroponics at height, lifting worker productivity and reducing water-use. Immediately, benefits can flow from reduced costs, and the ability for farmers to produce more, with less, for longer."

The announcement was recently made at a vegetable farm in Werribee, Victoria by Coles managing director John Durkan. He said the fund would help producers take the next step in improving productivity and innovation.

"Through investing in productivity driving activities we can not only provide better value to customers but also help set up small businesses to develop the products and platforms to expand their operations and, in some cases, export into global markets," Mr Durkan said.

Source (excerpt): www.theland.com.au



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Industry Matters continued

A Farewell to Terry Campbell



After thirty-five years working at the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Terry Campbell is looking to retire.

Terry has had a long and distinguished career and has worked extensively within the Australian avocado industry and other industries (including mangoes).

He has worked with businesses and key organisations across the length and breadth of the avocado supply chain.

Born and educated in Brisbane, Terry's father had tried tin mining and tobacco farming but eventually moved into teaching. Campbell was inspired to pursue a career in agricultural science

due both to his genuine interest in science and his family background in agriculture.

He acquired his agricultural science degree through the University of Queensland and completed a masters degree in agricultural extension through the University of Reading (UK).

Terry's contributions to the avocado industry have been broad. He was instrumental in helping the Shepard become an established cultivar, working with the Shepard Avocados group in North Queensland in their formative years.

He contributed new models for industry development and in his role as an extension officer he helped avocado growers to improve productivity and profitability. He worked with the Supply Chain Innovation R&D team developing training packages on ripening and handling of avocados. He developed best practice guides for all steps in the chain, delivering training on ripening and handling for wholesalers and retailers throughout Australia.

More recently he contributed to avocado exports by developing effective training modules and providing on the ground training in key export markets. He also provided considerable assistance to the domestic market through developing a robustness test for library trays, improved recommendations for ripening and handling, and in field training and advice to pack houses and

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ripening facilities across Australia. He also helped develop avocado firmness models to demonstrate the various stages of ripeness in an avocado, models used in training people to assess fruit ripeness.

"I guess one career for life is not that common these days but I did transfer around a lot so that gave me the changes we all desire," he said.

Terry counts his work with Shepard Australia, the avocado ripening systems, Qualicado and his attendance at the VII World Avocado Congress 2011 in Cairns as career highlights in his involvement with the avocado industry to date.

When asked about the future of the industry Terry believes that the greatest opportunities for advancing the Australian avocado industry is in the trend for industry organisations to take over the role of extension and change management.

"This coincides with a reduced role for government services and a greater role for consultants but the gap is in industry-wide improvement to meet changing markets," he said.

"A great example of this is in the Qualicado project where the industry has really invested in industry wide improvement. Research and Development organisations and industry groups need to embrace this, certainly it is a trend in most other developed countries."

Of the future challenges that may face the Australian avocado supply chain Terry believes that this may lie in improving efficiencies.

"The avocado industry is in that sweet spot of high consumer demand, a healthy product and versatility. However there will be pressure on prices. The challenge in the supply chain is to do it efficiently, to drive out waste and wasteful practices. To do this we need to reduce the variability of the product from different growers and regions."

"Individual supply chains may be able to do this by improving the flow of information throughout the supply chain to reduce costly storage and getting more predictability in product performance."

Irene Kernot, Director for Tropical Fruit & Value Chains RD&E at Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, believes that Terry has qualities that make him an excellent extension officer.

"His ability to tell the story exactly right, translating a knowledge of avocado production and handling into messages that make good sense and can be put to immediate use make him an outstanding extension officer," said Kernot.

"Terry passes on the avocado role to Noel Ainsworth, another of the team from the early nineties in Mareeba. Noel will be taking this role on with equal enthusiasm."



Noel Ainsworth joins QDAF as the new Principal Supply Chain Horticulturist.

Terry Campbell is currently on pre-retirement leave and is having a 'trial' of living in southern Tasmania before fully committing to retirement.

"I would like to thank the avocado industry for their friendship and support over the last two decades. I wish you all the best for the future."

Avocados Australia would like to thank Terry Campbell for the various contributions he has made to the Australian avocado industry.

"Terry has worked with the industry's supply chain project extensively and his role in supporting our retailer training has been valuable," said **John Tyas CEO of Avocados Australia**.

"We wish Terry and his family well for the future."

We are pleased to be able to pass on these words of appreciation and thanks from some of Terry Campbell's colleagues:

"Terry Campbell is unique. We worked together in Mareeba and the first project we did together was Shepard Australia, helping a little known variety with a niche in the market to work together to take on the might of New Zealand Hass. Never short of a good idea. I remember the avocado store surveys magically timed for Mardi Gras in Sydney with a group of Mareeba growers, and that was before he bought the safari suit attire in which he took Australian avocados to the world."

Irene Kernot, Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

"I have worked with Terry over the last 15 years. Terry has a strong passion for horticulture and especially from harvest to plate. He has deep insights into post-harvest systems and value chain concepts. We will miss Terry's experience and insights."

Peter Hofman, Queensland Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

"Congratulations to Terry on his valuable contribution to the Australian avocado industry over the many years of his career with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Terry has always been a team player and worked collaboratively with both the R&D community and industry. I will remember Terry for his creativity and ability to think outside the square to develop innovative solutions, his focus on understanding customers and what they needed, and his jovial personality that made it a pleasure to work with him. Well done Terry - you have made a difference for not only the avocado industry but also the many colleagues who have worked with you." - Scott Ledger, Senior Horticulturist, Hort VC Group

“Achieving more consistent yields of quality fruit in the Australian avocado industry”

Research Project Overview (Project AV14000)

By *Simon Newett, Principal Extension Horticulturalist, Qld Department of Agriculture and Fisheries*

Inconsistent yields from year to year in the Australian avocado industry create issues throughout the value chain. They lead to management difficulties for growers, packers and distributors such as staffing, workloads and cash flow. They also create difficulties in developing and maintaining market share due to unreliability of supply.

One of the causes of inconsistent supply is ‘irregular bearing’. This occurs when there is adequate flowering but factors like cold weather at fruitset, poor bee activity or excessive heat adversely affect fruitset and retention.

A survey in 2012 (AV12028) identified that there was a significant issue with irregular bearing in the Australian industry

and a minor issue with alternate bearing (alternate bearing is associated with poor flowering every second year). Whilst the 2012 survey did not identify alternate bearing as a major issue in Australia, as tree yields increase to 15 t/ha and above the chances of alternate bearing occurring will increase, it is therefore important that growers are made aware of it and know what measures can be taken to minimise its occurrence.

Regions that have historically shown to be most susceptible to irregular and/or alternate bearing, are West Moreton (South Queensland), Mid and Central Coast New South Wales, Tristate and Western Australia for ‘Hass’ and North Queensland and Central Queensland for ‘Shepard’. The project will provide training to growers in these areas on how to collect information on tree phenology, particularly flowering and the identification of male and female flower stages of commercial varieties and potential polliniser varieties. A recording kit will be designed and provided to participants. The project will attempt to identify potential pollinisers for different regions.

Temperature and humidity data together with significant weather events from the start of flowering, through fruitset



Growers on an orchard walk at a recent avocado growers' event.

and until natural fruit shedding is over will be collected across a number of locations with the help of automatic data loggers. This information, together with the phenology data, will be analysed to identify 'pollination events' to help explain the level of fruitset.

The information collected will be presented and discussed at grower workshops to create better awareness of the issue. A report will be prepared and uploaded to the Best Practice Resource (BPR) on the information collected.

Project aim, strategies, outputs and intended outcomes

The aim of the project is to provide Australian avocado growers with the knowledge required to implement practices that will lead to more consistent high yields of good quality fruit.

There are four main parts to the project:

1. Regional study group workshops
2. Collection of phenological and weather information relating to flowering, fruitset and fruit retention in relation to irregular bearing, identification of pollination events and potential polliniser varieties.
3. Maintaining and expanding the BPR and encouraging the industry to use it.
4. A special study, review and update of recommended avocado nutritional practices

The strategies for each of these parts are as follows:

1. Engage Australia's commercial avocado growers in a series of regional farm workshops where they will develop a better understanding of how to implement practices that will result in more consistent yields of high quality fruit. There will be an emphasis on strategies to minimise the occurrence and development of irregular and alternate bearing. Forty two regional grower workshops will be held across eight major avocado production regions in Australia (some of these will be combined with Avocados Australia's Qualicado workshops). They will cover key topics identified as having an influence on irregular bearing, alternate bearing, productivity and fruit quality. Detailed, illustrated minutes will be prepared and distributed after each workshop.
2. Encourage growers to become more observant of tree phenology particularly at flowering time so that they gain a better understanding of the crop cycle, can identify problems associated with flowering and fruitset and make appropriate management decisions to improve and maintain crop set. This will also include monitoring temperature and humidity through flowering, fruitset and early fruit development.

3. Encourage growers to make use of the 'Growing' section of the industry's on-line 'Best Practice Resource' (BPR) to get the most up-to-date information on growing avocados. Information in the 'Growing' section of the avocado industry BPR will be updated as required, added to, and will host the illustrated minutes and presentations from the study group workshops. In addition three instructional videos on important topics will be produced and uploaded. The team will liaise closely with other R&D staff working in avocado (mainly in Australia but also with overseas contacts) to source information required to keep the material in the BPR up to date.
4. A survey on nutritional practices will be conducted of a number of growers and consultants across different regions. The information will be compiled and a nutrition 'summit' held attended by growers, consultants and crop nutrition experts to review and update existing nutrition guidelines. The new guidelines will be published in the Best Practice Resource and will also be extended to growers via the regional study group meetings.

The intended outcomes are that Australian avocado growers will be better informed and able to take steps to produce higher and more consistent yields of good quality fruit through minimisation of irregular and alternate bearing and better adoption of orchard best practices.

Another expected outcome will be enhanced communication between growers and other sectors of the industry.

Project team

A team approach will be used with extension staff located in North Queensland, Central Queensland, South-East Queensland, Tristate and Western Australia. The project will be led from Nambour in South-East Queensland where two of the extension officers are located together with a project support officer as well as the team that specialises in the production of videos for horticulture. The team will liaise closely with other R&D staff (e.g. plant pathologists) to source information required to keep the material in the BPR up-to-date and to deliver the regional grower workshops.

Team members and their locations are as follows:

Simon Newett, DAF Qld, Nambour, SEQ

Peter Rigden, DAF Qld, Nambour, SEQ

Debby Maxfield, DAF Qld, Nambour, SEQ (project support)

Geoff Dickinson, DAF Qld, Mareeba, NQ

Helen Hofman, DAF Qld, Bundaberg, CQ

Shane Mulo and **Ingrid Jenkins**, DAF Qld, Nambour, SEQ (videos)

Lisa Martin, Ripe Horticulture.

Marketing Update

By *Duncan Sinclair, Marketing Services Manager, Horticulture Innovation Australia (The Love for Avocados article)* and *Sonya Rogers, Account Director, Bite Communications (Health update article)*.

The Love for Avocados is Growing - Wave 2 Research Results

Wave 2 of the avocado campaign research tracker was completed in November 2014 with strong results that show the consumers' love for avocados and our new campaign continues to grow. This campaign tracker is a dedicated survey that replicates the Project Accelerator strategic research first implemented in October 2012. This original research defined Australian Avocados new segmentation and informed the overall strategic direction for marketing activities for the next three years.

Research Methodology

The aim of the research was to assess the effectiveness of the advertising campaign and the impact it has had in growing the target "Lovers" and "Enthusiasts" segments. The detailed findings are also there to provide a recommendation as to direction and effectiveness of on-going marketing activity.

Wave 1 of the research was completed in July 2014 directly after the first advertising campaign was launched from April to June. These results were summarised in the Talking Avocados Spring 2014 edition (Vol 25 No 3). Wave 2 of the research was completed in November 2014 after the second burst of advertising activity over September and October.

The research approach is a 15 minute structured online interview, incorporating a nationally representative sample of n=1,300 Main Grocery Buyers. This was consistent with the previous research and allows for comparisons to be made between the previously collected attitudes and behaviours relating to avocado purchasing and consumption. Areas of exploration within the questionnaire included:

Avocado Purchase Behaviour and Consumption

1. Avocado usage patterns (including opportunities to grow breakfast consumption)
2. Attitudes towards avocados
3. Drivers and barriers to avocado purchase
4. Avocado advertising
5. Demographics and socio economic characteristics

Key Findings and Results

Overall the Wave 2 results show that the growth in the core avocado Lovers and Enthusiasts segments has been maintained

and that importantly their purchase frequency has increased since Wave 1. Compared to 2012 on measures of average purchase frequency, purchase quantity and segment sizes of Avocado Lovers and Enthusiasts all have successfully increased over the last two years. Overall ad awareness has increased and responses to the ad continue to be positive, with the "happy" and humorous tone resonating well. The ad also makes consumers want to buy more avocados and most can see themselves buying more avocados in the future. Importantly consumers, particularly Lovers and Enthusiasts, feel more confident selecting a ripe avocado.

Ad Recognition has increased

Ad recognition is an important tracking measure of how memorable the ad is to consumers and also how effective the media placement has been with the investment provided. Given this was the second wave of advertising the assumption was that there is residual consumer awareness or foundation of the campaign to build upon. The great news was that we have built on these foundations with ad recognition increasing by 8 points from 22% in wave 1 to 30% of those surveyed in wave 2, that's almost 1 in 3 consumers.

Making consumers want to buy more avocados

Not only do we want more consumers to recognise our advertising but we want to convert that awareness into some form of action. To gauge this more closely the survey measures to what extent consumers agree or disagree with a list of statements including calls to action of buying and eating avocados. In this second wave more consumers agreed the ad made them want to buy an avocado which was an increase of 2 points from 45% to 47%. This was an even greater result for our target Enthusiasts with an increase of 5 points wave on wave to 55%. In terms of the ad making consumers wanting to eat avocados, this remained at the same level overall at 60%.

The future is looking healthy

Essentially consumers agreed that they can see themselves buying more avocados in the future. This is great news and speaks to the ongoing popularity of avocados as an emerging staple. Our target consumer segments who are also the most regular purchasers, 96% of Lovers and 79% of Enthusiasts, agreed with the statement that they can see themselves buying more. Whilst price remains the largest barrier to many consumers our target segments continue to show strong commitment to avocados.

Get a good Feeling and a memorable tagline

As we are planning for ongoing media investment throughout 2015 it is important to ensure that the ad continues to resonate with ALL avocado consumers (those that say they recognise the

ad (30%) and those potential consumers who don't recognise it (70%). This speaks to the potential longevity of the campaign that it continues to be memorable and delivering positive messages. Overwhelmingly 74% agreed that they get a good feeling from watching the ad and 59% who saw it remembered the tagline "love that avocado feeling".

More confident consumers

In this survey we also measured differences or changes in attitudes on selecting and ripening avocados. Lack of confidence in selecting and ripening were identified in the 2012 strategic research as significant barriers to regular or ongoing purchase and was the driver for building strategies around educational messaging. Whilst this is not a key message of the television ad the research identified that consumer confidence is up compared to 2012. Both Enthusiasts and Lovers agreed they feel more confident in picking a ripe avocado.

These research results have provided further reassurance that ongoing investment in media to support this advertising will continue to provide benefits to industry as we move into the 2015/16 marketing planning.

An Update on Nutrition and Health

Enjoying a serve of avocado a day could help keep the doctor away – and that is news we want to share.



A campaign communicating the nutritional benefits of avocados with health professionals and media is in full swing and although only in its early stages, there have already been great results.

Australian Avocados Dietitian Lisa Yates reviewed the past 20 years' scientific research on the nutritional benefits of avocados to create a 12 page summary report for health professionals.

"Australian Avocados – An Update on Nutrition and Health" includes the key findings that, as part of a healthy diet, avocados may:

- Lower LDL "bad" cholesterol and boost HDL "good" cholesterol, contributing to cardiovascular health;
- Help absorption of colourful carotenoids necessary for eye health;
- Assist in weight management;
- Improve glucose tolerance for people with diabetes; and
- Avocados are also rich in folate, which is needed during pregnancy for tissue development.

It also provides details on Australian Avocado varieties, growing areas and emphasises the recommendation to eat 50g of



avocado daily – about a third of a small avocado or a quarter of a large avocado.

The purpose of the review was to create a resource for health professionals and inspires them to share the information with their patients, clients and the general public.

To help achieve this goal, a series of four social media infographics were created that bring to life the key findings from the report.

In addition, a news release was written about a newly published US study that shows eating an avocado a day as part of a

Marketing Update continued

moderate-fat diet is almost twice as effective as a lower-fat diet in reducing “bad” LDL cholesterol.

The “Australian Avocados – An Update on Nutrition and Health” report, infographics and news release were sent to 200 health professionals including dietitians, nutritionists, GPs, diabetes educators and fitness professionals.

Those on the list were health professionals that are influential in the media and have a strong social media following, for example dietitians who regularly appear on television or who have a number of people following them on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Australian Avocado Dietitian Lisa Yates also guest authored blogs/articles for five key online health sites including The Scoop on Nutrition, One Handed Cooks and Dr Joe.

To further leverage the valuable materials, it was decided to share this information with leading women’s and health magazines with the aim of generating magazine coverage and

informing consumers.

Gorgeous hampers of avocados and a media kit containing the report, news release and infographics, were shared with health writers at 10 leading magazines including Women’s Day, Australian Women’s Weekly, and New Idea. The media kits were also shared with a further 20 magazines.

Feedback from both health professionals and health writers at magazines has been very positive with many happy to receive the information and quick to use the materials provided on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Lola Berry, a nutritionist and regular on television shows such as the Today Show, emailed, “I love, love, love avos! Thanks for this, brill info!” Dietitian Karen Inge, who’s a regular on leading Melbourne talkback radiostation 3AW emailed to say “I am an avocado fan from way back. Still very high on my breakfast choices. Love, love, love them!!”

The results to date include:

- Direct communication with 200 health professionals;
- Posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter by health professionals with a potential reach of almost half a million people;
- Four blogs on the health benefits of avocados with more blogs expected in April/ May; and
- Based on feedback, we also expect to see coverage in leading magazines starting from May.

If you’d like a copy of the “Australian Avocados – An Update on Nutrition and Health” report, it is now available online at <http://bit.ly/2015AvocadoReport>





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Grower Profile

Chris Smith, Summerland House Farm House With No Steps, Alstonville, NSW



Above from left, John Tyas CEO of Avocados Australia, Chris Smith from Summerland Farm and Nathan Symonds (AAL)

In March this year Talking Avocados had the chance to visit with Chris Smith, Horticulture Manager at Summerland Farm. Summerland Farm is an avocado and macadamia orchard set in the hills of the Alstonville Plateau in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. It is owned and run by House With No Steps (HWNS), an organisation that has been supporting people with a disability for more than 50 years. Their founder, Lionel Watts, made it his mission to break down barriers for people with a disability. HWNS are now regarded as one of Australia's largest disability organisations and now successfully provide employment to people with a disability to help them achieve their goals and fulfil their potential. Summerland Farm provides full-time employment to over 90 people with a disability and their workers are actively involved in the care of the orchards, its maintenance, as well as assisting at harvest and in packing Summerland Farm's fruit.

Since its establishment Summerland Farm has gone from strength to strength and they regard themselves as 'the agricultural hub' of the region. The site is also a must-see tourist

attraction and includes an education centre attracting over 70,000 visitors per year.

Avocados Australia's John Tyas and Nathan Symonds caught up with Chris Smith and visited their orchards and packing shed. Talking Avocados took the opportunity to find out more about their operation.

When did Summerland Farm's orchards become established?

Summerland farm was established almost 45 years ago.

What avocado varieties do you grow and why?

We grow predominantly Hass due to its marketability. Other varieties we grow are Fuerte and Lamb-Hass.

What did you do before you became involved in growing and packing avocados?

I was working with House With No Steps in one of their businesses located in Sydney – Packaging.

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Grower Profile - Chris Smith, Summerland House Farm - continued

How much of the land at Summerland Farm is dedicated to avocado farming?

A quarter of the land area here is dedicated to avocado production. We also grow macadamias and now also tomatoes.

Summerland Farm has some long established trees, how old is the oldest tree in your orchard?

We have avocado trees that are over 30 years old and still producing good quantities of fruit.

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

Climatic conditions are always a challenge and introduce an element of unpredictability. However we are fortunate that our previous orchard manager gave us a good blueprint to follow in our orchard management practices.

What do you do to assess fruit maturity and dry matter levels prior to harvest?

We conduct dry matter testing and also pick some fruit to ripen and taste.

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

Our full-time staff harvest and pack our fruit.

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

We tend to take more time to harvest compared with other growers. We start in April and finish harvest of our avocados in the first week of September.

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

We grow a quality product that is healthy and their popularity is growing.

Do you enjoy eating avocados yourself? If so, how do you enjoy eating them best?

I definitely enjoy eating avocados and my favourite way to eat them is sliced or mashed on toasted sandwiches with tomatoes, and a grind of ground pepper and salt.

For more information about Summerland Farm visit their website: www.summerlandhousefarm.com.au.

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Adopting Organic Principles in the avocado orchard

By Anna Petrou, Communications Manager, Avocados Australia



If you have been following recent media coverage about the growing popularity of organic food you would have noticed that much of the recent reporting has been citing record increases in organic food sales. One example is a recent article that appeared online at FreshFruitPortal.com whereby the Organic Trade Association (OTA) based in the United States were quoted as saying that 2014 sales of organic food products in the U.S. increased 11% year-on-year resulting in a record US\$39.5 billion.¹ Annual growth in the sales of organic food in Australia is also growing from year to year according to the 'Australian Organic Market Report'.² This report states that the Australian organic industry is now valued at over \$1.72 billion and Australian Certified Organic said the growth demonstrated that consumption of certified organic food was at a "record high" in Australia.

If the popularity of organic food is in fact increasing as these trends would suggest then growers of organically certified produce are experiencing excellent market conditions. In view of this Talking Avocados wanted to investigate why more consumers are willing to pay a premium for organic produce and to also examine what would be involved in an avocado grower becoming certified organic in Australia.

There are six organic certifiers operating in Australia that are accredited by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) under the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce. They are: AUS-QUAL, Australian Certified Organic (ACO), Bio-Dynamic Research Institute (BDRI), NASAA Certified Organic (an Australian and International Organic Certifier), Organic Food Chain, and Safe Food Queensland (SFQ).

All certifying bodies require an organic management plan, however the information required in these management plans differ from one certification body to another. Each Australian

certifying body also has its own private standard, which, while based on the national organic standard, will have slightly different requirements. The same applies to international certifying bodies.

Talking Avocados approached Australian Organic (AO) who are the parent member based company of the certifier Australian Certified Organic (ACO), to provide their perspective. ACO has the greatest number of clients with 1800 across all sectors. This number is comprised of over 600 producers and nearly 65 are registered as avocado growers, varying in size.

A grower does not need to become organically certified in order to adopt organic farming principles. There are many growers and farmers across Australia adopting a biological approach to farming. Annabelle Bushell, the Industry Development Officer at Australian Organic, believes that a major decision in achieving organic certification comes down to farmers being able to benefit from the market advantages and premiums that are offered in the organic marketplace.

"Some farmers tell us that they chose to become certified to give them legitimacy in the eyes of their consumers, it provides proof that they really do farm organically," said Annabelle Bushell of AO.

Red Plateau Organic Produce at Moorall Creek New South Wales became organically certified through ACO. Sandra Fishwick, owner and manager at Red Plateau Organic Produce, said that they adopted organic farming practices in their orchard from the very beginning. Their decision to later become organically certified was prompted by the need to be able to provide an organic guarantee to wholesalers (and consumers) that their fruit is organic.

"We supply to wholesalers in Sydney and it was important to us to be able to provide an organic guarantee to our business partners and ultimately to consumers," said Fishwick.

"We focus on the health of the soil. Healthy soil means healthy produce and healthy people," she said.

Andrew Jenner is another avocado grower who decided to become organically certified. His business, Mount Ravensbourne Organic Avocados, is based in Ravensbourne Queensland.

"Being certified guarantees a welcome at the Brisbane Markets and excellent prices," he said.

In view of the increase in organic food sales from year to year and the fact that organic produce is charged at a premium price, a sound business case exists for growers becoming organically certified.

"The key benefit is that consumers are very much willing to pay higher prices to organic producers, rewarding growers for their management effort," said Bushell.

"It also gives growers a point of difference and more market

choice than what is afforded in the conventional fruit and vegetable industry – certified organic fruit and vegetables are highly sought after by retailers.”

Certified organic growers can claim that their avocados have been grown using a regulated standard approach to organic farming that is guaranteed to be free from synthetic chemicals and fertilisers.

Bushell also believes that trust is a factor “because the certified organic industry is regulated, growers can gain more consumer trust.”

The *Australian Organic Market Report 2014* found that consumers’ most common perceived benefits of organic food is that it is chemical free (80% of respondents), additive free (77%) and environmentally friendly (68%). The Report also found that half of those surveyed first bought organic because they became aware of the impact food, fibre or cosmetics may have on their health. 32% first bought organic for environmental reasons, 25% for animal welfare reasons and 16% because of a health crisis.

Currently, if a consumer is concerned with wanting to ensure that they are buying organically certified produce they can look for an organic certification logo like the Australian Certified Organic Bud logo to make sure that what they are buying is really organic.

So what does an avocado grower need to do in order to register their business and successfully become organically certified with Australian Certified Organic?

“The first step would be to understand the Australian Certified Organic Standard,” says Bushell.

“This Standard is based on the Australian Government’s National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce. It covers certification requirements, the certifying process and maintaining certification as well as general production standards and sector specific requirements. Essentially, it is a road map of what is allowed and what is not.”

“Following this a grower would submit an application for certification. The application process and ongoing certification has associated costs. As part of the initial paperwork a grower submits a Statutory Declaration and prepares an Organic Farm Management Plan before an initial audit is set in place.”

ACO has a clients’ services team that helps growers with the process and preparing for audits and certification officers are available to answer growers’ questions about the Standard.

After the initial onsite audit, the grower is considered to be in ‘pre certification’, for a period of 12 months. Towards the end of this period another audit of the business and property will take place to ensure management remains aligned to the Standard. The second stage is referred to as ‘In Conversion’ and



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Adopting Organic Principles in the avocado orchard - continued

lasts for 24 months during which produce can then be sold as 'In Conversion Organic'.

ACO conduct annual audits to ensure the business is managed according to the organic standard. At the end of this three year period a grower will be considered as certified organic and produce can be sold in the market as such.

So what does an avocado grower need to do in order to adopt organic farming principles and processes in their orchard?

"The first thing to do if a grower is thinking about organic avocado farming is to seek training in all aspects of organic farming practices," said Denis Roe from Sub-Tropical Fruit Farm Consultancy Services. Denis is a horticultural scientist and avocado orchard specialist who is experienced in assisting avocado growers in adopting organic farming principles in their orchards.

"Organic farming requires a complete mind-shift away from conventional thinking and an understanding of the soil food web, bio-control, composting, ecetera and their role in feeding and protecting the crop biologically."

"Attend courses, find information on the internet, get the advice of organic experts and certifiers, and visit other organic farmers."

Denis Roe has assisted in converting a large conventional commercial avocado orchard into an organically certified one and believes that there are a number of major challenges that need to be overcome in this process.

"The major challenges to organic avocado production are weed control and phytophthora management, especially in high-clay soils," he said.

"Avocado roots are relatively inefficient at competing with weed species and it is therefore important to avoid this competition in the tree drip areas. This is a difficult task if the trees are unhealthy and do not have a dense canopy. Dense foliage and thick mulch will prevent weed growth in the drip area-keep trees healthy."

According to Denis Roe, the best management strategy is to apply a thick organic, woody mulch about 10-15cm thick. The result is an aerobic organic layer into which the roots will grow and feed, thus evading the more anaerobic phytophthora fungus in wetter soils. Constant maintenance of this mulch layer is important.

"The microbial biodiversity resulting from mulching will help to reduce phytophthora by competition. A number of organically acceptable products are available for phytophthora control, such as gypsum and products containing Bacillus subtilis," adds Roe.

Conversion to organic production will often cause a decrease in production due to the loss of some conventional tools says Denis Roe. However, once the soil microbial populations have established and trees have acclimatised to the new growing

system, normal cropping will usually resume.

"The major benefits of organic farming are the improvement of soil health and environmentally sustainable, safe farms," says Roe.

"The satisfaction of producing safe, nutritious and flavoursome fruit, in a way that improves the soil and the farming environment is highly rewarding."

Bushell agrees that growers wanting to become certified organic should do their research, *"know your customer, know and secure your market and know your requirements."*

"If you are interested in becoming certified organic make sure the commitment you are making is the right one. If you want to export check whether you will have access to your intended market and whether there are additional requirements you need to meet."

Is there still room for innovation in a certified organic orchard?

Yes says Denis Roe from Sub-Tropical Fruit Farm Consultancy Services. He asserts that *"innovation in organic farming is continual and involves aspects such as composting, nutrition, pest control and selection/development of the most suitable genetics".*

"One example of this is when I was involved in setting up a no-waste process for factory grade avocados on a farm I was working on. Skin and seeds are waste products from avocado processing factories. These were composted together with wood chips, hay, cattle manure and garden refuse, using the Controlled Microbial Composting technique, and the resultant compost was put back into the organic orchards to be recycled by the trees. We got rid of waste and produced a sustainable nutritional product for our orchards."

#1 Tip for growers interested in becoming organically certified

Denis Roe's tip for growers interested in becoming organically certified: *"do your homework carefully before embarking on organic farming - this is not for everybody!"*

"You have to be a believer in the system as there are no half-measures. It is often more difficult than conventional farming but the satisfaction and rewards are usually worthwhile."



Acknowledgements:

Our thanks go to the following people who contributed to this article: Annabelle Bushell, Industry Development Officer at Australian Organic; Denis Roe, horticultural scientist and avocado orchard and nursery specialist, Sub-Tropical Fruit Farm Consultancy Services; Sandra Fishwick of Red Plateau Organic Produce, and Andrew Jenner of Mount Ravensbourne Organic Avocados. For more information please visit the Australian Government Department of Agriculture website's organic-biodynamic webpages, at <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/organic-biodynamic>. Please also refer to the other online resources listed here.

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- ¹ "U.S.: Organic food sales jump 11% in 2014", 16 April 2015. Link: <http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2015/04/16/u-s-organic-food-sales-jump-11-in-2014/?country=australia>
- ² "Australia's appetite for organic foods at record levels", 10 December 2014, author: Sophie Langley. Link: <http://ausfoodnews.com.au/2014/12/10/australias-appetite-for-organic-foods-at-record-levels.html>

Useful online links:

Australian Government, Department of Agriculture: <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/organic-biodynamic>

AUS-QUAL: www.ausqual.com.au

Australian Certified Organic (ACO): www.aco.net.au

Australian Certified Organic Standard 2013 (an ACO copy): <http://austorganic.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ACOS-2013-final.pdf>

Bio-Dynamic Research Institute (BDRI): www.demeter.org.au

NASAA Certified Organic (Australian and International Organic Certifier): www.nasaa.com.au

Organic Federation of Australia (peak body for the organic industry in Australia): www.ofa.org.au/

Organic Food Chain: www.organicfoodchain.com.au

Organic Growers of Australia (OGA): www.organicgrowers.org.au/

Safe Food Production Queensland (SFQ): www.safefood.qld.gov.au

The Tasmanian Organic Producers (TOP): www.tasorganicdynamic.com.au

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The potential use of trap hedges for monitoring *Amblypelta nitida* in Avocado Crops

Research Project Update (MT10049)

By Craig Maddox and Ruth Huwer,
New South Wales DPI Entomology Group,
Wollongbar NSW.

Introduction

Amblypelta nitida (fruitspotting bug, or FSB) is a key pest of the avocado industry and in the past has been targeted with heavy spray applications of endosulfan in a season to restrict the damage it can cause. Regulators removed endosulfan as a treatment option for growers in 2012, forcing many industries (not just avocado) to reassess how they handle this pest. Ideally we would love to have beneficials that would reduce the invading populations to zero but that is unlikely, so growers must still defend the crop. Detection of invading adult fruitspotting bug is a key issue in the taller tree crops like avocado, macadamia (trees can be 6-15m high) and many other crops because the pest has so many other hosts (particularly native species) outside commercial orchards that provide a food source throughout the year, and it disperses so well. When activity is undetected and untreated, significant late season crop loss to fruitspotting bug can occur in some varieties of avocado.

Trap hedges and trap cropping are used in many other crops

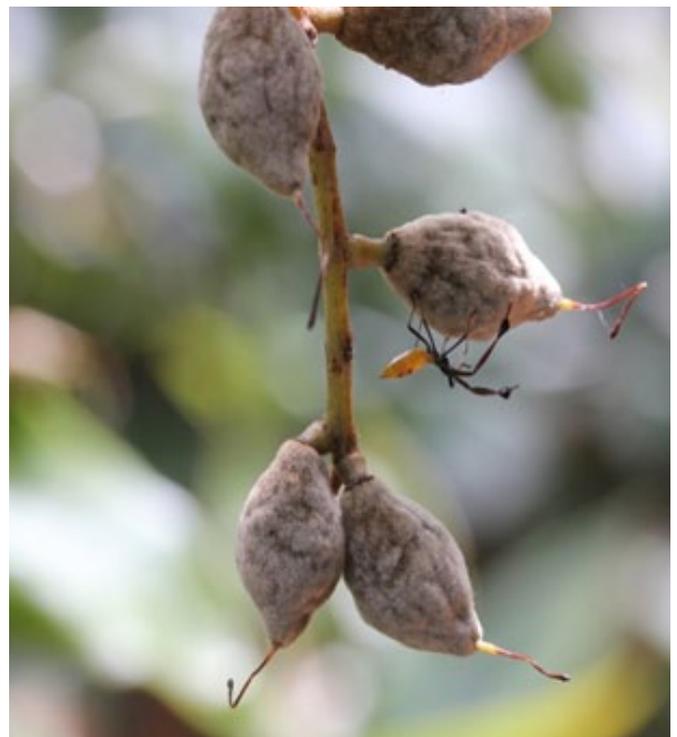
as both a monitoring tool and a control measure. The aim of the trap crop is to predict when adult bugs are moving into an orchard so that a grower can time spraying to when the population is about to do the damage and therefore limit the loss with minimal applications. The fruitspotting bug project is also developing pheromone lures for the two fruitspotting bug species as part of an integrated approach to monitoring. An update on the pheromone work will be presented in an upcoming edition of Talking Avocados.

How it works? The presence of fruitspotting bug “hot spots” within many different orchards has long been known. Growers have long stated that bugs continually “pick out” a certain tree in a planting on which they breed and feed, then radiate through an orchard while the main crop is susceptible. This behaviour offers us an opportunity to apply a “low tech” solution to the problem of how to monitor for early or late season fruitspotting bug activity.

Use of trap crops, a small hedge with highly susceptible fruitspotting bug hosts, for monitoring pests is based on the principle that a “hot spot” will appear within a trap crop, which is usually located on the edge of a commercial crop such as avocados. This makes for a quick and effective method of checking on pest numbers early in the season before the fruitspotting bugs move into the target crop, prior to fruit set.



Figure 1: (Left) Adult *Amblypelta nitida* (FSB) mating on *Macadamia ternifolia* nut at Alstonville Centre for Tropical Horticulture germplasm site January 2012.



(Right) *Amblypelta nitida* nymph feeding on *Macadamia ternifolia* at the Centre for Tropical Horticulture Alstonville in November 2011.

Research by the FSB Project Team has repeatedly shown that bugs will return to the same trees in a hedge each season. Table 1 shows that tree 15 and tree 8 in the two respective hedges of *Murraya paniculata* (commonly known as mock orange) at the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries Centre for Tropical Horticulture Alstonville (CTH) consistently carry very high bug populations. It is apparent now that FSB are more likely to return to trees carrying fruit they damaged earlier than undamaged fruit.

Table 1: The numbers of *Amblypelta nitida* collected from each tree within each hedge at Centre for Tropical Horticulture (CTH) Alstonville over the last 4 years. This shows that even among the *Murraya paniculata* a strong preference exists for particular trees, (red -best overall, blue - best in late spring). Top 3 trees each year at each site are shaded. Note population increase in 2014.

Arboretum Hedge (<i>Murraya paniculata</i> hedge)					Highway Hedge (<i>Murraya paniculata</i> hedge)				
tree	2011 fsb	2012 fsb	2013 fsb	2014 fsb	tree	2011 fsb	2012 fsb	2013 fsb	2014 fsb
1	6	3	6	3	1	8	7	41	54
2	1	1	3	2	2	21	11	13	108
3	1	2	8	11	3	18	19	69	79
4	29	9	20	18	4	8	6	22	57
5	1	16	10	7	5	19	16	13	52
6	7	2	16	19	6	38	20	8	45
7	36	13	30	34	7	23	27	11	35
8	27	16	22	29	8	95	67	43	157
9	19	24	22	34	9	42	35	25	43
10	5	24	24	36	10	12	9	8	15
11	8	13	30	11	11	11	23	10	17
12	4	11	14	23	12	13	22	8	26
13	24	29	37	48	13	39	11	3	30
14	14	47	25	38	14	7	15	14	9
15	27	71	44	111	15	1	6	17	34
16	4	13	27	39	16	0	0	0	3
17	11	30	27	41					
18	3	48	25	42	total	355	294	305	764
19	6	24	20	23					
20	14	38	16	27					
21	15	68	23	65					
22	10	30	21	98					
23	2	48	49	62					
total	274	580	519	821					

This research has shown that that avocado fruit carrying early season damage are likely to have more damage (up to double the number of stings) compared to previously undamaged early fruit (Figures 2 & 3). This does make early season control in an orchard very important as it appears to reduce the likelihood of reinfestation if it is done well.

To build the right trap hedge relies on finding those key trees on which the bugs prefer to breed. For this reason we have chosen the most consistent *Murraya paniculata* plants for the on farm research hedge sites.

The potential use of trap hedges for monitoring *Amblypelta nitida* continued



Figure 2: Early (dark stains) and late season (watery stains) *Amblypelta nitida* damage in avocado.

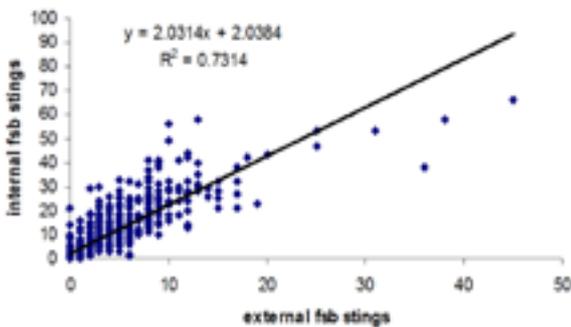


Figure 3: The relationship between external, or visible stings (early) and internal late season fruitspotting bug damage (probably both species) on the individual avocado peeled (n=885) at Bundaberg on Farms spray trials in 2014.

By selecting plants that we know the bugs will breed on and which have terminal bearing fruit we improve the detection of the bugs at ground level. With the right mix of plants we can maintain an *Amblypelta nitida* population for an entire season. *Macadamia ternifolia* type trees offer a good early warning tree within a macadamia orchard (Figures 1 & 4) and when combined with *Murraya paniculata* they can also give a complete seasons monitoring for avocado growers (Table 2).

In summary, for a monitoring hedge we identified that *Murraya paniculata* and *Macadamia ternifolia* are suitable hosts for monitoring and will cover most of the year providing fruit. For summer and autumn, for high risk crops like custard apple and lychee, a longan tree needs to be included as insurance in the hedge and offers a great indicator for *Amblypelta nitida* activity provided it sets fruit consistently. We have also used Ribbonwood, *Euroshinus falcata* in this role to cove the summer

period, but to date have only seen consistent fruiting at the Palmwoods site in Queensland where both *A. lutescens* and *A. nitida* have been found on the fruit, sometimes in high numbers.

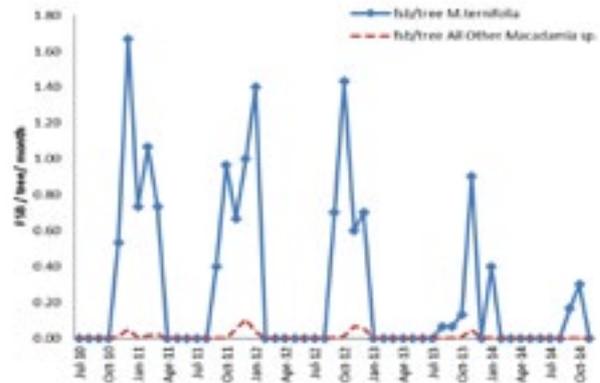


Figure 4: The incidence of *Amblypelta nitida* (FSB) at the Centre for Tropical Horticulture Alstonville Macadamia germplasm site from July 2010 to November 2014. Monthly counts on the *Macadamia ternifolia* compared to all other genotypes in the plot show the *M. ternifolia* trees are attracting bugs earlier and in much higher numbers each season.

By routinely sampling from this population of the trap hedge, it is possible to predict when adult generations are developing. Bugs are easiest to see mid-morning or late afternoon in summer, and during the middle of the day in winter. The research team sampled each research hedge for 10 minutes weekly, only collecting from the sunny side of the hedge, and determined the live stage (adult and different nymphal instars) of all the fruitspotting bugs caught and sex of adults. Based on 10 years of observing fruitspotting bug on the hedges at Centre for Tropical Horticulture, and now with commercial farm data to validate the approach, the team have been able to adjust spray timings to impact on the generating adult populations.

The bugs tend to stay within the hedge once feeding commences, and an understanding of the life cycle can help detect a build-up of large 5th instar nymphs (shown in Figure 5). A 5th instar nymph is typically almost adult size, with black antennae, black “knees” and only wing buds rather than fully expanded wings. This life-stage of fruitspotting bug gives you a ten to fourteen day window for management before they turn into adults and fly away.

We suggest that adult flights will follow our peaks in fifth instar nymph populations (>30% of the catch) by about 10-14 days, and that is the optimal treatment time (Figure 5, Table 2).

Table 2: *Amblypelta nitida* weekly collection numbers from the *Murraya* hedges at Centre for Tropical Horticulture. The proportion of adults and 5th instar nymphs of the total fruitspotting bugs collected between January 2014 and July 2014

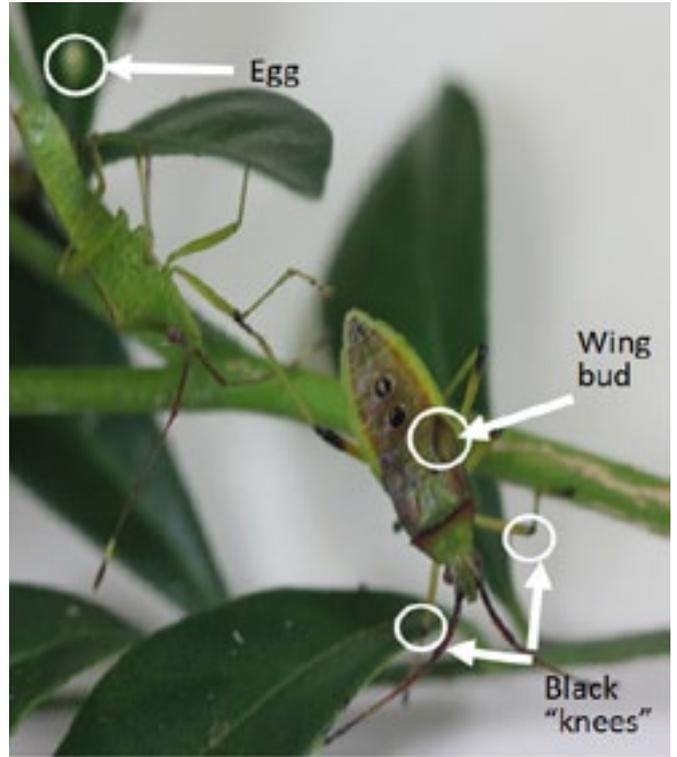
are compared. The spray application timing for the orchard are marked in yellow down the date column and were based on a high proportion of 5th instar nymphs in trap hedge:

spray dates	adult peak			5th peak		
	Arboretum		23 trees	Highway		16 trees
Row Labels	%adult	Total FSB	%5th instar	%adult	Total FSB	%5th instar
Date						
06/01/2014	33.3	3	0.0	50.0	4	25.0
13/01/2014	13.3	15	20.0	0.0	0	0.0
20/01/2014	0.0	7	28.6	0.0	0	0.0
28/01/2014	27.8	18	44.4	0.0	0	0.0
03/02/2014	33.3	18	0.0	50.0	4	25.0
10/02/2014	58.3	12	0.0	75.0	4	0.0
18/02/2014	45.7	35	14.3	0.0	3	0.0
24/02/2014	45.7	35	14.3	0.0	3	0.0
03/03/2014						
10/03/2014	17.2	29	44.8	83.3	6	0.0
17/03/2014	35.9	39	17.9	24.1	54	29.6
24/03/2014	70.6	34	8.8	31.0	29	17.2
31/03/2014	89.2	37	2.7	19.0	42	19.0
07/04/2014	100.0	3	0.0	24.1	29	17.2
14/04/2014						
22/04/2014	42.9	14	21.4	26.1	23	30.4
28/04/2014	28.6	14	14.3	30.6	36	36.1
05/05/2014	31.3	16	25.0	37.5	48	31.3
12/05/2014	8.0	25	12.0	20.8	24	29.2
19/05/2014	5.6	18	5.6	24.5	49	16.3
26/05/2014	12.5	16	37.5	33.3	6	0.0
02/06/2014	42.1	19	21.1	47.8	23	26.1
10/06/2014	14.8	27	29.6	33.3	21	23.8
16/06/2014	50.0	16	0.0	70.8	24	16.7
24/06/2014	40.0	20	30.0	40.0	15	13.3
30/06/2014	33.3	6	33.3	41.7	12	33.3

*The potential use of trap hedges for monitoring *Amblypelta nitida* continued*



Figure 5: (Left) Adult male *Amblypelta nitida* on Guava leaf at Wollongbar March 2013;



(Right) Fifth instar (V) nymph with black "knees" and antennae and no wings only wing buds from *Murraya paniculata* hedge plants at CTH Alstonville in comparison with the almost all green adult male side on and with an egg (see arrow) on foliage below the adults abdomen.



Figure 6: New South Wales Department of Primary Industries staff Ian Purdue and Ruth Huwer at the Maroochy research station hedge planted in 2013, siting a hedge near the population source (the rainforest area) on the orchard margin gives the grower the best chance to intercept the bugs as they enter an area.

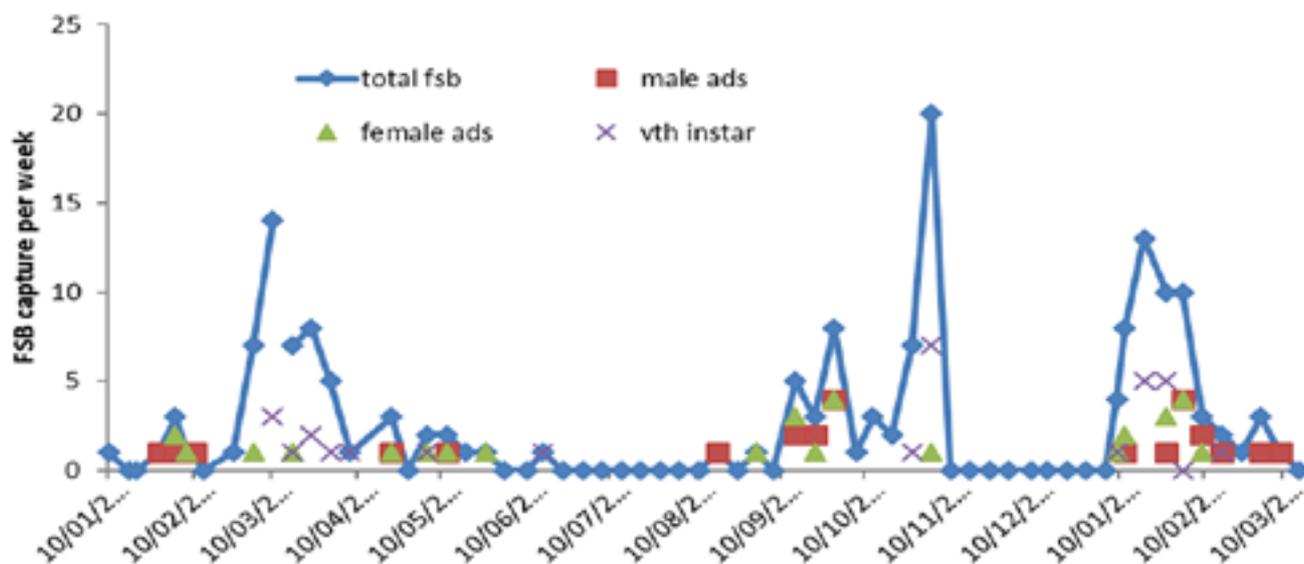


Figure 7: *Amblypelta nitida* activity in the trap hedge at Victoria park to monitor custard apple orchard damage, spray decisions were made in February both years based on adult and 5th instar nymph activity in the hedge.



Figure 8: The trap hedge on a commercial custard apple farm at Victoria Park NSW, was planted back in 2007 has seen a few plants change but now with the *Murraya paniculata* and longan, and *Macadamia ternifolia* plants bearing fruit, we can accurately predict the invasion into the crop from activity on the trap crops.

*The potential use of trap hedges for monitoring *Amblypelta nitida* continued*

Putting the plan into practice

The research team is monitoring trap crops for spray timing successfully on avocado farms, but the concept of using trap hedges as monitoring tool for FSB is also tested in other crops. To test this concept, custard apple has proven to be one of the best crops to see when FSB are actually arriving. This is because the damage shows immediately and fresh damage can be distinguished quickly (Figure 9). After 4 years of working closely on custard apples at Victoria Park in NSW, we are confident that optimal spray timing as the adults are beginning to impact on the crop can be extremely effective. At this trial site, using the trap hedge concept, damage has been cut by a factor of 10 and sprays have also been reduced to one or two per season. The critical period has moved each season, so it would have been unlikely that simple calendar applications would have given us the same result (Figures 7 & 8).

We are now in the position to test out spray decisions based on hedge activity in other crops like avocado, where the damage is more difficult to see. In 2015 at the custard apple site near Victoria Park, we were able to detect bug activity on longan fruit between mid-December and February and established a peak in early February. The first main flight of adult bugs had just arrived on the *Murraya's* at Alstonville between the 10th and

16th of March. Given the development time is around 42 days at 25oC we expected another spike in adult numbers around Anzac Day in NSW and we are checking the activity at another nearby avocado farm to see if this correlates with the hedge at Centre for Tropical Horticulture Alstonville.

Can we do better using a trap hedge than a calendar spray programme without endosulfan?

Several on farm trials as part of the fruitspotting bug project have consistently shown it is possible to reduce the amount of sprays needed to control fruitspotting bugs. In avocados, good control is being achieved on many farms with only six to eight sprays per season. It is more difficult where both species are present around Bundaberg. The secondary benefits that endosulfan offered at flowering and with mite control are hard to replace but so far we do have some promising results to report.

The Next Step – A Pilot Area Wide Management Program

A pilot area wide management (AWM) program is now in planning for the Rous district which is in close proximity to the Centre for Tropical Horticulture and on-farm trial hedges. In-crop

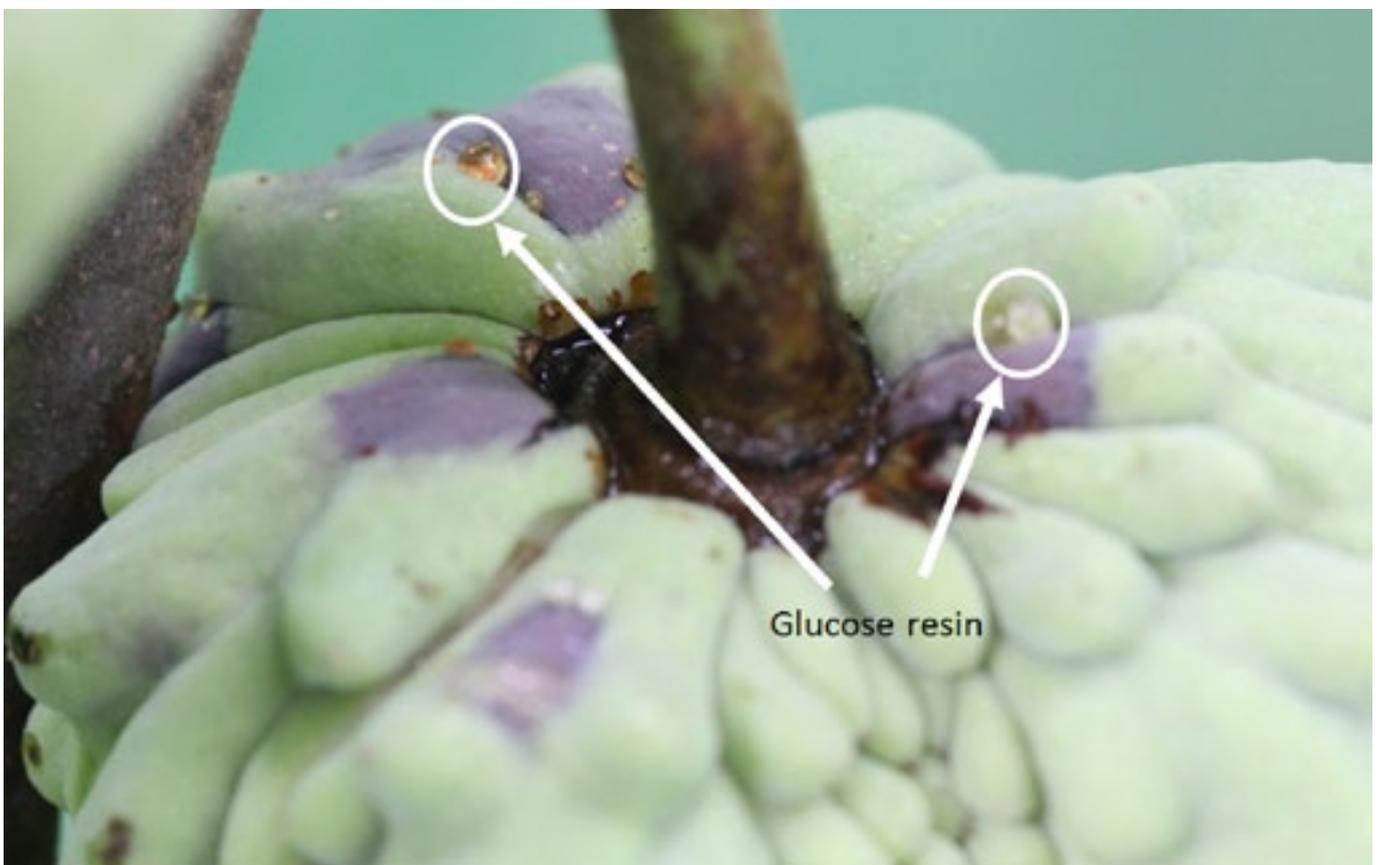


Figure 9: Fresh *Amblypelta nitida* damage on custard apple at Victoria Park NSW, showing the oozing glucose rich resins on the fruit surface after they have moved on, and the black bruising of the tissue below.

monitoring will be combined with trap hedge counts of 5th instar nymphs to provide information on spray timing for one or two clusters of avocado and macadamia growers and crop consultants during the 2015/16 season. The fruitspotting bug project team will work closely with these growers to assess the viability of a wider scale AWM program based on trap hedge monitoring with the aim of further reducing fruit spotting bug damage through improved spray timing. A comparative trial between calendar spraying and using hedge and pheromone trapping thresholds is also being planned in central Queensland for avocado sites this coming season.

Acknowledgements:

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on behalf of all partners. Other project partners include the University of Queensland and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

The work could not have been done without the help of Ian Purdue, David & Tina Robertson, Alister Janetzki, and Magda Verbeek. The grower cooperators have all been tremendous and willing to provide planting areas where spotting bug pressure is severe to help solve this problem. Special thanks to main hedge data providers; Phil & Patti Stacey, Keith Paxton (Custard Apples and Passionfruit), Chad Simpson, Tom Silver in avocados, Les Gain, Scott Allcott, Rob Hobbson, Stephen Mclean, and John Pretorius in macadamias so far.



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Why Dry Matters Matter



by *Anna Petrou*,
Communications Manager, Avocados Australia

As consumers, we all know how disappointing and frustrating it can be when we buy an avocado at a store, return home, and find that it will not ripen or has no flavour. As a result of Consumer Sensory Research (projects AV06025 and AV07019) Avocados Australia was able to confirm what consumers want from the avocados they purchase. If a consumer is disappointed by the quality of an avocado they have purchased it will have an impact on the consumer's re-purchase of avocados. If many consumers have the same disappointing experience this can result in significant loss of sales. So understanding the factors that influence a consumer's purchase and re-purchase of avocados is very important to all growers.

Giving consumers what they want

From the consumer sensory research it was discovered that consumers want:

- Ripe fruit they can eat tonight or tomorrow
- Less than 10% internal flesh defects
- Mature fruit that has:
 - Minimum of 23% Dry Matter for Hass
 - Minimum of 21% Dry Matter for Shepard
- A ready supply of quality fruit

One of the key take home messages then for growers is that it is important to ensure that fruit is picked when it is mature.

The Industry mandated standard for Hass avocados in terms of maturity is that it is required to have a minimum of 23% Dry

Matter (DM) at time of harvesting. This is based on consumer research that showed that the likelihood of purchase of Hass decreases rapidly once the dry matter content falls below 23%.

The minimum standard aims to assist growers and packhouses to achieve the best tasting avocados for consumers. The minimum standard for Shepard avocados is at 21% DM.

Avocados Australia implements a project to randomly sample avocados on a monthly basis from the wholesale market and test for DM percentage as a measure of maturity. The aim of this is to provide data to illustrate how the current level of maturity available to consumers' stacks up against consumer preferences as determined in the consumer testing.

The aggregated results of these tests are made available online and we recommend that growers refer to these results regularly. To view Dry Matter results go to the "Maturity Monitoring" webpage on the Avocados Australia Industry website at this address: <http://industry.avocado.org.au/MaturityMonitoring.aspx>.

Make sure to Test for Maturity

Given consumers' preferences for mature avocados it is particularly important for growers to be monitoring maturity closely in the lead up to harvest. Growers can access information from the Avocados Australia website about the range of tests that can be conducted to ensure optimum maturity. Visit the "Maturity Monitoring" webpage and scroll down to view the range of Dry Matter tests that can be conducted. If you do not conduct the dry matter tests yourselves, there are a number of laboratories that can conduct the dry matter tests on your behalf.

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News from Around the World

News from Around the World contains reproduced articles that have been published by various international news sources.

Peruvian Hass output set to climb

The short supply of Hass avocados caused by the late start to the Peruvian and South African avocado deal has caused a steep rise in prices on the European market. Arturo Medina of Peruvian avocado association ProHass said shipments are running at around 100 containers per week compared to 300 containers during the peak season.

"This obviously has increased prices and there are many unscrupulous people who are exporting dry matter levels below 21.5 per cent," he said.

He noted that although current price levels would not be maintained once high volumes come on stream, the fall would be more severe if quality levels were not maintained. He said ProHass members, who represent over 70 per cent of Peru's export volume, had made a commitment to ship only fruit with at least 22.5 per cent dry matter in order to safeguard standards.

According to Medina, the delay to shipments will not affect the overall volume of exports this season, which is pegged at 190,000 tonnes, of which 90,000 tonnes will go to Europe, 80,000 tonnes to the US and 20,000 tonnes to other markets.

"We are programming exports so as not to overload the markets

and our members are committed to extending shipments for a few weeks, which will take the season to mid-September," he said.

Meanwhile, Camposol has said it expects to export just over 25,000 tonnes of avocados this season, a fall of 20 per cent on last year's total of 31,400 tonnes. Executive director José Antonio Gómez said the reduction is the result of this being an off-year in terms of production.

Gómez said he expected the markets to be more stable than in 2014, which was marked by significant price fluctuations. He noted that Chile and China were likely to play a more important role in the future given Peru's rising production.

In spite of the fall in production this year, Camposol's avocado volumes are projected to grow in the coming years. Allan Cooper told Fruitnet that the company is carrying out trials in different parts of the country to compare yields and quality and is planning to invest in new packing capacity to handle future increases in production.

Source: www.fruitnet.com

Peruvian Hass avocados to grow more in the U.S.

Hass avocado exports in the season that will start next April are expected to reach some 190,000 tonnes according to ProHass.

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"While it is still a very preliminary estimate, this would represent an increase of 15% compared with the previous campaign, when a 57% growth was registered. The fruit drop and smaller calibres in the Central Coast area, the country's main producing area, as a result of weather issues partly explain the slowdown in growth in the production of Hass avocados," stated Arturo Medina Castro, of ProHass.

Shipments in 2015 would be distributed as follows: 90,000 tonnes to Europe, 80,000 tonnes to the United States and about 20,000 tonnes to be distributed between Chile, Canada, Central America and Asia.

"We are concerned about the devaluation of the Euro," said Arturo. This concern is reflected in the higher growth in exports to the U.S. market, which would increase by 24%, 9% more than average.

The main motivation for this is the stronger dollar, and although shipments to Europe should increase slightly, there is clearly some uncertainty about how much fruit the market will be able to absorb.

Source: freshplaza.com

US: Steady avocado market to perk up for Cinco de Mayo

In the run up to Cinco de Mayo next month, demand for avocados is likely to increase said AvoFruit recently, the Californian based packer, exporter and marketer.

"The market has been steady so far, but demand and prices could perk up this week."

"We're getting a constant supply of avocados out of Mexico right now," said Kevin Vines of AvoFruit. "Some people have already started to import avocados from Peru, and we will start importing Peruvian fruit in the next couple of weeks." Along with supplies from California and Mexico, Peruvian avocados could arrive in time for a spike in demand in the coming days.

"Cinco de Mayo is coming up, so we will probably see demand increase," said Vines. "We haven't seen an increase in prices yet, but it might start happening this week; it's different every year." On April 20, prices for a carton of Hass 32s were between \$36.25 and \$38.25 at Mexico crossings through Texas, and demand was reported as fairly good on sizes 32 through 40.

Vines added that volumes of fruit coming from Mexico have increased every year to meet growing demand in the U.S.,

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News from Around the World continued

where consumption is nearing 2.0 billion pounds annually. Avofruit will have a 52-week supply of avocados this year, supplying markets in Asia and the United States.

Source: www.freshplaza.com

US: Avocado Growers Trying High Density Farming

Southern California avocado growers could change how the industry operates as they experiment with high density farming.

The price of water in San Diego County is among the highest in the nation and is forcing small to medium operations to turn off the water altogether. San Diego County Farm Bureau Projects and membership manager Casey Anderson says their growers are forced to look at higher valued crops like avocados and a recent experiment is showing great promise for those growers.

Source: agnetwest.com

USDA gives green light to GM apples

U.S. authorities have granted approval for the commercial planting of genetically modified, non-browning apples, after an environmental and plant risk assessment came up positive.

In a release, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said deregulation of Canadian company Okanagan Specialty Fruits' (OSF) Arctic Granny and Arctic Golden apples would not be likely to have a significant impact on the human environment.

"The commercial approval of Arctic apples, our company's flagship product, is the biggest milestone yet for us, and we can't wait until they're available for consumers," said OSF president Neal Carter.

The Canadian company said consumers would still have to wait a bit longer for the product however, as the apple trees would take several years to bear significant quantities of fruit.

"Our focus is working with growers to get trees in the ground. As more trees are planted and they come into commercial production, there will be a slow, but steady market introduction," Carter said, estimating the fruit would be available in late 2016 in small, test-market quantities.

He said consumers could feel confident in the rigorous review of Arctic apples, which had been in field trials for over a decade and were likely the most tested apples on the planet.

"All we've done is reduce the expression of a single enzyme; there are no novel proteins in Arctic fruit and their nutrition and



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composition is equivalent to their conventional counterparts," he said.

Source: www.freshfruitportal.com

NZ: Horticulture production exceeds \$7 billion

New Zealand's horticultural production has exceeded \$7 billion for the first time, according to the latest edition of the industry statistics publication Fresh Facts.

In the year to June 2014, produce from New Zealand's horticultural industries was calculated to reach \$7.16 billion, with exports of close to \$4 billion. Wine is the largest horticultural export, valued at \$1.3 billion, with kiwifruit the largest fresh fruit export, valued at \$930 million. The avocado exports were valued at \$93 million.

"New Zealand's horticultural land is highly productive, with the value of horticultural exports equating to more than three times the comparative return achieved by dairy merchandise exports," says Peter Silcock, CEO of Horticulture New Zealand.

"The horticulture industry focuses on efficiency and providing products for high value markets, such as Asia. We are confident that the success of the industry will continue and that we will reach our target of \$10 billion of production by 2020."

"New Zealand's success continues to be the result of hard work and a keen understanding of our markets," says Peter Landon-Lane, CEO of Plant & Food Research.

"Science and innovation are employed throughout the value chain, allowing our sectors to deliver produce that commands a premium, meets increasingly stringent phytosanitary and sustainability requirements, and offers safe, convenient, high quality food for discerning consumers."

Source: www.hortidaily.com

NZ: Healthy diets boost for growers

New Zealand's avocado orchardists might well look at their crop and see gold nuggets dangling from their trees rather than green fruit. That's because the country's avocado industry is poised to reap huge rewards from the Western world's shift towards healthy eating and clean living.

Consumers are clamouring for avocados and export markets can't get enough of their green gold.

That's great for the 1842 avocado orchards who produce New Zealand's export crop; 73 per cent are in the Bay of Plenty (covering over 2100ha) and the rest in Northland (1200ha).

Avocados are New Zealand's third-largest fresh fruit export, behind kiwifruit and apples. But it may not remain that way for long. There's a bold plan to boost our productivity over the next eight years.

In June last year, the Government said it would invest, through



Grower Member Application Form

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Avocados Australia provides online and offline information, programs, materials and events to advance the industry. On top of this there are other services we can provide that are only made possible through the support of our members. Join today. All membership enquiries can be directed to admin@avocado.org.au or call toll free 1300 303 971.

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

Member Details

Business name
and/or trading name:

ABN:

Key contacts:

Preferred address
(postal):

Address of property
(if different):

Contact Details

Business phone:

Home phone:

Fax:

Mobile:

Email:

Grower Member Application Form continued

Corporate Structure

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

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

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

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

Payment Options

Grower Membership of Avocados Australia is **\$143 pa** (including GST).

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Or email admin@avocado.org.au

For more information or assistance please go to www.avocado.org.au or call on **07 3846 6566**

News from Around the World continued

the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP), in a programme called New Zealand Avocados Go Global which aims to triple their avocado yield to 12 tonnes a hectare which will quadruple industry returns to \$280 million by 2023.

A total of \$8.56 million will be invested in this PGP programme over the next five years, with the New Zealand Government committing \$4.28 million and the balance coming from the industry and investors.

Source: www.freshplaza.com

UK: High avocado prices due to lack of supply

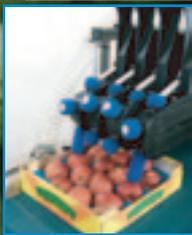
The summer avocado campaign in the United Kingdom, which is expected to last until September, has recently kicked off for the British company Pacific Produce, which works with Israel in winter and markets its own fruit from Peru in summer. "We sell to a wide range of clients, including supermarkets and the wholesale. We started with green skin avocados four weeks ago and with Hass, our main variety, two weeks ago," explains Rob Cullum.

"Due to the small supply at the moment coming to an empty market, the fruit doesn't touch the ground. As a result, prices

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are currently high, but I believe they will settle down in a few weeks. They will be slightly more expensive than last year, but without reaching the dramatic levels of recent weeks," explains Cullum.

Regarding consumption, Cullum said that in the UK it is up by between 30 and 50% at the moment. "British supermarkets tend to keep prices stable at this stage of the campaign which prevents demand from dropping, even if it means reducing margins / not promoting and if consumption has been this high during the cold weeks, it is unlikely to go down when the summer arrives."

Pacific Produce currently has 300 hectares in production and will be expanding with another 50 this year. Which taking into account the rising demand, "is growth at a sustainable level, as we prefer to grow with our customers, rather than gamble on the future," concludes Cullum.

Source: www.freshplaza.com

China: Chain Store Corp's fresh produce sales to grow by 20%

President Chain Store Corp recently said that annual sales of fresh fruit and vegetables are expected to grow by 20 percent from a year earlier to NT\$1.2 billion (US\$38.55 million) this year on expanded collaboration with a Formosa Environmental

Technology Corp's organic farm.

President Chain last month launched a special sales section for fruit and vegetable products at a dozen 7-Eleven stores in northern Taiwan.

President Chain said that since the launch, it has seen a 50 percent growth in sales of the products, which are supplied by the environmental technology company's farm in Taoyuan's Yangmei District.

President Chain plans to expand sales of the organic products to 70 stores by the end of next month and to 100 outlets in the first half of this year, a company statement said.

With plans to introduce more fruit and vegetable products from Formosa Environmental, President Chain said it hopes to turn the convenience-store chain into a small-scale supermarket.

The convenience store operator's sales in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector reached NT\$1 billion last year, said President Chain fresh food division head Liang Wen-yuan last month.

"In the first three months of the year, sales of fresh fruit and vegetable products climbed 20 percent from the previous year", Liang said.

President Chain sells fresh fruit and vegetables at about 1,000 convenience stores.

Source: taipeitimes.com



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