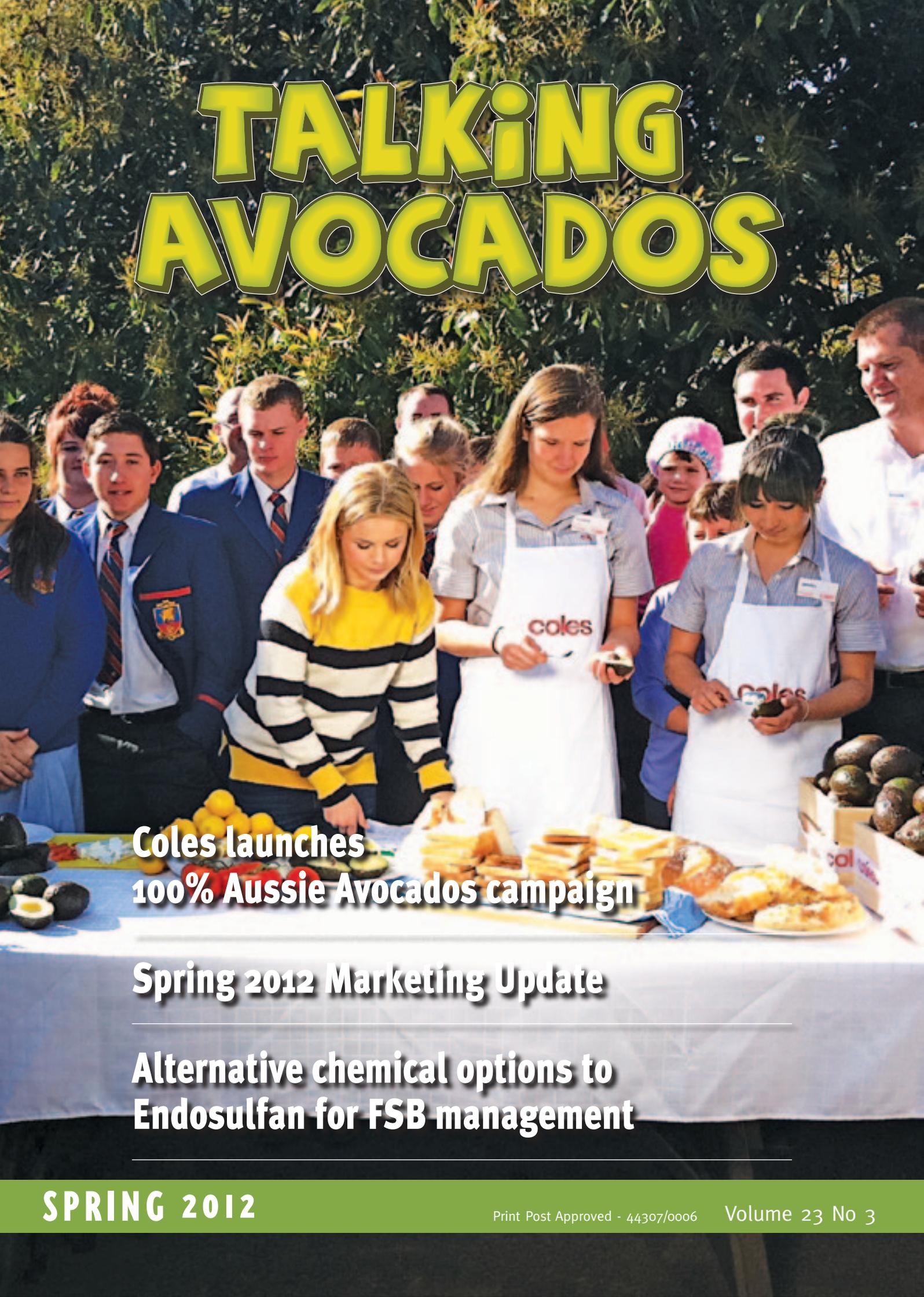


# TALKING AVOCADOS



**Coles launches  
100% Aussie Avocados campaign**

**Spring 2012 Marketing Update**

**Alternative chemical options to  
Endosulfan for FSB management**

**SPRING 2012**

Print Post Approved - 44307/0006

Volume 23 No 3



# Chairman's Perspective



This time last year we were reveling in the success of the VII World Avocado Congress where our industry was showcased to avocado growers from all over the world as well as many other stakeholders in this global industry. Praise and congratulations were offered from many participants regarding our research achievements, our marketing program and our industry organization. Of all these our industry can rightly stand proud on the world stage and also in relation to all the other horticulture industries in Australia.

The success of our industry is not a matter of luck and it can not be taken for granted. Our success is due to the program of research and development (R&D) and marketing over the past many years following a strategy set by the Avocados Australia Limited (AAL) Board and managed by the CEO and staff at AAL. You would expect me as Chair to make these great 'wordy' claims but I can explain this position better with some facts and figures.

The Australian avocado industry 'punches above its weight' in both R&D and marketing compared to every other horticultural industry in this country.

Our success is the envy of these other industries, and here is the why, according to the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) Annual Operating Plan 2012/13:

	Avocado	Apple/ Pear	Banana	Citrus
Farmgate GVP 2011/12	\$215m	\$477 m	\$400 m	\$450 m
Estimated R&D Levy income	\$2.048 m	\$1.750 m	\$1.684 m	\$1.270 m
Estimated marketing Levy income	\$3.072 m	\$2.899 m	\$3.619 m	\$0.354 m
Proposed R&D Levy Project spend	\$4.732 m	\$3.513 m	\$3.535 m	\$2.539 m
Proposed Marketing Levy Project spend	\$2.888 m	\$3.014 m	\$3.107	\$0.438 m
Spend on building consumer demand	49%	N/A	47%	35%
Spend to meet consumer needs (production/quality)	39%	48%		
Number of projects	34	19	10	33

Our programs are always evolving and this is evident now

as the marketing program has taken a new direction to use an Australian-grown fruit label as well as a cooperative program with Woolworths and Coles to support Australian-grown avocados; as the supply of fruit has increased from Australia, South Australia/Victoria and New South Wales for the summer supply period.

We have doubled supply in the past 10 years and for the most part income returns to growers have kept pace as well. Our consumers now consider avocado an every day use rather than a special event use.

I will admit to having some complaints being made from a small number of growers about our programs and the functions of our organization and I, the AAL board and the CEO will work to resolve these.

For the great majority, you have every right to take pride in the success of your industry because you have contributed and participated in many ways to this success over many years.

"The harder we work, the luckier we get" - luck has very little to do with success. We, as growers, all know that.

*Jim Kochi*

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia



# CEO's Report

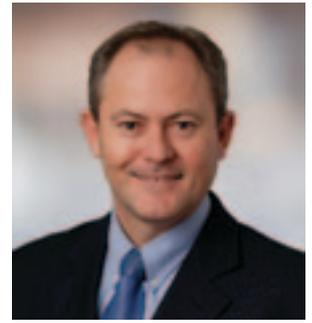
Over the past few months the focus of my work has been on the internal operations of Avocados Australia Limited (AAL) to ensure we have efficient and effective procedures in pace. Strategic initiatives unfortunately have been largely put on hold during this consolidation phase, but a lot of ground work is being done to review and re-scope a number project initiatives. There are many changes underway at present within AAL and within the research and development (R&D) and marketing program.

By far the majority of projects funded through the avocado R&D and marketing levies are managed by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and contracted to specialist R&D and marketing agencies. A small proportion of the program (about 15%) is delivered by AAL as a service provider in areas where we have the skills, relationships and networks to best provide these services. This includes the two key R&D project areas: industry communication and supply chain improvement (including Infocado). I am committed to ensure that the projects that AAL delivers are well planned and implemented to achieve the best possible outcomes.

In relation to the supply chain program, there are a number of activities underway to review and further improve the program. Notwithstanding the excellent work that has been done through this program over the past few years, we are about to commence a new phase of supply chain improvement work and need to evaluate what has been completed, how well it meets the needs of the industry and confirm with the supply chain what the priorities are for the future.

Over the past few years, a suite of supply chain education materials have been produced for each sector of the supply chain. These materials aim to communicate the key information required to assist each sector of the supply chain to optimise fruit quality. In the last edition of Talking Avocados, we sought feedback on these resources and have followed up with an online survey to gain your feedback.

Other aspects of the supply chain program include Infocado and OrchardInfo, online best practice resources, retail quality surveys, retail price surveys, retail education delivery, and the development of a pilot wholesale accreditation program. AAL convened a workshop in mid-October with a number of supply chain representatives to review all aspects of the supply chain program and to develop recommendations for future investment in this area. This was a very productive day and with the benefit of the wide range of expertise in the room we now have a clearer direction for the program in its next phase. The consensus view was that an extension-type approach would be more likely to achieve improvements in fruit quality and this will be the focus of the next phase of work.



Last year, a HAL project was commissioned with Jenny Margetts (p2p Business Solutions) to review the wide range of production and market information available to the industry. As part of this, Infocado was reviewed and recommendations have been made to further improve the accuracy of this system. These recommendations will be taken on board as the program is developed further. Some of the improvements require additional resources and judgements will need to be made as to the relative return on investment for such changes.

Over the last two years, work has been undertaken to develop a multi-national research program to address alternate bearing. We recently commissioned work to thoroughly scope the needs of the Australian industry in order to ensure any proposed research in this area adequately addresses the needs of the Australian growers. Simon Newett (Qld DAFF) was contracted to undertake this scoping work which provided a thorough analysis of the needs across the country. A workshop in mid-October with plant physiologists, consultants and growers identified the industry needs and broad priorities for future investment. The key finding from the work to date is that the main problem in Australia is irregular bearing - not alternate bearing. There are distinct differences and the R&D required is therefore quite different. Further work is needed, drawing on the expertise available, to develop an appropriate R&D project proposal to address irregular bearing in Australia. Proper planning needs to occur to ensure any R&D or extension investment is well targeted.

We are also currently reviewing the avocado industry communications project and looking to make improvements to best meet grower and other stakeholder needs. You may have noticed some small changes to the login section of the Online Reports Centre to improve access to R&D final reports, avocado domestic category performance reports and avocado export performance reports. In the coming weeks we will be seeking industry input into this review to ensure we continue to deliver communication services that meet industry needs. Again, I urge you to participate so that a broad range of views can be considered as part of our planning.

The current avocado marketing program will complete a three year strategy phase this financial year and a new three year strategy is currently under development. The first stage of work is to undertake comprehensive consumer research which is due to be completed soon to provide a solid foundation for the new marketing strategy; including refinement of the target market and

key messages. Earlier in the year, an extensive review of the marketing program was commissioned which acknowledged the good work that has been done over the past years, but also made recommendations for changes going forward. The new strategy will have to accommodate even greater challenges over the coming years in terms of the changing supply dynamic. The pressure to increase demand will be more intense than ever before in light of the increased supply expected and the spread of supply volumes across the year.

For many years, AAL has held the licensing rights for use of the Heart Foundation Tick on avocado fruit labels. In 2011, a decision was taken to introduce a new 'kangaroo' label to help identify the Australian product at point of sale. As we move to the new label, the Heart Foundation Tick label will be discontinued. AAL has negotiated a new licence with the Heart Foundation to enable existing stock to be

used up until 30 June 2013. After this date, the Heart Tick label will not be able to be used on any avocado material or fruit.

Finally, last month we said farewell to John Leonardi who had been employed with AAL since April 2001; when he commenced working on canopy management. This work culminated in the development of new industry guidelines for canopy management. For the last four years, John has been working on a project which has evaluated a range of products and techniques to improve orchard productivity and fruit quality (AVo8o2o - Evaluation of sustainable orchard management practices for extension into general industry standards to reduce costs). This project was completed at the end of October 2012 at which time John concluded his employment with Avocados Australia. John will be sorely missed from the avocado team and we wish him the very best with his future endeavours.

## Around Australia

### Sunshine Coast Report

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



On the Sunshine Coast we have enjoyed mostly good flowering, warm but dry, with plenty of pollinating insects - we await the outcome.

In February - a date to be announced - we will have a field day, which will be an opportunity for growers to catch up and share issues and ideas. Please call, text or email me with suggestions on how to make the most of the day.

I urge Sunshine Coast growers to look at the proposed benchmarking study of avocado production costs by Howard Hall and consider whether the level of detailed information you would obtain by taking part would be useful to you in your operation. In our case, we decided it could be very timely and have signed up.

The Sunshine Coast is hosting Avocados Australia Limited Annual General Meeting and the annual Levy Payers' meeting this year, at Nambour on 26 November 2012. This should be a great opportunity to engage with industry issues and meet fellow growers from around Australia.

### Central New South Wales Report

By Chris Nelson, Avocados Australia  
Director for the Central New South Wales Growing Area



As I write this regional update, Central NSW orchards are in heavy flower following an earlier than usual completion of harvest for most growers due to consistent high value market returns during the winter months. Crops were mixed from the region but overall lower than the forecast figures in Infocado. While as an individual grower or packhouse this may not seem like a big issue, it is important to consider how these forecasts are used and strive to improve accuracy. Annual seasonal forecasts are used by industry to budget levy income and plan how this money is spent across the calendar year. If we collectively overestimate, the annual impact can be significant. I encourage all contributors to place increased emphasis on improving the accuracy of their forecasts going forward.

One of the most significant positives that growers should be aware of this season has been the support from Australian supermarkets for Australian grown avocados despite some periods of lower supply than usual over the last six months or so. Industry has worked hard to focus marketing on Australian grown and there are many individuals (on both retailer and supplier sides of the relationship) I am sure have played an important role in reaching the current level of support that we

## Around Australia continued

are experiencing. I believe strongly that the customer experience results will speak for themselves in terms of ongoing market growth fed by positive eating experiences of quality local fruit. The shift to continued Australian supply over the spring and summer seasons has been made possible due to a significantly increased Western Australian crop this year. The challenge will be maximising the momentum gained into next year when we will likely face higher imports from New Zealand and significant pressure from their industry to regain shelf space.

For Central NSW this season ahead will be a very interesting one from a pest control point of view with endosulfan no longer available to control fruit spotting bug. Industry newsletters have provided advice on the chemical control options available going forward and potential strategies for maximising effectiveness of your spray program. Ultimately there will be a significant amount of trial and error involved to determine what works best given we no longer have a one stop solution. I would encourage any grower conducting a fruit spotting bug spray program to share their program and results with their fellow growers. This will potentially allow us to come up with a most effective solution and ultimately minimise any unnecessary sprays.

I wish everyone well over the upcoming summer months – hopefully by the time this goes to print we are all celebrating good fruit sets and kind summer weather!

### Tri State Report

By Nick Hobbs, Avocados Australia Director for the Tri State Growing Area



Just when you think you have a handle on where the crop and the market will be for the season it all changes. Certainly no two seasons are the same but this one has been turned on its head. After a number of seasons having to wait for central Queensland to wind up before starting harvest in October we look like being a long way through harvest by the end of September with quite a few growers finished.

Many growers have responded to market demand and harvested early. With many groves being lighter after the large 2011 crop and a strong flowering expected the early harvest could be a blessing giving trees some respite as it is rare for us to not have two crops on the trees through November. Let's hope for good pollination conditions.

This will be my last report as I am not standing for re-election this year. My commitments to the persimmon industry have increased and I can not commit fully to this role. I would like to thank all those that I have had involvement with in the avocado industry. It had certainly

been challenging and interesting and I would encourage anyone with an interest in furthering their industry to look at nominating for the Regional Director position

### Central Queensland Report

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



In the Central Queensland region most growers will have already finished picking by the time this edition of Talking Avocados reaches your coffee table.



For the 2012 season the Central Queensland produced overall a lighter than originally forecast Hass and Shepard crop. The lighter crop would most likely been a result of the Hass variety not sizing up because of the adverse weather conditions last summer, in addition to the carryover of the damage that had occurred the previous season. Prices have been very good for growers; in fact, possibly the best we have ever seen with the exception of around four weeks in May. Overall there has been very good flowering and with good dry conditions this goes a long way to giving us a good fruit set. Central Queensland growers still have trees that are being rejuvenated and there are still some tree health issues but generally it's looking good for the region. In regards to irrigation, the dams still have plenty of water in them which hopefully means that everything is looking good for next season. Storm season is also approaching and hopefully Central Queensland growers will avoid the bad ones.

Growers will most likely already be aware that endosulfan can no longer be used; the big question for this coming season is what alternatives are available? There are new chemical compounds under investigation, but they won't be available to growers in the immediate future. For fruitspotting bug management in avocados there are only three insecticides currently registered: trichlorfon (Lepidex®, Dipterex®), beta-cyfluthrin (Bulldock®) and methidathion (Suprathion®, Ridacide®). In Queensland a number of chemicals are registered for other pests in avocados and may give some incidental control of fruit spotting bugs, these include methomyl (off-label permit for QLD only) only after flowering (it is toxic to bees) and chlorpyrifos. It will be very interesting to see how the replacement chemicals stack up in regard to the control of fruitspotting bug. If you're after more information you can visit the Grower Notices page of the Avocados Australia website.

At the time of writing this we are in the middle of elections for the Avocados Australia Board. The Central Queensland

Growing Area, Tri State Growing Area and Western Australia/NT Growing Area are all up. Best of luck to all! In relation to elections, it is important to remember that as your Regional Directors we represent the interests of all Central Queensland avocado growers. If any grower has an issue or problem that they would like to raise and/or discuss we are here to listen and will do our very best to address your concerns.

Please contact either:  
 John Walsh - 0428 268 200, j.walsh@avocado.org.au  
 Lachlan Donovan - 0428 981 185, l.donovan@avocado.org.au

### North Queensland Report

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



The new season is shaping to be average for North Queensland. The Shepard crop seems to be setting an average crop despite what looked to be a strong flowering event. The Hass crop also looks to be of average volume after what was a very large crop in 2012. On some orchards the Hass crop is much lower than expected as the new growth flush looks to be growing

through the flower panicles and causing very low fruit setts. Here's hoping that the irregular bearing project review being conducted by Simon Newitt QDAFF can shed some light on the possible causes of these events and to give some direction to the irregular bearing project that is in the planning stage.

The phos acid trial conducted by Matthew Weinert QDAFF is at reporting stage after a season of applications and analysis so the NQ growers are looking forward to the results. This trial was funded by the local grower association and matching funds through Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) as a voluntary contribution (VC) project, with the main focus to investigate the use of phos acid in Shepard as foliar and injection treatments.

### Western Australia Report

By Russell Delroy, Avocados Australia Director for the WA Growing Area



At the time of writing this (mid October) harvest north of Perth is almost over, the Bussleton/Capel region has been busy for eight weeks and Manjimup/Pemberton is well under way. Denmark/Albany region will follow. We have had the highest weekly

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*Around Australia continued*

volumes ever produced out of WA and all of this into a well organized and very strong marketplace.

Compare this to 12 months ago – oversupply, poor marketing co-ordination, and most significantly retail space dominated by imported NZ fruit. The efforts by WA marketers resulting in the two major chains replacing NZ fruit with an Australian fruit program this summer has been well rewarded for all – growers, retailers and consumers. It is critical that we continue to deliver the supply to these programs in a steady and consistent manner.

As we enter peak supply during November and December we need to maintain the marketing disciplines that have benefited us so far. Focus on fruit quality and keeping fruit age from paddock to plate as low as possible is critical to retaining the confidence we are building with consumers – and their frequency of repeat purchase.

With such a heavy crop load this season the return flower currently is a bit light in some areas. Where possible it will be important to get crop load off those trees that are flowering well as early as possible to improve fruit set – next season we will need all the fruit we can get to try and retain the gains made in market share this season.

Over the last couple of months Simon Newett carried out a

project for the industry to review and more clearly identify the issues many growers across southern Australia have with irregular bearing. Simon visited many growers in all the regions that are affected and collated data relating to historical yield patterns, growing conditions/events and spring flowering temperatures.

In early October Simon presented the findings of this work to a study group organized by Avocados Australia which included Tony Whiley and Graeme Thomas. The conclusions from Simons work clearly showed the major issue facing Australian growers is irregular bearing and is not biennial bearing. Biennial bearing is largely a result of a lack of flowering every second year – this is not typically the main problem in Australia.

The study group then compared these results against proposed research projects put forward by the International Avocado Alternate Bearing Research Program. The conclusions were that these proposed research projects will not solve the issues faced by Australian growers. Tony Whiley detailed a significant body of existing work that covers many of the issues relating to irregular bearing. It is likely that a key recommendation of this study group will be that a comprehensive Road Show extension program be developed to better inform growers

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of methods and strategies that can be employed to reduce irregular bearing. I will endeavor to encourage this to occur as soon as possible as it remains one of the key issues facing all growers in WA.

## South Queensland Report

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



Harvest in Southern Qld is all but finished with mixed results for growers; from growers with very poor crops to some with not bad yields. The ones lucky enough to have some fruit have been rewarded with probably the highest prices I have ever seen for avocados during this period. What this has shown is that the volumes the market needs to satisfy consumer demand has increased and what was being supplied has been

below that demand - so we get increased prices.

The encouraging thing is that the volume per week is high so we can still achieve very profitable returns. With good communication and collaboration within the industry growers should continue to receive profitable returns.

As I write this I am observing a very good flowering so with a bit of luck the climatic conditions will let us all turn this into fruit on trees. As we all know flowers don't always turn into fruit which is very frustrating to say the least.

Please remember to contact me if you have any industry issues that you would like me to take forward to industry for either investigation, clarification or anything that you think needs industry attention. I do my best to work for all in the region I represent and for industry as a whole but I am not a mind reader.

All the best for a good fruit set.

# Industry Matters

## 'The Case of the Bruised Avocados'

Over the last two years, staff at the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) - formerly the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) - and the University of Queensland's Centre for Advanced Imaging partnered with industry stakeholders to learn more about avocado bruising.

They asked: *When is bruising occurring throughout the supply chain and how does the bruise behave?*

For example, does it keep growing and how long does it take to go brown after impact? These are key questions that this Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) funded project has been investigating.

The project has yielded some exciting results, some of which have been published in a past editions of Talking Avocados. It's crucial to communicate these results to the wider avocado industry in the best possible way. To accomplish this, the project team have over the last two months been working with Applied Horticultural Research to design and shoot a short video about the project and its key findings.

This video will showcase the project findings and indicate how the information is going to be used to help the whole avocado fruit supply chain to lower the incidence and severity of flesh bruising. Filming for the video has now been completed with the final product scheduled for

release by the end of the year.

'Watch this space' for more information about where and how you can view the final video. For more information please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566 or [supplychain@avocado.org.au](mailto:supplychain@avocado.org.au)

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

## A closer look at yield variability

As a part of a planning process to assist with R&D investment, a review has been undertaken over the last few months to understand the industry needs in relation to Alternate Bearing. Simon Newett from Queensland DAFF undertook this analysis with the cooperation of growers across the country. 51 farms including 85 individual blocks were surveyed to better understand the issues surrounding yield variability. From this review it is evident that the Australian industry does not have a major Alternate Bearing problem, under the true definition.

The review identified that in most cases, flowering was generally reliable from year to year across all sites. However, the review did confirm problems with Irregular Bearing associated primarily with cold nights at flowering, extended wet conditions at flowering, hot dry desiccating conditions at flowering and during the two main fruit shedding events.

## Industry Matters continued

The information from this survey was considered by an expert panel and representative growers, which identified the key issues impacting on yield variability. The panel also reviewed a proposed international collaborative research project on Alternate Bearing and agreed that the proposal would not adequately address the industry needs. Further scoping work has been recommended by the panel to identify R&D and extension needs in relation to yield variability and this will be considered further by the Avocado Industry Advisory Committee.

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

### Hard Condition of Avocados (ICA-30) now available

The Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Scheme's Operational Procedure Hard Condition of Avocados (ICA-30) is now available. The purpose of this procedure is to describe the principles of operation and standards required and the responsibility and practices of personnel that apply to the certification of hard condition of avocado for Queensland fruit fly under an Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) arrangement.

To access this document please visit [www.daff.qld.gov.au](http://www.daff.qld.gov.au)

### Australian Avocados 'Eating My Colourful Vegies and Fruit' launch

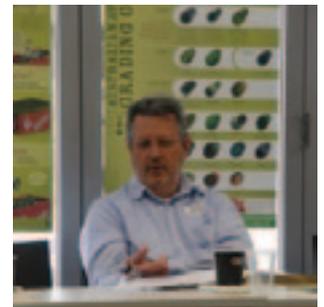
The 'Eating My Colourful Vegies and Fruit' program for 2012 was recently launched in Queensland. The launch was held at a Bulimba Child Care Centre in Brisbane and was attended by Minister John-Paul Langbroek. Mr John Tyas, CEO of Avocados Australia, was also in attendance to discuss the program. 'Eating My Colourful Vegies and Fruit' encourages healthy eating amongst toddlers. The resource kit has already touched the lives of over 60,000 pre-schoolers and this year is set to be even bigger with 600 new preschools and childcare centres having registered and a pilot program commencing in 10 primary schools.



This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy.

### Workshop to guide program future

A workshop was recently held with industry stakeholders to discuss a range of Avocados Australia program activities including Infocado, OrchardInfo, the proposed Wholesaler Accreditation scheme and the industry's education materials. The purpose of the workshop was to gain feedback on the program activities completed to date and discuss how these programs should proceed and be improved. Representatives from the wholesale, packing, growing, research and funding sectors were invited to attend. Watch this space for more information. For more information please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566 or [supplychain@avocado.org.au](mailto:supplychain@avocado.org.au)



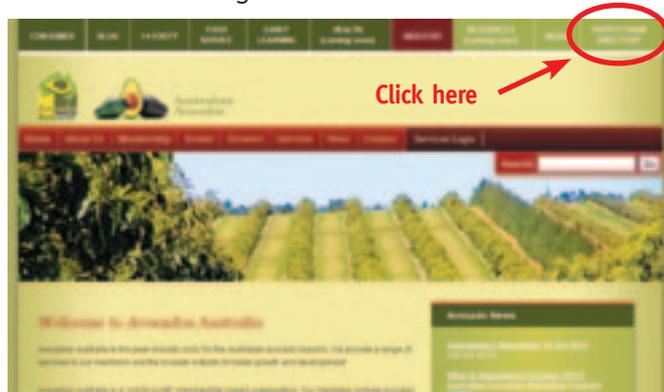
This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

### Is your business registered on the industry Supply Chain Directory?

The Australian avocado industry's Supply Chain Directory is a valuable resource area for both buyers and suppliers of industry-related products. The directory enables buyers

to find suppliers, while allowing suppliers to create and maintain a web presence on the industry website.

To become a registered supplier in the Supply Chain Directory please visit [industry.avocado.org.au](http://industry.avocado.org.au) or email [admin2@avocado.org.au](mailto:admin2@avocado.org.au)



## Grower and Member Profiles to feature in Talking Avocados

Talking Avocados are calling for avocado growers and members of Avocados Australia to feature in a series of grower and member profiles. If you are interested please contact Courtney Vane, Managing Editor of Talking Avocados on 07 3846 6566 or email [co@avocado.org.au](mailto:co@avocado.org.au)



## APVMA recommends the continued use of fenthion on pre and post harvest avocados

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) recommended the continued use of fenthion on pre and post harvest avocados in the recently published residues and dietary exposure report.

Fenthion, a chemical used to control fruit fly and other insects, was recommended to the APVMA for review in 1994, due to toxicological concerns. Concerns were also raised about the safety to human health from dietary exposure to fenthion residues. Residues data were consequently received in 1999 and additional data generated on behalf of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) were received in 2010.

In the report, the use of fenthion on pre and post harvest tropical and sub-tropical fruit (inedible peel), this includes avocados, has been supported by appropriate residue data to allow maximum residue limit (MRL) establishment.

For more information or to access the report please visit the APVMA website at [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)

## Newly published R&D final reports available on the Avocado Online Reports Centre



The Avocado Online Reports Centre is a useful communication tool as it offers users easy access to up-to-date R&D final reports, marketing final reports, industry annual reports, market monitoring reports from Nielsen, and avocado study group minutes.

Read the latest report to be uploaded: *Integrated industry and market data (AV11013)* - A review of all current industry and market information systems, to understand how the information is used, to identify the benefit this information provides to industry stakeholders and how industry information could be improved to better meet industry needs.

All levy paying growers on the Avocados Australia database are issued with a username and password to access our Online Reports Centre via 'Services Login' on the industry website.

For queries about usernames and passwords please contact Amanda Madden on [admin2@avocado.org.au](mailto:admin2@avocado.org.au) or call 07 3846 6566.

To log on please visit the industry website ([industry.avocado.org.au](http://industry.avocado.org.au)) and click on 'Services Login'.

## Meeting with the QLD Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Avocados Australia CEO Mr John Tyas, recently attended a meeting, along with other representatives from the QLD horticultural industry, with the QLD Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Mr John McVeigh. The objective of the meeting was to impress upon the Minister the importance of horticulture in Queensland; which is a \$2.2 billion industry.

*Industry Matters continued*

“It was important to have the discussion about the future of horticulture in Queensland and to ensure the Minister understands the needs of our sector” commented John.

**Thai audit of Australian avocados concludes**

In October 2010, the Thailand Department of Agriculture (DOA) submitted to DAFF a new market access protocol for Australian avocados. Thailand aims to introduce a new market access protocol in the near future to manage pests of quarantine concern.

To assist with the Australia-Thailand market access negotiations, the Thailand DOA needed to be satisfied that the Australian industry has the capacity to adequately address the agreed phytosanitary requirements for market access.

Thai officials flew to Australia in late August to audit avocado farms and packing sheds in all of the States from which fruit may be exported. The Thai officials were very impressed with the professionalism and protocols in place within the industry. Discussions included the use of Fenthion as another possible solution to fruit fly

concerns as well as the difficulty involved in pursuing a cold disinfestation protocol as opposed to a hard green protocol.

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

**Avocado exports reach new heights despite the dollar**

Australian Avocado exports increased 35 percent to a record 2,638 tonnes in the 12 months leading up to June 2012, with much of the growth occurring in 2012 period. Singapore, the Middle East region, Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong account for 99 percent of annual avocado exports.

A strong result in the January to June period has catapulted results to 51 percent ahead of the same period last year. During this first half of 2012 all leading markets contributed to growth. The Middle East region lifted 76 percent and Hong Kong lifted 137 percent whilst leading destinations Singapore and Thailand also lifted a strong 36 and 57 percent respectively.



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To read the full story and download the report please visit the 'News' section of the industry website ([industry.avocado.org.au/news](http://industry.avocado.org.au/news)) or alternatively log into the Online Reports Centre.

### APVMA approves AuStar®

AuStar® has now been approved by the APVMA for use on avocado in Australia.

Applying AuStar provides avocado farmers with cost effective:

Canopy Control	Improved fruit quality
Higher yields	Fuller Shape
Greater fruit retention	Increased flowering

AuStar is now approved for two applications and is applied as a foliar spray as follows:

Growth control	Apply AuStar at full flower as a foliar spray to point of runoff 0.7% (7L/1000L)
Fruit drop control	Apply AuStar at fruit set as a foliar spray to point of runoff 0.5% (5L/100L)

For further information please contact David or Tyson at Chemicals Direct on 08 9388 4774 or 0402 565 580

### Do you use agricultural chemicals available under a minor use permit for horticulture?

Have you had an adverse experience with products for uses covered by a minor use permit? An adverse experience is an unintended or unexpected effect on plants, plant products, animals, human beings or the environment, including injury, sensitivity reactions or lack of efficacy associated with the use of an agricultural chemical product(s) when used according to label (or permit) directions.

AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd facilitates the management

of a number of minor use permits for the following horticultural industries; Almond, Apple, Avocado, Banana, Blueberry, Cherry, Chestnut, Citrus, Custard Apple, Cut Flower, Garlic, Ginger, Hazelnut, Hops, Lychee, Macadamia, Mango, Nashi, Nursery, Olive, Onion, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pear, Pecan, Persimmon, Pineapple, Pistachio, Potato, Rubus/Ribes, Strawberry, Summerfruit, Table Grape, Tomato, Tropical Fruit, Turf, Vegetable and Walnut.

You can view the permits available for your horticultural industry at the following Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) website: [www.apvma.gov.au/permits/search.php](http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/search.php)

If you believe you have had an adverse experience following use under a minor use permit for one of the above horticultural industries, please email [pds@agaware.com.au](mailto:pds@agaware.com.au) for an adverse experience report form and return it to the same email address. This information will be forwarded onto the APVMA. This mechanism will assist the APVMA to receive and consider horticultural industry feedback on adverse experiences relating to the use of agricultural chemicals under minor use permits. This information may also assist in making informed decisions on the suitability of pesticides for the future needs of your horticultural industry.

Further details about the APVMAs Adverse Experience Reporting Program for Agricultural Chemicals may be found at: [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)

### 10th Annual R&D Workshop completed in Brisbane

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Avocado R&D Forum was held on Tuesday, 04 September 2012 at The Point Hotel in Brisbane Queensland. The aim of the forum was to promote discussion, encourage interaction and integration between service providers and the avocado industry leadership. 23 presentations were given on the day; presentations encompassed a variety of important industry issues such as fruitspotting bug (FSB), alternate bearing research, and avocado quality. Feedback gathered via an online survey emailed to all attendee's shortly after the event was positive with key learning's to be considered in future planning including more time allocated for in-depth discussion and more networking opportunities.

### APVMA finalise review of carbaryl

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has completed its review of the carbaryl products used in agricultural situations and their associated approved labels.

To view the final review report and regulatory decision

## Industry Matters continued

please visit the APVMA website [www.apvma.gov.au](http://www.apvma.gov.au)

### New Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws

In July 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) formally committed to the harmonisation of Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws with a commencement date of 1 January 2012.

NSW, QLD, NT and ACT have already adopted the new system and Tasmania recently passed legislation for the new harmonised WHS laws to commence on 1 January 2013. WA, VIC, and SA did not adopt the new WHS laws from 1 January 2012.

The model work health and safety legislation consists of an integrated package of a model Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act, supported by model Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations, model Codes of Practice and a National Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

Safe Work Australia is the national policy body responsible for the development and evaluation of the model Work Health and Safety laws. The Commonwealth, states and territories are responsible for regulating and enforcing work health and safety laws in their jurisdictions.

For more information please visit your relevant state or territory work health and safety authority's website or the Safe Work Australia website at [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)

### Avocados Australia Annual Report 2011-2012 now available

The Avocados Australia Annual Report 2011-2012 is now available to read and/or download on the industry website. Please visit [industry.avocado.org.au](http://industry.avocado.org.au) and click on 'About Us' and 'Company Info'; alternatively you can logon to the Online Reports Centre via 'Services Login' which is located in the menu bar on the industry homepage.

### Chefs urged to get creative with avocado

The Australian avocado sector is advising chefs to get ready for a bumper crop this year. To celebrate this year's high yield the industry has launched a campaign aimed at attracting interest from the foodservice industry. The campaign highlights creative menu ideas utilising avocados.

Avocados Australia is running a competition encouraging chefs to use avocados in as many ways as possible. Up for grabs are Tojiro brand knives, Thermomixes - plus of course the visits and reviews from consumers and food bloggers to try the menu.

Australia has the highest level of consumption of avocados

amongst English speaking nations. Per person, Australian consumers eat around 2.7 kilograms of avocado a year – an increase of more than 106 per cent in the last decade. In the next four years the industry hopes to lift consumption even further with an ultimate goal of 5kg per person. Source: [hospitalitymagazine.com.au](http://hospitalitymagazine.com.au)

### Coles launches 100% Aussie Avocados campaign



In September, Coles launched their '100% Aussie Avocados' campaign to drive Australian avocado sales. This campaign is a part of the commitment Coles has made to Australian avocado growers to source locally grown fruit for the remainder of the season - as long as there is adequate supply

Coles have implemented numerous activities to drive Australian avocado sales, these include:

- A segment on the Today Show with Curtis Stone mentioning Australian avocados
- Great in-store executions including Point Of Sale (POS) and in-store radio promotion
- \$100,000 donation from avocado sales to Make-A-Wish Foundation
- Front page coverage on the Coles website including recipes and grower stories
- Coles magazine exposure with recipes and Make-A-Wish
- Social Media coverage from Coles, Make-A-Wish as well as Australian Avocados

The industry has also contributed significant marketing dollars to assist Coles in their campaign and this investment involves:

- Targeting avocado buyers to increase 'frequency' within the Fly Buy customer database
- Targeting avocado 'dip' buyers and converting them to buy fresh avocados
- 100,000 targeted customers will receive an Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) and docket deals
- In-store demo campaigns in the month of September

In addition, this new partnership has allowed growers

from South East Queensland, New South Wales and the Riverland to supply varieties to retail that are usually destined for the wholesale market with Coles now buying Gwen and Reed avocados to supplement the short Hass season across the country.

### Coles launches website identifying origins of its fresh fruit and vegs

Coles supermarket group has launched a new website to inform customers of the origin of their fruit and vegetables. Although Coles said 96 per cent of their fresh fruit and vegetables are grown in Australia, many customers still believe half the fresh produce is imported.

The new Coles website appears to be a response to the recent revamp of its rival Woolworths' core message of buying local and fresh.

Coles said that customers often "don't understand why" some types of produce may have to be imported at certain times of the year. The new Coles online calendar will list all of the popular fruits and vegetables and show month by month if they are Australian grown or imported.

The Coles online calendar shows that lots of popular fresh fruit and veg, like bananas, carrots, potatoes and tomatoes are Australian grown all year round. Coles said its avocados are Australian grown, and Coles reported that it is the only national supermarket that can say this.

Coles Group Merchandise Director, John Durkan said it was "now easier than ever for customers to support Australian growers and buy seasonally".

"Coles is passionate about supporting Australian growers and offering our customers the freshest local produce. The problem is that many customers just don't believe it," Mr Durkan said.

"Buying Australian produce generates billions of dollars

for the rural economy but we are not resting on our laurels. In the last year we have replaced hundreds of millions of dollars of fresh produce imports including 200 tonnes of capsicums previously imported per year from New Zealand.," said Mr Durkan.

Coles said popular fresh fruits and vegetables that were 100 per cent Australian at Coles all year round included: apples, avocados, bananas, broccoli, beans, cabbage, capsicums, carrots, cauliflower, herbs, lettuce, limes, brown and white mushrooms, pineapples, potatoes, spinach, tomatoes and watermelon. Source: [www.ausfoodnews.com.au](http://www.ausfoodnews.com.au)

### New state planning zones are a disaster for rural Victoria

The State Government's new planning zones will radically transform rural Victoria for the worse.

They are a triumph for the state's anti-planning lobby and market-oriented ideologues. This lobby includes influential landowners, some rural councils and the departments of Tourism and Primary Industries - all well connected to rural politicians. This group cares little for the survival of agriculture and townships compared to short-term profits from development. They see land as a resource-in-waiting for commercial, industrial and residential development.

Effective planning safeguards our future by protecting long-term options. But the Baillieu Government's new zones will have a series of pernicious impacts. The new commercial zones will destroy the retail centres of many country towns by facilitating retail and other commercial development on township fringes. Existing retailers should note this threat or risk to their livelihood and the value of their assets. The new Farming and Green Wedge zones will allow dispersed commercial and industrial uses, many

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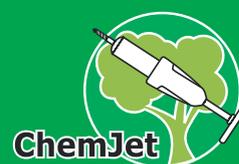
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## Industry Matters continued

without the need for permits.

Residential hotels, function centres, industrial developments and other commercial uses should be located in or near towns to bolster township economies. Instead, they will be dumped on cheaper rural land, introduce urban uses incompatible with agriculture, raise some rural land prices and lower the comparative rate of return from agriculture, further threatening agricultural viability.

The further small lot subdivision favoured by Planning Minister Matthew Guy will add to these pressures. Subdivision will also place thousands of people in high fire-risk areas, cause large cost increases for local councils and rate increases for communities through pressure on rural roads and demands for services.

The new zones divorce the protection of natural resources from agricultural production and economic prosperity. They ignore the benefits from integrating environmental protection with farming - and the economic returns, such as tourism income - from protecting high amenity areas. People don't visit ugly landscapes littered with development.

We need a settlement policy for Victoria but one which relates population increase to agricultural production, infrastructure and protection of amenity. Destroying rural areas to benefit developers will benefit the few at great cost to the many. Source: [www.weeklytimesnow.com.au](http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au)

### Record avocado prices

Some of the best avocado farm gate prices on record for winter and spring largely went begging for NSW growers, whose farms produced crops up to half their normal size on the back of poor seasonal conditions.

Only 150,000 5.5 kilogram trays came out of northern NSW this season, down 50 per cent, with yields badly affected by wet flowering last spring and continuing excessive rain during the summer growing season. For the same reasons, production from the central NSW growing region between Grafton and Sydney was down 40pc, with about 450,000 trays sent to market.

The Murray-irrigated Mildura Tri-State region was in a cyclical poorer yield season and turned off about 300,000 trays compared to last season's 600,000.

Despite slightly above-average yields in Queensland, the drop in supply was enough to push prices to \$35 a tray for larger fruit and standard trays were still trading at the very solid \$30 mark. Prices to growers last year, when bumper crops were picked, bottomed at \$14 a tray.

Avocados Australia's northern NSW representative Tom

Silver, Alstonville, said he could not remember seeing prices that high during winter in his 25 years of growing avocados.

"The wet seasons have taken a big toll on tree health across the northern NSW region with an increased incidence of root rot disease and orchards generally looking less healthy," he said.

"The dry spell this spring, however, has meant there has been the best fruit set for three years and the hope is for a big crop next year.

"The major chains have been very supportive of Australian products and the beauty of short supply is that fruit moves quickly so quality is very good, which assists the long-term marketing of avocados."

Western Australian avocados are now dominating the market, with 230,000 tray equivalents supplied to key city markets around the country last week. WA is expected to harvest its largest-ever crop at more than three million trays this season, which continues until March.

Avocados Australia chairman Jim Kochi, Atherton, Queensland, said the bumper western crop could be attributed to excellent seasonal conditions and increased land moving into avocado production.

"WA fruit has been on the market since the end of September, but there is no oversupply and prices are expected to hold at that level through until next autumn," he said.

"Consumer demand has increased to the point where the supply demand balance is now about 200,000 trays per week – up 50,000 from what it was five years ago.

"We know when supply drops to a level where the retail price goes too high there is a negative effect on demand, but this season has shown if quality is good consumers consider \$2.50 to \$2.80 per piece of fruit to be good value."

Queensland produced more than four million trays this season – slightly above average courtesy of strong yields in the north of the State.

Across the eastern States, flowering conditions and fruit set has been positive, and, while the dry run is testing water sources, growers say crops are on track to be heavier next year.

Tri-State industry representative Nick Hobbs, Renmark, South Australia, said there was now a swing towards increased avocado production in his region with the crop expected to grow in the next five to 10 years. Source: [theland.farmonline.com.au](http://theland.farmonline.com.au)

# Alternative chemical option to Endosulfan

## Alternative chemical option to endosulfan for fruitspotting bug management for this coming season.

*Ruth K. Huwer and Craig, D.A. Maddox  
Wollongbar Primary Industries Institute  
1243 Bruxner Highway, Wollongbar, NSW 2477*

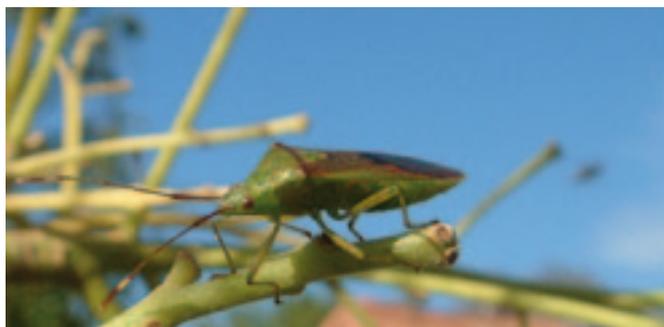
Fruitspotting bugs (*Amblypelta* spp.) are a major pest and problem for Australian avocado growers. In the past multiple applications of endosulfan during the growing season were commonly used, and it proved a successful and economically viable option. However, all endosulfan products were deregistered on 12 October 2010 in Australia with a two year phase-out period. Endosulfan in stock can only be used until 12 October 2012. After that date use of endosulfan is illegal and checks for residues will be undertaken.

The big question for growers for this coming season is what alternatives are available? There are new chemical compounds under investigation, but they won't be available to growers in the immediate future.

For fruitspotting bug management in avocados there are only three insecticides currently registered: trichlorfon (Lepidex®, Dipterex®), beta-cyfluthrin (Bulldock®) and methidathion (Suprathion®, Ridacide®).

Trichlorfon at 2 mL/L is very effective, but alkaline hydrolysis can be an issue. The active ingredient breaks down fairly quickly in an alkaline solution (pH→7). It is important to check the pH of the water to make sure the pH is not alkaline. If it is, an acidifier needs to be added. Alkaline hydrolysis can become an issue when trichlorfon is combined with some copper products (especially copper hydroxide). In this case copper oxychloride might be a better option.\*

Research in other crops has shown that using synthetic pyrethroids, including beta-cyfluthrin for FSB control can cause secondary problems such as scale insects and spider mite because they kill beneficial insects. The latter would also certainly hold for methidathion. Scale and tea red spider mite populations can flare up after only



two applications of synthetic pyrethroids such as beta-cyfluthrin.

As a good policy, growers should aim not to use more than two consecutive applications of any of the registered insecticides, or other insecticides in the same group. This will greatly reduce the risk of insecticide resistance building up in fruitspotting bug or other non target pest populations.

Remember that routine monitoring for the presence of bugs in the orchard should be an integral part of any pest management program. Understanding how fruitspotting bug populations build through the season, and which parts of the orchard are more severely infested with high pest populations (ie hot spots) can help in planning for effective FSB management.

The HAL project MT10049 – Multi targeted approach to fruitspotting bug management is currently investigating new chemicals as alternatives to endosulfan, but it will be some time before they will be available to growers as efficacy and residue data still have to be generated.

### Suggestions for fruitspotting bug management during the forthcoming growing season

Alternate between two applications of trichlorfon and a single beta-cyfluthrin spray (both best applied after flowering) and if high bug populations necessitate, apply a single application of methidathion, again after flowering.

For example	1 <sup>st</sup>	spray trichlorfon
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	spray trichlorfon
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	spray beta-cyfluthrin
	4 <sup>th</sup>	spray trichlorfon etc

### For Queensland only

In Queensland a number of chemicals are registered for other pests in avocados and may give some incidental control of fruit spotting bugs, these include methomyl (off-label permit for QLD only) only after flowering (it is toxic to bees) and chlorpyrifos.

For further information please contact Ruth Huwer on 02 66261196, Craig Maddox on 02 66261195 or Mark Hickey on 02 66261277 at NSW DPI Wollongbar.

\*Craig Maddox from NSW DPI has investigated the issue of alkaline hydrolysis of trichlorfon and points out that the chemical company degradation studies were carried out on the technical grade active, but that the commercial Nufarm product formulation is buffered and should be reasonably resistant to alkaline hydrolysis. Addition of an acidifying agent to buffer the spray solution is an added precaution to achieve optimum effectiveness of the insecticide.

# Channel 9's Today Show Team visit Balmoral Orchard

Michael Flynn, Manager and his staff at Balmoral Orchard had a welcome break from picking and packing avocados in October when **Emma Friedman** and the Channel 9 Today Show team dropped in for a breakfast-time visit to the orchard and packing shed at Cabarlah, Queensland, just outside



*Sunrise over the range at Balmoral Orchard*

Toowoomba. While the sun rose on a beautiful morning over the Toowoomba Range, Emma gave Balmoral Orchard and the Queensland avocado industry some great publicity when she told viewers “avocados are the most delicious fruit found in the country and Balmoral Avocados are the crème de la crème”

The TV presentation was co-ordinated with a visit to Balmoral by local Coles Supermarket staff and volunteers from the Make-a-Wish Foundation. Coles have been raising money for seriously ill children through retailing specially branded avocados. They used the visit to Balmoral present a cheque for \$100,000 to the Foundation. This excellent contribution will go a long way to making life



*Emma Friedman of Channel 9 helping with breakfast at Balmoral*

a little more cheerful for the children.

Emma explained “the Make-a-Wish Foundation volunteers do an amazing job helping these seriously ill children”

While Emma was exploring the orchard and packing shed at Balmoral, back in the Channel 9 studio, **Karl Stefanovic** and **Lisa Wilkinson** were advising viewers on how to ripen avocados at home.

“Put the avo in a paper bag with a banana” suggested Karl, while he did just that on live TV. When he opened the bag a few minutes later, after an ad break, there was the avocado, magically ripened and already spread on a piece of toast! He also jokingly asked if Emma could find him a guacamole tree at Balmoral.

On the subject of shopping for a ripe avocado, Lisa



*Coles donation to Make-a-Wish Foundation at Balmoral Orchard*



*Karl Stefanovic and Lisa Wilkinson gave avocado ripening advice to viewers during the Balmoral Orchard visit*

recommended to “just feel the consistency around the stem, and when slightly soft it should be ready to eat”

Also visiting Balmoral Orchard and appearing on live TV was Avocado Australia’s very own Alvin Avocado. Alvin was seen skipping gaily down the range at Balmoral to assist with fruit picking when he unfortunately lost his footing and did a spectacular somersault which was captured live by the Channel 9 cameras. Back in the studio Karl and

Lisa were relieved to see that Alvin recovered well and was happily waving to viewers. Karl wondered if that sort of activity could lead to bruised fruit!

All in all the morning at Balmoral Orchard was an enormous success for the Australian

avocado industry. In closing the show, Emma Friedman was effusive in her thanks to Michael Flynn, Manager and his hard-working team at Balmoral. Emma made Michael blush when she advised viewers to “go and buy some of his avocados, as he’s one of the best blokes we’ve met on the road”



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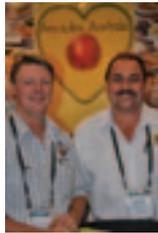
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ph: 07 4696 6388, Fax: 07 4696 6321, email: balmoralavocados@bigpond.com

VISIT US ON THE WEB: [www.balmoralavos.com](http://www.balmoralavos.com)

# Dr John Leonardi leaves Avocados Australia



After 12 years of dedicated service to the Australian avocado industry Dr John Leonardi left the employment of Avocados Australia at the end of October 2012. Since 2001, John has worked tirelessly as a Horticulturist and Project Officer for the Australian avocado industry on projects that have provided growers with both lasting and tangible benefits.

John is well known for his extensive work on canopy management strategies. Canopy management is one of the major production issues confronting the Australian avocado industry. Finding cost effective means of tree size control to optimise light interception and penetration, maximise fruit quality and yield, and improve efficiency of harvesting and spraying operations are essential to industry. John's study was to identify canopy management strategies that could be successfully implemented in all major avocado growing areas across Australia. He evaluated several canopy management strategies, including selective limb removal, selective and mechanical pruning, staghorning, tree removal and plant growth regulator application.

John's most recent work for the industry was to evaluate sustainable orchard management practices for extension into general industry standards. Avocado growers have adopted several sustainable orchard management practices including the use of mulches, natural mineral fertilisers, molasses, fish and kelp concentrates, and compost teas and other brewed microbes. John undertook an analysis of several of these strategies in the major avocado producing regions across Australia. At each study site, he evaluated information on the timing and cost of these practices and the effect on tree health and productivity.

On behalf of the Australian avocado industry, Avocados Australia would like to sincerely thank John for his service and wish him the very best in all of his future endeavours.

## Profile of Dr John Leonardi

### Education

**Doctorate of Philosophy,  
University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane (1999)**

Factors limiting fruit set and retention in cashew (*Anacardium occidentale* L.)

**Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours I),  
University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane (1989)**

### Experience

*June 2004 - October 2012*

#### **Industry Project Officer, Avocados Australia**

Projects:

- Evaluation of sustainable orchard management practices for extension into general industry standards to reduce costs.
- The development of canopy management strategies suited to the different growing conditions across Australia for increased profitability.

*July 2000 - June 2004*

#### **Horticulturist, Avocados Australia and Australian Avocados Grower Federation**

Project: Avocado canopy and orchard floor management

*November 1998 - June 2000*

#### **Experimentalist, Queensland Department of Primary Industries, Maroochy Research Station, Nambour**

Project: Avocado canopy health and management

*May 1995 - October 1998*

#### **Project Scientist, CSIRO Division of Plant Industry, Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre, Darwin**

Projects:

- Stabilising mango flowering & cropping in northern Australia
- National mango breeding program

*October 1994-April 1995*

#### **Research Assistant, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton**

Develop trials to investigate the effect of irrigation and nutrition on Culinary Bamboo shoot production and establish grapevine rootstock and Papaya dieback trials.

*October 1993-July 1994*

#### **Part time Research Assistant, CSIRO Division of Horticulture, St Lucia, Brisbane**

Project: The effect of pollen parent on nut retention and subsequent yield in macadamia.

*March 1990-August 1993*

#### **University of Queensland & CSIRO Division of Horticulture PhD Research Program**

Project: Factors limiting fruit set and retention in cashew (*Anacardium occidentale* L.)

# New HAL Marketing Services Manager for Avocados

Duncan Sinclair joins HAL with over 15 years marketing experience across food and beverage sectors of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) and more recently the Australian Wine Industry. Starting a career with the multinational FMCG giant Kraft Foods Ltd, Duncan then moved onto product and brand management roles with smaller Australian owned co-ops of Ardmona Foods Ltd and then Dairy Farmers (before both organisations merged with their competitors). During this time he worked across a number of different categories including fruit snacks, canned fruit and tomatoes, flavoured milk as well as gaining experience in new product development. Within these categories Duncan managed well known brands such as Goulburn Valley fruit, Dare, Moove and Oak flavoured milk brands.

Duncan then moved into the wine industry as a brand manager with the Barossa based family winemaker The Yalumba Wine Company. At Yalumba he gained an understanding of the winemaking process from the vine to the consumer by managing brands from small premium boutique vineyards to international commercially driven

table wines such as Oxford Landing. This experience led Duncan to become Yalumba's Brand Marketing Manager charged with the responsibility of managing the marketing team and the company's equity portfolio.

Duncan left Yalumba to take up consulting work in the wine industry plus take on the responsibility of managing his young children. Over the past 2 years he has completed a new product development project for Taylors Wines and successfully kept his children in check!

He holds a Bachelor of Business, Marketing, and lives in Rozelle with his young family. Duncan is looking forward to working with Avocados Australia and its members to continue the momentum gained from activities to date.



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# Infocado and Orchard Info: Spring Update

## Review of Avocado Industry and Market Information Systems

An external review was recently undertaken of the Australian avocado industry and market information systems to understand how that information is being used, how beneficial it is, and what improvements can be made for the benefit of industry. The Infocado and OrchardInfo systems were a primary focus of this review.

As most readers would already know, the Infocado system is designed to collect a variety of dispatch and forecast information from packhouses and wholesalers. OrchardInfo is designed to collect and report information such as variety, rootstock, yield, tree spacing, hectares planted, and tree age at orchard level. This information is collected directly from growers.

Stakeholder consultation confirmed that the information provided through Infocado is highly valued and the current reporting formats and delivery meet user's needs. The main issues with the system relate to data accuracy and data verification.

The following recommendations have been made:

- Continue to invest in all current data sources
- Investment is needed in communications to restore confidence in the system
- Improve accuracy of Infocado data
- Verify Infocado data
- Improve reporting
- Improve communication and offer a grower education project
- Risk management
- Greater project resourcing is needed to allow investment in the time and tools required to achieve the above mentioned goals.

The following text is an extract from the Review of Avocado Industry and Market Information Systems Final Report (Project AV11013). This project was undertaken by Jenny Margetts of p2p business solutions pty ltd.

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Infocado Update: July Quarterly Report continued

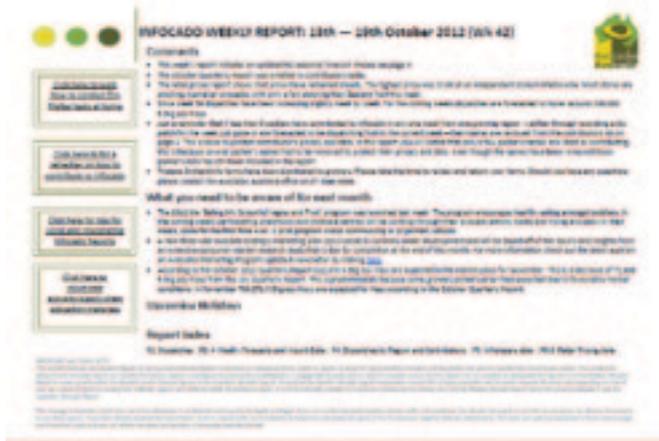


Figure 2: Example of Weekly Infocado Report

The difference between the reports is noted on the front page of both and states:

*The monthly forecast and dispatch figures in the Quarterly Infocado Report incorporate an allowance (which varies by region) to allow for the production forecasts and dispatches that are not inputted into the Infocado system. This production (dispatch and forecast) data is not inputted for various reasons including some packhouse's unwillingness to engage with industry and/or lack of computer access. For this reason it is not possible to extrapolate the figures from the Weekly Infocado Report to come up with either the dispatch and/or forecast figures in the Quarterly Infocado Report. At any time the Weekly Infocado Report incorporates around 85% of total production and forecasts however this does vary depending on time of year (as a result of the fruit coming from different regions with different levels of packhouse input). It is not functionally possible to incorporate allowances for missing data into the Weekly Infocado Report hence the variance between it and the Quarterly Infocado Report.*

**Improve reporting**

- Introduce minor format improvements and changes to improve clarity and to acknowledge discrepancies in the data
- With regard to crop forecasting, when there are known changes in regional crop performance which may have an impact on supply chain performance then interim (monthly) reports should be released e.g. instead of releasing Infocado Quarterly Reports in January, April, July and October only, it may be required to release interim reports in other months also.
- Continue to focus on developing OrchardInfo as this will provide important information to support longer term strategic planning at a business and industry level

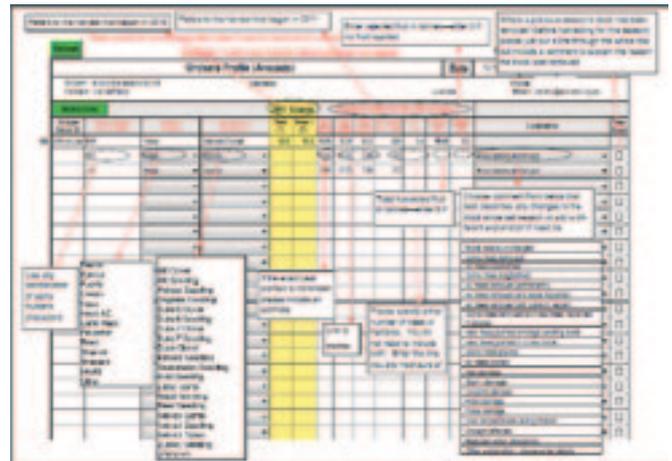


Figure 3: OrchardInfo instructions.

- Consider investing in weekly wholesale price reports as an incentive to encourage growers to provide data for OrchardInfo
- Publish the quarterly export / import report on the Avocados Australia website (under log-in)
- Seek to introduce a Brisbane Price Index and evaluate for usefulness
- Consider introduction of a fee-for-service offering around customised reporting to support businesses.

**Communication and grower education**

- Develop and resource a comprehensive communication program, building on the existing program, to support industry's objectives around data collection and industry development
- Encourage and educate users in how historical data could be used to inform business development processes
- Develop a more comprehensive marketing education program for the industry
- Continue to hold Infocado Summits, where possible, every two years.

Avocados Australia is currently reviewing these recommendations to assess how and when they might be implemented. It should be noted that some of the recommended activities are already in place and are ongoing, such as checking weekly and seasonal data for anomalies as it is submitted.

Should you have any questions about anything mentioned in this article please contact Julie Petty at Avocados Australia on the Infocado Hotline: 1300 303 971 (if unattended please leave a message and your call will be returned) or P: 07 3846 6566 or E: [infocado@avocado.org.au](mailto:infocado@avocado.org.au)

# OHMA to maximise trade access opportunities for Australian horticultural producers

Horticulture Australia Limited has established the Office for Horticulture Market Access (OHMA) and the OHMA Committee made up of various horticulture industry stakeholders.

The purpose of the OHMA committee is to collaborate with industry, private and government stakeholders to increase the opportunities to maximise viable new and continued existing trade access for Australian horticultural producers into new and existing markets under commercially viable conditions.

The primary role of the committee is to:

- Act as a focal point on market access issues for all HAL member industries
- Take a leadership position in identifying market access issues and promoting market access on behalf of the horticultural industry
- Identify global and individual market impediments to market access of horticultural products including



government and commercial restrictions

- Determine new market access priorities for the Australian horticultural industry based on identification of access requirements, commercial viability of access proposals, and government support for pursuit of such priorities through the market access process
- Encourage and assist horticultural industries to address and submit commercially feasible applications for market access prioritisation
- Invite expert individuals on an as needed basis to assist the committee to make judgments on priorities in relation to both quarantine and non-quarantine market access issues and economic viability.
- Highlight technical, R&D or other problematical issues which may arise in course of the market access process, for presentation of an industry view towards resolution of the matter with government authorities or others involved, including recommendations for research programs to address the issues.
- Encourage the discussion and dissemination of information on market access at industry forums and other meetings which complement the committee's own activities
- Provide a collaborative and productive environment with each of the main government market access agencies (particularly Biosecurity Australia and DFAT and DAFF Technical Market Access Division and AQIS), such that meaningful horticultural outcomes can be achieved

The AAL Board has nominated AAL Director Daryl Boardman to represent the interests of the avocado industry on this committee.

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# QAAFI – a new model for research and future development in horticulture

Much has changed in the two years since formation of the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI) in late 2010.

Aligned with the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) –QAAFI is a unique example of how researchers, producers and government can work together to increase productivity and profitability.

Two years ago, 34 senior Queensland Government scientists joined QAAFI and its parent body, The University of Queensland. The government scientists came from a variety of disciplines within agriculture, food, nutrition and animal sciences.

With a string of research successes to its credit, QAAFI is widely recognised as a model research institute for the food and fibre sectors both nationally and internationally.

Indeed, the horticultural sector and wider agricultural community have benefited considerably from QAAFI’s scientific leadership.

Importantly for avocado growers, several former senior Queensland Government scientists with decade-long industry experience are now part of the QAAFI team.

Dr Liz Dann, a former DAFF scientist and now part of QAAFI at the Ecosciences Precinct in Brisbane, leads the major avocado disease management project funded by industry through Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL).

As a senior plant pathologist working from one of the world’s best-equipped research facilities, Liz has enhanced capacity to respond to industry concerns.



*Graham Anderson (Anderson Horticulture) discusses strategic research directions with Assoc. Prof. Andre Drenth at the QAAFI Annual Research Meeting (Photo credit: QAAFI).*



*Dr Elizabeth Dann and PhD student Merran Neilsen beneath one of several large shade houses on the roof of the Ecosciences Precinct complex (Photo credit: QAAFI).*

“By moving to QAAFI, many new opportunities are available to my research team,” she said.

“For one it provides our group access to science students, who can range from undergrads and course-work students to participants from research higher degree programs.

“Collectively the involvement of enthusiastic young scientists means more hands on deck, and the capacity to value-add to the avocado research program.

“It’s widely recognised that students add positively to the research mix, by undertaking small projects and contributing to the overall knowledge base.

“Having access to these programs allows us to gain a better understanding of the complex interactions between the plant and its pathogens.”

Liz is recognised internationally for her work on systemic induced resistance in plants and its practical implementation.

A large component of her research is focused on assessing non-traditional products that may be valuable in disease management, such as compounds which activate disease resistance pathways.

Such products are becoming more popular given concerns over pesticides in the environment and residues in fruit, and the drive towards more sustainable production of our food.

She currently supervises several students on projects investigating molecular diversity and epidemiology of

fungal pathogens and constitutive and inducible plant defences.

Overall, QAAFI is on track to significantly improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability across the tropical and subtropical food, fibre and agri-business industries.

According to QAAFI Director, Professor Robert Henry, there were initially some misconceptions about the institute's role as a research organisation.

"In essence, QAAFI is about bringing together cutting-edge developments in science to address priority needs and opportunities in agriculture and food production," he said.

"Many of our former Queensland Government scientists remain at their government research sites, but they have now become part of an exciting research institute that brings people, science and research projects together."

"Initially, the benefits of forming QAAFI were not so obvious but that's changing now we've demonstrated our linkages with industry and the growing research funding opportunities.

"QAAFI is about delivering better outcomes for industry; more rapid delivery to industry and smoothing the path to industry for university researchers."

During the past 12 months alone, with the assistance of HAL, QAAFI researchers have mapped out sophisticated, long-term, disease-management programs to protect Australia's \$450 million banana crop and the \$120 million macadamia industry.

QAAFI has played a similar leadership role in the recent formation of the Northern Beef Research Alliance with CSIRO and DAFF.



*Professor Robert Henry, Director of QAAFI, presents the award for best student poster to Ms Dalphy Hartevelde, PhD student, at the QAAFI Annual Research Meeting (Photo credit: QAAFI).*

Another key component of QAAFI's strategic approach to long-term success is its decentralisation.

QAAFI has scientists working with DAFF teams at 12 research stations across Queensland, ranging from Cairns to Warwick.

With such broad research interests, industry plays a key role in developing QAAFI's research priorities.

At QAAFI's annual research meeting, dozens of industry leaders from around Australia join Australia's top food and fibre scientists for a chance to workshop specific industry concerns.

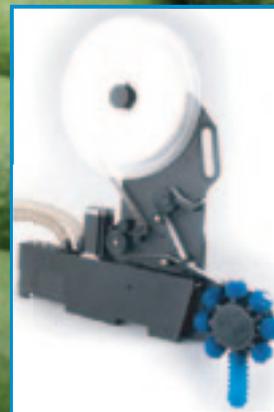
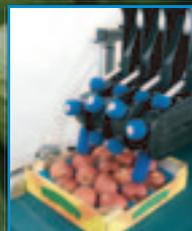
At the institute's 2012 research meeting, three representatives from HAL, the CEO of Australia's leading macadamia growers' association and Graham Anderson (Anderson Horticulture) were among the many industry reps who took advantage of the opportunity to talk directly with researchers.

For more information about QAAFI or its next year's annual research meeting visit [www.qaafi.uq.edu.au](http://www.qaafi.uq.edu.au)

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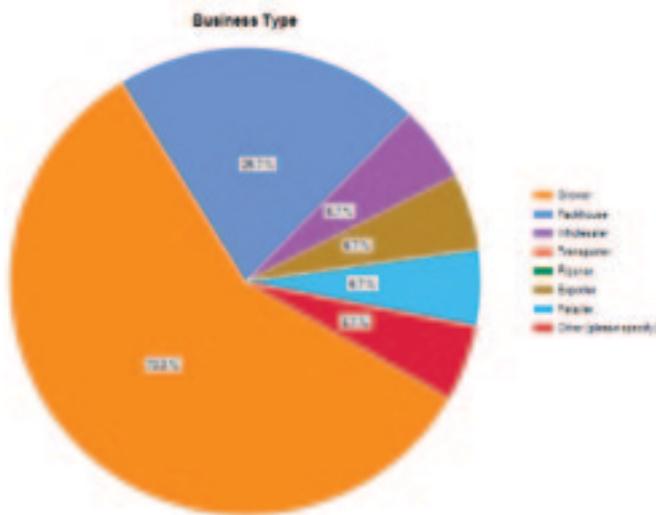
# Supply Chain Education Materials

## How are things progressing?

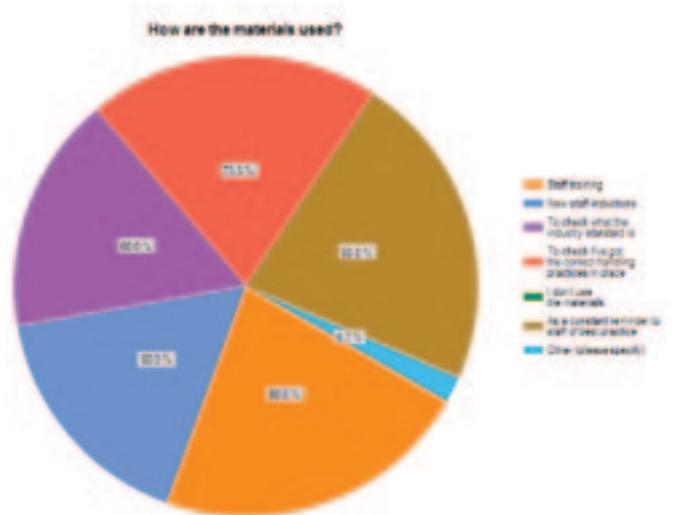
The Australian avocado industry likes and uses the supply chain education materials – that is the key finding from a recent survey of industry stakeholders conducted by Avocados Australia. The education materials were developed in conjunction with expert staff at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), formerly Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and other supply chain stakeholders. These materials are designed to highlight the best recommended practices for handling fruit at each sector of the supply chain with the goal of improving handling and therefore the quality of fruit in the market place.

Avocados Australia wanted to know whether or not industry stakeholders found the education materials useful in their businesses and if they thought any improvements were necessary. The feedback generated from the survey will be used in helping Avocados Australia determine where necessary what improvements need to be made to the education materials. All sectors of the supply chain were given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

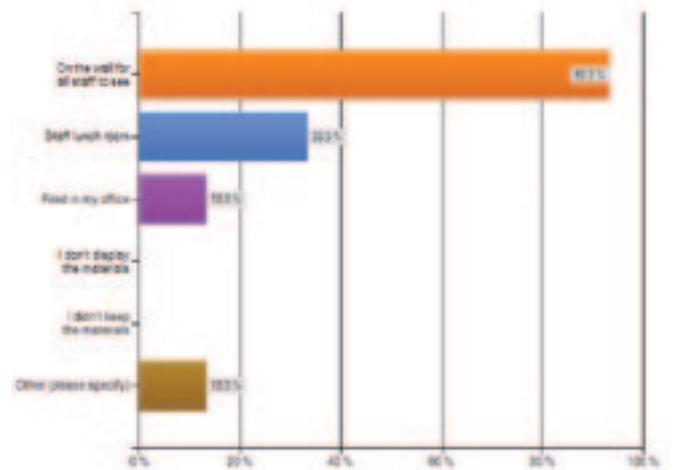
The pie graph below shows survey participants by business type. Participants could select more than one role. Most participants were growers (73.3%).



If the education materials were applicable to their sector of the supply chain, most participants were already using them in their businesses. The below pie chart shows the most common ways the survey participants were using the materials. Again, participants could select more than one option.



Over 90% of respondents had the posters displayed on the wall for staff to see.



All participants indicated that they were happy with the education materials as they are. Some were keen to see the education materials translated into foreign languages and also wanted to see the retailer focused materials distributed as widely as possible.

All members of the supply chain can help! If you are supplying fruit directly into a retailer, or your wholesaler is doing so; make sure you order retail education materials from Avocado Australia to include in the consignment.

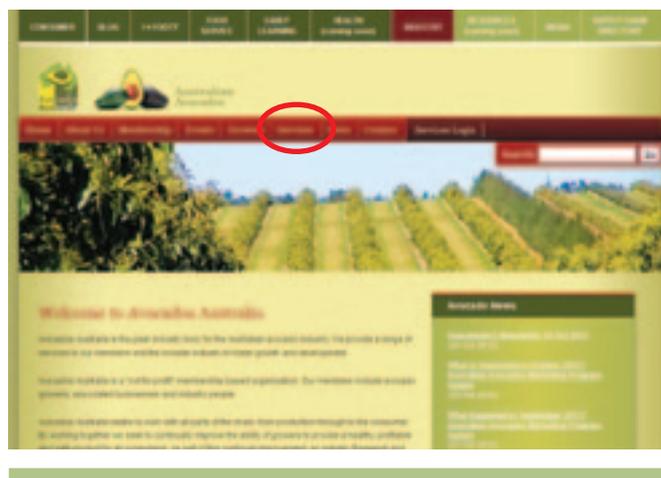
Of those who responded, over 60% felt that an online, interactive version of the education materials would be helpful in their businesses. It was flagged however that understanding the education material could be an issue because English may not an employee's first language.

Should you have any further feedback you would like to discuss please contact Julie Petty on 07 3846 6566 or [supplychain@avocado.org.au](mailto:supplychain@avocado.org.au)

To order copies of any of the education materials please

contact the Avocados Australia office on the above number.

Copies of the supply chain education materials to date can be viewed by going to [www.avocado.org.au/industry](http://www.avocado.org.au/industry) from there click on 'Services' and from the drop down menu click on 'Education Materials'.



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# What's happening with retail prices?

Since 2008 retail price data has been collected and reported from a range of stores, including major supermarkets, independent supermarkets and independent fruit and vegetable stores in four capital cities including Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

The graph below illustrates the relationship from July 2008 through June 2012 between the volume of fruit dispatched by month and the average retail price per month across all states. As would be expected an inverse relationship is observed.

**Graph 1: Australian and New Zealand Avocados: July 2008 to June 2012 Dispatches v Average Retail Price**



As well as price, other information has also been collected on a weekly basis including whether or not a display of fruit was on catalogue special or not. Tables 1 and 2 below summarise for the two major supermarkets (Coles and Woolworths - not necessarily in that order) how many catalogue specials there were in each of the surveyed capital cities in each full year that was surveyed (i.e. neither 2008 or 2012 data has been included as there was only survey data for part of each of these years). Store special data was also collected however as stated previously Coles and Woolworths catalogue specials have a large impact on demand for fruit. Hence only a summary of the catalogue special data has been reported below.

**Table 1: Number of catalogue specials per year per state for M1 Supermarket**

M1	2009	2010	2011
Qld	12	8	11
NSW	8	5	6
Vic	5	8	10
WA	7	7	7

**Table 2: Number of catalogue specials per year per state for M2 Supermarket**

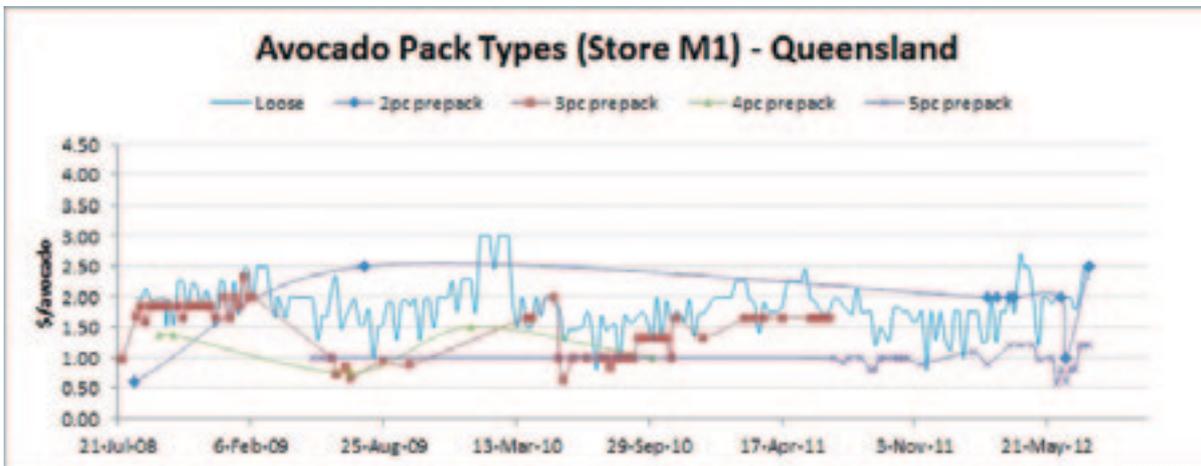
M2	2009	2010	2011
Qld	12	5	4
NSW	9	7	11
Vic	9	10	19
WA	19	14	13

Graphs 2 through to 9 illustrate the relative price of fruit at a 'per avocado' rate for different pack types for the two major supermarkets (Coles and Woolworths). The 'loose display' price is always illustrated by the bright blue line without markers.

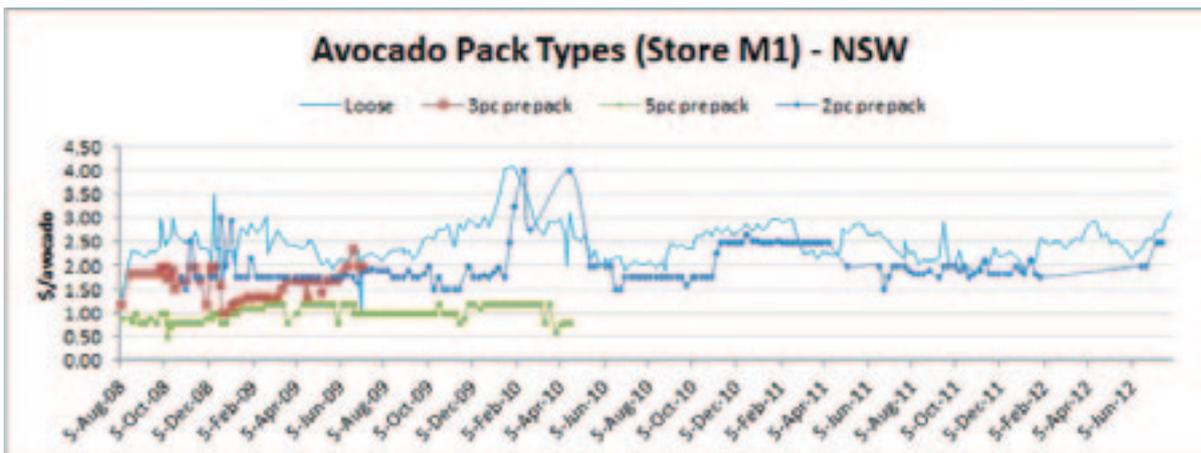
The graphs indicate that in the vast majority of cases the 'per piece' price of avocados sold in prepacks is lower than the loose fruit. The exception to this is for two piece prepacks in the Victorian M1 stores (see graph 4) and Queensland and New South Wales M2 stores (see Graph 6 and 7).

These graphs also show where different stores have moved from one size prepack to another. For example graph 9 indicates that until early 2011 M2 stores in WA sold predominantly four piece prepacks (in their prepack range) but in early 2011 changed to three piece prepacks.

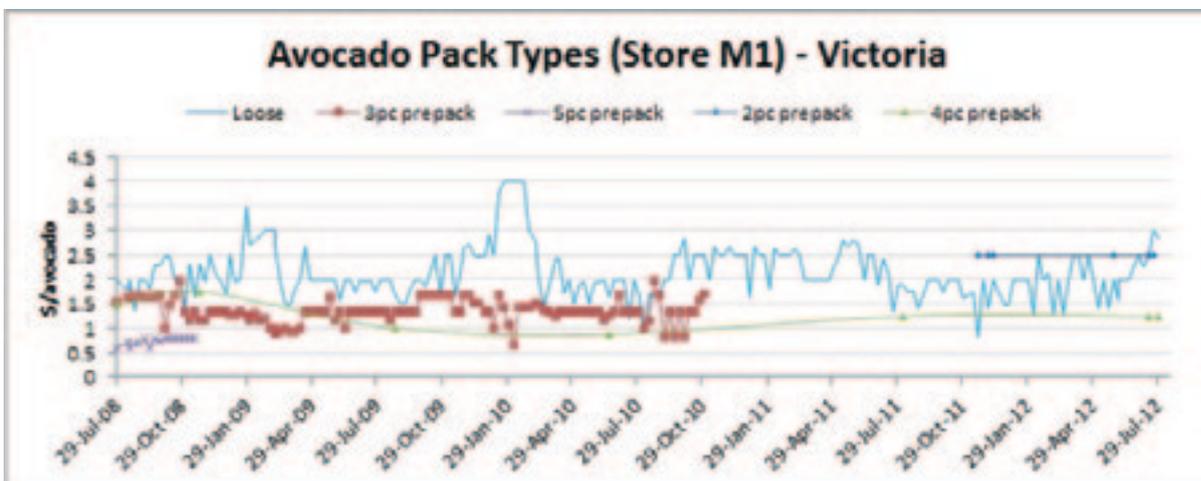
Graph 2: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M1 Queensland



Graph 3: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M1 NSW

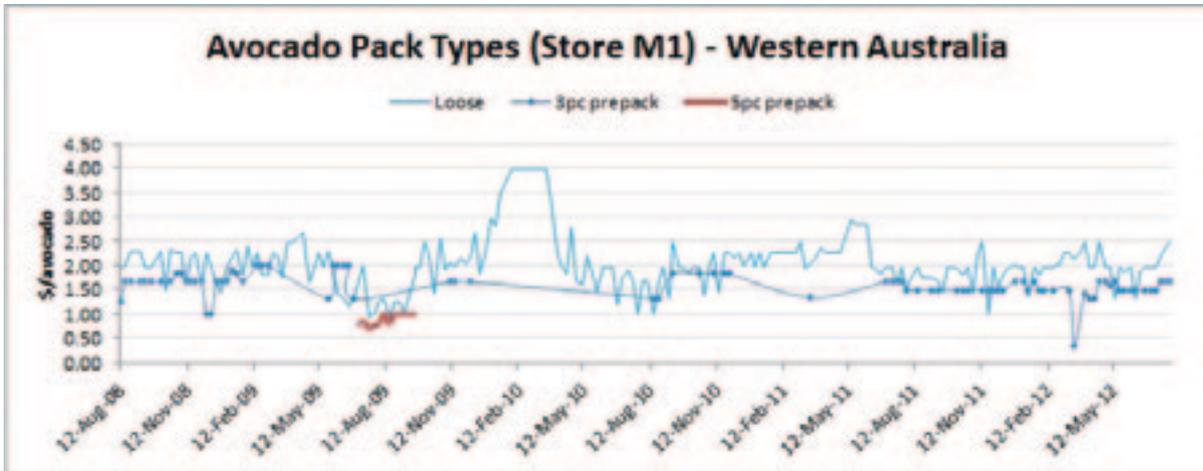


Graph 4: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M1 Victoria

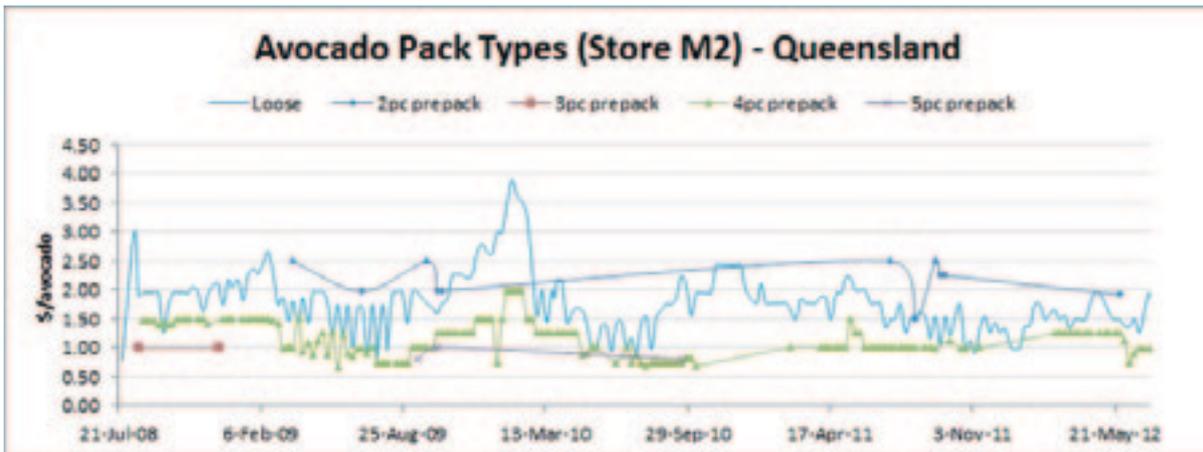


What's happening with retail prices? continued

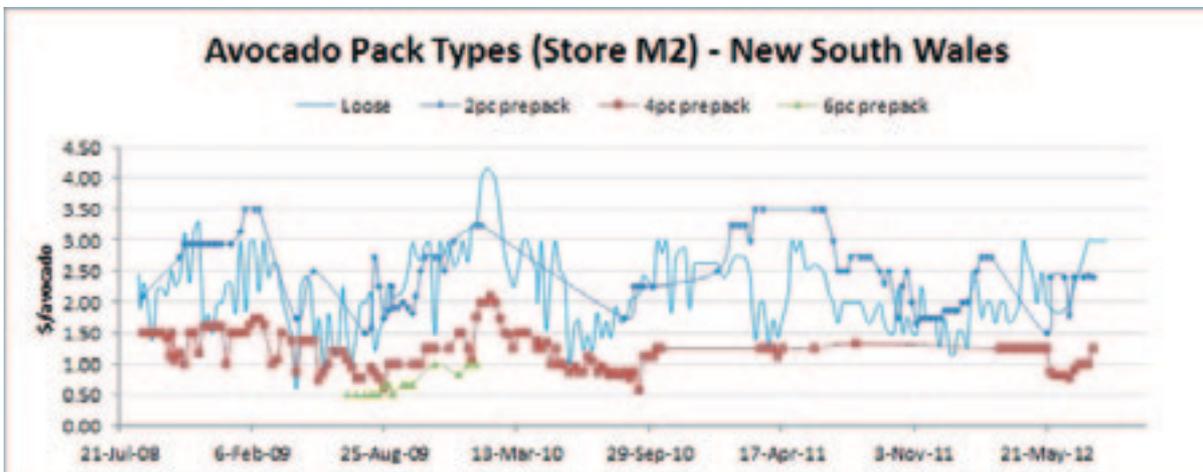
Graph 5: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M1 WA



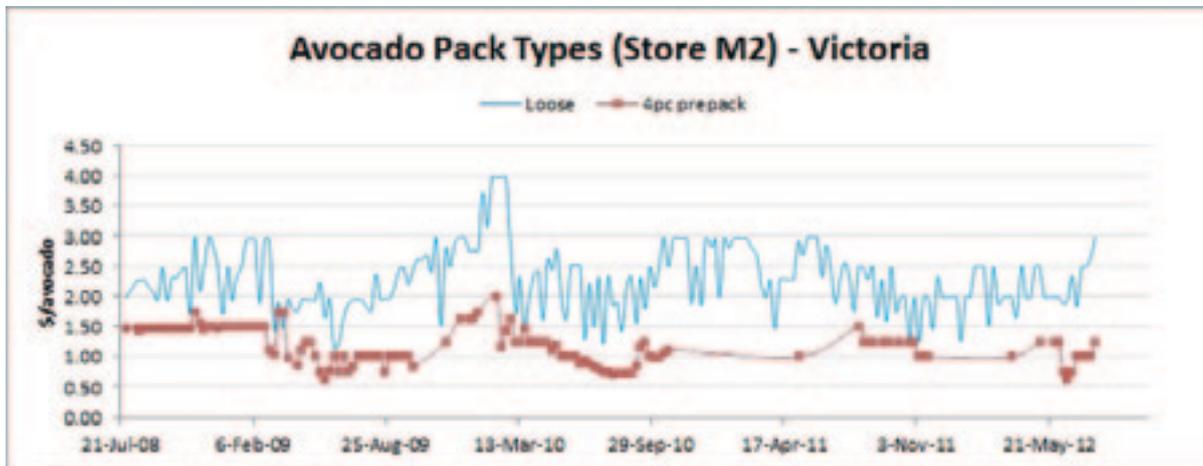
Graph 6: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M2 Queensland



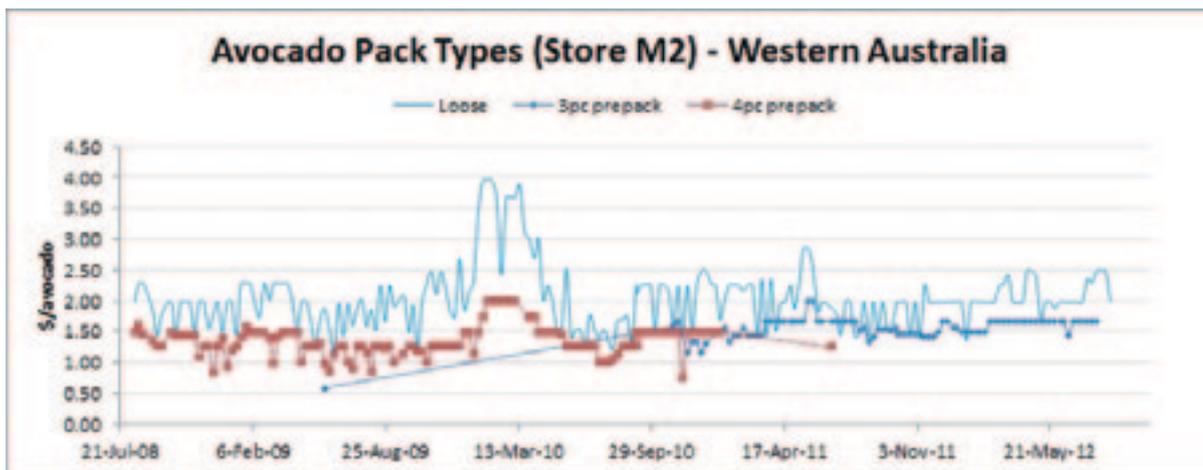
Graph 7: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M2 NSW



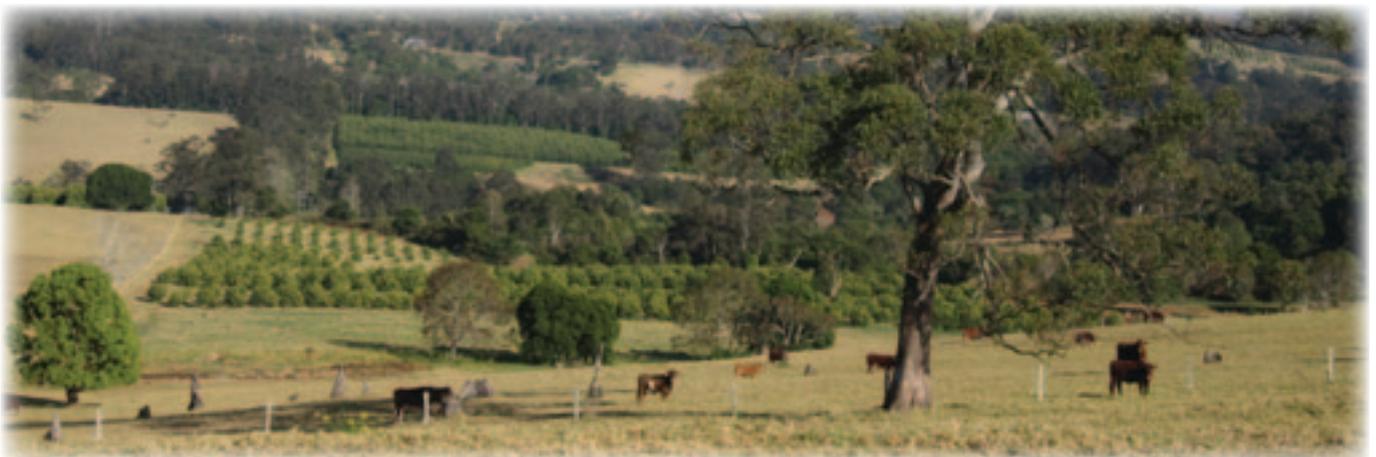
Graph 8: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M2 Victoria



Graph 9: Relative per Piece Price of Avocados for Different Packtypes Store – M2 WA



A range of other data can be made available to individual stores illustrating fruit size profiles relative to price, display information (i.e. stacked vs. single layers), and country of origin reporting.



# Spring 2012 Marketing Update

## Avocados Marketing Activity in the lead up to Christmas [October through to end December]

In the Talking Avocados Winter Edition 2012 we outlined the strategy behind the current 2012-13 marketing plans and detailed the main focus of our marketing activities for the year. As summer is fast approaching it is a great opportunity to provide all members with a summary of the consumer marketing and communication activity that is coming up over the next three months in the lead up to Christmas.

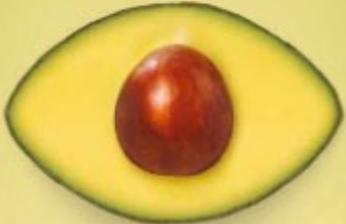
Before going into specific detail about the activity its worthwhile revisiting some of the strategic adjustments we have made this year to help meet the challenges of a bumper crop. From an overall advertising perspective our emphasis is on choosing media that will deliver a bigger audience that sees our messages more often. It is a strategy focussed on retail channels for greater reach that aims to stimulate more purchase occasions driven by our call to action of *Add an Avo Everyday*. Using a combination of TV, national magazine and on-line advertising coupled with competitions and store level sampling we have a great opportunity for our message to be seen more often by more consumers.

**TV Advertising:** Our TV advertising schedule for the year uses a combination of free to air digital channels and targeted Pay TV channels. The role of TV in our media strategy is to deliver our message to the widest possible audience in the most cost effective way. It provides a call to action for everyday consumption as well as building a brand.

**Pay TV:** In the lead up to Christmas we will be maintaining our “always on” strategy via advertising in the Lifestyle channels. This means on average our 30 second ad will have a minimum of 6 spots a day, every day – in other words we are always on. Throughout October we will also have our *Lifestyle Food Bites* sponsorship. This is a 10 second avocado fact targeted at mums that will run adjacent to every booked spot during the month. (See image below). Also, commencing in late November through to mid December we will sponsor *Lifestyle You* with 10 second ads that provide mums with a healthy tip, brought to you by avocados. These will also run adjacent to our ads and are designed to keep avocados top of mind with consumers.

Watch out for our ads on the Lifestyle channels including Home, You and Food as well as Fox 8 and Arena.

**Digital TV:** Our free to air TV focus is on relevant programs that target mums on the Channel Nine Digital channels of



**There's more to an avocado than meets the eye.**

Avos can help us absorb carotenoids, important to help protect against macular degeneration and cataracts.



And what better way to have a healthy serving than by making this avocado and tuna salad for sandwiches or a snack.



So keep an eye out for great ways to include them at mealtime, just like whipping up this avocado and chocolate mousse for dessert.




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For more quick ideas and recipes, visit [avocado.org.au](http://avocado.org.au) and



[facebook.com/AustralianAvocados](https://facebook.com/AustralianAvocados)

AV00044\_SF\_TN04\_Eye



GEM & GO! We will have three x weekly advertising bursts coming into the summer season to boost our audience reach. These weeks include w/c 7/10, w/c 2/12 and w/c 16/12. Watch out for our ads on shows such as Jamie Oliver, The Best and Eat Yourself Sexy.

**Magazines:** Similar to TV, magazines can provide access to a large number of our target audience cost effectively. With a focus on female grocery buyers between the ages of 25-49 years, with older kids, our messages of versatility and health will help drive awareness and purchase consideration. Alternating full page placement with a new *one third* page format we can maintain continuity cost effectively through both weekly and monthly magazines. Avocados advertising in the coming months can be seen in;

- Australian Good Taste (monthly) October and November issues
- Sunday magazine on sale 7/10 and 28/10
- Recipes + (monthly) on sale mid October
- Australian Womans Weekly on sale 21/10
- Woman’s Day (weekly) publications w/c 7/10 & w/c 18/11

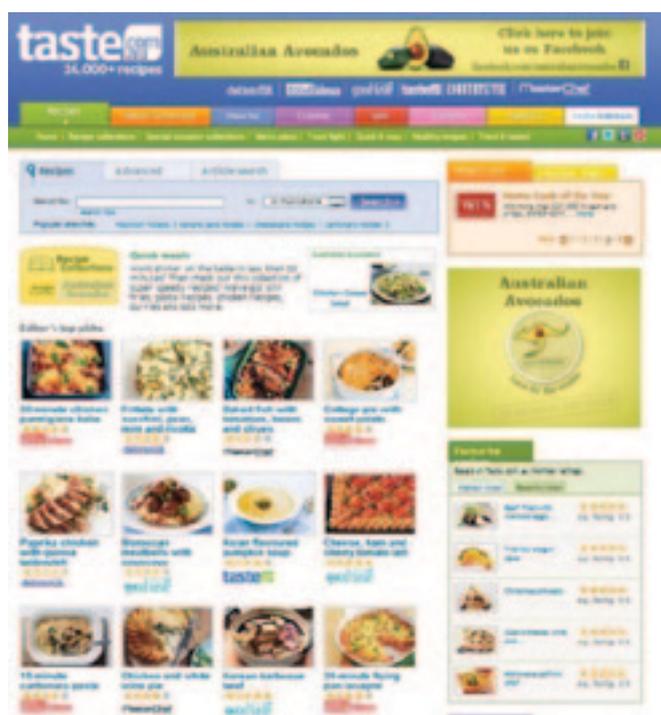
We are also leveraging our magazine media spend to gain editorial support through meal ideas to inspire readers.

**On-line Advertising:** Online advertising and activity is playing an important role in supporting and aligning our campaign with the more traditional media channels. Online activity will be at its heaviest over the coming months and is focused in a number of key strategy areas.

The first is our continued sponsorship with Taste.com which provides advertising in contextually relevant food environments. As the 'go to' resource by consumers for

recipes and food ideas we have a great opportunity to reach more consumers cheaply. October is a key month as we take on the mobile banner sponsorship of the new Taste.com mobile phone app. We are also sponsoring the Quick Meals Recipe Collection which is one of the sites most popular recipe collections.

We are also continuing a strategy of *conversation and advocacy* by targeting with banner advertising (see below) key on-line forums where avocados are being discussed. Termed *user generated content forums* we aim to have our messages visible at those moments consumers are engaging with our product. The key forums targeted over the coming months are Taste Kitchen, Essential Baby Forums and Weight Watchers – Community.



Spring 2012 Marketing Update continued

Facebook is a key online vehicle particularly for mums. Our Facebook paid media was very successful in 2011 in driving Likes and traffic to the Avocados Australia Facebook page. As a result we are continuing with a heavier media strategy to build Likes and Connections. As mentioned our advertising presence will increase over the next 3 months.

**Social Media:** Facebook is a key platform in our social media strategy aimed at pushing content out to our current fans. With a focus on making it social, being topical and relevant we can encourage participation plus recognise and reward fans in more meaningful ways. We are continuing with weekly content posts around the themes of recipes, quick ideas and lifestyle tips. Supported by our celebrity nutritionist Zoe Bingley-Pullin and our Dietitian Lisa Yates our topics are high quality and engaging.

**Consumer Competitions via Facebook:** We will also be running a strategy of bi-annual promotions on Facebook to build fan acquisitions. The first, launched in October will encourage fans to create their own “Avo-tar” using an interactive Facebook application. The aim is to dress up ‘Alvin the Avocado’ from a customisable menu on the Australian Avocados Facebook page. Once they have registered their details, they will then go in the draw to win a cash prize of \$5,000. Avo-tar will have a simple entry mechanic to engage with existing fans and also a sharing

element to promote the Australian Avocados page to potential new fans.

The second promotion, scheduled for December, is designed to encourage fans to create their favourite avocado salad and post it on the Avocado Australia Facebook page. Called “Summer Salad Days” the aim is for entrants to get as many friends as possible to vote their salad as the best salad. The entrant with the most votes will win a picnic hamper. This will run over four weeks with a prize every week.

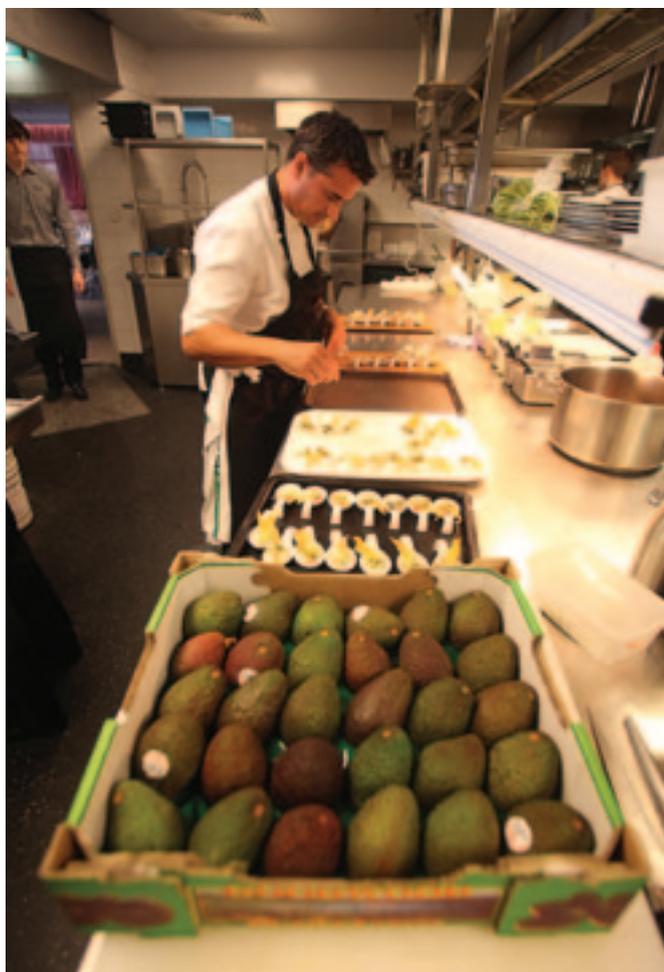
**In store sampling:** Sampling at point of purchase is a great way to build confidence with consumers about how to use avocados and stimulate an immediate sale. In partnership with the major retailers a national sampling campaign commenced mid September and will run through to the end of October covering more than 800 supermarkets. Demonstrators will make and sample to shoppers a simple and delicious recipe which will encourage purchase.

**Foodservice Campaign:** Getting avocados on the menu is the essence of our Foodservice advertising campaign. Over the coming months we will continue to target chefs with messages that challenge them to consider avocado based dishes. Combining punchy headlines with a high quality serving suggestion (from recognised restaurateurs) these will appear in relevant industry publications;





- September – Restaurant & Catering Magazine (NAT) Seafood creative
  - October – Open House (NAT) Summer Menu / Breakfast
  - November – Clublife Magazine (NSW) Annual Wrap
- We will also kick off a Chefs competition during the coming months to get avocados on the menu. Open to all NSW and ACT outlets, chefs are invited to create an avocado based dish and need to keep it on their menu for the entire month of November. The best judged dishes will receive prizes such as Tojiro brand knives, on-line and media publicity, while the very best dish will receive a Thermomix. There is also a consumer element to this promotion



whereby consumers can vote for their favourite dish via the Avocado Australia website.

Our efforts are not only focused on stimulating short term avocado consumption but also attempts to affect generational change over the medium to longer term. The Early Childhood Education program designed by Shelly Woodrow and the nutritional work done by dietitian Lisa Yates are examples of building the health and nutrition values of avocados through education.

**Educating Early Childhood Educators:** October is a key month in the calendar for our Educating Early Childhood Educators program. On the 17<sup>th</sup> October we will be despatching 600 trays of avocados to childcare centres that pre-registered in August to be involved with the Eating My Colour Vegies and Fruit program. This 3<sup>rd</sup> burst will extend the resource that has already touched the lives of 60,000 pre-schoolers aged between 3-5 years old.



To maximise Avocado Australia’s association with this program a PR strategy has been developed to generate extended media opportunities from this positive activity. Media kits have been distributed to a broad range of news, lifestyle, parenting and education reporters. We have targeted all media platforms including print, broadcast, radio and online. We are looking forward to some column inches reinforcing Australian Avocados association with the program!

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy.

# Premier's award to Avocado Export Company

Simpson Farms director John Walsh is happy the farm has won a premier's export award. A business with interests in the Bundaberg region had its contribution to the state's economy recognised with a Premier of Queensland Export Award.

The Avocado Export Company won the Emerging Exporter award at the prestigious awards ceremony held in Brisbane last week.

Owned by a collective of avocado growers, packers and marketers from across Australia, Avocado Export Company exports Australian-grown avocados to markets including Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates and Thailand.

Avocado Export Company is part-owned by two Bundaberg growing and packing operations, Simpson Farms and Donovan Family Investors.

Managing director Jennie Franceschi said the company was thrilled to have its endeavours recognised with a Premier's Export Award.

"We're extremely lucky to have really committed growers and packers," she said.

"The fact that they are all prepared to work together and row the boat in the same direction has been evidenced by this award."

A key aim of the company was to establish new export opportunities to ease oversupply and stabilise the domestic market. A vast network of growers across Australia allows Avocado Export Company to supply avocados to its international suppliers 52 weeks a year.

"If all the fruit we exported stayed on the domestic market we wouldn't (have) any money, for this to work, we need to be competitive at an international level," she said.

Mrs Franceschi said remaining competitive with foreign suppliers and the high Australian dollar had been a challenge the company has had to meet.

"We have all gone into it with the same intent and the same vision," she said. "It hasn't always been easy but we are very pleased with what we have established."

LNP Member for Bundaberg Jack Dempsey congratulated the Avocado Export Company on winning the Emerging Exporter award at last night's ceremony.

"This accolade recognises Avocado Export Company's contribution in promoting the state of Queensland on the world stage," he said.

"The success of the Avocado Export Company success is inspirational to other businesses in the Bundaberg area seeking to establish strong international trade partnerships." Source: [www.thechronicle.com.au](http://www.thechronicle.com.au)

## APMS paid growers the highest prices seen in 15 years

-  Over 20 years packing and marketing knowledge
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## The Worlds Most Compact Telehandler

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

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

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

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

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

## Latest in Forklifts

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

# Full strategic marketing review for avocados

## Avocados Australia undergo a full strategic marketing review in preparation for the new 2013-2016 strategic marketing plan

This year is the final year of the existing three year strategic marketing plan and Avocados Australia is well underway in the planning process for the new 2013-2016 strategic planning horizon. As has been the case with previous strategic plan development, an allocation of funds has been provided in this final plan year's budget (2012/13) to conduct a thorough consumer market research study to support the process. The purpose of this research is to provide a deeper and up to date understanding of consumers' usage and attitude towards avocados that can provide overall marketing direction on

potential future messaging as well as a full evaluation of the current program.

Prior to investing in this research, Avocados Australia recommended a further step be added to the process to help fine tune the research scope and get the most out the investment. In **March** HAL commissioned a specialist consultancy called Review Partners to conduct a critical review of all avocado marketing activities setting out to answer a key question; **How can the avocado marketing levy deliver the greatest net benefit to the avocado industry?**

In answering this question the review focussed on satisfying a number of overall requirements with specific outputs and recommendations;

### Overall Requirements

1. To provide an assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current marketing program
2. To provide recommendations for future programs which take into consideration the current changing production and marketing environment of the Australian avocado industry.

### Specific Outputs

1. Review of the current marketing strategy (including consumer, food service, health professionals, early childhood) and advise whether the current strategy or an alternative strategy is likely to achieve the greatest increase in demand possible for the industry, given the funding resources available and the changing supply environment.
2. Detailed analysis of the current marketing investment mix (media type, timing, weighting) in relation to the marketing strategy and the changing supply environment.
3. Provide recommendations for the campaign in relation to the timing and weighting of marketing levy expenditure across the year in light of the changing supply and marketing

To address these and other questions Review Partners focussed on five key topic areas to review. These provided the framework for a process of stakeholder consultations, desktop research and thorough analysis which led to a set of recommendations. The five key topic areas covered were;

1. Market review and economic trends
2. Competitor review
3. Strategic Development review
4. Creative effectiveness review
5. Media effectiveness review

This comprehensive review process was finalised by the **end of July** and the results presented to the Avocados IAC in **early August**. In conjunction with tabling the report and its recommendations HAL sought endorsement from the

IAC to proceed with the strategic consumer research. The research scope incorporated the recommendations from the Review Partners evaluation, specifically:

1. *That research should help establish how much equity is currently held among the Australian population for each element of the current campaign, the potential influence of the messages contained within it and the definition of the target market that offers the greatest potential for increased consumption;*
2. *Research needs to define the ideal consumer – based on consumption (frequency and volume) to help support the goals of the industry i.e. increase consumption to support increased production and to define what would make more people like these 'ideal consumers' i.e. look at heavy buyers for inspiration;*
3. *Research needs to explore the range of messages that could be used to promote avocados with a view*

*to finding a hierarchy of messages that are most likely to stimulate the most people to become regular consumers of avocados*

A final research brief was approved by the Avocado IAC and four research agencies were asked to submit detailed proposals on their methodology to answer the project objectives. Given the importance of this project and the anticipated outcomes, the Review Partners provided their assistance and expertise to help evaluate each proposal. At the end of this evaluation the IAC endorsed the proposal from **BDRC Jones Donald** to commence research as soon as possible.

BDRC Jones Donald recommended a research project process in five stages starting with a workshop qualitative phase to guide the implementation of the quantitative survey phase. These stages are tabled below; (Fig 1.)

The presentation to the IAC of the consumer research findings (**Stages 3 & 4**) and the recommendations for the way forward is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> October. Once these

recommendations are accepted, HAL will work with the current creative advertising agency Jack Watts Currie (JWC) to develop the communications strategy which is critical to the marketing plan. Whilst the research outcomes will determine the extent of the creative development work required the key next steps to build the campaign proposal are as follows;

- Develop the communications strategy and possible brand territories
- Conduct consumer testing of brand territories (*Stage 5 of research*)
- Start the creative development of advertising
- Presentation and approval of advertising concepts
- Partner agency briefing and collaboration for channel strategy and implications

The last stage will be to build a presentation of the campaign proposal for approval at the February IAC meeting.

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy

**Fig 1.** The five stages of the research project

Stage	Description	Timing	Status
	<b>Project Commissioned</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> August	
Stage 1	<b>Engagement Workshop</b>	w/c 13 <sup>th</sup> August	Completed
Stage 2	<b>Consumer Workshops for Difference</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> August	Completed
	<b>Interim Discussions and Findings</b>		Completed
Stage 3	<b>Population Definition Study</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> September	Completed
Stage 4	<b>Value Propositions and Segmentation</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> September	Completed
	<b>Analysis, Reporting and Presentation</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> October	Via IAC Teleconference
Stage 5	<b>Evaluation of Value Proposition and Creative Expression</b>	TBC Late November	Waiting on findings

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

Neena Mitter

*Senior Research Fellow*

*Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation  
University of Queensland, St Lucia*

Rapid population growth, industrialisation, deforestation, natural calamities, pests and diseases remain a serious threat to plant genetic diversity. It is therefore vital we take adequate steps to preserve the genetic diversity of crops in a manner that is both cost-effective and mindful of the constraints of space, time and labour. Long-term storage of avocado seeds for the conservation of diversity is impractical.

Avocado seeds are 'recalcitrant', meaning they do not survive drying and freezing. Under normal conditions, the seeds do not undergo drying at maturation and are shed with high moisture content. Also, avocado adopts a unique breeding system, termed 'protogynous dichogamy' (female and male flowers open at different times) producing heterozygous seeds resulting in not true- to- type seedlings.

Avocado genetic resources across the globe are currently being maintained ex situ in field repositories. Countries such as USA, Mexico, Israel, New Zealand and others have dedicated areas of land leased as repositories to maintain avocado germplasm. Possibly due to limitations posed by land and labour costs, Australia does not currently have a dedicated field repository for avocado germplasm.

But there might be another, more efficient way to preserve avocado genetic diversity. Many of us would be familiar with the cryopreservation of human eggs, sperms and embryos. AVO12006 is a research project that focuses on using cryopreservation to preserve the somatic embryos of avocado and possibly young shoot tips. The process involves storage of living cells and tissues at ultra-low temperatures (-196°C) in liquid nitrogen. It will be useful not only for germplasm conservation but also to ensure avocado somatic embryos are available as research material for genetic improvement. If successful, shoot-tip cryopreservation will be extremely useful for avocado as it will be true to the accession.

The AVO12006 project is pioneering work in this area. The project expects to accommodate about 1000 accessions. If successful, it will generate capacity to store 1000 accessions in space not much larger than a domestic bathroom (~10 m<sup>2</sup>), offering genuine cost-effectiveness.

Our laboratory has previously laid the groundwork for this research proposal by optimising the protocols needed for multiplication and regeneration of somatic embryos.

We have also successfully trialled coating the embryos

with alginate beads and storing them in liquid nitrogen. Our plant team includes skilled technical officers, Chris 'O'Brien, Ann Parisi and Roger Mitchell from DAFF Queensland, and a young enthusiastic honours student, Jamie Lim.

Our long term aim is to create Australia's first cryo-repository of avocado germplasm, a move which will position the Australian avocado industry as world leaders in development of a cryo-bank solution for avocado germplasm conservation.

This project has been funded by HAL using the avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government.

## Researcher Profile: Neena Mitter



Dr Neena Mitter, Senior Research Fellow at Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, University of Queensland is one of Queensland's leading biotechnologists, having been involved in molecular biology and biotechnology in Australia and India for over 15 years. The plant and microbial biotechnology group led by Dr Neena Mitter focuses on developing novel and innovative RNA silencing based biotechnological approaches towards management of pests and diseases. She has won the Women in Technology (WiT) University of Queensland Biotech Researcher award for her involvement in innovative projects such as the development of a Phytophthora resistant avocado rootstocks and nanoparticle based needle-free vaccine delivery. She is also the winner of Queensland International fellowship to work with Washington State University for developing novel approaches to virus diseases of crop plants. Her current focus on avocado is broad based from disease resistance to germplasm conservation to clonal propagation technologies.

# News from Around the World

## Smaller export volume from New Zealand

The volume of this year's avocado harvest for export is expected to be significantly less than initial estimates, with smaller fruit being picked.

The New Zealand Avocado Grower's Association is forecasting a harvest of 2.6 million trays, which is less than the initial forecast of 4 million trays.

Last year, more than 6 million trays of avocados were picked.

Chief executive Jen Scoular says a very wet winter may have had a part to play in the smaller fruit.

But Asian markets prefer smaller sized avocados.

Ms Scoular said smaller fruit mean there will be fewer trays because a tray may fit 18 large sized fruit, but 30 small sized ones. Source: Radio New Zealand

## First rate education material to support growers

The 'Centro de Transferencia y Extension del Palto' set up by the Chilean Agricultural Research Institute (INIA) to assure transfer of technology and technical assistance for

avocado growers has placed online about 20 video films providing basic information on the main techniques used. The identification and management of the main sanitary problems are addressed, as are irrigation, pollination and pruning. This extension material is available to all growers (speaking Spanish) all over the worlds on <http://www.inia.cl/link.cgi/lacruz/noticias/10444> Source: CTE

## All aboard for US style segmentation at ASDA

Green, amber or red? ASDA has just installed new segmentation of loose avocados in 30 shops. Customers can choose between three degrees of ripeness, with the traffic light colour code as the key. 'Perfectly rip' fruits have green stickers, those to be eaten in 2 to 5 days have amber stickers and those 'for ripening at home' with red stickers should be kept for 5 to 8 days. This is an innovation in Europe but has proved its effectiveness in the United States. Source: ASDA

## Peruvian avocado exports grew 11%

Although it was not a good year for avocado shipments, the president of Inform@cion, Fernando Gillóniz, said exports will close this year with 11% growth. Thus, reaching



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## News from Around the World continued

approximately 90,000 tons.

The initial expectation was to reach 110,000 tons for this season, but there were quality problems in production. According to Gillóniz, a large number of fruits detached from the plant before ripening, without any apparent reason. "Some believe that it was due to a strange winter, a little warmer than normal," he said.

He also said that a large volume of avocado that was exported for the second year now to the U.S market arrived with stains on the skin. As a result of this, prices per kilo fell in most cases by half. Also, it must be taken into account that the US had a good year in avocado production, which also impacted prices.

A good year is expected by 2013, if quality problems are solved, said Gillóniz after indicating that these issues will be addressed in the III International Avocado Symposium (SIPA). Event that will be held from the 7th to 8th of November in the Jockey Club in Peru. Source: Perualdia

### Peru pushes for new avocado markets

The Peruvian avocado industry's first full season entry in the United States didn't go quite as planned this year, but representative body ProHass will continue promotional campaigns in the country. As exporters look for new options to absorb volume, they at least have the U.S. phytosanitary stamp of approval to help seal deals elsewhere. ProHass general manager Arturo Medina tells [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com) that Chile, Mexico, China and Japan are high priorities right now, along with raising domestic consumption.

Medina says the 2012 season was difficult and next year could be too, facing big volumes from key competitors during its supply window.

"When we arrived we were very enthusiastic to be in the American market, but then we saw the market had a lot of Mexican and Californian fruit," he says.

"So we encountered them and, caramba, we already had a program where we wanted to send them 50% of the volume we had projected, and what we had to do was draw back and look to our natural market of recent years, which is Europe.

"We need to be looking at opening up new markets – not just looking at Europe and we don't want to neglect the United States and will continue sending fruit there – such as Chile, Mexico, Japan and China.

He says the issue with Chile is that authorities ask for quarantine treatment, either as cold treatment or through methyl bromide application, which in the end damages the fruit.

"In Peru in 2009-10 we did a study that showed that Peruvian avocados did not have fruit fly. That finished satisfactorily with collaboration from APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service), so fruit fly shouldn't be a barrier for us in exporting to the world.

"In China they don't have the habit of eating avocados so we would need to promote. We know that Mexico is doing promotions there, and we want to distribute – if we could get the Chinese eating more avocados it would be wonderful.

"Japan is attractive too, a good market, and Chilean and Mexican avocados are entering there."

On the issue of Mexico, Medina says many importers from the country have approached Peruvian avocado shippers to capitalize on periods when the North American country has lower production.

"We hope to open at least a few markets in the next year, this is our expectation. We are sure we will achieve this as there aren't many reasons why they'd say no."

Medina firmly believes in the potential of existing markets as well such as the U.S. and Europe. Around US\$1 million was spent on promotions in the latter this season, of which around half was destined for Germany.

"We think Germany has a lot of potential, and that's why we're betting so much on them.

The Peruvian market is also a priority for Medina, where cultural hurdles still need to be overcome.

"In Peru we have an avocado called Fuerte, which is highly consumed at around 95,000 metric tons (MT) a year. People keep eating Fuerte avocados and they don't know Hass avocados.

"Hass avocados were planted mainly for export, but what's now starting, last year we began promotions so people understand there is this other variety.

"But it's difficult as we are used to eating a beautiful green and smooth avocado, so if you serve up an avocado with black or a darker color, people think it's gone off – a lot of people have this perception and it's a barrier we need to get over." Source: [www.freshfruitportal.com](http://www.freshfruitportal.com)

### Avocado clonal patterns are 300% more precocious

For the third year running, the International Avocado Symposium (SIPA 2012), will bring together the most select professionals related to the avocado crop. Such is the case of Monica Castro Valdebenito, MSc, professor at the Catholic University of Valparaíso in Chile, who will provide a lecture about the remarkable

advantages of using clonal patterns in avocado production on a commercial scale.

According to the specialist, the avocado crop production with clonal patterns is significantly higher than that obtained by conventional plantations, “the precocity of avocado fields, being that a plantation crop with clonal patterns of 1 year, closely resembles a conventional 2 or 3 years (+300%) one.”

He also stressed that such patterns have proven effective, by achieving uniformity of orchards during their first years of life, when conventional plantations are usually very uneven (between the first and second year). Source: Agraria.pe

## US: Using new technology to connect with customers

With the recent launch of the greescans Mobile Platform, three produce companies have been busy supplying greescans with product information for their customers to view. Washington Apple and Pear growers/shippers, Chelan Fresh and CMI (Columbia Marketing) and California avocado supplier Mission produce showed strong interest in the app and how they could integrate it with their marketing program.

The initial interest with the consumer app for Chelan was the ability to access grower videos by scanning PLU labels on bulk apples, followed with their packaged items. Mac Riggan, Director of Marketing took special interest as a way to use the grower videos. “We believed that this would be an excellent way to connect the consumer with our growers,” stated Riggan. Videos were initially available on sixteen of their apple varieties. Today, those videos are viewed from one of a variety of tiles that can be viewed by the consumer when they scan Chelan bulk apples.

Many commodities have a plethora of varieties with new ones always popping up. How does the consumer learn about the taste of a new apple variety? CMI recognized the value of the greescans app by communicating the taste profile of their new apple varieties Kanzi, Kiku and Ambrosia apples. With one scan, the consumer can learn if it meets their taste requirements, sweet, tart, a mixture of both. Katharine Grove, Marketing Manager at CMI, shared her delight, “We were attracted to the fact that we can direct message consumers from our existing databars on our bulk apples.”

The strong growth in the avocado category is testament to how educating consumers can increase consumption across the board. Avocado growers/shippers and retailers have worked very closely to promote the product on a year round basis. Mission Produce realized the value of

# Grower Member Application Form

## Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

For Associate and Affiliate membership application forms please go to [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) or call 07 3846 6566

## Member Details

Business name and/or trading name:

---

ABN:

---

Key contacts:

---

Preferred address (postal):

---

Address of property (if different):

---

## Contact Details

Business phone:

---

Home phone:

---

Fax:

---

Mobile:

---

Email:

---

## Corporate Structure

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

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

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

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

## Special Interests

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

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

## Grower Member Application Form continued

### Payment Options

Grower Membership of Avocados Australia is \$143 pa (including GST). You can pay your membership by cheque or credit card. To pay your membership fee, please choose one of the following options:

**Cheque**

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$143.00 made payable to Avocados Australia Ltd.

Please charge \$143.00 to my credit card. Details are listed below.

**Credit card** (please circle):

MasterCard    Visa

Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on credit card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Privacy Options

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

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

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

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

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**Reply Paid 8005**  
**Woolloongabba Qld 4102**

(no stamp required within Australia):  
For more information or assistance please go to  
[www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) or call on **07 3846 6566**



## News from Around the World continued

stepping up the message to their consumers and is using the app as a way to brand their entire line of conventional Haas Avocado products. When consumers scan a Mission Haas Avocado, there will be no doubt in their mind, where the product comes from and all the different ways they can use the product. Mission Produce Marketing Representative, LeighAnne Thomsen wasted no time entering information for every tile that is available on the greenscans app. She has also recommended adding a CAC (California Avocado Commission) tile to the Mission Produce scan that will link with the commission's content rich information. "We were so pleased with the finished look on the app, that we just recently added two more products," Thomsen commented.

Greenscans is pleased to team with these produce pioneers and continue to work closely with companies using the app on their products. "We have given them tremendous support both on the technology end and making recommendations on how to use the app to best meet their marketing objectives," stated greenscans, vice president business development, Juanita Gaglio. Companies using the greenscans app have much to benefit with U.S Grocery Shopping trends 2012, reporting that 52% of customers use technology when shopping. Source: FreshPlaza

### Large avocado crop on way from Mexico

Mexico's 2012-13 avocado crop should be one of the largest ever, with more than 918 million pounds earmarked for the U.S. — a 20% increase over last year — according to the Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán.

Because California's crop also was large, there was plenty of U.S. fruit in the pipeline during September and October, which meant there was no need to rush the Mexican harvest.

Mexican fruit was allowed to stay on the trees longer, resulting in higher-quality, more mature fruit, growers said.

Mexico also had a large flora loca — or off-bloom — crop that gave the main crop more time to mature, said Gahl Crane, director of avocado sales for Green Earth Produce, Vernon, Calif.



Most of the company's growers started transitioning to the new crop in early October, he said. Crane anticipates good-quality fruit.

"There's been a strong effort by the industry, the growers and importers to make sure only fruit with proper dry weight is harvested," he said.

The fruit should exceed industry standards, he added.

As of the second week of October, two-thirds of the avocado shipments from Calavo Growers Inc., Santa Paula, Calif., were from Mexico, said Rob Wedin, vice president of sales and fresh marketing.

By the first week of November, that figure should be up to 95%.

Growers were fortunate that they had a large off-bloom crop, Wedin said.

"The off-blooms are always good – they have good flavor and good texture."

It also meant growers didn't have to rush into the early new crop, he said.

In past seasons, growers sometimes had problems with

their early crop, he said. But that won't be a concern this year.

"The fruit is coming along really well," he said Oct. 8.

Fruit size was good, he said, and should remain that way until mid-November. There were plenty of large sizes and not quite enough small ones.

A shortfall of small sizes helps keep the market stable, Wedin said.

Early-season fruit packed for Mission Produce Inc., Oxnard, Calif., also was larger than usual, said Ross Wileman, vice president of sales and marketing. But he expected the crop to settle down to a more traditional size as the season progressed.

He expected quality to peak during November and December.

Grower-shippers are hopeful prices will remain strong despite the large crop out of Mexico.

"It's going to be one of the biggest (crops) ever," Crane said. "Growers know it, packers know it, and importers know it." Source: [www.thepacker.com](http://www.thepacker.com)

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