

TALKING AVOCADOS

**Avocado Best Practice and
Training Site Key Tool for Industry**

MRI as a non-invasive research tool

Avocados Marketing Activity

SUMMER 2013

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

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Cover: Watch the *'The Case of the Bruised Avocados'* on YouTube today!

Chairman's Perspective

For some time now I have been staring at a quote I found in an investment article. I have tried to throw it away but it keeps coming back into my 'deep litter' filing system so I am forced to use it because it applies so well to the history of our wonderful industry.

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago" - Buffet

The success we see today in the strength and success of our industry and the loyal support of our produce by the consumer is not a result of what has happened over the past few months or even the recent years. The conditions leading up to this successful summer were set in motion more than five years ago when it was realized that supply, quality and promotion were critical factors.

Rod Dalton, wrote in Talking Avocados in 2006: "The Australian industry's lack of capacity to forecast crop volumes has meant that major retailers have started their New Zealand fruit supply programmes earlier than necessary. The crop forecasting module in the 'Infocado' system provides us with the most cost effective option yet to improve crop forecasting. However, its effectiveness will rely on the majority of growers/packers supplying accurate information."

The success of this past summer crop is a result of better forecasting which allowed the market to be better informed on the supply side and product was able to move through the supply chain more evenly and with better quality. It has been a very successful season for all the stakeholders:

growers, packers, retailers and most importantly, the consumer.

The research conducted in the past years on avocado culture is also still relevant and needs to be more widely adopted. The work on root rot management, nutrition, canopy management, mulching and irrigation management is still relevant today and should be reviewed by all growers.

This year should see some increased activity in revisiting the information we already have and having discussions on past research in greater detail so we can fully understand the basics and therefore be in a better position to apply what we already know.

There is so much information available at our fingertips now in past issues of Talking Avocados and on the Avocados Australia website. The information is out there for all to use now, just like that shady tree that Warren Buffet spoke about.

To visit the Avocados Australia website please go to www.industry.avocado.org.au

To view past issues of Talking Avocados visit www.industry.avocado.org.au/TalkingAvocados

Jim Kochi

Jim Kochi, Chairman, Avocados Australia



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Letter to the Editor

Letter to the Editor about the current changes in our industry.

Firstly I would like to talk about the two main parts of the Australian avocado industry in regards to the decisions that are made for all commercial avocado growers. We have Avocados Australia Limited (AAL). This is your grower body that you all pay a small membership fee to be part of - well not all of you but we would like all growers to be members of this great organization.

When we have problems or issues that need raising AAL is our voice to government and the like. It also runs a number of projects which are levy funded such as Infocado, retail pricing, the industry's e-newsletter Guacamole, as well as Talking Avocados. Also the AAL Board understands and hears industry concerns from all growing regions due to the regional directors. The presence of regional directors on the AAL Board is extremely important to make sure the projects that levy monies are spent on represent the needs of all growers in all regions. This is just to name a few things that are done by AAL - there is much more!

Something to remember is that AAL has around 80% of the volume grown in Australia of avocados represented as members, which is approx 50% of growers. I want to thank those growers that are members and I would urge anyone that is not a member to please support AAL and become a member - it is in our interest to keep a strong industry body.

We also have the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that is a committee of the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) Board. What is this you may ask? The IAC, which I have been a part of since my time on the AAL Board has up until now been made up of AAL Board members and an independent Chairman. Some have thought that the IAC had in some way a conflict of interest as it was made up and they have written to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) complaining about the structure. DAFF only heard from a very small number of disgruntled growers; and from this have decided that the structure needed to change.

DAFF didn't hear any counter argument and this may be because the majority of growers are either happy with the way the industry is going or just can't be bothered to say anything. For instance, we had the last Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Levy Payers Meeting at Nambour on the Sunshine Coast and had only one grower and levy payer attend. Did this happen because everyone thinks we are doing a good job? Was it because we have done a bad job? Or was it because you were all too busy growing avocados to come along? My guess is that most growers are happy with the way the industry is going, but if I am wrong I would encourage you to all voice your concerns or praise if it is deserved. I am sure DAFF would love to hear from you.

Getting back to the changes, these few disgruntled letters have resulted in DAFF then instructing Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) through their CEO John Lloyd to make some changes to remove any conflict from the IAC - what this means I will never understand because unless you are from another industry or have no interest whatsoever in avocados then you will always have some kind of conflict.

We have had what I believe to be the youngest, most forward thinking board and IAC in Australian horticulture, and from this we have seen huge consumption growth - some of the best in the world! We have not had anyone that you would call a 'seat warmer' and we have had in excess of 80% of Australian avocado production represented by the people sitting on the IAC and making

the decisions. But now, as we are 'conflicted' in some way, this is all going to change and I will be able to write about this in the next issue of Talking Avocados.

What will we end up with now to make the decisions on your levy dollars? Just on levy dollars you all pay 7.5cents/kg; made up of 3cents for research and development (R&D) and 4.5cents for marketing. The industry receives matched funds from the Government for R&D but nothing for marketing. Because the Government collects the levy they believe all this money is theirs. I understand this as it is a compulsory levy and if it were not compulsory many growers most likely would not pay it and we would not have the great industry we have today. However, I fundamentally disagree with being told by HAL, which is the intermediary between DAFF and the growers, on how we should spend our money.

If growers would pay levies voluntarily then we would not have to pay for bureaucrats to fly around the country to have a meeting to decide on another meeting. I guess this is just my poor understanding of how you are meant to spend money but I hate to see waste as most of you do and the current changes that are being put upon us by DAFF and HAL in my opinion have been totally unnecessary. These changes will most likely lead to larger conflicts and will cost more to run and that means less levy money for R&D projects and marketing. This is all without talking about the stop work order we have had put on us for the past year so to speak.

So our new IAC will be made up of less than 50% of the AAL Board; it will have four members who have volunteered to be on the IAC through the Expression of Interest you would have already received and I hope you all applied for. It will also have a new Compliance Officer appointed by HAL. It will also have an independent Chairman as it has always had. The ironic part is that we could end up with four pig farmers, an accountant (Compliance Officer), and an independent Chairman who all get a vote. This makes six against five AAL Board members and only when this happens will DAFF be happy. At this point it is not decided how the five AAL Directors will be chosen other than they have agreed that the current AAL Chairman gets a seat at the table.

I must say I have enjoyed it immensely while being involved in the IAC. I would hope that I have always made good industry decisions and never made decisions based on myself. I have always sat in that forum with the whole industry in mind. By the time this goes to print you will already know the outcome and if I get to remain on the IAC only time will tell. Whatever happens I have appreciated the opportunity to have been a part of a great group of forward thinking growers who have enabled this industry to grow to what it is today.

To the new IAC, if I am not a member, remember that when you sit in that forum you are making decisions for all Australian growers and growing regions/ If you think that the industry is being asked to do something it shouldn't, challenge it as what should happen in any democratic society. There is no need to be bullied. Sometimes things need to be changed and addressed but this should always be done in the proper way. What you need to keep in mind is that the best decisions for industry and levy payers are made keeping in mind that you are spending levy and tax payer dollars. If this is done as I believe it has always been done the avocado industry will remain in safe hands.

Daryl Boardman

South Queensland Grower
Director on the Avocados Australia Board

CEO's Report

The avocado industry has one of the largest R&D and marketing programs amongst all Australian horticultural industries - valued at over \$8M for 2012/13 including grower levies, voluntary contributions and matching commonwealth funding. One of the most important roles of Avocados Australia is to ensure the avocado R&D and marketing levies are invested wisely; that they address the strategic priorities of industry and deliver real benefits for growers. The levy system provides the mechanism for industry to fund much needed research and marketing which has helped the avocado industry to achieve the strong position it currently holds. It is important that industry continues to invest and to ensure this funding is directed towards projects that will deliver the best possible outcomes.

Many may not understand how the funding system works, so here is a brief summary. The levies that are paid by growers are collected by the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and managed by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL). HAL is a not-for-profit company established for the purpose of managing horticulture R&D and marketing investments and its members are the horticulture Peak Industry Bodies (PIB's), which of course includes Avocados Australia. HAL is an R&D and marketing services company, not an industry representative body, and is specifically excluded from engaging in agripolitical activity.

HAL is also accountable to DAFF in line with a 'Deed of Agreement'. This Deed sets out the specific obligations of HAL under the *Horticulture Marketing and Research and Development Services Act 2000 (Cth)*. The Deed provides the rules under which HAL must operate in managing the levies and government matching funding in the case of R&D.

In line with its constitution, HAL must establish an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) for industries with a statutory levy. The IAC has a very important role to provide advice to HAL on the R&D and marketing investments with specific responsibility for strategic and annual investment planning.

Avocados Australia has a role in recommending the IAC structure and membership to HAL but HAL has the final say and appoints the members. To date, the directors of Avocados Australia have made up the majority of the members on the IAC. This structure has provided strong leadership from the growing sector, with all major regions being represented and it also provides a breadth of knowledge and skills covering production, marketing, exporting and processing.

Due to some concerns around potential conflicts-of-interest DAFF has recently instructed HAL to change the structure of IACs such that PIB directors may only comprise less than 50% of the IAC membership. In line with this requirement Avocados Australia has been working with HAL to develop a new IAC structure that is efficient and effective and that also meets DAFF's requirements.

The new Avocado IAC will consist of:

- Five AAL directors, recommended by AAL
- Four Independent IAC members selected through an Expression Of Interest process
- One HAL appointed member (required by DAFF for governance compliance)
- One Independent IAC Chair

All members would be full voting members.

Avocados Australia has recommended that the IAC should draw on additional expertise through the use of Project Reference Groups or Expert Panels that can be established to provide more detailed planning on an as-needs basis.

Avocados Australia will monitor this new structure closely to ensure that the recommendations from it translate into outcomes that deliver real benefits to the levy payers, the growers.



Around Australia

Central Queensland Report

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

What a season of contrasts, we have had a long hot summer, one of the driest experienced in a long time. This dry was fantastic through the flowering fruit set period and helped the orchards around to set one of the best crops seen for many a year. There has been ample water available for irrigation but nothing will ever replace decent rain, incredible how a couple of inches of rain will spark up an orchard and size fruit. Now a couple of inches would have been great but a couple of feet of rain was absolutely ridiculous. Ex Tropical Cyclone Oswald came down the east coast of Australia and absolutely drenched this region, some reports of over a metre of rain, but generally around the 600mm. This has caused untold damage throughout the region especially to all the residents of North Bundaberg where thousands of people were evacuated and many homes and properties were destroyed. With regard to the avocado farms around, there have been reports of orchards going underwater with floodwaters in some areas 5 meters higher than in 2011. There has been huge amounts of fruit drop overall and also tree deaths from drowning showing up all over the place. There has also been orchards that have barely been affected but these are in the minority. From the beginning of January where we were looking at a huge crop I believe now it will be just a good average crop, disappointing but our hearts go out to all the people who have suffered losses from this.

By all accounts the coordinated marketing effort out of the West and the lack of supply from New Zealand has been achieving huge prices with substantial volume going through; we have never seen these prices along with this kind of volume. The Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) which was the Avocados Australia Limited (AAL) Board plus an Independent Chair and a marketing expert must take a lot of the credit for this. The industry has continued to grow, consumption has kept rising and the return to the grower has been increasing, but somehow this isn't good enough. Even though something like 80% of Australia's avocado production is represented on the IAC and each of the directors are trying to grow the whole industry and succeeding, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) tells us it is conflicted and the board needs to immediately de-conflict. The avocado industry has been seen by all other industries as the most progressive well organised of all, it is putting fantastic marketing programs



together, doing an enormous amount of R&D and has for many years been the benchmark for other industries. Unfortunately the the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Joe Ludwig has been bombarded by an extremely small number of growers to change the whole system and the industry has never been allowed to defend itself, hence the changes. We wish the new IAC the very best and may it continue to make sound decisions that will benefit the whole of the avocado industry for years to come.

In this region there are very few face to face meetings that the AAL directors have with the avocado growers but we are always here to help with any of the industry issues that you may have. If you have any please contact John Walsh on 0428 268 200 or Lachlan Donovan on 0428 981 185.

Tri State Report

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



As I attempt my first report, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Nick Hobbs for his contribution to the board on behalf of Tri State growers, also to wish him well on his appointment to the Persimmon Board.

At this stage, most growers will have finished what surely will have been their best season for a long time, prices are strong and at long last there is recognition that fresh Tri State fruit is superior to imports that are often six weeks old by the time they hit the shelf.

I see some very interesting marketing opportunities opening up for Tri State growers going forward and hope to organize an information workshop before next season. I believe strongly that growers must be more proactive in marketing their fruit, rather than just pass the responsibility on to packing houses.

It is good to see that the long awaited root stock trial is finally underway. If the information from this trial can be combined with a private trial planted in Robinvale two years ago, there will be substantial benefits for growers in the future.

Information at hand at this stage regarding next season's crop suggests that a good flowering and set occurred, however we had a severe setback with our hottest ever December day - 46 degrees by 1pm with a humidity of 6%, which saw any grower without a cooling system lose large amounts of crop. Over the years I have come to the conclusion that heat, not frost, causes more fruit loss, fortunately it is a problem that is easily rectified at not too great a cost to growers.



Around Australia continued

Growers should look to the future with confidence as I believe advances in modern technology will make production of avocados in our area a much more viable industry than it has been. Growers should, however, also be prepared to research and adopt new ideas as growing avocados in the south bears little resemblance to that of our northern neighbours.

South Queensland Report

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



It's summer time again and southern Queensland has been lucky so far to not be getting the extreme heat like that of our southern growers.

The region seems to have a good fruit set and so far there have only been a small amount of storms with hail damage. It looks like we may have a late wet season, if it happens at all, and if it doesn't I would think that if the hot weather remains we will see reasonable fruit drop. Overall I believe Southern Qld is in for a good year.

So the next step is to manage the fruit flow so we can all share in the same rewards that our West Australian growers have seen this summer. With regulated fruit flow and coordination we are seeing volumes in the 200,000 tray per week getting over \$50 per tray in returns. I don't see why this is not possible to achieve during our picking period if volumes are controlled and good product is delivered to our customers.

As I mentioned many times in the past our success in obtaining high returns depended upon how we work together; treat your fellow grower as your partner in this big game and not your enemy and we can all get the rewards that WA has seen. I am not saying we will see

\$50 per tray, but to see prices in the winter in the \$30 per tray range should not be out of the question. This will only work if we all work together.

North Queensland Report

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



Sometimes you can say something that you later regret so I will think positive and hope for the best.

In advance of the North Queensland supply season I would like to thank the West Australian, Tristate and Central NSW growers for their excellent work in maintaining an organized supply line of excellent quality avocados over the September-January period. The consumers are happy to purchase very high volumes of fruit at high prices.

I hope for a smooth transition from this good Hass to good Shepards from NQ so that the northern growers can share the consumer confidence and the farm gate returns.

While the rest of the country is experiencing extreme heat and dry weather the north tropics is suffering our driest summer in over 20 years. Fruit quality should be good for those who have avoided sunburn and fruit drop. We still have a 'wet' to come and we hope it's not late and in the middle of peak harvest in March and April.

The weather is out of our hands; however, dry matter (DM) is in our hands and if DM for Shepard is under 21% then your avocados will not be in the consumers' mouth for long. Immature fruit will not be tolerated by the consumer and it will have a negative effect on your returns and volumes. The consumer is now used to eating good quality Hass so it is up to us to continue the taste sensation with good quality Shepard.



Volumes for Shepard should be similar to last year and less than 2010 so there is no need to rush the market. The following Hass crop will be smaller than last year so again there is no need to rush the market.

I urge all growers to participate in the Infocado forecasting system so we can understand the market better. Infocado can be a fantastic tool for helping to understand what is scheduled to happen in the market place in the short and long term. The more companies who participate as accurately as possible within system the more reliable the reports will be – like DM this is within our control! Contact Julie Petty at the Avocados Australia office for assistance with Infocado.

Good luck for the rest of the summer and the market.

Central New South Wales Report

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



Reflecting on the last season I think most growers from all regions across Australia would agree that

we experienced the most stable and high return market in many years. These good prices were no doubt due to the high quality Australian fruit and consistent marketing efforts by both the winter and summer season suppliers. While we do enjoy the results of such a positive season it is important we don't forget the past and assume that it will always be this easy. Just one season earlier in 2011, the large and unpredictable influx of excess New Zealand fruit had the opposite effect. It is paramount that in 2013 growers, from all regions, work closely with their packers and marketing agents to ensure the 2011 fall in prices is not repeated in the spring and summer of 2013. The best way we can ensure a stable market is to secure retail shelf space appropriate to the size of our crops and provide a superior quality product to our overseas competitors.

The crop set from the central NSW region certainly looks to be higher overall than the previous year. As we have seen in the past, however, the unpredictable variability among blocks continues to be a problem in some areas. Unfortunately the region is in the midst of its driest period for some time and unless Mother Nature is kind enough to supply a decent rainfall in the coming months water



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Around Australia continued

supply and adequate irrigation will be a major concern. I encourage growers to make contingency plans for this unpleasant scenario.

Overall, the 2013 year has great potential for both central NSW and Australian avocados in general, if we are prepared to meet the challenges presented by imported fruit and maintaining fruit quality from tree to consumer.

Editor's Note: As this issue went to print Chris Nelson resigned as Director for the Central New South Wales Growing Area.

Sunshine Coast Report

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



There will be a field day at our orchard at Bellthorpe (between Maleny and Woodford) on Friday 15 March, starting at 10am and finishing mid afternoon. The aim is for Sunshine Coast (and other) avocado growers, packers and everyone else interested in our industry to meet and discuss topical production, marketing and industry issues in an open but structured way, together

with people working at the forefront in each of these areas. If you would like more information, email me (p.annand@avocado.org.au) or call 0414 586 825. If you plan to attend, I would really appreciate your letting me know for catering purposes.

As Talking Avocados goes to press, we are recovering from a week of wild wind and rain. Some trees and fruit have been damaged. Longer term threats to tree health will depend when and how quickly the soil dries. After an exceptionally dry spring, many of us (especially those with limited or no irrigation) will also be watching to see whether the fruit that developed during this time will reach a good size and whether the absence of a good spring leaf flush will reduce fruit quality.

Proposed electricity tariff changes that will increase off-peak irrigation costs are also threatening productivity in horticulture generally and are being opposed by several peak industry bodies.

It will be stimulating and enjoyable for us all to share opinions and insights on March 15. The address is 126 Gap Road, Bellthorpe.

Industry Matters

Ex Tropical Cyclone Oswald

Many growers across the North Queensland, Central Queensland, Sunshine Coast, South Queensland, Tamborine and Northern Rivers and Central New South Wales growing regions have been affected by ex Tropical Cyclone Oswald.

In the wake of this natural disaster Avocados Australia staff contacted growers in each of the affected regions to ascertain the level of damage. The impact is variable within and between the growing regions, but thankfully, most growers have come through better than expected.

Growers in the Bundaberg and Tamborine and Northern Rivers growing regions have been the most adversely affected in regards to percentage of fruit loss and estimated value of infrastructure damage. Average fruit loss across the most of the affected regions is estimated to be about 15%, however, further losses may become apparent if trees have been significantly stressed.

"Tree health will be a major concern for many growers affected by this natural disaster and I would urge all those growers, if you have not already, to please begin your remedial work now so that you can ensure your trees have the best possible chance of surviving," commented Mr Jim Kochi, Chairman of Avocados Australia.

For more information please visit the Grower Notices section on the Avocados Australia website.

New Avocado Industry Advisory Committee

The Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) is a committee of Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and has a key role in providing advice to HAL in relation to investment of industry and government funds for R&D and marketing managed by HAL. A new IAC structure has recently been put in place and the new members will hold their first meeting next week to make recommendations on the 2013-14 levy investment program.

Previously the Avocado IAC has been comprised of the Avocados Australia board of directors plus an independent chairman. Avocados Australia was advised by HAL last year that the structure of industry IACs would need to be amended to remove potential conflicts of interest whereby New Avocado Industry Advisory Committee the IAC is comprised of a majority of Peak Industry Body directors. This requirement follows ongoing negotiations between HAL and the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

Over the past few months, Avocados Australia has considered various IAC options to meet the requirements of HAL and DAFF and below is the final model that was

approved by HAL:

- 4 Independent IAC members selected through an Expression Of Interest process
- 1 HAL Independent Officer (for governance compliance, appointed by HAL)
- 5 Avocados Australia Directors, recommended by Avocados Australia
- 1 Independent IAC Chair

To provide additional input of specific expertise to the IAC process, Avocados Australia has recommended that the IAC should appoint Project Reference Groups or Expert Panels. These groups would provide critical advice to the IAC at a more detailed level and would be formed on an as-needs basis, rather than rigid subcommittees with limited expertise and limited flexibility.

The expressions of interest for the IAC was advertised widely on the Avocados Australia website, electronic and mailed notices; HAL website and emails to 700 service providers, and advertisements in newspapers targeting the major production regions.

An objective and thorough process was undertaken for selecting the four Independent Members using an independent recruitment agency engaged by HAL and an independent Selection Panel appointed by HAL.

The outcome of this process has resulted in the following members having been appointed by HAL to the IAC:

Independent Members

- Mr Wayne Franceschi
- Mr Neil Delroy
- Mr Anthony (Tony) Walsh
- Mr Jack Archer

Avocados Australia Directors

- Mr Jim Kochi (Avocados Australia Chairman)
- Mr John Walsh
- Mr Lachlan Donovan
- Mr Daryl Boardman
- Mr Barry Avery

HAL Independent Officer (appointed by HAL)

- Ms Christine Hawkins

Independent IAC Chairman

- Mr Bob Granger

The newly formed Avocado IAC met this month. At this meeting, the IAC discussed the most effective way to best utilise additional external expertise to provide high quality R&D and Marketing investment recommendations to HAL. There is varying opinion as to how best this should operate but initially it will be up to HAL, the IAC and Avocados

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Industry Matters continued

Australia to consider the options available.

The IAC has an important role in ensuring grower levies are invested wisely and Avocados Australia, on behalf of industry, will be working closely with HAL to ensure it achieves its objectives.

Changes to the Avocados Australia Board

In the week commencing 11 February 2013 Avocados Australia received the resignations of Mr Chris Nelson, Director for the Central New South Wales Growing Region and Mr Russell Delroy, Director for the West Australian Growing Region from the Avocados Australia Board effective immediately.

As directors on the Avocados Australia Board Chris and Russell have proudly represented the interests of growers in their respective regions and played an integral role in shaping our organisation to date. Chris has been a director since its inception in 2003 and Russell has been a director since 2009. Avocados Australia would like to thank Chris and Russell for their service and wish them all the best in the future.

To ensure the Central New South Wales and West Australian growing regions continue to be represented on the Avocados Australia Board we will be seeking expressions of interest from growers to fill the positions in the coming months.

Infocado Update

The January Quarterly Infocado Report has now been published. Please make sure you take the time to review it in full. Thank you to all the packhouses who contributed to the report and to the regional committees for their time in helping to make estimates for non-contributing packhouses in their growing region.

As everyone would be aware there have been extreme weather events directly affecting some major avocado growing regions over the Australia Day long weekend. At the time of writing this article we have been talking to growers across the affected regions and early reports indicate that there has certainly been some fruit loss with considerable variability within and between regions. The areas that appear to be worst affected generally are Central Queensland and Mount Tamborine. We are unable to provide accurate estimates at this point but average fruit losses across the affected regions could be in the order of about 15% and fruit remaining on the trees have suffered some skin damage. We will be contacting growers over the next few weeks and months to get a better understanding of how these events will affect the overall national crop for 2013.

Given that we are unable to account for the affects of recent events in the January Quarterly Report, we will be releasing another Quarterly Report in February with updated forecasts for 2013. New forecast forms have been emailed to all packhouses for review. We would ask that you please update the form as soon as possible, keeping in mind that it will span from February 2013 to January 2014, so that we can promptly provide you with an updated forecast.

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

Prices recently have been very good and we hope the avocado market continues to track the way it has been. Despite the steady supply during most of 2012, the market has continued to hold up and indications are that this can continue if the industry is disciplined with its marketing. The last thing we want to see is immature fruit finding its way to the market as we all know that disappointed consumers can take some time to return.

We know from consumer research that consumer acceptance of the quality of avocados declined from approximately 95% to 70% if the DM is below 23% for Hass and that up to 70% of consumers would choose 26% DM avocados over 22% DM avocados.

The Dry Matter benchmarks for Shepard and Hass are 21% and 23% respectively. Instructions for Dry Matter testing at home can be found on the Avocados Australia website under 'Services' and 'Maturity Monitoring'.

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

R&D and market monitoring 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.

Market Monitoring Reports

The Nielsen Company produces monthly Brand Health Reports for the avocado category. Nielsen Homescan data is used to track a number of things including:

- How many households are buying avocados, how many they are buying and how often
- Share of trade between Woolworths, Coles and other store types

- Avocado purchase demographics

How do I access this information?

All levy paying growers on the Avocados Australia database and Avocados Australia members 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 or on 07 3846 6566. To log on now please visit the Services Login section on the Avocados Australia website.

OrchardInfo Update

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

Like Infocado, the information collected is designed to be aggregated and distributed to contributors on a season by season basis. It is designed to assist individuals and

the industry a clear understanding of how many trees of different ages are in the ground and therefore provide the information necessary to generate long term forecasts for the industry. Due to a range of issues including low grower participation, Avocados Australia has been unable to aggregate and publish the data collected.

Without more growers contributing the data is currently too misleading. Because of this we strongly encourage you to fill out the forms to the best of your ability and return them to us as the more people who participate, the more accurate the reporting will be.

In the coming months changes and improvements will be made to the OrchardInfo system to make it easier and simpler for growers to submit their data. As reported in the last edition of Talking Avocados, an external review was undertaken of OrchardInfo and other 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. Industry representatives at a workshop in October 2012 endorsed the review findings (see last edition of Talking Avocados) and recommended that the information collected through OrchardInfo be simplified to make it



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Industry Matters continued

easier for growers to complete.

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

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

New Project: Leadership Development Plan for the Avocado Industry

In the Australian Avocado Industry Strategic Plan 2010-2015, the industry articulated the need to provide stewardship for industry and achieve optimal outcomes for its stakeholders. This project aims to provide the decision making framework for the industry to achieve Strategy 3.1 Develop industry leadership and capacity to secure long term sound stewardship of the Australian avocado industry. This project will identify the leadership needs of people in businesses and organisations at all levels of the

avocado industry and provide a Leadership Development Plan to address those needs and assist the industry in planning future leadership activities. Diane Fullelove is assisting industry to develop this plan and has been contacting a number of industry members to seek their input.

ICA 47 (for Qld businesses sending to Victoria)

QDAFF have advised that a new ICA has been established for fruit and vegetables destined for Victoria (including avocados). ICA 47 has been established for those growers confident their consignments are fruit fly free and is based on an 'on-arrival inspection'.

ICA 47 is only for the Victorian market (non PFA zone) and requires fruit and vegetables to be inspected and certified as 'free of fruit fly'.

To arrange on – arrival inspections contact:

Melbourne Markets
Rudge Produce Systems

Phone: (03) 9689 1234

Regional:

DPI Customer Service Centre

Phone: 136 186 and ask for your local Plant Standards Officer.

Please note - This is not a free service. The consignee will be charged a fee for verification of each consignment.

ICA-47 is currently NOT accepted by the following fruit fly sensitive markets:

- South Australia
- Western Australia
- Tasmania
- New South Wales Pest Free Area (PFA)
- Victoria Pest Free Area (PFA)
- Entry into PFA or movement within PFA

For further information, please contact your local QDAFF Plant Standards Officer on 136 186. For a copy of ICA 47 please visit the *Growers Notices* page of the industry website.

WA's rapidly growing avocado industry sees best season yet



Rob and his daughter Hanna have a happy snap amongst the Pemberton avocado orchard (Jessica Strauss)

After an oversupply in the market last year for avocados, proving a tough time for growers in Australia, the two major supermarket chains agreed to only take Australian avocados this year as a bumper crop was predicted.

Traditionally imports are brought in to supply the market, but this year there's no need with managing director of Delroy Orchards in Donnybrook, Russell Delroy, saying the rapidly growing avocado industry in WA has seen its best season yet.

"This is the first year that there's been enough avocados produced in Australia over a summer period and

traditionally supermarkets would bring a lot of imported avocados in from New Zealand to supply the market," says Russell.

The WA avocado industry is making leaps and bounds with an increasing supply of good quality product.

"This is the biggest avocado season Western Australian producers have had by a long way.

"It's a rapidly growing industry and we're probably about half way through our season this year and so far it's been going extremely well," says Russell.

Having a growing avocado industry in WA also means the avocado lovers will be able to access a local and fresher product.

"We do grow a very good product in the South West, because we have such a dry summer that produces a very good avocado and it's recognised as being a very good product," says Russell.

Source: ABCRural

Key food stakeholders' forum in March on Australian food sustainability

Australian Food News recently reported on research finding that as much as half of the world's food – amounting to two billion tonnes worth – is wasted every year. With predictions that food production needs to double to match global population growth, food security is a high priority in government discussions.

Michael McCallum, from the Global Foresight Network, says that "business as usual will not create a sustainable food system."

The 3 Pillars Network has organised the *3rd National Sustainable Food Summit* which will be held 20-21 March 2013 at the Melbourne Town Hall. This landmark event is expected to attract the largest and most diverse gathering of practitioners interested in the sustainability of our food system.

Participants will be coming from across the food supply-chain and will be exploring the roles and attributes each stakeholder can contribute to address the next stage of the conversation: 'What is the roadmap to a sustainable and equitable food system?'

The Summit plans to map transformation moves across Australia's food system, not just long term, but with a focus on immediate and emerging priorities.

The 3rd National Sustainable Food Summit features amongst an impressive list of speakers:

- Dr Peter Carberry, Deputy Director, Sustainable

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Industry Matters continued

Agriculture Flagship, CSIRO

- Armineh Mardirossian, Group Manager, Corporate Responsibility Community Sustainability, Woolworths
- Professor Ben Cocks, Director of Biosciences, Department of Primary Industries of Victoria
- Jim Woodhill, Principal Sector Specialist Rural Development, AusAid
- Michael J. Hiscox, Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University (USA)

Speakers will be addressing pressing questions such as:

- Where is the food system heading and what is changing?
- What are current initiatives and how do we accelerate progress?
- What roles and attributes does each stakeholder bring?
- How do we collaborate?

The National Sustainable Food Summit has been designed to write an inclusive and interactive program allowing participants to contribute their knowledge and expertise in delivering the outcomes from the Summit.

All participants will gain an understanding for their role in transitioning their food industry sector to achieve sustainability.

Event supporters and partners for the Summit include DPI Victoria, Meat & Livestock Australia, Grains Research & Development Corporation, City of Melbourne, Australian Food and Grocery Council, Net Balance, and WWF Australia

To learn more about the 3rd National Sustainable Food Summit and to register to attend the Summit, visit: <http://www.3pillarsnetwork.com>

Source: <http://www.ausfoodnews.com.au>

Register for Certification Assurance Operational Procedure workshops

Biosecurity Queensland is seeking participants for upcoming workshops on two new Interstate Certification Assurance (ICA) Operational Procedures. There will be a series of workshops for each of the ICA Operational Procedures. The workshops will explain the procedures and provide attendees an opportunity to discuss how this will work for their businesses. ICA-47 Inspection of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Freedom From Fruit Fly is available to all growers consigning fresh fruit and vegetables to the Victorian marketplace, noting that it is not permitted for the Sunraysia Pest Free Area. Certification under the procedure is only accepted by Victoria. Therefore, growers with intention of accessing multiple markets may nominate to remain with their current accreditation arrangements. ICA-30 Hard Condition of Avocados is accepted by New South Wales Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia for avocado cultivars Hass and Lamb Hass to meet Queensland Fruit Fly quarantine entry conditions. This provides avocado growers of Hass and Lamb Hass varieties with an alternative to postharvest treatments with chemicals.

If growers are interested in attending a workshop to learn more about the requirements of each operational procedure, please complete and submit a registration form to your local Plant Biosecurity Officer.

To download and complete a registration form please visit the Grower - Notices page of the Avocados Australia website (www.industry.avocado.org.au/Growers/Notices)

Please note that workshops will then be scheduled according to interest, so register your interest quickly. For more information about Interstate Certification Assurance Operational Procedures, visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.

Get up to speed

Queensland producers have an opportunity to get digitally savvy through the Get Up To Speed program, which is being funded by Skills Queensland.

The 12-week online program, which offers both in person and virtual support, covers topics including social media, website design and development, search engine optimisation, cloud computing, pay per click, online advertising, e-marketing and more.

Thanks to government support, the price for the Get Up To Speed program has been reduced from \$595 to \$295 for Queenslanders. For more information, or to register, visit www.getuptospeed.com.au or [facebook.com/getuptospeedprogram](https://www.facebook.com/getuptospeedprogram).

Regulator warns: More permits under scrutiny after guilty plea

Holders of agricultural and veterinary chemical permits are warned to stick closely to the requirements of their permits or face the legal consequences according to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

The warning comes hard on the heels of an APVMA permit holder, Jotun Pty Ltd, being convicted and fined \$22,000 after pleading guilty to two charges in the Sunshine (Victoria) Magistrates Court on Friday.

Jotun was charged under the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Administration) Act 1992* (Cth) for import offences, and the Victorian Agvet Code for supply offences.

APVMA's regulatory strategy and compliance program manager, Neville Matthew, said he was disappointed with an apparent trend of companies failing to respect the conditions of permits.

"We will continue to tackle permit non-compliance with vigour in the coming year", said Mr Matthew.



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Industry Matters continued

"The dollar value of penalties has recently increased and with reform legislation currently being considered by the Australian parliament this year, the APVMA's compliance powers are likely to be enhanced, as are the maximum penalties for specific offences.

Jotun is a multinational company based in Norway, with an Australian office in Victoria. It produces a range of marine antifouling products that are applied to vessels to prevent or treat the build-up of barnacles, seaweed and so on.

Antifouling products fit the definition of an agricultural chemical product in the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994* and must be registered by the APVMA before being sold or used in Australia.

Several permits for two unregistered Jotun products were issued from 2003–09 to enable research data to be collected and used in an application for full product registration. Revised permits were issued in late 2009.

"In this case, Jotun was allowed to conduct research on unregistered products through the issue of permits. These permits have limitations both in time and scale that are appropriate to that purpose. Jotun breached those limits", said Mr Matthew.

"APVMA permit holders are on notice: the APVMA will be scrutinising many more permits this year."

The APVMA is an independent statutory authority responsible for the assessment and registration of agricultural chemicals and veterinary medicines and for their regulation up to and including the point of retail sale.

Source: APVMA



Avocado industry exports record tonnage in 2012

Wayne Prowse – Export Consultant

The Australian avocado industry exported 2,300 tonnes in 12 months to December 2012 which was 5.7 per cent higher than the previous year despite overcoming difficult economic conditions and the high exchange rates. Australian Avocado exports have come a long way since 250 tonnes were exported 10 years ago.

According to data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Singapore was Australian major destination taking almost 40 per cent and 896 tonnes followed by Thailand with 530 tonnes. Australia enjoys a market leadership position in both these markets and trade expanded 11 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

With market leadership in these markets the Australian industry in co-operation with exporters and Queensland government have implemented handling & training programs and promotions to help build relationships with the trade and promote avocados to consumers in the condition that we expect in Australia. Avocados are not widely consumed in these markets and therefore consumer education is a vital element of market development.

The United Arab Emirates and Malaysia are two other important markets taking around 270 tonnes each of Australian avocados.

The only market to record lower trade was Hong Kong

which dipped 12 per cent to 187 tonnes despite the overall market expanding. South Africa and Chile are strong competitors in this market along with Mexico and now Peru and New Zealand which makes market development more challenging with more competitive pricing. A strong demand from an expat community in Hong Kong influences trade and also some avocados are re-exported to China.

By far the largest market in Asia is Japan which imported 58,000 tonnes in 2012 according to Japan Customs data. Most of the avocados imported by Japan are used as ingredients in sushi although some are sold through traditional retail channels. Mexico supplies around 90 per cent of this volume followed by United States and then small volumes from Chile and New Zealand. Australia does not have access to the Japan market.

Not to be complacent, Australia is a very small player in the global avocado market and despite the consistent growth trend we compete with export focussed suppliers from Chile, South Africa, New Zealand and also Mexico with much larger volumes available, economies of scale and strong trade relationships. We also face challenges with changing import conditions, particularly in Thailand and Indonesia that are outside the control of the Australian industry.

Australian Avocados exports were valued at \$8.47M for the 12 months to December 2012



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Avocado Best Practice and Training Site Key Tool for Industry

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

The Best Practice Resource (BPR) is available from the Avocados Australia website www.avocado.org.au. Simply click on the tab at the top of the page.



Figure 1: BPR log in page.

To gain access to the site as a first time user, simply type in your email address and click 'Apply for Access'. You will then be taken to a screen where you will be asked to record your business details and interests. After completing the form, click 'Apply for Access' and your request will be emailed through to the Avocados Australia office for approval.

Avocados Australia will process your application and you will be sent a confirmation email. You will be given access to topics relevant to your business on the site and should be able to use your log in straight away. You will be able to view content articles relevant to your business such as fruit grading standards at packhouses or recommended core

temperature levels for transporting Hass and Shepard fruit.

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

Growing content is being finalised and will be uploaded in the coming weeks and months in a staggered fashion with the most important topics being prioritised (e.g. Nutrition). Additional content relating to export and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) will also be developed in the coming months.

As the business manager or owner, you have the ability to register your employees on the system. You can also personalise the site so that you and your employees can



Figure 2: Business owner/manager homepage.

view information specific to your business and practices. The information you add will only be accessible to you, your employees and the site administrators.

You will be able to add information to the 'Business Fact Sheet' and 'Manage Course' sections of the site. The Business Fact Sheet can be used to house information relevant to your employees such as address and company information, key contact people, history of the business and related documents like a property map or WHS Policies.

Within the training courses, which you may want your employees to complete, you can upload additional content if need be. Clicking on 'Manage Course' (see top right hand side of screen in figure 2) will take you to the 'back end' of the site where you can upload content. Each page within each of the training models will be listed and you will be able to add content to the notes section. This content will appear on the relevant page in the training module and will thus allow you to incorporate any existing employee training resources you have into the BPR system.

You will be able to track what modules your employees have completed and when they did so. You will be able to reset the training for the employee to redo if necessary.

From a reporting perspective this tool should be very helpful in keeping track of what employees have been instructed to do and when.

Generating reports, adding content to the Business Fact Sheet, registering employees on the system and resetting training can be done at the back end of the site. A full set of site instructions will be given to all business owners and managers and ongoing assistance will be provided.

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

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

Training on how to use the BPR will be available to all stakeholders through a range of workshops, one on one assistance and user guides.

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

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MRI as a non-invasive research tool

MRI as a non-invasive research tool for internal quality assessment of 'Hass' avocado fruit

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Introduction

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is known for its efficacy in medicine and medical research for non-destructively revealing the morphological features of internal organs, including those that are diseased. Its application in studies on plant organs, including for avocado fruit, has been investigated in the past, however its full potential for internal quality and defect assessment of avocado fruit has not been fully explored. This article briefly introduces MRI and describes its application in defect assessment for 'Hass' avocado fruit. Recent research into bruising of green mature and firm ripe fruit, including our findings and the potential of MRI for future avocado postharvest research, is presented.

The avocado industry continues to expand in Australia, with 'Hass' being the leading cultivar. Avocado production and consumption growth has continued to increase, despite research over about two decades indicating general consumer dissatisfaction due to poor internal fruit quality (Harker and Jaeger, 2007; Embry, 2008). Accordingly, compromised avocado fruit quality at retail level is an important avocado supply chain issue (Hofman, 2011). Bruising and flesh rot are the major reasons for poor internal avocado fruit quality (Hofman and Ledger, 2001).

Bruising in 'Hass' avocado fruit is the result of physicochemical changes in the flesh due to any impact energy absorbed by the fruit (Ledger and Barker, 1995; Arpaia et al., 2005). Factors that affect the development of flesh bruising include the stage of fruit ripeness (softening) and time and temperature after impact (Hyde et al., 2001). Rots reflect the activity of pathogens which mostly infect fruit in the field but usually remain dormant until the fruit start ripening (Everett and Pushparajah, 2008).

Various approaches to minimize both bruising and rots have been devised, including handling of less ripe fruit and using protective packing (Arpaia et al., 2005) to reduce bruising, and good orchard hygiene, postharvest fungicides and appropriate rootstocks (Willingham et al., 2006; Everett

et al., 2007) to reduce rots. In most research, bruising and rots in the avocado fruit flesh are measured by destructive assessments. However, bruise and rots progression varies from fruit to fruit, so to understand the development of these disorders either large numbers of fruit need to be destructively sampled, or a non-destructive technique developed that allows observation of bruise and rots development in the same fruit.

MRI represents a potential non-invasive research tool for internal quality assessment of 'Hass' avocado fruit. As mentioned above, MRI is a diagnostic and research tool used primarily in the medical field. Its use in plant science has also been investigated in numerous different crop organs (Clark et al., 1997), including avocado fruit (Sanches et al., 2003). ¹H-MRI imaging detects changes in the magnetic environment of the nucleus of hydrogen, one of the atoms in water. The nucleus of hydrogen can be imagined as a bar magnet. When placed in the large magnetic field of a superconducting MRI magnet, the nuclei align with the magnetic field similar to a compass facing north. In addition to being aligned with the magnetic field, the nuclei also rotate at a frequency dependent on the magnetic field. When a magnetic field gradient is applied across the sample, human or avocado, the frequency of the spinning nucleus changes dependent on where it is within the applied magnetic field gradient allowing positional information to be obtained. A radiofrequency pulse of energy then rotates the nuclei perpendicular to the MRI magnetic field, which allows the spinning magnetic field of the nuclei to be detected by a receiver coil as the nuclei realign with the MRI magnetic field. This signal contains spatial information and can be converted to an image or "map" of the atomic components of the water molecule according to their density and other properties. The rate at which the nuclei realign with the MRI magnetic field is dependent on the freedom of the water, chemical environment of the water and tissue structure that contains the water. This all occurs without any damage to the avocado. Thus, normal avocado flesh gives rise to different image intensity to abnormal or bruised tissue. As the tissue structure changes during bruise development, changes in the avocado images are evident. This can be repeated numerous times to follow the development of a bruise in a single fruit without additional damage due to the MRI imaging process, as opposed to cutting the avocado open.

In this work, the effects of impact bruising were investigated by MRI for firm ripe and green mature 'Hass' avocado fruit. Opportunistically, images of fruit rots were also obtained.

Methods

The experiment comprised of two treatments; green mature fruit dropped from 100 cm onto a hard surface, and firm

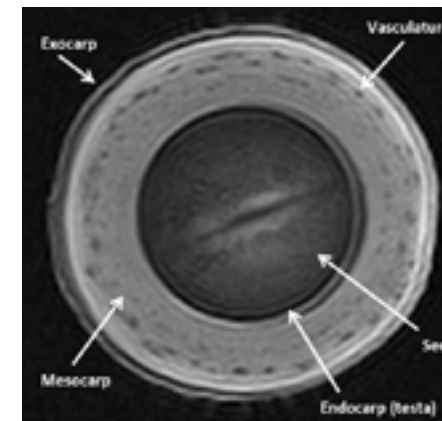


Plate A: Transverse section MRI of a firm ripe 'Hass' avocado fruit that has not been deliberately impacted.

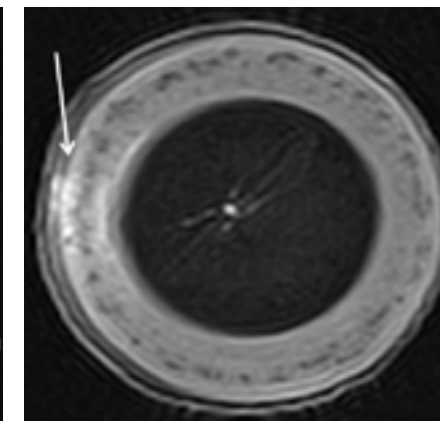


Plate B: MRI of a firm ripe 'Hass' avocado fruit immediately after impact by dropping from 50 cm height. The arrow indicates the site of impact. The brighter (more hypersensitive) area indicates water that is less constrained, and likely associated with broken cell membranes from the impact and the release of water into the cell walls and spaces between the cells.

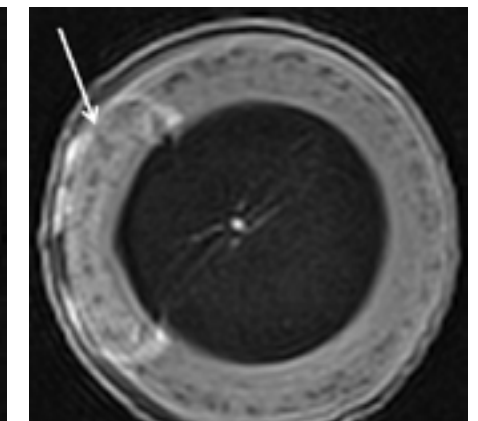


Plate C: MRI of a firm ripe 'Hass' avocado fruit 72 hours after impacting from 50 cm drop height. The arrow indicates the impact point and the hypersensitive area indicates the increasing area of flesh affected by the impact over the 72 hours (compare with Plate B).



Plate D: Image of a bruised 'Hass' avocado fruit impacted from 50 cm drop height at the firm ripe stage. The circled area indicates the bruised flesh.

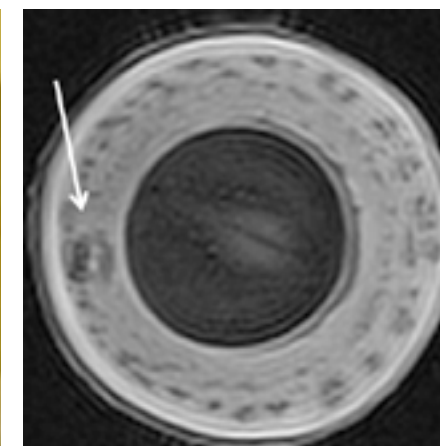


Plate E: MRI of a green mature fruit immediately after being impacted from 100 cm drop height. The arrow indicates the site of impact which was visible immediately after impact.

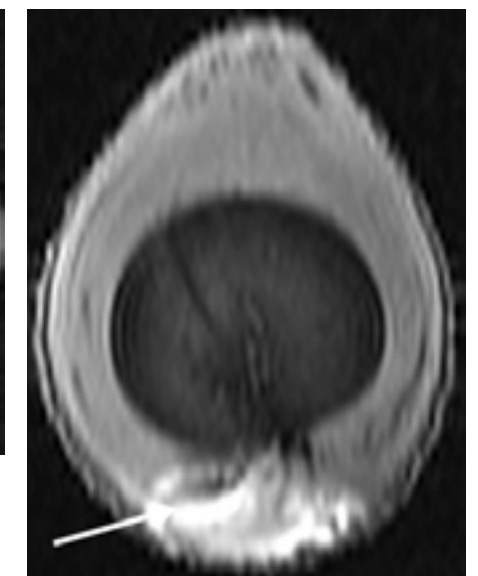


Plate F: MRI of a firm ripe 'Hass' avocado fruit impacted from 50 cm drop height showing the diseased area of the fruit. The arrow indicates decaying flesh at the distal end of the fruit.

MRI as a non-invasive research tool continued

ripe fruit dropped from 50 cm. 'Hass' avocado fruit for both treatments were collected from a ripener at the Brisbane Markets. The green mature treatment fruit were used on the day of collection from the ripener, and the firm ripe treatment fruit triggered to ripen by dipping in ethephon solution, and held at 20°C until firm ripe. The fruit were individually impacted by dropping in a pendulum device against a solid surface. The impacted fruit were then held in a foam rubber and wooden frame which was inserted into a head coil for imaging in a 3T clinical MRI system. The fruit were impacted on a Friday afternoon, placed immediately in the MRI, scanned every 30 minutes over the weekend, and then every day during the following week. The T2 weighted turbo spin echo (TSE) images were acquired. Additional fruit were collected at the same time and treated in the same way, except MRI, and were cut at intervals to track the development of visible bruising (browning and flesh cracking) symptoms.

Findings

MRI was able to effectively and non-invasively visualise internal morphological features, including the skin (exocarp), the small layer of cells under the skin (mesocarp), the strands in the flesh (vascular bundles), and the flesh (endocarp) of the fruit (Plate A). Visualising the different parts of fruit tissue non-destructively can help understand the physiology, microbiology and pathology of 'Hass' avocado fruit (Sanches et al., 2003).

The energy absorbed by the firm ripe avocado fruit upon impact caused damage to the flesh resulting in bruising and cracking. Immediately after impact the MRI showed bright (hyperintense) areas around the location of the impact (Plate B), suggesting a disruption of cell membranes allowing greater motional freedom of the water. However, destructive sampling indicated that visual symptoms of bruising were not obvious until at least 8 hours after impact (Mazhar et al., 2011), which is probably the time required for the enzymes in the affected area to start producing the brown-coloured polyphenols. The area of the hyperintense region increased for up to 72 hours during the period of serial imaging (Plate C). Destructive assessment of other fruit treated in the same way but not exposed to MRI complemented the findings of MRI (Plate D).

Destructive assessment of the firm ripe fruit used for MRI at about 72 hours after impact confirmed the presence of bruised flesh at the site of impact and corresponded to the hyperintense area in the MRI images.

Visual symptoms of bruising in impacted, green mature fruit were not obvious, even after 72 hours after impact. Hofman (2002) found very little bruising in fruit sampled from the end of the packing line then very carefully handled

and ripened to minimise additional bruising. These results suggest that firm, hard fruit are tolerant to developing bruising symptoms. Nonetheless, the MRI showed signs of changes in water characteristics (potentially reflecting cell damage) near the impact site (Plate E).

Thus, visualization by MRI of transient bruising in hard green fruit suggests a capacity to repair the initial damage. This interesting observation merits more detailed investigation.

As the fruit aged, they began to decay. Disease-affected areas noted during destructive assessment appeared as hyperintense regions in the MRI images (Plate F). The image intensity and tissue volume affected by the disease progressively increased over the 72 hour assessment period. The non-invasive visualization of decay-affected regions in the fruit suggested additional utility of this technology in postharvest pathogenicity studies on ripening 'Hass' fruit.

This study has shown that MRI can be used as a research tool to non-destructively assess internal bruise and decay development in 'Hass' avocado fruit. Some advantages of MRI over destructive assessments include avoiding the need to dissect many fruit over time, efficiency and precision in measurement, reducing variation due to inter-fruit variability, and choice in different MRI imaging modes that potentially provide additional knowledge about the physicochemical mechanisms of bruising. In the wake of this preliminary study, there is a need for more in-depth MRI research on different combinations of fruit firmness and impact energy in green mature through to ripening avocado fruit. MRI could also be used for non-destructive bruising assessments that evaluate the incremental progression in bruising (and decay) as fruit travel through the supply chain.

Acknowledgements

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Retailer Education



Figure 1: Avocado Handling: Retail poster.

Over the last 18 months Avocados Australia has rolled out a retailer training program across Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The program was developed to ensure best recommended practices are communicated to key retail staff members about how to improve handling of avocados. Since the program began over 900 individual stores have been identified to participate including independent green grocers, independent supermarkets and the large chains. Over 1800 individual store visits have been completed by our avocado trainers to date and feedback has been very positive. Most retailers are excited to be involved in program and very happy to provide feedback on how it could be improved and how the industry could boost consumption.

At each visit stores are given a range of information to assist them in improving the handling of their avocados. This is particularly important because as avocados ripen they become more susceptible to damage, particularly bruising. The point of the supply chain that the fruit is therefore at the highest risk is in the retail sector. Consequently there is a need to ensure that the messages relayed in the retail handling guide (pictured below) are properly transferred to the staff on the retail floor.

Trainers visited retail outlets to conduct a short training session with the store's produce department. Training was repeated in the selected stores two to three times per year to maximise effectiveness and account for staff turnover. A breakdown of store types and number of visits conducted is included below in table 1.

The trainers were given the following materials to use and hand out to stores:

- Avocado Colour and Ripeness Chart
- Avocado Handling – Retail
- Avocado News: an overview of the season thus far

Table 1: Store Types

Retail sector/ business	Number of stores	Number of training sessions undertaken
Woolworths	117	313
Coles	142	295
IGA	119	224
Other stores	507 (includes independents & independent supermarkets)	976
ALDI	31 (mainly stores in Sydney and Melbourne)	48
Total	916	1856

- The Little Green Book: tells the story of how avocados came to be grown in Australia and their journey from paddock to plate. It helps to show the retailers where and how they fit into the overall supply chain.
- A roll of 500 'I'm ripe and ready' fruit stickers for retailers to apply to ripe fruit.

During the visits stores were asked if they had had any issues when buying fruit. The main problems mentioned were regarding quality. Issues with ripening (either too ripe or not ripe at all) and product inconsistency were cited. A summary of issues/questions raised by stores are listed below:

- Representatives from some stores said they have higher wastage of Shepards than Hass because people don't realise the green Shepards are ripe
- Retailers feel that much of the flesh damage is caused by consumers themselves (particularly bruising) as the consumer squeezes multiple pieces of fruit in the display looking for their preferred firmness. Retailers are very keen for some education material to be circulated to address this issue.

- In April 2012 there were some issues with fruit not ripening correctly in the Perth market place. This coincided with a shortage of fruit from some grower suppliers due to poor weather conditions and a changeover of picking between major varieties. The quality issues included fruit browning from the seed out and consistent ripening.

Feedback on the program to date has been predominately positive with the education materials being well received and store staff engaging with the trainers. Independent green grocers on average have been particularly keen to be involved in the program and use the education materials. Anecdotal feedback has been that they want to take advantage of anything that will help to differentiate them from the major supermarket chains.

One of the primary concerns retailers have is how they can prevent consumers squeezing the fruit when searching for a ripe one. This obviously causes bruising and can lead to increased customer dissatisfaction. In response to these concerns, Avocados Australia has provided the below information to retailers to make sure ripe avocados are

managed carefully at retail level:

- Rotate stock to ensure the oldest or ripest fruit is displayed first.
- Assist consumers to identify 'ripe for tonight' avocados either through having a separate display or applying 'ripe and ready' stickers. The aim is to reduce the need for the consumers to squeeze fruit to check for ripeness.
- Explaining how retailers and their staff can check ripeness.
- Recommend following temperature guidelines on the Avocado Handling: Retail guide to ensure the fruit is in the best possible quality when it's presented to consumers and to help manage the ripeness level of the fruit.
- Optimise stock control – minimise storage and display time to ensure the fruit is always fresh and some ripe and ready fruit is always on hand.

As a way to monitor store performance, information was collected about the store's practices during the training

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Retailer Education continued

session. Information collected included:

- How the staff handle fruit
- What varieties are preferred
- If the store has had any quality issues
- How the staff check ripeness
- Where fruit is purchased from (eg wholesale markets, Distribution Centres)
- What does the store value in terms of their supply of avocados? Eg good prices, quality, consistent supply
- How often fruit is ordered
- Number of trays sold per week
- Proportion of different coloured fruit in the display
- Any obvious quality issues within the display (ie fruit with rots)
- Are ripe fruit identified within the display (ie labelled with ripe and ready stickers)
- Feedback on the usefulness of tools which may help retailers to select and identify ripe and ready fruit for their customers
- What improvements retailers would recommend for this training program

The trainers have been able to assign the stores a rating out of five based off the handling practices observed while in the store. The percentage for each rating are listed in Table 2. The percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percentage.

Rating 1 = very poor and rating 5 = excellent.

Table 2: Store Rating Breakdown

Overall Store Rating	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Melbourne
1	4%	6%	28%	41%
2	31%	46%	27%	37%
3	35%	45%	21%	16%
4	28%	5%	10%	5%
5	2%	0%	4%	0%

Table 3 shows a breakdown of how stores are checking for ripeness. How staff check ripeness is important as certain methods such as squeezing fruit can cause bruising damage. It should be noted that the stores were able to select more than one option for ripeness checking. Most stores are using a combination of colour and firmness to test ripeness levels.

Table 3: How Stores are Checking for Ripeness

How Stores Check for Ripeness	Percentage
No checking	8%
Colour	56%
Relied on Seller's advice	4%
Squeezing fruit or gently pressing the stem	67%

Table 4 shows a breakdown of how frequently stores are ordering more avocados. Order frequency is important for a number of reasons including:

- Ordering less frequently, can mean that fruit are left to sit on the display. They can deteriorate over the week if not looked after correctly leading to quality issues

- An indication of how often the store is checking their display
- An indication of store turnover for avocados

Most of the supermarket chains make daily orders. It should be noted that for the most part, they do not get any choice of ripeness level, they display what they are given.

Table 4: Fruit Order Frequency

How Often Orders are Placed	Percentage
Daily	39%
6 x weekly	4%
5 x weekly	8%
4 x weekly	15%
3 x weekly	23%
2 x weekly	10%
Weekly	1%

If any fruit within the display had obvious defects this was recorded. 27% of the stores surveyed had some defects present. Where possible the defects were identified. See below table for a defect breakdown.

Table 5: Defect Types Seen in Store

Defect Type	Percentage
Bruising	33%
Rots	18%
Old/shrivelling	32%
Other	17%

The 32% of old/shrivelled fruit could in part be due to stores not checking their displays often enough and not placing frequent avocado orders to their supplier. 86% of the fruit with 'Other Defects' was specified as having skin spotting.

Table 6 below shows the percentage of stores which are displaying avocados 1-2 layers deep. The industry recommendation is to not stack the fruit more than two layers deep to help prevent bruising and squashing.

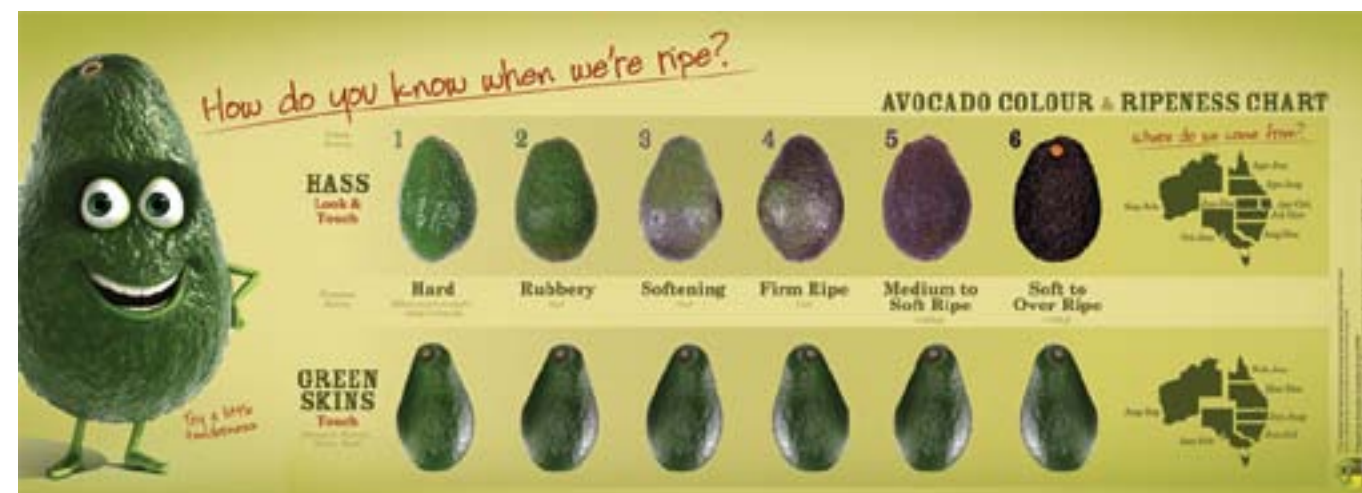
Table 6: Avocado Display Type

Display Type	Percentage
More than 2 layers deep	12%
1-2 layers deep	88%

This retailer training program will continue in 2013 with an increase in the number of stores targeted. Thanks to our fabulous trainers Yianni Vrachnas, Joy Walker, Carmel Carmichael and Johanne Appelbee for their ongoing efforts!

If you are planning any retail education yourself in the coming season please get in touch with Julie Petty at the Avocados Australia office. We can supply educational materials for you to use during your training and to avoid double ups, we'd like to work in with any store visits you are conducting.

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



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'The Case of the Bruised Avocados'

Want to know where in the supply chain avocado bruising is most likely to occur?
How do bruises behave and develop over time?
Well the results are in and they are pretty exciting!

Researchers at the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and The University of Queensland along with industry stakeholders have been working on this issue over the last couple of years. Their primary focus is to understand flesh bruising in ripening avocado fruit with a view to delivering better quality fruit to consumers. The results to date of this study have been summarised in a short video.

To view the video please visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDn-4YbV9BE>, alternatively visit www.YouTube.com and type in 'The Case of the Bruised Avocados'.



Team leader Prof Daryl Joyce from DAFF and UQ stated that "we knew already that up to 80% of Hass avocados on the retail shelf have flesh defects which affect consumer intent to repeat purchase. What we didn't know was the incidence of bruising at each stage of the supply chain. We also didn't know if and how each sector of the supply chain is contributing to the bruising issue".

Prof Joyce confirmed that understanding if and how each sector of the supply chain may contribute to the issue is extremely important as it would assist the industry in developing targeted, effective solutions to the bruising problem.



"There have been a number of important findings from this research" stated Prof Joyce. "We now know that bruises develop over a 96 hour period after impact and that, as anticipated, the riper the fruit the more susceptible it is to bruising".

"Importantly, multiple tests have confirmed that most, if not all, of the bruising is occurring at the retail store level. Whether this damage is being caused by consumers themselves or retail store staff, we will need to investigate through further collaborative research in the next phase of this program".

The next phase of the study is aimed at identifying decision aid tools to assist consumers in choosing a ripe piece of fruit without the need to squeeze it.

For more information please contact:
 Prof Daryl Joyce, Mobile: 0428 867 804,
 Email: daryl.joyce@daff.qld.gov.au

The above video has been developed by Applied Horticultural Research (AHR) to highlight the results from this project. This project has been funded by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) using the avocado industry levy and matching funds from the Australian Government.

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Avocados Marketing Activity

January through to end March

Written by Duncan Sinclair
 Marketing Services Manager for Avocados
 Horticulture Australia Limited

As highlighted in the Spring edition of Talking Avocados, the last quarter for 2012 was a full program for Australian Avocados marketing activity in the lead up to Christmas. Throughout the last quarter avocados advertising was seen across free to air digital channels and targeted Pay TV channels, in national magazines and featured as targeted banner advertising on sponsored digital sites such as Taste.com. The *Ad an Avo Everyday* message was carried through to store level with a strong in-store sampling campaign across 800 major supermarkets, it was reinforced via our social media facebook promotions of "Avotar" and "Summer Salads" and our celebrity nutritionist Zoe Binley-Pullin provided topical content pushed out to our growing facebook fan base.

The Spring quarter also saw 600 early childhood centres across Australia receive a tray of avocados as part of the Eating My Colourful Veges and Fruit program. This extended the program reach to over 60,000 pre-schoolers aged between 3-5 years old. The Food service program was equally active in getting avocados on the menu. An advertising campaign in relevant industry publications challenged chefs with high quality serving suggestions and was backed up by a competition in NSW and ACT inviting chefs to create their best avocado dish and let the critics decide.

The strategic marketing review process also continued with the final Stage 5 of the consumer research project being completed. Brand communication concepts presented to the IAC in late November and endorsed were tested in research to determine the foundation for the final stage of the creative development process. Outputs from this process will be presented to the IAC in early February as part of the new strategic marketing plan recommendation.

Having recapped the last quarter's program the Avocados marketing activity for summer will be back into full swing after a quiet January, a traditionally low rating and media viewing time. Avocado advertising recommences in February across all major media channels in a block of activity to re-establish strong reach and frequency.

Free to Air TV: Two bursts of advertising will focus on relevant programs that target

mums on the Channel Nine Digital channels of GEM & GO! We will have two by weekly advertising bursts w/c 17/2 and w/c 3/3 being featured on shows such as Jamie Oliver, The Best and Eat Yourself Sexy.

National Pay TV: Coinciding with our second TV burst in March avocados will feature in the Everyday Meals block across the Lifestyle channels. The avocados ad will be targeted at any food related program across the Lifestyle network for the 3 weeks and will run Everyday Meal "stingers", a 10 second ad that is developed in a prescribed format that presents a fact about a particular product, adjacent to the ads. Underpinning our national pay TV advertising is the "always on" strategy through the Lifestyle channels package featuring a minimum of 6 spots a day, every day.

Magazines: The focus of avocados magazine advertising for the coming months will be insertions in Super Food Ideas monthly magazine. This magazine provides busy individuals and families with easy recipes and meal solutions, using readily available ingredients and simple techniques. Alternating full page placement ads with a new *one third* page format allows continuity cost effectively through the period. Watch out for avocados in the January, March and April editions.

On-line Advertising:



Avocados Marketing Activity continued

Throughout February Australian Avocados will again sponsor the Taste.com mobile phone app with banner advertising. This relatively new platform is enjoying great success as consumers discover how easy it can be to search for recipe ideas when they are out shopping. One in four ads featured on the app will be avocados. In March avocados is also the Salad Recipe sponsor which is one of the sites most popular recipe collections for this time of the year.

Website & Blogs: We are maintaining a high level of website activity reaching out to our database with weekly content posts around the themes of recipes, quick ideas and lifestyle tips. Celebrity nutritionist Zoe Bingley-Pullin will be posting timely articles around back to school with great after school recipe ideas and also tips on keeping naturally healthy kids. Other topics will include how to get kids cooking, Zoe's top 10 kitchen tips and Monday meal planning. Dietitian Lisa Yates will continue the theme of "what women need to eat" focusing on thirty year olds, as well as focussing on the nutrition of school lunchboxes and "eating vegetarian and keeping healthy" to name a few.

Health & Nutrition: The second annual Nutrient Rich Fitness (NRF) program event is scheduled for 26th February. This free national event presented by Matt O'Neil (see below) is an evening webinar targeted to Health and Fitness Professionals. Specifically designed to broaden their knowledge of nutrient rich eating, Matt will communicate the health benefits of maintaining a diet consisting of natural, whole foods - and of course how avocados are a key provider of essential nutrients. As weight management is the number one reason clients see fitness professionals this new Nutrient Rich Fitness for weight management webinar also aims to show why healthy fats such as avocados are an important part of weight management diets. By attending Health and Fitness Professionals can broaden their knowledge of nutrient rich eating, which they can easily pass onto clients. They will also earn 1 Fitness Australia Continuing Education Credit (CEC) essential for their accreditation.

Matt is the fitness industry's fat loss guru and Director of

the SmartShape Centre for Weight Management. He is the Nutritionist on Channel 7's Sunrise and Morning Shows and the weight loss coach for Men's Health magazine Australia. He is the creator of Metabolic Jumpstart.com which has given metabolically matched diet plans to over 7000 people.

Foodservice Campaign: Chef training events kick off in late January as does foodservice advertising in industry publications to stimulate chef awareness and interest in developing avocado dishes for their menus. In February Hospitality Magazine features the Breakfast ad and in March Open House focuses on eating vegetarian.

February's Australian Gourmet Traveller also featured a special full page advertorial to showcasing the winners and all participating outlets of the Chefs Menu Competition. The winning dish will feature along with the winning consumer review.

Australian Avocados

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Researcher Profile - Simon Newett

Simon Newett is the Principal Extension Horticulturist with the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) based at the Maroochy Research Facility at Nambour in Queensland.

He grew up on a broadacre cropping farm in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and obtained a BSc Agriculture at the Pietermaritzburg campus of Natal University in South Africa.

The avocado projects he has been involved in have included the AVOMAN and AVOINFO software, the avocado Agrilink Information Kit, the study group project and more recently the Alternate Bearing survey, the Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide and the on-line Avocado Best Practices system. Simon has also co-led several avocado overseas study tours.

Particular interests include working with growers, crop nutrition and irrigation, and developing information products.

What do you find most rewarding about working with the avocado industry?

Meeting growers and other R&D personnel and working with them. I also enjoy learning more about this unique crop and finding out how it is grown and how it responds

to different environments around Australia and overseas.

Where do you see the industry going?

With a common goal, trust, imagination, hardwork, and a spirit of cooperation and goodwill it will continue to be a very progressive industry. (That's not too much to ask for is it?)

What do you think the future holds for avocado R&D?

R&D is going through a challenging period of change, it will have to be carefully managed to correctly identify the research and development that is needed and to secure the people and other resources to deliver it.

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

Overcoming the post harvest quality problems in Hass and competing with potential imports of cheaper fruit.

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

The health and nutritional properties of avocado and its convenience.



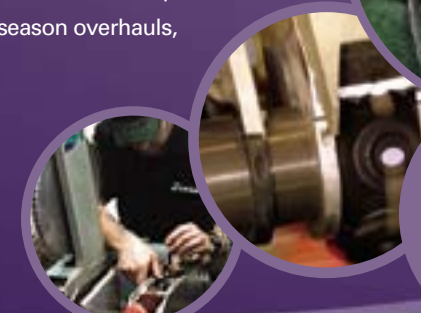
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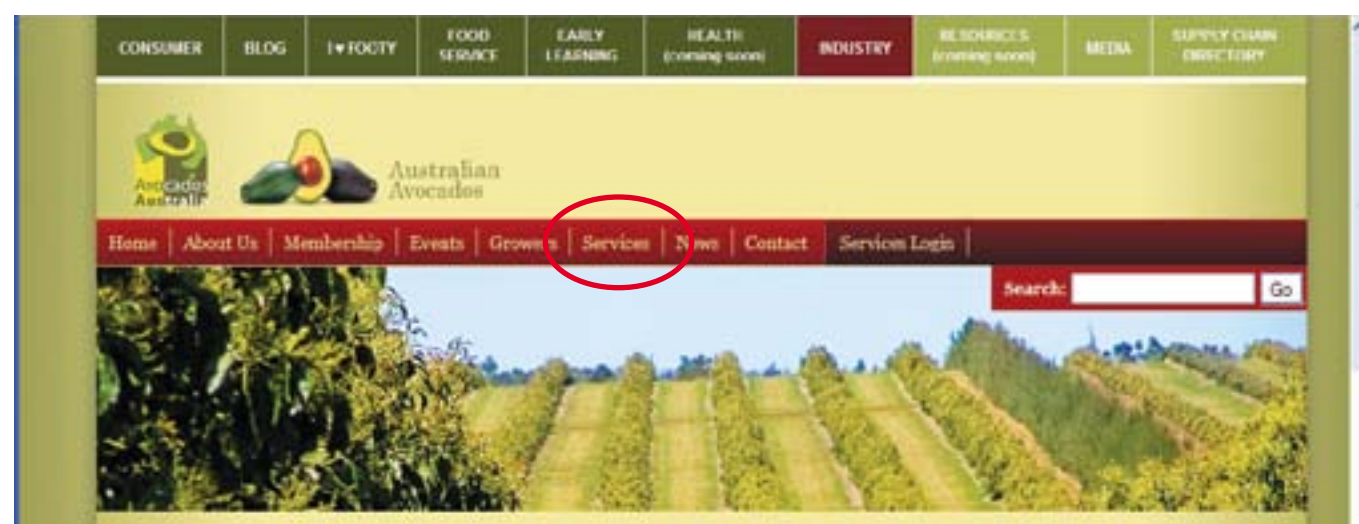


Figure 1: Screen shot of Avocados Australia website



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

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

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

Retail prices at the moment are reasonably steady and high as shown by the below graphs.

Figure 2: Sydney Hass prices for last 52 weeks



Figure 3: Brisbane Hass prices for last 52 weeks

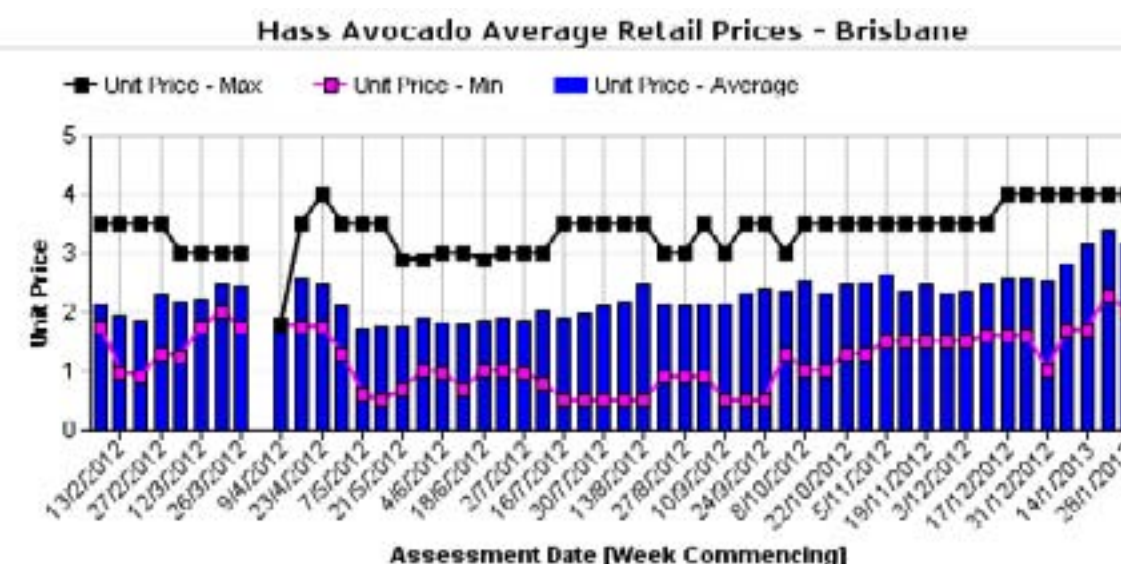


Figure 4: Melbourne Hass prices for last 52 weeks

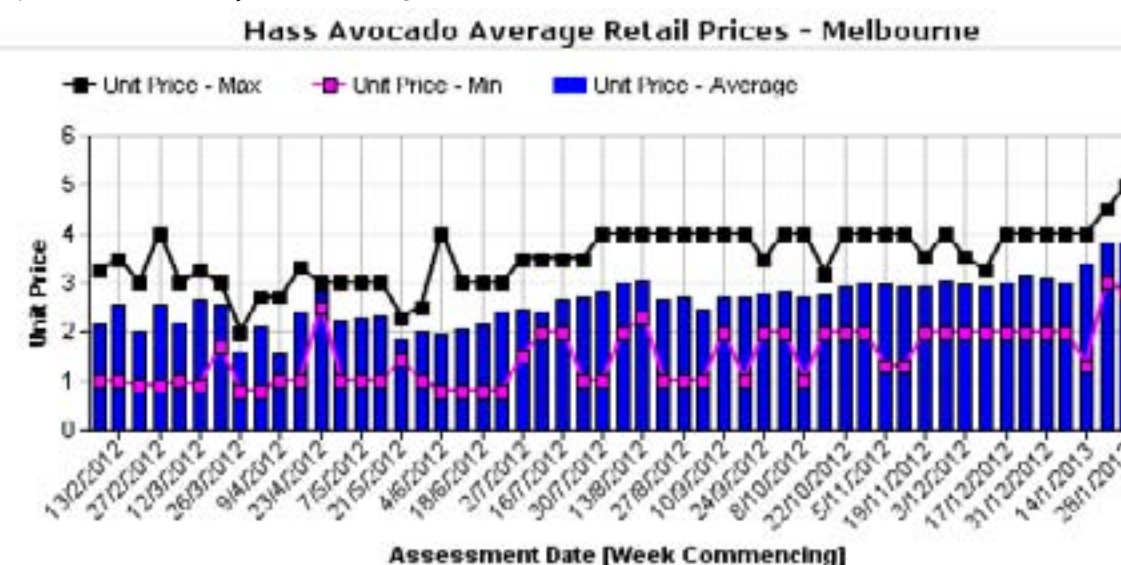


Figure 5: Perth Hass prices for last 52 weeks+



China FVF 2012 Visit - 8-11 November 2012

Written by Daryl Boardman, Avocado Export Company

The China World Fruit & Vegetable Trade Fair (CHINAFVF) is the sole official fresh produce show in China covering the full spectrum of fresh produce. It aims to promote technology and trade exchanges, improve varieties, increase planting and processing level, perfect the logistics concerned with storage, fresh-keeping and cold-chain transport, as well as fruit and vegetable food safety in the fresh produce.

Following on from exposure for avocados in Naning at the China World Fruit and Vegetable Fair (CHINAFVF) in October 2011 it was decided to attend the Beijing FVF in November 2012. The Avocado Export Company (AEC) and Sunfresh joined forces with Australia Fresh to build greater awareness of the Australian avocado industry in the Asian market and gain maximum exposure for Australian avocados as a healthy nutritious fruit.

Venue: China National Convention Center, Beijing

Sponsored by: China Fruit Marketing Association, China Entry- Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association (CIQA), China Cash Forest Association (CCFA)

Supported by: General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ), All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives, State Forestry Administration, P.R. China

Managed by: China Great Wall International Exhibition Co. Ltd.



Opening Ceremony

Daryl Boardman, a representative from the AEC, arranged a meeting with Yong Huang from Trade and Investment Queensland at the Beijing office. Brian and Judy Prosser, whom were representing Sunfresh, met with both Daryl and Yong at the Crown Plaza for further discussions.

This meeting also included Dr Rob Williams, Counsellor (Agriculture - Technical) from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) based at the Australian Embassy in Beijing. This meeting was of great interest to the AEC and Sunfresh as Dr William's had been in China for ten months and was able to share his views of the approval system.

It is the role of the Office of Horticultural Market Access (OHMA) to make the recommendations of priorities. Australian commodities that have applied for market access protocol include Grapes, Cherries, Summer Fruit, Citrus and Avocado. Cherries have been allowed access but only from Tasmania - China wanted cold disinfestations and like avocado this protocol is not suitable for cherries. Mangoes are allowed access under vapor heat treatment. Avocados are currently not on the OHMA radar and could be up to four years away from gaining market access.

After the meeting, Yong took the AEC and Sunfresh to a supermarket generally frequented by expats. There were hard green avocados from Chile on a cold shelf and R2E2 Australian mangoes individually wrapped.



Hass from Chile in Beijing



R2E2 Australian mango in Beijing



Single pre packs at Parkson supermarkets

On the 8 November the AEC and Sunfresh set up an Australian Avocado booth for display in the Australia Fresh exhibition. Other commodities included in the Australia Fresh exhibition included cherries, citrus, lychees, and table grapes. The backdrop for Australian Avocados was created by Avocado Australia (AAL) and printed in China.

It was agreed that the stand would be about Australian Avocados and not specifically exporter focused. Both the AEC and Sunfresh had their company's logos appear at the bottom of the backdrop on the left hand side. Generic information about Australian avocados (translated into Chinese) was handed out to those who appeared to have a genuine interest in avocado. An interpreter was also working in the booth for the days of the exhibition which was extremely beneficial for communication. Unfortunately due to phytosanitary certificates not being completed in Australia the product of frozen guacamole was not allowed into the show. Other fruit that was allowed on the Australian stands were for display purposes only – this was a disappointment for Australian Avocados as having the taste factor would have created more of a buzz and a better understanding of any genuine interest.



Daryl, Sally, Brian and Rebecca (interpreter) on the stand

Mr Bryan Balmer from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in Victoria was at the exhibition assisting the Victorians with introductions to the Chinese. Bryan arranged a bus trip for all exhibitors to the Beijing Wholesale Markets on Saturday morning. It was a typical market with fruit and vegetables from all around the world. The exhibitors did however come across some Australian produce - 2PH mandarins, Gaypak mandarins and mangoes from the Northern Territory. We also saw some brand copying of 2PH displaying "product of New Zealand"

The official dinner for AQSIQ and CIQA hosted by Australia Fresh was held on the night of the 10 November. Only two representatives from each commodity were able to attend. Daryl from the AEC and Judy from Sunfresh attended the dinner representing Australian avocados. In total, there were some 40 guests at the function. The seating was strategic with Australians intermingled with the Chinese delegation. Conversation with the Chinese delegation was difficult as most did not speak English and both Daryl and Judy's Chinese was minimal at best - any conversation was in broken English.

Outcomes

- AEC and Sunfresh joined forces with Australia Fresh to establish greater awareness for the Australian avocado industry to gain maximum exposure for the Australian Avocado stand.
- Through several meetings with Chinese officials and DAFF officials representatives from the AEC and Sunfresh have established that Australian avocados pose no risk for importation into China.
- There is no short term fix to accelerate Australian avocados into China.
- There are opportunities through Daryl Boardman on the board of OHMA to push for avocado to move up the list and gain market access.
- Continued exposure through attending trade shows in China will provide leverage for avocados to move up the list of Australian commodities.
- There are opportunities for potential joint ventures for establishing avocado orchards in the southern region of China.

China FVF 2012 Visit - 8-11 November 2012 continued

Australia Fresh visit to Taiwan



Meeting at Austrade office: pictured above are members from table grapes, apples and pears, summerfruit, cherries and avocados. Martin Walsh (second from left) is the new Senior Trade Commissioner in Taipei.

All members of Australia Fresh flew from Beijing to Taipei on the 12 November to meet major importers for a market briefing, as well as meet with Austrade to gain a picture of the current status and opportunities that we have in Taiwan.

Avocados currently have no market access protocol for Taiwan and due to locally grown varieties as well as imports from other countries there would only be a small window that Australian Avocados would fit into; Taiwan is probably not a market that needs much time spent on at this point for avocados.



John Moore, Summerfruit and Agnes Barnard under the Australia Fresh banners in Taipei produce markets

On the night of the 12 November, Australia Fresh with the help of Austrade arranged a market briefing for around 25 fresh produce importers. Each industry gave a five minute slide show and overview presentation. This was a well organized event and for those industries that are able to export to Taiwan it provided a good opportunity to gain valuable new contacts. The next morning Austrade arranged a market tour and visits to the Welcome Supermarkets distribution centre and to the Dole operations in Taipei. After lunch the Australia Fresh delegation also visited supermarkets such as Cosco.



Agnes Barnard and Martin Walsh at the Market Brief

The AEC and Sunfresh would like to thank Australia Fresh, Horticulture Australia Limited and the Australian Government for their assistance and support in allowing Australian Avocados to attend these trade events and also with the organizing important official meetings. We would like to give special thanks to Agnes Barnard for her dedication to the Australia Fresh program and hope with the support of more industries we can all get valuable assistance to build exports in both existing and new markets.



Avocado representatives with VIP's







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.

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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 Technology 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.

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

News from Around the World

New Zealand avocado industry working together to meet export demand

Recent reports in the Australian media suggest a decline in the import of New Zealand avocados this year, suggesting that this presents an opportunity for domestic growers. This may well be the case for this season, but the situation is only part of the natural fluctuation that is part of avocado cultivation.

Jen Scoular, CEO of New Zealand Avocados, says, "We anticipated much lower volumes this year, as we are in an off year. We export 60% of our crop, but lower volumes of fruit mean less to export than in the previous season."

Despite the shortfall there is still a call for New Zealand avocados from Australian retailers this year.

"Supermarkets plan in advance the volumes they need from their consumers, in order to ensure they meet demand from consumers," Jen says. "This year, knowing there were high volumes in Australia led to expectations of a smaller market share for New Zealand. However, the high Australian volumes forecast did not fully materialise and New Zealand avocados were needed to fulfil demand."

New Zealand has a number of other export markets to fall back on, in addition to Australia. Amongst these are the US and a number of Asian destinations. The success of the product internationally means that there is a need to ensure adequate volumes even in the biennial off year part of the cycle.

"The nature of the avocado tree is bear heavy one year and less the next. It's a challenge shared by avocado producers worldwide. However, our plantings are increasing and we are working together as an industry to help growers increase their yields and lessen the dips in an off year."

For the 2012-2013 season, New Zealand expects to harvest 2.6 million 5.5kg trays, of which 1.6 million will be exported.

Source: www.freshplaza.com

Demand for Hass avocados increased 34% in 2012

by Hass Avocado Board

Irvine, Calif. - The year 2012 was a record breaking year for Hass avocados with the industry topping the 1.5 billion pound consumption mark, 34 percent more than in 2011 when 1.137 billion pounds were consumed.

Demand for Hass avocados in the United States has been increasing steadily over the last several years and consumers continue to add them to their diets, due in large part to the many successful marketing programs

executed by the Hass avocado industry.

"Stronger avocado supply is motivating retailers to promote the fruit more aggressively, generating increased velocity at point of sale," said Emiliano Escobedo, Hass Avocado Board executive director.

HAB's ambitious nutrition research initiatives will also support increased consumption as health professionals and consumers learn about the emerging science behind avocado goodness, according to Escobedo.

Mexico: Avocado producers seeking new international markets

The avocado sector, in Mexico, is not prepared to suspend trade with the United States given the growing competition from national and international producers, which is forcing it to seek new international markets and to strengthen domestic trade, as pointed out by Alejandro García Romero, treasurer of Pro Aguacate.

"Although we have a dominant position in the U.S. avocado market, it is not guaranteed to stay that way, mainly due to the growth of other producers and the possibility that other countries may offer quality and adherence to phytosanitary regulations at more competitive prices," explained García Romero.

The producer also mentioned that when Michoacan started exporting fruit, around 1990, the main destination was France, which currently imports very small volumes, while the U.S. currently buys a large part of the 480 thousand tonnes of avocados that are exported yearly.

"20 years ago, avocados from Michoacan were banned in the U.S., but nowadays they receive 40% of the state's annual production, which is of 200 thousand tonnes."

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"However, other countries also import our products regularly, such as Japan, Canada, part of Europe, Central and South America, and there are also hopes to enter China, although the situation in that country is a little more complicated for reasons of logistics," added Alejandro García.

García stressed the importance of the domestic market for producers, as the largest percentage of the sector's total sales take place in it.

"Producers must promote avocados for domestic consumption, not only to strengthen our brand, but also to prevent lower quality avocados from being sold in the country, helping us keep our position as the largest worldwide producers of the fruit," explained Pro Aguacate's treasurer.

The arrival of foreign fruit is also a reality. "Avocados are produced from Guatemala to Argentina, so only an improvement in quality and strict adherence to all phytosanitary regulations can help us keep our leading position, both nationally and internationally," expressed García Romero.

According to Alejandro García, the increase in production efficiency, the preservation of quality, the national and international distribution of the fruit, as well as the sustainability of avocado plantations are the sector's main challenges.

"Avocado growing is becoming increasingly popular, which will lead to lower prices, but that should not affect growers if we achieve enough quality to cover both exports and the promotion of domestic consumption. Lower costs will also help regulate the number of suppliers, so we do not expect an oversupply," concluded García Romero.

Source: Cambiodemichoacan

2013 outlook:

The Hass avocado market is expected to expand even more in 2013. HAB is projecting annual volume for 2013 to reach 1.65 billion pounds, an increase of 10 percent compared to 2012. An increase in supply and high impact marketing programs in the United States will be the main drivers of this growth.

HAB recently updated its website to make it more user friendly. The new website is mobile friendly and users can sign up for the optional alert system that lets them know when updates have been made — including volume projection and new nutrition research.

The website allows visitors to easily access popular nutrition and retail information by viewing the expanded Nutrition Research and Consumer Research sections, along with an expanded retail data program. Users can also

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 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
 ☐ Technology/innovations
 ☐ Organic farming systems
 ☐ Marketing
 ☐ Water management
 ☐ Supply chain management
 ☐ Field days
 ☐ Key political issues
 ☐ Pest management
 ☐ Other (please specify)
 ☐ Food safety

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:

Avocados Australia
Reply Paid 8005
Woolloongabba Qld 4102

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



News from Around the World continued

sign up for a monthly and quarterly newsletter. Please visit <http://www.hassavocadoboard.com>

Source: <http://www.perishablenews.com>

Spain: getting under fruits' skin with laser labelling

An almost futuristic form of produce labelling is making its rounds on the European market and literally leaving its mark on fruit and vegetables.

Spain's Laser Food broke onto the scene last year and now inscribes personalized labeling directly onto the skin of apples, kiwifruit and persimmons, among other things, in Spain, France, Italy and Poland.

Marketing manager Jaime Sanfelix described the laser process to www.freshfruitportal.com, which he said works with the natural qualities of the fruit.

"The system designed by Laser Food does not burn the skin with a laser. With laser light energy, we liberate the oils in the fruit skin and apply a liquid that interacts with the liberated oils to make the label visible without damaging the commercial life of the product," he said.

At a velocity of up to 64 fruit a second, Sanfelix said the labeling quickly adds an individual passport for each piece of fruit.

"Each fruit carries its own written identification and since it is being marked in a permanent way, traceability of the product is totally guaranteed for the consumer," he explained.

Beyond confidence in origin, Sanfelix cited a number of other benefits to consumers.

"Consumers accept the new labelling perfectly because it provides them a number of benefits. Most of all, it eliminates the inconvenience of traditional paper labels. They don't like traditional labels because of contaminants, they don't contain information and they are annoying when they stick to the fruit," he said.

"They like this new labelling system because it's permanent, it doesn't come off, it has clear identifying product information that doesn't allow copies, each unit is traceable, it's ecological and it allows personalization."

On a larger scale, the laser labels have also received an environmental nod of approval.

"Through a special project, the European Environmental Community selected our company to introduce this technology to the market, considering its superior efficiency from an environmental point of view," he said.

"With our technology, you only need the machine in a warehouse where you fruit is processed for supermarkets.

Everything is done there and you don't need more supplies, travel, applications or storage. The carbon foot print of paper labels is much bigger."

Due to the elimination of extra transportation and material, Sanfelix estimated that the laser process costs about 30% to 40% less than traditional stickers.

UK: Problems with unripened avocados

A blog in the UK newspaper, the Guardian has been published bemoaning the fact that ripe, ready to eat avocados often aren't ripe and are not ready to eat. The author details a number of trips to top supermarkets, selecting ready to eat fruits, only to find them hard and inedible. After making enquiries she finds that many other UK consumers find the same. Worryingly, it is pointed out that the "ripe" produce often retails for higher prices, on the assumption that it has been ripened and is more convenient for the consumer.








Examples of other types of fruit are also given, including pears, mangoes and nectarines. Currently there is no legislation that covers such marketing. "There is no legislation that relates solely to this situation," says David Pickering, food lead officer of the Trading Standards Institute. "The Food Safety Act section 15 relating to misleading descriptions will apply, but we would need to

prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the description is misleading." If it doesn't say "guaranteed" on the packet, there's not a lot you can do.

Avocados are picked when firm and transported to the UK, kept in climate-controlled temperatures en route. "Avocados are ripened by the suppliers here in the UK," explains an industry insider. "The avocados are in boxes on pallets and warm air gets blown into the spaces between them, evenly warming the fruit and allowing them to ripen quicker." Tesco uses a "bespoke avocado texture analyser" according to a spokesperson, which uses "acoustic testing" to check for ripeness. The suppliers will also test a batch using a penetrometer, and Tesco tests again at its depot. Asda also uses "infra-red to test internal quality" while Sainsbury's uses mature avocados with high oil content and says its Ripe & Ready avocados are "fully ripened in specialist ripening rooms". Waitrose "accurately forecasts future demand" in its battle to get its Perfectly Ripe avos on the shelves. Meanwhile Asda has introduced new traffic-light packaging for its avocados: green for ripe, orange for "nearly ripe" and pink for "requires a little more time". "The days of avocado guess work will soon be a distant memory!" says Asda's avocado buyer, Damien Gray.

Source: guardian.co.uk

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To be kept up to date with registration and programme details please email your contact information to **NZAAGC@nzavocado.co.nz**



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