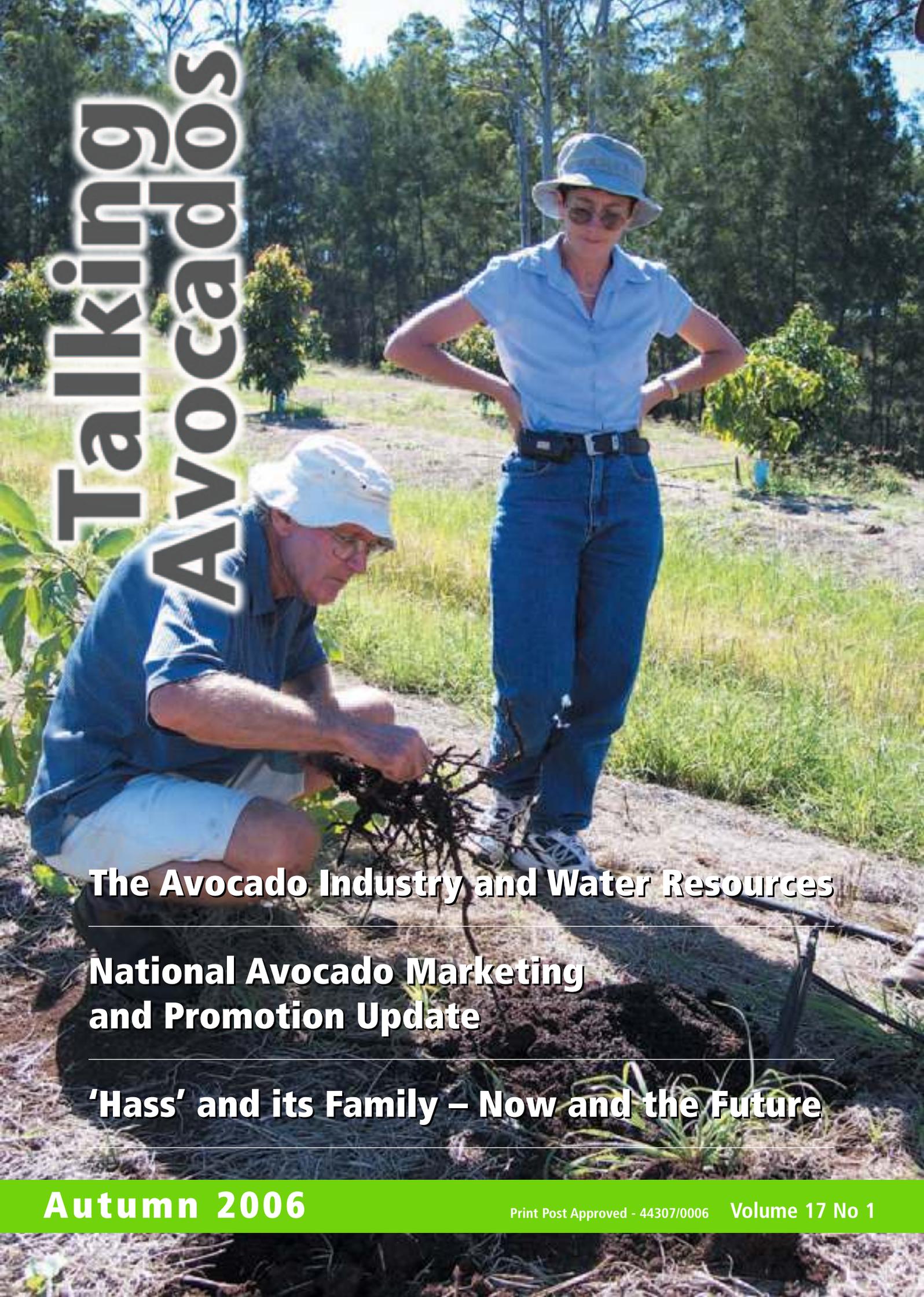


# Talking Avocados



**The Avocado Industry and Water Resources**

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**National Avocado Marketing  
and Promotion Update**

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**'Hass' and its Family – Now and the Future**

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**Autumn 2006**

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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 photo:**  
**Ken Pegg and Danielle Le Lagadec assessing avocado roots for disease.**

## Chairman's Perspective

I am sure the thoughts of all growers have been with those affected by Cyclone Larry in North Queensland. Although much of the media focus has been on the coastal region and the banana and sugar industries, the avocado industry on the Atherton Tableland has suffered severe damage and it will take many years for the orchards to return to full production. The Governments are making the right noises about assisting all those affected in their recovery. However, I expect that the reality will be that most will be forced to fund their own recovery with the help of their "friendly" banks. Once the cleanup has been completed then ongoing employment of most farm workers will be a real issue for the growers and the region. This certainly appears to be a major concern for Government and may provide an opportunity for some creative solutions which will benefit the growers, the regional communities and the Government.



As an optimist I hope that from this disaster there may come a system which would be available to assist all who in the future are severely affected by a natural disaster, be it flood, fire, hail, drought or frost. The general community has no appreciation that insurance is not available for these risks and it is only when a large area is severely affected that the media becomes involved and politicians are forced to offer some assistance.

### Market Outlook

The crop estimate which was prepared prior to Cyclone Larry indicates that we have a significantly larger crop to move through the system this year than in any other previous year. Returns early in the season have been ordinary with the large volumes of New Zealand fruit meaning that the new season fruit was arriving on a well supplied market. The four weeks after "Larry" will be a difficult period with logistical difficulties for the fruit that remains in North Queensland, confusion at consumer level with prices and potential quality problems with fruit that has been held in the system too long. The last thing the industry needs now is "opportunistic" growers in other regions going out and picking immature fruit to take advantage of a perceived shortage of fruit.

### Pick to Order

It has been suggested to me that a concept the industry should adopt is "Pick to Order". We have an unusual product which can be stored on the tree. Rather than going out and picking our avocados when it suits us and consigning them to market (or our packing shed) then faxing our consignment note off to tell them they are coming, we all need to be communicating with our market to determine a harvest strategy. Regardless of whether your market is Woolworths, a wholesaler in Melbourne or your local packhouse you need to be seeking their advice before starting to harvest, as they will have a better understanding of

market conditions and opportunities than you or I will have from talking to our neighbour over the fence. Despite the improvements in technology fruit quality is still much better if the fruit is stored on the tree rather than in a coolroom for 4-6 weeks. Better communication and a "Pick to Order" approach should alleviate some of the problems the industry has had in the past with large volumes of fruit arriving in the marketplace unexpectedly.

The proposed levy increases will not come into effect till later in the year so all promotional activity this season will be based on the current levy rate. Therefore, I strongly encourage all growers to adopt a "professional" approach to their harvest and marketing so that we give the "system" the best opportunity to move the large crop at acceptable prices. We do not need, for example, a grower in my area picking Hass in March or growers on the Sunshine Coast picking in March to fill the "void" left by Cyclone Larry. These are examples of the unprofessional behaviour of which I am aware.

*Rod Dalton*

Rod Dalton  
AAL Chairman  
and Director for the South Queensland Growing Area.



## WARNING

Avocados Australia has for a number of years paid a large amount of money for the industry's right to use the **Heart Foundation "Heart Tick"** on avocados.

***If you are using a "Heart Tick" logo from anyone other than the label companies "Label Press" or "Compass Labels" you are acting illegally.*** No other label printers are able to legally print the "Heart Tick" for use on avocados.

Avocados Australia is undertaking a clean up of the "Heart Tick" printing. We will lose access to the "Heart Tick" logo if it is used illegally.

Avocados Australia, AUF and the Heart Foundation will enforce their Registered Trademark rights to the fullest extent.

If you have non-genuine labels do not use them. If you know of label companies offering to print non-genuine **"Heart Tick"** labels for you please let us know on **1300 303 971**, so we can all help keep this valuable tool.

***All growers could lose access to the "Heart Tick" logo if you don't act now.***



CERT TM

## Industry Matters

### New Advertising Agency for Australian Avocados

Avocados Australia and HAL recently met in Brisbane to select a new agency for the national avocado promotion account. The four agencies all performed well with De Pasquale standing out amongst very tough competition. We look forward to a productive and successful program into the future.



### Infocado expands to North Queensland, Bundaberg and Sunshine Coast and into Crop Forecasting

The last three months has seen Infocado workshops and meetings held in North Queensland, Bundaberg and the Sunshine Coast. Growers from these areas were given the opportunity to have hands on training of Infocado. Antony Allen, Avocados Australia CEO and Jenny Margetts, Infocado Project Officer were pleased with the number of businesses that attended the meetings and workshops.

Now Infocado has two modules. The dispatch module where data on actual volume throughput, based on dispatch records, is entered weekly by individual businesses across Australia. And a new forecasting module. This module allows the collection of data on expected dispatches for the next four one-week periods.

In both modules the data from individual businesses is aggregated with data from other participating businesses dispatching product or forecasting dispatches in any given week and made available to participating businesses.

### New Zealand Contributions

The New Zealand Chair, Hugh Moore, in the New Zealand industry publication, *Avoscene*, has outlined to New Zealand avocado growers the potential of contributing to the “generic” marketing and promotion program in Australia. “AAL [Avocados Australia] members presented a supermarket survey, with a request to meet our share to grow the market during our time slot” wrote Hugh Moore. “If the Australians put an import levy in place, similar to the HAB levy in the USA, this would mean additional levies over and above what growers pay at present” he wrote. The fifth joint Australian and New Zealand Board meeting is planned for the second half of 2006. We look forward to discussing with the Board of the New Zealand Avocado Growers Association this very important issue and many more of benefit to our growers.

### Avocados Australia Meets with New Parliamentary Secretary

Chair, Rod Dalton and CEO, Antony Allen met with The Hon Sussan Ley MP Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in early March in Canberra. Discussions were held on levies, exports and levies on imported avocados for promotion. Mrs

*Written edited and compiled by  
Antony Allen CEO of Avocados Australia*

Ley clearly understood the horticulture sector and we look forward to working with her over the coming years.

The Hon Sussan Ley MP was sworn in as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on 27 January 2006 replacing Senator Richard Colbeck. Senator Colbeck has moved to the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration. Mrs Ley is the member for Farrer, New South Wales representing the Liberal party. She was previously the Parliamentary Secretary for Children and Youth Affairs.

### Avocados Australia Board Meetings

The Board of Avocados Australia met three times during January, February and March. The meetings were essential for development of the 2006-2007 avocado programs.



### Meeting with Plant Health Australia

Whilst in Canberra in March, Avocados Australia also met with the new PHA CEO, Lindy Hyam. A number of issues were discussed with regard to Avocados Australia’s membership of PHA and the Avocado Industry BioSecurity Plan that is currently underway. The second meeting of the Avocado Industry BioSecurity Group will take place in early April. This group is developing a Draft BioSecurity Plan to help protect the Australian avocado industry from pest and disease incursions.

### Avocados Australia CEO Attends NMG workshop

In March, Plant Health Australia conducted a training workshop for industry delegates to the National Management Group (NMG). The aim of the workshop was to advise delegates on the responsibilities and related issues under the Deed and PLANTPLAN. NMG delegate training is a requirement for industry signatories to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed and an essential part of industry fulfilling designated roles under PLANTPLAN.

### Plant Health Australia Industry Forum

Also in March, Plant Health Australia (PHA) held the inaugural PHA Industry Forum for industry member representatives. The forum

discussed topics chosen specifically by industry members and relevant to the National Plant Health System. Some of these included industry resources in the event of an incursion, capability within the industry scientific and field staff industry training, capacity to meet WTO requirements and Deed signatories where there are multiple small industries. The Annual Operating Plan (AOP) workshop discussed the context for development of the AOP 2006 - 2007 and provided an overview of each PHA program including past benefits delivered for members and directions for 2006 - 2007. *Source: PHA*

## Market Access - Exports and Imports

Avocados Australia continues to work towards market access to the US. The market access application for the US was submitted to BioSecurity Australia in 2001. Whilst in Canberra in March, Rod Dalton - Chair and Antony Allen - CEO, met with BioSecurity Australia to receive an update on the access progression. We are able to report the process continues, although no set date for achieving access has been agreed. Applications for avocados current with BioSecurity Australia as at 2 March 2006:

- Export of Avocados to: USA submitted in 2001
- Import of Avocados from: Mexico received in 2000

## Avocados to US Reprioritisation to "HIGH" Priority by HMAC

After a request by Avocados Australia the "Horticultural Market Access Committee" (HMAC) meeting on 14 March undertook a reclassification of avocados into the US. Avocados were reclassified upwards to a 'high' priority.

The avocado application is currently with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awaiting their assessment of "pest risk". The question of R&D requirements for avocados will not be entirely clear until the USDA undertakes its "Product Risk Assessment" (PRA) and identifies the pests and diseases for which treatment is required. As an export market the US continues to be the top priority for avocado market access.

## Welcome Danielle Le Lagadec to the Australian Avocado Industry

Dr Danielle Le Lagadec (front cover) has accepted a senior researcher position with QDPI&F based at the Bundaberg research station. Her experience is wide and varied and she brings an international depth to the avocado industry that we are fortunate to have.



Danielle was born in Mauritius, grew up and was educated in Gauteng (Transvaal) South Africa, completing a science degree at the University of Pretoria in 1984, majoring in botany and entomology. Continuing with post-graduate studies in entomology and obtained a PHD in 1997. She lectured at the Medical University of Southern Africa for 9 years. She then moved to the rural, subtropical region of Lowveld (Limpopo Province, South Africa) in 1997, where Danielle worked as a mango researcher for Westfalia Technological Services (WTS) for one year before being promoted to head of mango research for WTS.

Westfalia are regarded as market leaders in subtropical crop production, marketing and technology in South Africa. They are the largest producer, processors and exporter of avocados and mangoes in South Africa and have more recently become involved in citrus production. Research undertaken by WTS was export focused and very much production based. Trials focused on improving both quality and quality of production, penetrating new markets and differentiating the company as a market leader.

Danielle was deeply involved in developing IPM programmes for mangoes, mango cultivar development, developing organic production methods and addressing general horticultural and entomological issues. The research was undertaken in Westfalia's commercial orchards using standard farm equipment and carried through to the packing shed and shipment simulations.

## Australian Crop Estimates for 2006-2007

The largest Australian avocado crop has been estimated for the 2006-2007 financial year. Australia is estimated to produce 41,525 tonnes. The table below indicates how the crop is predicted to be distributed. This is a preliminary estimate and is reviewed on a 3 month basis.

Region	Trays 2004/2005	Trays 2005/2006	Trays 2006/2007 Estimated
Atherton	950,000	825,000*	1,100,000
Bundaberg	1,500,000	1,700,000	2,000,000
Sunshine Coast	1,000,000	800,000	850,000
West Morton	600,000	300,000	850,000
Mt Tamborine	200,000	150,000	150,000
NSW (total)	400,000	700,000	
		North NSW	250,000
		Central NSW	550,000
Sunrayasia	400,000	125,000	400,000
Riverland	400,000	125,000	400,000
Wst Australia	700,000	500,000	1,000,000
<b>Total Trays</b>	<b>6,150,000</b>	<b>5,225,000</b>	<b>7,550,000</b>
<b>Total Tonnes</b>	<b>33,825</b>	<b>28,738</b>	<b>41,525</b>
*will be revised due to Cyclone Larry			

## New health claim standards

Avocados Australia has discussed with Food Standards Australia New Zealand worrying media reports that suggested certain fruits will be disadvantaged under proposed new health claim standards. FSANZ has indicated that it is not looking to disadvantage fruit and vegetables in making health claims and is looking to work constructively with industry to find a resolution to the issue. A Fact Sheet clarifying the current FSANZ proposal has been prepared and can be found on the FSANZ website. *New Health: www.foodstandards.gov.au*

### Industry Matters continued

#### Agricultural Census: coming to Australian farms in 2006

In June 2006, 190,000 businesses will take part in the 2005-06 Agricultural Census. The Agricultural Census is Australia's biggest collection of agricultural statistics. It is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) every five years and collects production data from primary producers around the country.

Gemma Van Halderen, Head of the Agricultural Program at the ABS, says it is beneficial for farmers from all industries to take part in the Agricultural Census because the data provides important information about agricultural production across Australia.

"We strongly encourage people to complete their Census forms because the information they provide can assist people such as policy makers and industry bodies to make informed decisions about the agricultural sector that could affect them and their industry," said Ms Van Halderen.

"The data from the Agricultural Census helps Australia understand changes that have occurred in the sector to measure the contribution that agriculture makes to the economy," said Ms Van Halderen.

The Agricultural Census forms are sent through the mail. Forms will arrive by the end of June. Farmers are asked to complete the forms and return them within two weeks. Assistance will be available through a help line that will be printed on the form.

#### Elevating Work Platforms issues

A recent project sought and received funds from various industries that use elevating work platforms (EWPs; hydraulic ladders with a lift greater than two metres, used in construction, factories and tree fruit production). There are over 8,000 of these units used in tree fruit crops around Australia for tree training, pruning, thinning and harvest. Industries involved were apples and pears, avocados, canning fruit, cherries, citrus, dried tree fruit, mangoes and summerfruit.

The Australian standard for the maintenance and safe use of EWPs was reviewed in late 2005. There were a number of inclusions in the draft standard that would have been expensive for growers to comply with and could in fact introduce an additional occupational safety hazard. Through HG05031, a consulting engineer developed and presented a submission to the appropriate Standards Australia committee. This submission argued for special consideration of the horticultural workplace and was successful. A good example of the changes sought was that instead of sending machines to capital cities for an x-ray of structural welds after 10 years operation, a dye penetrant test that can be conducted by suitably trained regional engineering businesses will now be accepted. This will save industry many millions of dollars. Another major change relates to the use of safety harnesses by operators.

A proposal to extend this project to encompass the review of design aspects of EWPs is underway. This review has identified a number of issues of concern to industry.

#### Horticulture for Tomorrow Project Update

##### NRM strategy feedback

The timeframe has closed for industry members to provide feedback on a draft five-year strategy for natural resources management in the Australian horticulture sector. Thank you to all who provided comments on the draft in 2005.

The strategy has been developed by the Horticulture Natural Resource Management (NRM) Initiative and will be finalised this year. It aims to create a whole-of-industry platform to help horticulture cut through the confusion and make sure adequate resources are available for growers to tackle environmental issues.

The strategy will operate at the national level, complementing other programs and projects focusing on catchment and farm-level approaches. Creating it has involved extensive consultation with industry and leading NRM proponents, as well as individual growers.

Draft copies are available on the website.

Further information about the *Horticulture for Tomorrow* program is available on - [www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au](http://www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au)

For technical queries relating to the Horticulture NRM Initiative contact Peter Day on (08) 8278-9288 or [prday@bigpond.com](mailto:prday@bigpond.com)



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**Phone 07 5446 7069**  
**Fax 07 5472 7271**  
**[sunfresh.fruit@bigpond.com](mailto:sunfresh.fruit@bigpond.com)**

## APVMA review of endosulfan

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) recently completed a review of endosulfan, including all registered uses, withholding periods and application. New forms and information, essential for users of endosulfan are now available on its web site [www.apvma.gov.au/cbemrev/endosulfan.shtml](http://www.apvma.gov.au/cbemrev/endosulfan.shtml). Some of the new changes are that endosulfan MUST NOT be used on leafy vegetables, berry fruits, bananas, bulb vegetables, sweet corn or some cole vegetables, and a number of withholding periods have been increased.

For further information, contact Kathleen Allan Public Relations Officer, Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines, Authority PO Box E240 Kingston ACT 2604 Phone. 02 6272 3794 Fax. 02 6272 5811 [Kathleen.Allan@apvma.gov.au](mailto:Kathleen.Allan@apvma.gov.au) Source: APVMA

## New guide launched to country-of-origin (CoOL) food labelling

A new user guide on country-of-origin labelling of food would help the industry and enforcement authorities to meet the new standard, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Christopher Pyne, said in Adelaide today.

He was launching Country of Origin Labelling of Food, which has been developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

"This new user guide has been designed by FSANZ to help food retailers and businesses, especially small businesses like fruit and veggie shops and butchers, to understand the new country-of-origin labelling standard," Mr Pyne said. "From 8 June - which is only three months away - all unpackaged fresh and processed fruit, vegetables, nuts and seafood must say which country they come from, including Australia. "From December this year unpackaged fresh and processed pork products must also be labelled with their country of origin, and the changes to packaged foods must be completed by December 2007.

"The new country-of-origin labelling standard has been endorsed by the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council, which I chair.

"I urge all state and territory agencies responsible for food to ensure that their local food businesses and retailers are aware of these new requirements, and to fully enforce the Food Standards Code, including this new standard."

When the ministerial council agreed to the new standard in October 2005, the Australian Government directed FSANZ to assess the merit of extending country-of-origin labelling to two or less fruit or vegetable whole-food components packaged together, including where other incidental ingredients were included.

FSANZ was seeking public comment on the feasibility of doing this before reporting to the Australian Government later this month, Mr Pyne said.

"FSANZ is also preparing information to help consumers to understand the new country-of-origin labelling when it starts to come into force in June," he said.

The new Country of Origin Labelling of Food Guide to Standard is

available on the FSANZ website at: [www.foodstandards.gov.au/\\_srcfiles/CoOL\\_1st%20Edn-PRINT\\_with\\_cover.pdf](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/_srcfiles/CoOL_1st%20Edn-PRINT_with_cover.pdf)

## Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group Report released

The Agriculture and Food Policy Reference Group released its report, *Creating Our Future*, in March in Canberra. HAL and HAC coordinated the development of a horticulture submission which was submitted to the reference group in October 2005. The full report can be viewed at [www.agfoodgroup.gov.au/next\\_generation.html](http://www.agfoodgroup.gov.au/next_generation.html)

## Australian Avocados at Biggest Ever Fruit Logistica

Fruit Logistica concluded in Berlin (Germany) with a record 1650 exhibitors from 64 countries and over 30,000 visitors braving the minus degree temperatures to reach the Messe Berlin fair grounds. The Australia stand managed by HAL involved some 7 exporters who were very pleased with the business generated. Sales of Australian Fruit, Vegetables and Nuts to Europe have almost doubled from \$53m to \$101m in the last 4 years.

Source: HAL

## Study Assesses Australians' Produce Consumption

More than half of all adult Australians could be at risk of heart disease and cancer because they're not eating enough fruit and vegetables, a new report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows. It found more than half the population was not getting the recommended daily serving of fruit and vegetables. The National Health and Medical Research Council suggests at least five servings of vegetables and legumes a day and two servings of fruit, yet the latest figures from the AIHW show most Australians are not meeting that target, with just one in three adults eating the suggested amount of vegetables and only one in two eating the recommended level of fruit in 2001. Overall, 27% of men and 34% of women usually had at least four serves of vegetables a day.

## Australian and New Zealand Horticulture on show at Seoul Exhibition, 13 - 18 August 2006

HAL is assisting the Horticultural Science societies with their joint bid to host the 2014 International Horticulture Congress (IHC) in Brisbane. The bid will be considered just prior to the 2006 IHC in Seoul. The bid committee has booked a stand at the associated exhibition, in order to promote Brisbane (and Queensland) as the hub of horticultural diversity in the region, and in particular at promoting delegate attendance in 2014. The macadamia industry are also interested in taking part to supplement the display by providing tastings of macadamias. Other Australasian horticultural products also have an opportunity to take part. As this event seems to be more focused on the general public, HAL does not envisage major direct trade opportunities, compared with established trade shows. Any industry or company that is interested

### Industry Matters continued

should contact Russ Stephenson at [russ.stephenson@dpi.qld.gov.au](mailto:russ.stephenson@dpi.qld.gov.au). For more information see the website. [www.ihc2006.org](http://www.ihc2006.org) Source: HAL

### Irradiation regulation remains inconsistent worldwide

Regulation of the use of irradiation in the food sector is inconsistent around the world and within the EU's borders, according to a legislative overview of the technology, published recently.

The process exposes foods to ionizing radiation that kills insects, moulds and bacterium. The technology, which can kill up to 99 per cent of pathogens, is seen by industry as a means of ensuring food safety. However public concerns over the health effects of the technology has meant global food companies have had to deal with a confusing thicket of legislation and restrictions when making and marketing their products. Source: HAL

### Go for 2&5 workshop

A workshop was held in Brisbane last week to discuss the Queensland Government's support for the national Go for 2 & 5 campaign. The program, which originated in Western Australia, recommends that people eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables every day. The Queensland Government has committed \$4.4 million to the campaign over the next 5 years. The aim of the campaign is to increase the daily consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by one serve. Currently in Queensland, only 57% of people eat 2 or more serves of fruit per day and only 7% of people eat 5 or more serves of vegetables. Source: *Old Health*

### Endosulfan in Europe

The European Commission have recently published the Commission Decision publicising the fact that endosulfan has not been placed on Annex I, that is, endosulfan will no longer be registered for use in the EU. As a result authorisations for all uses in the EU (other than tomato, potato, peppers, hazelnut, pears & strawberry) are to be withdrawn by June 2 2006. For tomato, potato, peppers, hazelnut, pears and strawberry the uses are to be withdrawn by June 30 2007. The Commission Decision can be found at [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l\\_317/l\\_31720051203en00250028.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_317/l_31720051203en00250028.pdf)

It has been left to individual EU states to determine what periods of grace will be granted to cover treated produce in the supply chain, however the decision does indicate that it should be as short as possible. Source: AKC Consulting

### China FTA current negotiations

HAL Managing Director John Webster had the opportunity on 28 February while the Chinese negotiators were in Canberra for the latest round of negotiations for the Australia China FTA to meet and discuss the interests of horticulture. The round was the first of the substantive stage of negotiations, as discussions have progressed beyond last year's information exchange.

### Considerations for a possible Australia Mexico FTA

DFAT has advised interest in public submissions and comments on issues relevant to Australia-Mexico economic relations, including the possibility of an Australia-Mexico FTA at some stage in the future. While horticultural trade between Australia and Mexico is currently minimal.

### New Industries Development Program

The New Industries Development Program (NIDP) provides assistance to agribusiness through grant funding and dissemination of lessons learnt. Funding available includes:

- Pilot Commercialisation Projects. Grants range from \$35,000 to \$120,000 on a matching dollar basis. Applications close in April and September each year; and
- In-Market Experience Scholarships of \$12,500. These close in July each year.

For more information visit [www.daff.gov.au/agribiz](http://www.daff.gov.au/agribiz) or phone NIDP on 1300 88 45 88. Source: HAL

### Review into Science and Innovation

The Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, has announced a major review into science and innovation to be conducted by the Productivity Commission. The review will examine the impact of the government's science funding on national productivity, examine impediments to innovation in Australia, and also assess the broader social and environmental impacts of public support for science and innovation. Details of the review can be found at [www.treasurer.gov.au/tsr/content/pressreleases/2006/010.asp](http://www.treasurer.gov.au/tsr/content/pressreleases/2006/010.asp)

### Cyclone Larry Update



*Jim Kochi, AAL Director and General Peter Cosgrove survey some of the damage left by Cyclone Larry*

*Other photos following are a selection of images taken by Anthony Allen, AAL's CEO on this recent trip in support of members in the devastated area*

## Industry Matters continued

## Cyclone Larry Update

### North Queensland Growers Meet in Mareeba

Over 90 avocado growers from the Atherton Tablelands met on Tuesday 28 March to discuss numerous topics relating to Cyclone Larry. QDPI and North Queensland Avocados Australia Director, Jim Kochi organised the meeting. The initial Government support packages were explained and discussed by Irene Kernot, technical issues and questions were answered by Simon Newett (Nambour) and Terry Campbell (Bundaberg) and the local Mareeba QDPI staff. Jim Kochi and Antony Allen outlined the behind the scenes and media work that Avocados Australia has been undertaking on behalf of the Atherton growers.

Simon and Terry spent last week visiting growers and helping with various growing and harvesting issues that has arisen from the cyclone.



Growers agreed that the average loss of fruit from the cyclone across the tableland was 80% to 90%. Leaving only 10% to 20% of first grade marketable fruit as the average for the region. Tree damage is yet to be fully collected and collated.

### Avocados Australia's John Leonardi in NQ

John Leonardi was based in NQ to help follow up with the work Simon Newett and Terry Campbell started after Cyclone Larry. He assisted growers with tree damage and tree management issues.

### Emergency Permit for Post Harvest Chlorine use on Avocados (NQ only)

Please find the permit on our website [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) for use in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry. QDPI and Avocados Australia have worked to put this emergency permit in place. QDPI staff have worked quickly to establish a protocol and to get the Permit through the APVMA. Avocados Australia would like to thank them all for their efforts in getting this completed.

Growers in North Queensland with working fax machines would have received a copy on Monday afternoon. Please call if you need assistance, phone 07 3391 2344.

### Cyclone Relief Packages

Information on relief packages is becoming available, but some of the initial measures are reprinted below. More information is on the Australian Government Assistance website [www.disasterassist.gov.au/tropical\\_cyclone\\_larry/](http://www.disasterassist.gov.au/tropical_cyclone_larry/)



### One-off income Support Programme

For affected farmers and small businesses, the Australian Government will provide a one-off income support programme equivalent to the Newstart Allowance for six months.

### Small Business Assistance Fund

In addition to ex-gratia payments to individuals, existing small and home-based businesses, including farmers and tourism operators, adversely affected by the cyclone will be eligible for one-off, tax-free grants for business assistance of \$10,000.

### Concessional Loans

Farmers and small businesses will also have access to concessional loans to re-establish their enterprises. Loans of up to \$200,000 under the Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements will be available for nine years with repayments deferred for up to two years. The first 25 per cent of any loan will be provided as a grant.

### Queensland Government assistance

People with enquiries on how to access relief packages can contact the QDPI&F call centre in the first instance on 13 25 23 during office hours. For further information, also go to the Premiers website: [www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/news/initiatives/cyclonelarry/index.shtml](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/news/initiatives/cyclonelarry/index.shtml)



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# New Zealand and Australian Avocado Growers' Conference Papers CD

**Tauranga, New Zealand, September 2005**

Every four years the Australian and New Zealand avocado industries combine to hold a joint conference. The 2005 venue for the joint Conference was Tauranga, New Zealand the heart of New Zealand's avocado production.

An exciting line up of international and national speakers presented the latest knowledge and understanding of important issues relevant to successful avocado production.

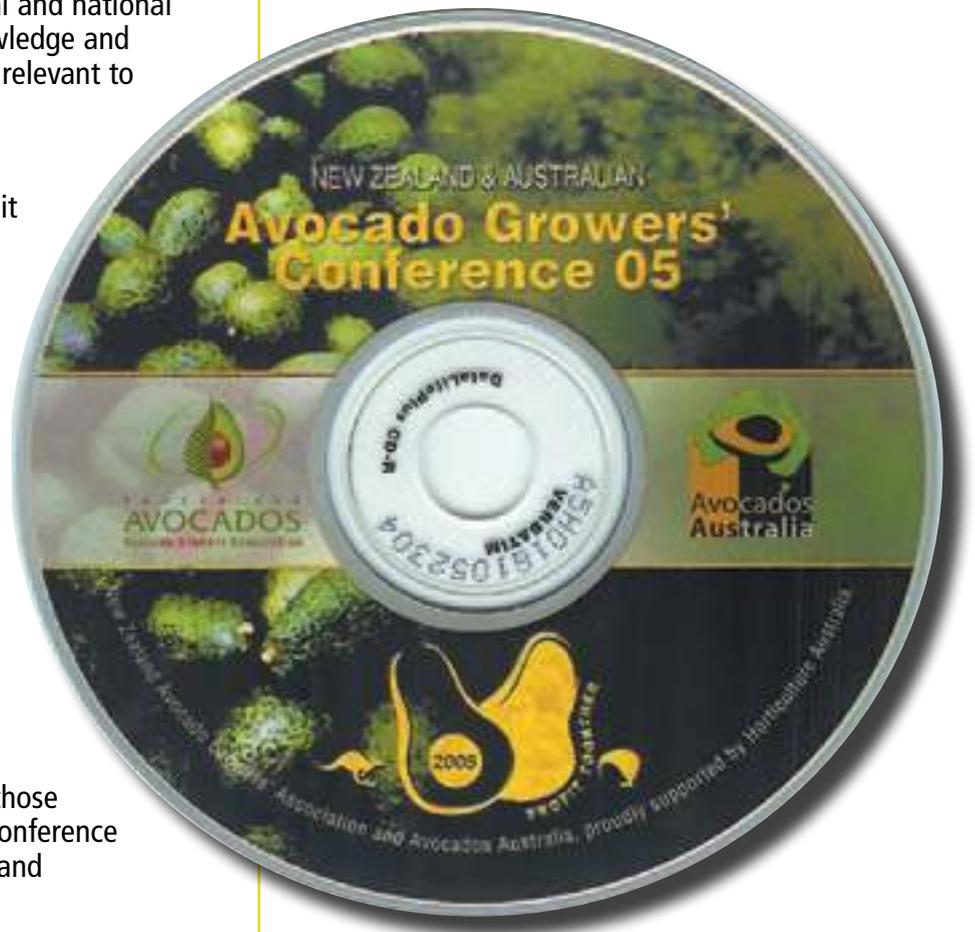
Topics covered included:

- Flowering and fruit set: yield, fruit size and production
- New germplasm and global breeding programmes
- Pest and disease control strategies
- Integrated production systems and the impact on market access
- Postharvest quality and outturn
- Competing in a global world
- Building demand: promotions, marketing, customer trends and expectations

Over 480 delegates attended. For those that were not able to attend the Conference you can now purchase the papers and presentations on CD.

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Non Members: \$330 incl GST

To purchase please call Avocados Australia on 07 3391 2344 or download an order form on [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au)



# Australian Roundup

## Central New South Wales Report

By *Chris Nelson, AAL Director*  
for the Central New South Wales Growing Area



The start of the year has been good with frequent rains and favourable conditions, especially for the weeds! Most crops are still looking good to the extent that Central New South Wales production looks to be at least as good as last season. Harvest has already started for the few remaining fuerte growers. I would urge all grower/packers and packhouses to support Avocados Australia and the continuing rollout of the Infocado project with the help of Jenny Margetts. Ultimately this package will be a vital tool in maintaining grower returns into the future.

Our New South Wales Farmers North Coast Avocado Growers Branch held its Annual General Meeting on 25 March at Nick and Margo Schenken's property in the Nambucca valley. Most executive positions remain the same; however, Rose Too from Coffs Harbour was elected as the incoming Assistant Secretary. We enjoyed the privilege of meeting with Graeme Anderson and Harold Taylor, who travelled south to share their industry knowledge with us. The group would like to extend their sympathy to all the cyclone affected growers in North Queensland, and best wishes for the difficult times ahead of them. As fellow farmers we all dread the threat of storm damage and watch the news with considerable empathy.

All New South Wales growers should be aware the State Government is rolling out the Macro Water Sharing Plans, with the community consultation process completed in most areas of the northern rivers. Growers should contact the Department of Natural Resources or the Catchment Management Authority for details.

The new AgStart scheme for young farmers has been announced by the Rural Assistance Authority. The scheme aims to provide career development and guidance to young people entering agriculture and its support industries in New South Wales through grants, scholarships, mentoring, and assistance with farm finance. More information is available on this website [www.raa.nsw.gov.au/reader/agstart](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/reader/agstart).

## Central Queensland Report

By *Lachlan Donovan and Ron Simpson, AAL Directors*  
for the Central Queensland Growing Area



Bundaberg/Childers is now full on harvesting what is looking like a big crop, which it seems, is no different to every other region in Australia. We have had good falls of rain and there has been plenty of irrigation water available. The trees and the fruit are both looking great.

The Shepard crop is significantly up on last year and with the unfortunate disaster that has occurred in North Queensland with Tropical Cyclone Larry, the pressure is on to push the Shepard crop through simply to keep supply up and keep the consumers eating avocados. It's bad enough to have too much fruit,

but not being able to supply fruit undoes all the good work of growing consumption. This short period of short supply (which will probably be well and truly over by the time you read this) will quickly change when the other regions all release their significant quantities of fruit,

This year, even with North Queensland's reduced crop, we are looking at producing 2 million more trays than last year. The saving grace is that New Zealand has a very light crop and this will be supplied more by WA and the Tri-states area. The real tough time when just about every region will be in is that June/July/August period, the winter. This will mean a real challenge to all of us including our Marketing and PR agency De Pasquale to be able to promote our product and keep the momentum going which has been happening over the last few years. We also need to work on our forecasting and communications to know what's going on and how much fruit there is. We need to iron out those peaks and troughs. Let's hope we all can support Infocado and develop this into an accurate forecasting tool which we can all make real decisions on.

## North New South Wales Report

By *Peter Molenaar, AAL Director*  
for the North New South Wales Growing Area



The Northern Rivers has in general had favourable weather over the summer months, even though the heat and the humidity started in December and continued through until early

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March. This is a little earlier than usual but the outcome was that we received more rain. Certainly, a marked improvement over the last few seasons, even though January was a little dry.

Fruit set was heavier than in previous seasons and it would appear the crop in general has hung on and is up on last year. The coastal strip crop is up a little while the inland areas of Green Pigeon and Pretty Gully are up markedly. Let's hope that the weather is favourable until harvest.

The prediction is that there will be a large crop throughout the season so I urge growers to take care and ensure that they market good sound fruit and process unsuitable fruit. Let's market a good product to ensure repeat sales.

I would like to conclude by letting our North Queensland growers know that we are thinking of them during their period of extreme hardship and wish them favourable seasons to enable a speedy recovery.

### Tri-State Report

By Colin Fechner,  
AAL Director for the Tri-State Growing Area



The study tour to look at Western Australian avocado areas is all set with 23 growers going. It took a few phone calls to get enough people to make the commitment. It is always a great way of increasing our knowledge of not only growing but also how we fit in with the other avocado producing areas in the same time slot. We are leaving Adelaide on 30 April 2006 and return 5 May 2006.

Most growers are expecting a large crop this season. We had a few very hot days (46°C – 47°C with wind) at the end of January, a week later the ground under the trees was green with avocados. Growers found that where the trees were healthy and the water was kept up to them, the trees have still got a heavy crop. Some varieties were not affected. Over all we expect to have an above average crop.

Our AGM is on Wednesday 24 May 2006, at the Berri Hotel starting at 2 pm. There will be the usual reports including information on the Western Australian study tour.

### Western Australia Report

By Jennie Franceschi,  
AAL Director for the Western Australia Growing Area



Growers have just finished harvest for this season with returns better than expected with the large New Zealand crop. November was a fairly dismal month with regards to pricing, however Christmas prices did lift significantly and continued price throughout the rest of our season, lifting the overall average.

We ran a promotional program which was conducted by Fresh Finesse. This included

- Schools promotions and recipe competitions.
- Media releases. This included print, internet and radio media
- Merchandising with retail stores including Dewsons, Supa Valu and Farmer Jacks plus a number of specialist fruit shops.

- Shopping centre promotions – Centro Victoria Park and Centro Mandurah
- Be active – "Have a go day". Small promotion aimed at the elderly
- In store demonstrations at 20 stores. Fresh Finesse report an average increase in sales of 80%.
- Retailer of the year. Stores assessed on their avocado displays in October and March and a prize for the best store.
- Fruit for Chef training at Joondalup TAFE. Ripened fruit was delivered to the campus to allow trainee chefs to become more familiar with avocados. Prizes were awarded to the two best recipes.

Overall we have been happy with the results of our promotional program and are looking to increase our budget due to the much larger crop expected in the coming season. With summer and fruit drop over it still looks like the West is going to have a bumper crop. Many of the younger trees in the South West are now coming online and we expect our production to increase significantly each year for a number of years to come.

AGAWA recently held their AGM with Alan Blight returning to the Chair and Wayne Franceschi continuing on as the Vice Chair. I would like to acknowledge Alan and Wayne's contribution to the industry in Western Australia. They have both represented Western Australia on the Avocados Australia for many years and have been instrumental in unifying the Western Australia industry. Thank you Alan and Wayne for all your years of hard work.

### North Queensland Report

By Jim Kochi, AAL Director  
for the North Queensland Growing Area



#### Where to start

There I was on Sunday picking some more beautiful Shepard avocados as were most of the other growers in the Mareeba- Atherton area and thinking that the weather bureau has got it wrong again. There was some talk of a low pressure somewhere near Mars or was it Vanuatu. Anyway, it was a million miles away, but, later that afternoon some fool named it Larry. "That's not even a girls name so they can't be serious", I told my wife. Well, how wrong can you get and how right can the weather man be. Windbag Larry came at us at a steady rush all Sunday night and hit us fair square at Innisfail at 0700 hrs with wind faster than a hot Schumacher Ferrari (280 - 320 km/hr) and for just as long (3 hrs) and with as much noise. This cyclone was 250 km wide and Category 5, and bigger than anything since avocado was still an Aztec word.



## Australian Roundup continued

The eye of Larry passed over Innisfail and continued over the jungle clad mountains some 5800 ft high (Mt Bartle Frere) and passed over Malanda which is 20 km from Atherton. Well, it got us all, every single one of us, all 100 of us in the avocado business. I cannot describe to you the feeling of relief as Larry went past us as we realised how lucky we all were to survive personally but then I find it more difficult to describe the utter desperation we all felt when we realised how much damage we copped in our orchards. Some orchards at Atherton -Tolga-Kairi are just destroyed, but every orchard dropped fruit and had trees rolled over. Some of the other industries like banana were just laid flat, dead flat, and the macadamia trees just exploded into shreds.

Shepard growers lost at least 50% of the fruit left to pick and at least half of that remaining will be marked by leaf or wind rub. The Hass crop was 2-3 weeks off the start of harvest and the losses will be up to 80% wind fallen with the remainder with wind rub. On top of these losses the ongoing cost of loss of production from lost trees and the cost of a major cleanup. The fruit loss in the 3 hours will be about \$8 million (150,000 Shepard and 300,000 Hass), but this is an estimate.

After such an event all the politicians come out to offer assistance which to the general public sounds like a generous offer. The reality is that the \$200,000 loan at 4% is not asset tested (first grand media release) but it is means tested (a later non media release) so to most avocado growers the offer is very diminished. All horticultural industries have asked for a wage subsidy scheme whereby we can keep key trained staff to clean

up our orchards and get them ready for return to some production next year with the equivalent of a basic Centrelink payment propping up the staff's income and we pay the extra to their usual wage. The Federal Government is up for the Centrelink payment in any case because these staff will be retrenched immediately. The main offer was for me the grower to spend everything we have in liquid assets and overdraft facility first and when we are busted then come back to QRAA and we (the Government) will see how we can help you further.

My most sincere sympathies to all the avocado growers for their losses. Larry came and passed on Monday 20 March but his memory will live for a long time. I wish all growers in North Queensland and elsewhere safe passage for the rest of 2006 and may the ill wind of Larry bring some good fortune to you.

On behalf of all the North Queensland growers I thank Antony Allen and all the Directors of Avocados Australia and all the other growers from all over Australia and the world who rang and sent messages of sympathy and support to me and the other growers up here. The avocado community in Australia and the world is something special when compared to the other horticulture industries and it showed on this occasion.

At the next report I will try for a more optimistic outlook.

Thank you again.

## Sunshine Coast Report

By Henry Kwaczynski,

AAL Director for the Sunshine Coast Growing Area



The new season's crop for the Sunshine Coast looks far more promising than the last few years. The return to the growers in the latter part of 2005 was not as good as in previous years, due to a large influx of New Zealand avocados - growers who traditionally enjoy good prices for late season fruit were disappointed. From information available at this time, the NZ crop for this year is nowhere near the size in the previous year and hopefully this will provide some opportunity for reasonable prices.

When compiling estimates for 06/07 year, the figure I have given to Australian Avocados for the Sunshine Coast region is approximately 800,000 trays - this figure is close to the figure produced in previous years, as the avocado industry in this area is quite static. Compare this to many other regions in Australia (eg Bundaberg and South West of WA) where production levels are increasing quite markedly. I suggest we will see a larger and longer season for Australian avocados from these areas.

Finally, you would all be aware of the terrible impact of Cyclone Larry in North Queensland. I am sure all Sunshine Coast avocado growers join me in sending our commiserations to affected avocado growers and we also send good wishes as you begin to count the cost and look to somehow rebuilding orchards and the industry in the region.

## ANVAS ACCREDITED NURSERIES

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Duranbah NSW  
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**Avocado Coast Nursery**  
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Schulz Road,  
Woombye Qld  
Ph: 07 5442 2424

**Birdwood Nursery**  
Peter and Sandra Young  
71-83 Blackall Range Rd  
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**Rainforest Nursery**  
Ron and Joan Knowlton  
25 Reynolds St  
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# Infocado Update

## An update on what's happening with Infocado

The successful rollout of Infocado across Australia continues. In the last two months we have seen North Queensland and Bundaberg packhouses and grower packers begin to contribute data to Infocado. Significant volumes of Shepard avocados are now moving through the system, whilst volumes of fruit from New Zealand have tapered off as we head toward the end of their season.

The benefits of collecting market throughput data have been evident in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry. North Queensland consolidators and grower packers have continued to supply data, allowing the industry to see the volumes expected to enter the market and manage the flow of fruit accordingly.

'The last thing we need is for production areas away from North Queensland industry to overcompensate in filling the void and potentially oversupplying the market. This is where a tool like Infocado is very valuable,' Antony Allen said.

'We are still working hard to bring on as many eligible contributors as possible. Once packhouse and grower packers see how the system works and realise the benefits they can gain from being part of the system, it's very easy to bring businesses on board' said Antony.

Over the last two months Avocados Australia has held Infocado workshops in Mareeba, Bundaberg and Nambour. This has given potential users a quick snapshot of how the system works, how to enter data and retrieve information.

'Mareeba and Bundaberg packers are right behind the system and we look forward to the same levels of participation from the Sunshine Coast and Northern NSW when their season starts' said Antony

## New forecasting module added

Packhouses involved in the early phases of the rollout of Infocado quickly realized that having historical dispatch data was great but they quickly indicated they also wanted was a forecast of fruit expected to be dispatched. As a result Avocados Australia set about building a forecasting module to meet industry needs.

The new module was added to the Infocado system in late January, just in time for the start of the North Queensland season. Packhouses and growers in Queensland have been trained in how to enter and retrieve data and system has now been well accepted.

The forecast module is similar to the dispatch module in that participating packhouses and growers enter data each week. For the forecasting module, the data entered is their expected volume of dispatches for each of the following four weeks. This data is then aggregated with all other contributor's data so that a picture of the volume of fruit expected to enter the market over the next four weeks is developed.

## What the figures are showing

Since September 2005 the system has been collecting data as part of a staggered rollout, since then the total number of contributors has continued to grow as new production areas have come on stream. Over the summer months we have seen a transition from southern Australia and NZ production to NQ and then Bundaberg. In all areas the majority of packhouses and grower packers are contributing regularly.

A snapshot of this information showing total number of trays (all markets) of all varieties entering the market is show below.



Fig. 1: Number of trays of avocado recorded on the Infocado system lowering through the Australian market. The jump in fruit volume on the 18/11/05 corresponds to the start of the inclusion of data from NZ.

## What's Next...

Our next challenges are pricing data and seasonal forecasts. These two issues have been highlighted by industry as being the most important areas where additional data would assist the industry in decision making. Avocados Australia currently developing solutions for both and will roll these out as they are completed.

## Be a Winner

Packhouses and grower packers contributing volume data for at least 80% of their season go in the draw to win 7 nights at a Plaza Hotel of your choice (conditions apply). Plaza Hotels have a range of business and holiday accommodation across Australia. The draw will be held in September 2006.

## Be involved

Want to know more? Need help with accessing the system? Need training for you or your staff? Have ideas on how we can do things better? If so, just email [Infocado@avocado.org.au](mailto:Infocado@avocado.org.au) or phone 1300 303 971

## What is Infocado

Infocado is an internet based system, which has been developed to assist with the collection of more meaningful and timely data on the volume of avocados entering the Australian marketplace. It will assist individual packhouses and grower packers make better informed management and marketing decisions and enable industry to smooth out the peaks and troughs in volumes of fruit coming on to the market during the year.

There are currently two modules in Infocado – the forecasts module and the dispatch module. It takes packhouses and grower packers about 15 minutes each week during the packing season to enter data these modules.

The forecasts module collects data from individual packhouses and grower packers on their expected dispatches on a rolling 4 week basis. The data collected is aggregated and provided in a range of consolidated report on a weekly basis to Infocado users. Reports show variety and number of trays / bulk packs expected to be dispatched by Infocado users over coming four week based on weekly intervals.

The dispatch module collects more detailed data on product, such as variety, fruit size, number of trays and destination markets, that has been dispatched by packers across Australia in the previous week. This data is then aggregated and a weekly Industry Summary Dispatch Report is made available to participating businesses each Monday.

There is no cost for participating in Infocado, but participants must be members of Avocados Australia. The Infocado system has been developed by Avocados Australia for the benefit of industry.



# The Avocado Industry and Water Resources - A Proactive Approach

Horticulture and Water Fact Sheet 2006 Series

## Industry Situation and Performance

Avocados are grown commercially in Australia by around 1 200 growers. The major production areas are north, central and south-east Queensland, northern New South Wales, the tri-state area (South Australia, Victoria and south western New South Wales), and Western Australia.

The industry has been undergoing significant growth for more than a decade and the outlook remains positive. Around 30 000 tonnes of avocados are produced annually (29 614, ABS 2001) and it is estimated that over 33 000 tonnes of avocados will be harvested in 2005-06.

Based on ABS estimates the gross value of avocado production was around \$60 million in farm gate value of production (2001), compared with \$69 million the following year - despite relatively stable production volumes. Depending on market forces, the value of production can vary significantly each year. Although total value has been estimated to be more than double these values when multipliers associated with manufacturing, wholesaling, distribution, and retailing are included.

The Avocado industry has long enjoyed a domestic and international reputation for quality, primarily because of high standards in all stages of the supply chain.

Australia is a small exporter in world avocado terms accounting for less than 0.2% of world exports.

As a southern hemisphere producer, with a product that can be transported easily via sea freight, producers have a significant opportunity to profit from this unrecognised export market.

## Water for Production

In terms of total volume (Table 1), estimates suggest that avocado crops use a relatively small volume of water (less than 1%), compared with the rest of the irrigation industry.

However it should be emphasised that the range in water use per hectare (ML/ha), varies significantly across the key production areas. The high rainfall areas of northern Queensland have relatively low irrigation requirements (3-5ML/ha), when compared with areas further south and parts of Western Australia (8-18ML/ha).



**Table 1: A statistical overview of the Avocado Industry compared with all Horticultural Industries.**

Source: HAL Stats Handbook 2004, Horticulture Water Initiative 2005, ABS 2001, Agricultural Commodities 2002-03, CIE 2004

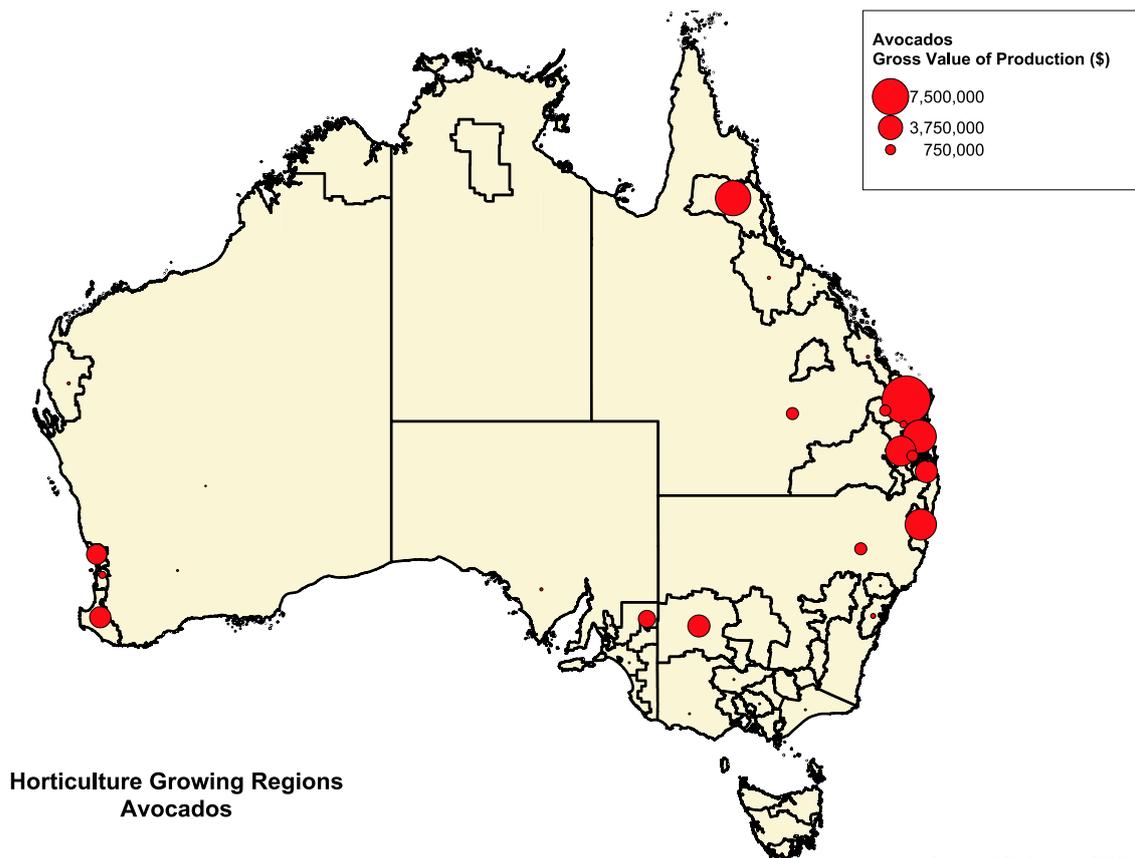
Industry	No. of Businesses	Water Use (ML)	Average return (\$/ML)	Estimated no. of jobs	Production Tonnes/ML
Avocado	1 172	24 791	2 783	5 327	1.1
Horticulture	22 808	2 577 077	2 454	110 572	2.7
Total	43 774	10 403 759	816	188 300	-



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## Industry Commitment

The Avocado industry is committed to improving irrigation efficiency and management. The industry vision for 2020 is to double the irrigation efficiency of Australia's avocado industry (Turner *et al*, 2001).

The industry supports a coordinated approach, designed to ensure ongoing access to water. Coordinated investment in Research and Development (R&D) is being achieved, demonstrated by horticulture's contribution to the National Program for Sustainable Irrigation (NPSI), which has leveraged R&D funding worth \$12.6 million.

Most of these projects are directly applicable to the long-term sustainability of horticulture. For example, the program is continuing to fund research into new technologies, such as high frequency 'hydroponic' irrigation techniques to be used for avocado production.



### Further information:

Please refer to the following websites:

**Horticulture Australia Limited**  
[www.horticulture.com.au](http://www.horticulture.com.au)

**Water Initiative**  
[www.rmcb.com.au](http://www.rmcb.com.au)

**Horticulture for Tomorrow**  
[www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au](http://www.horticulturefortomorrow.com.au)

**Avocados Australia**  
[www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au)

**Rural Water Use Efficiency Initiative**  
[www.nrm.qld.gov.au/rwue/](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/rwue/)

### Publications:

Turner, D.W., Neuhaus, A., Colmer, T., Blight, A. and Whiley, A. *Turning water into oil - Physiology and Efficiency*, Talking Avocados, 12:4, Bundaberg, Qld (2001)

# National Avocado Marketing and Promotion Update

The avocado industry is undergoing continued rapid growth. The industry has been growing at 35% over the last 5 years as new orchards have been established and expanded. Currently Australia is producing 41,000 tonnes per year.

Avocados have become a more desirable fruit with increased awareness of the health benefits, taste and versatility of use. For example, the popularity of avocados as a spread can be noted in the sandwich shops alone. The recent TV campaign and success of public relations has helped achieve this outcome that has aided the industry maintain viable prices in the wake of ever increasing volumes.

In 2005, the avocado industry commissioned new market research to assess the consumer use and attitudes towards avocado consumption in the domestic market. The research vindicated the strategies of the previous 5 years positioning avocados as a year round food, positive health attributes and becoming a regular consumption item.

The key recommendations of the consumer research were:

- Increase use amongst occasional users
- A general population push, through the communication of vitamins and minerals
- Increase sales in Victoria
- Promoting avocado spread usage
- Increase usage amongst children

## Summary of the research

- Of the total sample, 75% had bought avocado fruit in the last month.
  - 28% buy avocados weekly or more often
  - 25% buy fortnightly
  - 17% purchase it monthly (occasional users)
  - 20% purchase avocados 1-3 months to twice a year (very occasional users)
- Those with incomes over \$75K are significantly more likely to buy once a month or more than the lower income groups
- Average fruit purchase was 5.6 in the last month
- Average fruit purchase appeared to differ little amongst buyers of different demographic groups, apart from by State, where significant variance was found (6.8 QLD, 5.6 NSW, 4.7 VIC)
- Buyers in the last month claimed on average to have bought 2 fruit per shopping trip, although this was higher amongst the highest frequency purchasers (2.5)
- SINKS (Single Income, No Children) are most likely to purchase avocados on a whim

- The vast majority of fruit purchased were bought loose (83%)
- Most avocados were purchased in supermarkets (61%), a figure that increased to 68% in regional areas. Interestingly, high frequency buyers were less likely to buy at a supermarket (55%)
- In addition to purchasing a whole avocado (85%), dip purchase in particular appears high (58%) as does the use as a spread in a sandwich shop (31%). Use as a spread appears to be directionally skewed to high frequency buyers.
- Avocados are only used as bread spread in specific sandwiches, the reason for this is their price and their flavour was not perceived to fit well with very many flavours.
- Avocados are difficult to introduce to children, mums struggle to find ways to introduce avocados to their children so that they weren't seen as a challenge
- The biggest gap was for warm/hot meals, only 1 or 2 had really tried avocado in a hot dish. The vast majority did want to be educated on how to use avocado in a hot dish.
- What set avocados apart from the rest of the produce market is that they are considered to be both a fruit and a vegetable, they have a distinctive taste and texture and they are unlike anything else.
- 85% considered avocados to be either quite or very healthy, most consumers were able to talk about avocado's "good fats" and were aware that there were other vitamins and minerals but couldn't mention any of them
- Avocado consumers are also buying:
  - Fresh produce (not into frozen meals)
  - More gourmet salad ingredients (e.g. rocket, sun dried tomatoes)
  - Good quality meat / seafood
  - Smoked salmon, bocconcini, focaccia
- The usage of avocados in foodservice is patchy at best
- The greater opportunity lies in the use of avocado as a spread or a topping in a range of applications from sandwiches

"Add an Avo to Seafood" Full Page Ad

		April	May	June	July	August	September
Public Relations							
Website Activity							
Ads - Online							
Ads - Lifestyle Mags	Weekly						
	Monthly						
Ads - Health Mags	Weekly						
	Monthly						
Recipe Leaflet	Monthly						
Point-Of-Sale	WW						
	Coles (TBD)						
Point-Of-Sale	Independents						
Ads - Food Service	Monthly						

**By Yelli Kruger,**

*Yelli is a member of the HAL Professional Services team*

to burgers, salads or warm dishes, when offered as an option. Those businesses that had adopted this method of using avocado were selling significant amounts of avocado.

For this current year, 2006, the industry has decided to launch a new campaign which is based on the results of the consumer research carried out in 2005. After selecting four service providers to pitch for the program, the successful agency was Brisbane based De Pasquale. This agency is now responsible for creating and implementing an innovative campaign which will build on all the solid work carried out in the previous five years.

The objective of the new campaign is to encourage occasional users to increase purchase frequency, and at a minimum maintain the purchase frequency of high users.

The strategic direction set for 2006–2007 is focused heavily on versatility, demonstrated by recipe usage. Targeting the traditional female grocery buyer 25–54 years (with a skew to 25–39 yrs), both media and creative relies on introducing new uses for Avocado supported always by specific recipe usage. The Campaign line, ‘Add an Avo’ plays perfectly to the Avocado’s role as an accompaniment to meals, delivering a real product truth in the way they are used. At the same time, the health benefits will continue to be supported with a supplementary campaign focused towards vitamins and minerals content. This strategy delivers two key messages to the market. That Avocados are both ‘Versatile’ and ‘Good

for You’ supporting the overall positioning that Avocados are amazing. “The most versatile and nutritious fruit on earth.”

Magazines will fill the major media role in 2006–2007 with full page colour advertisements, recipe leaflets and both a consumer and food service competition delivered by up over 10 consumer and food service titles. The reason magazines were selected as a media is twofold, firstly to introduce a completely new campaign, it is important to show it to consumers as often as possible, and with the current media budget (new levy is not in place until end of 2006), we would reach a much higher percentage of our target audience as well as reaching them more often by using magazines instead of TV. In addition to that, this campaign is very focused on educating consumers on how to use an avocado and the health aspects of an avocado. To do this successfully you need to supply consumers with a substantial amount of information, whether this is a recipe to show the versatility of an avocado or an explanation of the vitamin content, and unfortunately, a 15 second or 30 second TV ad does not give you the opportunity to really engage with consumer.

To be certain that as many of our target audience as possible will be exposed to the message, the magazine advertisement will be supported by on-line advertising, newly developed in-store media and point-of-sale. The avocado website will be a large part of this campaign, it will serve as a reference point for consumers where they can find more recipes and in-depth information about avocados, therefore the avocado website will be upgraded to be more consumer friendly.

2006–2007 will also be the first financial year in which we would have activities planned for the majority of the year, with bursts of activity in May–June 2006, August–September 2006 and starting again in March 2007.

**Examples of the ads & Recipe Leaflet**

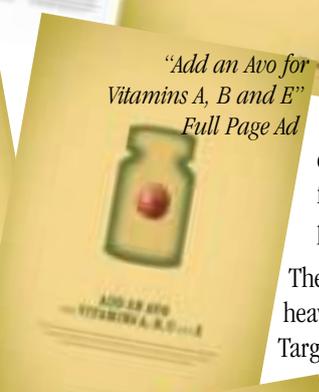
These are just a snapshot of the creative; there are more versions available with either the versatility message or health message, such as “Add an Avo to Beef” or a “Heart” message.



“Add an Avo To Chicken”  
Full page & 1/3 Page Ad



“Add an Avo to Crab Salad” Full Page & 1/3 Page Ad



“Add an Avo for Vitamins A, B and E”  
Full Page Ad



“Add an Avo to Swordfish”  
Full page & 1/3 Page Ad



“Add an Avo to Sushi”  
Full Page Ad



Recipe Leaflet

October	November	December	January	February	March
Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Cyan	Cyan	Cyan	Cyan	Cyan	Cyan
Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey

**Timeline**

Watch this space for more information about the new marketing campaign!

# 'Hass' and its Family – Now and the Future Part 3

## – from "Sports"

By Tony Whiley

Sunshine Horticultural Services, Nambour QLD

Previous articles in this series have reviewed 'Hass' and the new varieties from the Californian breeding program. While 'Hass' originated as an ungrafted seedling in the orchard of Rudolf Hass the other California varieties have resulted from a program that deliberately set about creating new lines from parents selected for the various traits they could contribute. The greatest improvement in these varieties ('Lamb Hass', 'Gem' and 'Harvest') over 'Hass' has been increased production albeit 'Lamb Hass' does develop strong biennial cropping patterns as trees age. Unfortunately they have all fallen short of the fruit quality that we find in 'Hass'. This article is the last of the series and examines new 'Hass'-like varieties that have been selected from a different pathway: that of natural genetic mutation.

Commonly called "sports" new varieties in many fruit crops have been selected and successfully developed following the occurrence of natural mutation that has occurred during shoot growth. An example that comes to mind is the "richer red" 'Delicious' apple. "Sports" potentially have the advantage of retaining most of the attributes of the parent but with additional features that give them superiority. For example, the "richer red" 'Delicious' apple is essentially the same fruit as the parent 'Delicious' but with a brighter, full red skin colour that enhances its appearance on the retail shelves. Since 'Hass' has become such a dominant international variety firmly entrenched in markets it is logical that a "sport" of 'Hass' that retains most of its parents' qualities will easily slide into the supply chain and be widely accepted by the market and consumers. Four "sports" of 'Hass' at different stages of development/evaluation in Australia are described in this article.

### 'Turner Hass'

'Turner Hass' is considered a "sport" of 'Hass' and was discovered growing in an orchard near Childers. Exhaustive examination required by the Plant Breeders Office when making an application for registration of a new variety was unable to distinguish differences in tree characteristics and foliage between 'Turner Hass' and 'Hass'. However, there were sufficient differences between fruit of the two varieties to allow

a PBR application to proceed. At this point in time provisional Plant Breeders Rights for "Turner Hass" has been granted to Mr & Mrs J.W. Dorrian (Australian PBR application 2002/258). The variety has been tested and found free of Avocado Sunblotch Viroid.



Fig. 1 'Turner Hass' on LHS and 'Hass'

**Fruit characteristics:** Superficially 'Turner Hass' looks very similar to 'Hass' having the same textured skin of similar thickness which changes to purple/black on ripening. There is a slight difference in fruit shape with 'Turner Hass' having an extended neck at the stem-end when compared with 'Hass' (Fig. 1). This helps increase the flesh recovery of 'Turner Hass' (70%) when compared to 'Hass' (67%). One of the most exciting aspects of 'Turner Hass' is its larger fruit size, which is about 18% greater than 'Hass' at commercial maturity (21% dry matter). This is of particular importance when growing 'Hass' in warm, subtropical climates such as the south Burnett or Atherton Tableland where 'Hass' fruit size is generally smaller than when grown in cooler climates. It is expected that the larger fruit size of 'Turner Hass' will also improve fruit packouts in other districts since fruit become smaller on 'Hass' trees as they get older. The flesh of 'Turner Hass' fruit is similar in colour and flavour to 'Hass' and the variety performs similarly to 'Hass' in the supply chain; however, no critical assessment has been made at this point in time.

**Tree and cropping characteristics:** Comparisons with adjacent 'Hass' trees in the Childers orchard indicates that 'Turner Hass' produces consistent and heavier crops than 'Hass' at this location. However, there are insufficient trees in the monitored sample to conclusively demonstrate the higher productivity of 'Turner Hass' at this point in time. The maturity time of "Turner Hass" based on dry matter



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*'Hass' and its Family – Now and the Future Part 3 – from "Sports"*  
continued

accumulation is slightly later than 'Hass', lagging by approximately 2% dry matter. Based on this maturity profile it is likely that 'Turner Hass' can be hung later than 'Hass' when grown in the same orchard thereby extending the production season. No differences in tree shape or vigour have been found between 'Turner Hass' and 'Hass'.

**Commercialisation:** After observing 'Turner Hass' for several seasons the owners of the variety decided that its performance under their conditions was superior to 'Hass' and propagated it for use in a new orchard they were developing. Approximately 22000 trees were produced on seedling 'Velvick' rootstock and planted. The 2006 harvest will be the first commercial crop of this variety. Test plots comparing 'Turner Hass' with 'Hass' are currently being established by Sunshine Horticultural Services in the major production areas of Australia to more completely assess the performance of this variety. However, the intellectual property owners have decided that they would like to offer Australian growers the opportunity to grow 'Turner Hass' as an alternative to 'Hass'. There will be a production royalty and marketing plan for 'Turner Hass' and a requirement for any 'Turner Hass' grower to plant a minimum of 500 trees. Sunshine Horticultural Services has been granted exclusive propagation rights for this variety and further information can be supplied by Tony Whiley on (07) 5441 5441 or by emailing [whileys@bigpond.com](mailto:whileys@bigpond.com). A website for updates on 'Turner Hass' is under construction and will be available in the near future at [www.turnerbassavocado.com](http://www.turnerbassavocado.com)

### 'Simmo 1'

'Simmo 1' is another locally discovered "sport" of 'Hass' found growing in an orchard belonging to Ron and Fay Simpson at Goodwood via Childers. Following observation of the tree for a number of years it was decided to apply for Plant Breeders Rights, which were subsequently awarded (Australian PBR application 2001/154).

**Fruit characteristics:** The skin of 'Simmo 1' is similar in texture and thickness to 'Hass' and turns purple/black when fruit ripens.



Fig. 2 'Lamb Hass' left, 'Simmo 1' centre and 'Hass' right

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*'Hass' and its Family – Now and the Future Part 3 – from "Sports" continued*

However, the shape of the fruit is different to 'Hass' being more elongated with an extended neck and smaller diameter (Fig. 2). There is no difference to 'Hass' in the average fruit size (weight), however 'Simmo 1' has a higher flesh recovery than 'Hass' possibly due to its longer neck. Experience at the Simpson farm indicates that the neck can be compacted through the application of 'Sunny' at flowering. The flavour of the fruit is similar to 'Hass' and the variety appears to perform similar to 'Hass' in the supply chain however, no critical evaluation has been made at this point in time.

**Tree and cropping characteristics:** 'Simmo 1' trees tend to be slightly more compact than 'Hass' at a comparable age. However, the information available at the time of PBR application indicated that there was no difference in crop load to 'Hass' in the Goodwood orchard. Dry matter profiles over time comparing 'Simmo 1' with 'Hass' showed that there was no significant difference in time of fruit maturity.

**Commercialisation:** Simpson Farms is continuing to evaluate the performance of 'Simmo 1' and have planted a small commercial orchard to monitor the performance of this variety. There are no immediate plans to offer the variety for commercialisation by the Australian avocado industry at large.

**'SHS Hass 01' and SHS Hass 02'**

'SHS Hass 01' and 'SHS Hass 02' are "sports" of 'Hass' found in overseas orchards and imported into Australia for local evaluation by

Sunshine Horticultural Services. In both cases trees were observed in growers orchards exhibiting slightly different characteristics to adjacent 'Hass' trees. For both varieties the texture, thickness and colour of the skin is similar to 'Hass' and there is no apparent difference in fruit flavour or flesh recovery. The claimed distinguishing attributes of these "sports" are increased fruit size ('SHS Hass 01') and early maturity ('SHS Hass 02') (Fig. 3) when compared to 'Hass' growing in the same orchards. Trees of both varieties have recently been released from quarantine and are being propagated for performance evaluation in the main Australian production areas.



*Fig. 3 Early maturing 'Hass' "sport" (SHS Hass 02)*

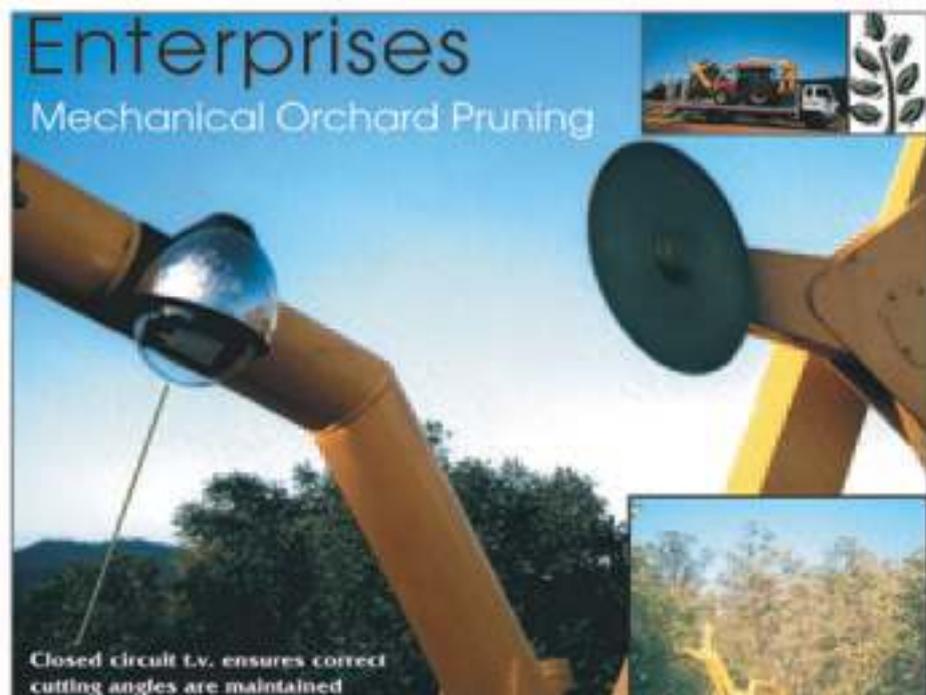
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# Clonal Propagation of Avocado Rootstocks – a Progress Report

By **Tony Whiley**

Sunshine Horticultural Services Pty Ltd,  
Nambour QLD

Traditionally in Australia avocado trees have been propagated using seedling rootstocks. In the 1970's it was common practice for nurseries of the time to place drums at the back door of restaurants to collect the seeds after the chef had removed them from the fruit. It was a time when many different varieties including seedling lines were sold through the markets. Hence one of the colloquial terms coined for the rootstock type was "restaurant run". One can only imagine the variability that rootstocks from such a diverse source would impose when grafted and planted as orchard trees. From the 1980's on there were fewer avocado nurserymen and with the introduction of ANVAS a more professional approach was introduced into this segment of the industry. For some time rootstocks were identified as tree orders were sent out but despite best intentions either planting plans were not recorded or keys to rootstock codes were lost. Thus our industry is currently left with orchard populations of great genetic diversity. This does provide an opportunity to select high-performance trees but only if the owner/manager remains alert to what is happening from year to year among their trees.

Vegetative propagation of avocado rootstocks first gained popularity in California as this industry strived to develop Phytophthora-tolerant rootstocks. Once a seedling of improved merit was selected vegetative propagation was the only means by which the same level of Phytophthora tolerance could be retained. 'Duke 7' was the first rootstock to be seriously cloned by this industry and the technology soon spread to South Africa where it was used in their nursery industry. Vegetative propagation (cloning) of rootstocks is labour intensive and requires two grafting operations to produce a nursery tree. Also the trees require much longer in the nursery occupying valuable bench space. This markedly increases the cost of a nursery tree over those produced on seedling rootstocks. Fortunately for the Californian and South Africa nurserymen a pool of relatively low cost labour was available and trees could be cloned relatively cheaply. This is not the case in Australia so the cost/return benefits of this technology clearly need to be demonstrated.

Clonal propagation research carried out by Sunshine Horticultural Services has adopted the micro-propagation technique developed by Allesbeste Nursery in South Africa (Ernst, 1999). Small modifications

have been made to the system to suit local conditions. The production of clonal rootstocks overseas has been mainly with Mexican race rootstocks, which are the easiest to root (Kadman and Ben Ya'acov, 1965; Reuveni and Ravi, 1981). However, the rootstocks of interest in Australia are usually hybrids of Guatemalan and Mexican races or West Indian, the latter being the most difficult to propagate vegetatively (Kadman and Ben Ya'acov, 1965; Reuveni and Ravi, 1981).

The propagation sequence for cloning is described in detail by Ernst (1999) so the intention of this article is to list the key criteria that have helped improve the rooting of the most difficult lines to propagate. The two critical factors required to achieve commercially successful rooting of 'Velvick', which has been the hardest line to root to date are:

1. Plant growth regulator concentration: the preferred product is the potassium salt of Indole butyric acid (KIBA) at a concentration of 0.6 to 0.8%.
2. Rooting temperature: 25 C night minimum/30 C day minimum. All rootstocks respond favourable if these temperatures are maintained during the post etiolation phase and several experiments have resulted in a consistent 100% rooting of 'Velvick' clones. The time taken to produce roots varies between races with Mexican lines filling propagation tubes within 3 weeks from removal from the etiolation chamber and about 7 weeks for 'Velvick'.

'Velvick' produces prolific callus from the tissue directly treated with KIBA and this must be pruned free at the time of re-potting the rooted clone as if left it can continue to grow eventually choking the entire root system. Correct attention to detail will produce a strong nursery tree suitable for orchard planting.

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- Reuveni, O. and Raviv, M. (1981). Importance of leaf retention to rooting of avocado cuttings. *Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science* 106, 127-130.



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# An Early Result when *Phytophthora* Root Rot Invades a Rootstock Experiment

By Tony Whiley

Sunshine Horticultural Services, Nambour QLD

Those involved in research can find it to be an addictive occupation. Our world is full of questions without answers that need to be investigated before we can take the next step forward. For true progress to occur we need to have well designed research projects addressing issues of interest in such a way that we are confident that the results are real and reproducible across conditions and time. Progress can often be hastened by benchmarking our results against those reported by others working in the same or similar field— a practice commonly termed “peer review” or “referencing”. However, despite clear goals and good experimental design occasionally research programs can reward the practitioner in unexpected ways. Such is the case that I report below where the goal of my research was to establish two avocado rootstock experiments in North Queensland with either ‘Hass’ or ‘Shepard’ as the scion variety for long-term yield and fruit quality evaluations. However, within 6-8 months of planting trees an unexpected setback occurred when *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot) invaded roots of the young trees causing a decline in tree health.

In April 2005 two experiments were planted on the same farm on the Atherton Tablelands (approximately 200 trees in each experiment). The experimental site had previously grown avocados for about 20 years but due to a decline in tree health the orchard was removed in 2003 and prepared for replanting. Following tree removal the deep red clay loam (krasnozem) was ripped, stick-picked and fertilised with poultry litter. Lime and gypsum were also applied to adjust soil pH and calcium levels. The block was then planted to a cover crop of sorghum, which was grown for a year and periodically slashed to increase soil organic matter. In the second year a grass sward was established and maintained by periodic slashing.

Due to the past history of the block one week prior to planting, nursery trees were drenched with 20% phosphorous acid (diluted to 5 mL/L) to provide protection from *Phytophthora* root rot. Tree sites were fertilised and irrigation sprinklers installed and connected at planting. Tree establishment was excellent and good growth was made over the winter months. During this period no root rot control treatments were applied. By mid-October the health of many trees began to decline with typical *Phytophthora* root rot symptoms. Individual tree health was assessed in mid-November 2005 by visually rating health on a 0-10 scale where 0 = healthy and 10 = dead. In a few severe cases trees rated 9 but those showing symptoms mostly fell between 2-5. A *Phytophthora* root rot control program was implemented which included soil application of Ridomil<sup>®</sup>, foliar sprays of phosphorous acid and bark paints of a phosphorous acid/ Pulse<sup>®</sup> mixture. In most cases tree health significantly improved following these treatments but in severe cases tree replacement has been carried out.

With each of the scion varieties trees were grafted to either vegetatively cloned rootstocks ensuring that for each rootstock the trees were genetically identical to each other, or to the standard seedling

rootstocks commonly used by industry in which genetic variability occurs between all trees within each rootstock line. There were 10 trees of each rootstock/scion combination. Within each cloned rootstock experiment both ‘Hass’ and ‘Shepard’ scions were struck as cuttings and planted on their own roots thereby providing a control treatment for comparative measurements.

## Results

There was minimal commercial damage to trees that had health ratings less than 1. In the population of ‘Hass’ trees on cloned rootstocks the healthiest trees were either grafted to ‘Velvick’, ‘A10’ or ‘Thomas’ or planted on their own roots (Table 1). ‘Reed’, ‘Barr Duke’ and ‘Nabal’ showed the greatest decline in health of the cloned rootstocks. ‘Hass’ trees grafted to ‘SHS-R 01’, ‘Velvick’, ‘Barr Duke’ and ‘Rigato’ were the healthiest trees within the seedling rootstock population (Table 1) while ‘A10’, ‘Nabal’, ‘Duke 7’ and ‘Reed’ had the greatest decline in tree health.

**Table 1**

Tree health ratings from a rootstock experiment planted on the Atherton Tableland. The health ratings are scored for each tree from 0 to 10 where 0 = healthy and 10 = dead. The health ratings are mean values from 10 trees. The scion variety is ‘Hass’. Values in columns with different letters are significantly different ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

Mean tree health rating (0-10)			
Cloned Rootstock		Seedling Rootstock	
Velvick	0.1 <sup>a</sup>	SHS-R 01	0.4 <sup>a</sup>
Hass	0.3 <sup>a</sup>	Velvick	0.4 <sup>a</sup>
		Barr Duke	0.8 <sup>a</sup>
A10	0.6 <sup>ab</sup>	Rigato	1.0 <sup>a</sup>
Thomas	0.6 <sup>ab</sup>		
Duke 7	0.9 <sup>b</sup>	Zutano	1.5 <sup>ab</sup>
Zutano	0.9 <sup>b</sup>	A10	1.9 <sup>b</sup>
		Nabal	2.2 <sup>b</sup>
		Duke 7	2.3 <sup>b</sup>
A8	1.8 <sup>bc</sup>	Duke 7	2.3 <sup>b</sup>
Reed	2.3 <sup>c</sup>	A8	2.6 <sup>b</sup>
Barr Duke	2.6 <sup>c</sup>	Reed	2.9 <sup>b</sup>
Nabal	4.7 <sup>c</sup>		

In the ‘Shepard’ population of cloned trees those of greatest health were either rooted cuttings of ‘Shepard’ or grafted to ‘Duke 7’, ‘Barr Duke’, ‘SHS-R 02’, ‘Thomas’ or ‘Velvick’ while those with the greatest decline in health were grafted to ‘A10’, ‘Nabal’ and ‘Zutano’ (Table 2). For the seedling population the healthiest trees were grafted to ‘SHS-R 01’, ‘Velvick’, ‘SHS-R 03’ and ‘Duke 7’ while those with the greatest decline in health were grafted to ‘Reed’, ‘Zutano’, ‘SHS-R 02’, ‘A10’, ‘Nabal’ and ‘A8’.

## Discussion

It should be emphasised that the results from these two experiments are preliminary giving the first insight into what may have been ahead if trees had not been subsequently treated with root rot control fungicides. However, the question that needs to be asked is “are these results likely to be real in the long term thereby correctly identifying rootstocks with useful commercial tolerance to *Phytophthora* root rot?”

**Table 2**

Tree health ratings from a rootstock experiment planted on the Atherton Tableland. The health ratings scored for each tree are from 0 to 10 where 0 = healthy and 10 = dead. The health ratings are mean values from 10 trees. The scion variety is ‘Shepard’. Values in columns with different letters are significantly different ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

Mean tree health rating (0-10)			
Rootstock	Cloned	Rootstock	Seedling
Shepard	0.3 <sup>a</sup>	SHS-R 01	0.3 <sup>a</sup>
Duke 7	0.5 <sup>a</sup>	Velvick	0.9 <sup>a</sup>
Barr Duke	0.7 <sup>a</sup>	SHS-R 03	0.9 <sup>a</sup>
SHS-R 02	0.7 <sup>a</sup>	Duke 7	1.1 <sup>ab</sup>
Thomas	0.7 <sup>a</sup>	Reed	1.3 <sup>b</sup>
Velvick	0.7 <sup>a</sup>	Zutano	1.6 <sup>b</sup>
A10	1.8 <sup>b</sup>	SHS-R 02	1.8 <sup>b</sup>
Nabal	2.1 <sup>b</sup>	A10	2.0 <sup>b</sup>
Zutano	3.9 <sup>b</sup>	Nabal	2.4 <sup>b</sup>
		A8	2.5 <sup>b</sup>

To answer this question with any confidence a peer review of published results on this topic is required. Fortunately ‘Duke 7’ and ‘Velvick’ were included in the long-term evaluation of *Phytophthora* root rot tolerance of rootstocks in South Africa and are discussed by Kremer-Köhne and Duvenhage (2000) and Kremer-Köhne *et al.* (2001, 2002). In their studies with ‘Hass’ trees grafted to cloned rootstocks they report that ‘Velvick’ has a high and similar tolerance to ‘Merensky II’ (‘Dusa’) while ‘Duke 7’ has lower tolerance to *Phytophthora* root rot. These results remained consistent over a three-year period. More recently Giblin *et al.* (2005) report that research in Australia has demonstrated the higher root rot tolerance of ‘Velvick’ seedling rootstocks when compared with ‘A8’ and ‘A10’ seedling rootstocks grafted to ‘Hass’ scions. Taking these two independent studies into account it then seems likely that the results presented above are realistic since trees on cloned and seedling ‘Velvick’ rootstocks are rated in the best health group of trees for both ‘Hass’ and ‘Shepard’ scions. The other rootstock of interest when used as a seedling is ‘SHS-R 01’ which has demonstrated good tolerance when grafted to either ‘Hass’ or ‘Shepard’.

Another interesting result to emerge from this study is the performance of both ‘Hass’ and ‘Shepard’ when planted as trees on their own roots. In both cases they have shown high tolerance to *Phytophthora* root rot – at least at this early stage. One possible explanation for this is the absence of a graft union. Grafting joins two genetically different entities, which imposes a level of physiological stress within the tree thus making it more vulnerable to contracting disease. Without the graft union there is an unrestricted exchange of resources between the roots and top of the tree thereby placing it in a stronger position to fight infection. As we don’t have knowledge on root rot tolerance of ‘Hass’ and ‘Shepard’ it is unwise to assume that in the longer term these will be superior trees as they may succumb to the disease once cropping begins.

## Points of Clarification

There continues to be a high demand for nursery trees in Australia as the industry expands or replants “tired” orchards. It is pleasing for me at least to hear that growers have become more discerning about what rootstocks they want when placing an order for trees. This is a significant step forward from 2002 when all that was required was a ‘Hass’ or ‘Shepard’ tree. If *Phytophthora* root rot is a concern when placing an order then two choices are available to Australian growers: seedling ‘Velvick’ or cloned ‘Merensky II’ (‘Dusa’). The decision then falls back to availability (demand for ‘Velvick’ is currently greater than the supply of seeds) or cost (trees grafted to cloned ‘Merensky II’ retail for about \$30 each). Whatever rootstock choice is made it must be clearly understood that neither ‘Velvick’ nor ‘Merensky II’ are resistant to *Phytophthora* root rot as the health of trees on either rootstock will decline when cropping begins if *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is present in the soil. However, both rootstocks have commercially useful tolerance to root rot, which requires support through the normal use of fungicides. Under such conditions it will be easier to maintain tree health if either rootstock is used. According to Kremer-Köhne *et al.* (2001, 2002) the cropping performance is similar for ‘Hass’ trees grafted to either rootstock when cloned.

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## News from Around the World

### UK gears up for Chilean Hass avocado campaign

The Chilean Avocado Association will launch its first promotional campaign in the UK this year in a bid to boost Hass avocado consumption. Some 1.6m recipe and information booklets will be distributed throughout the major UK retailers as part of the programme, as well as in store tastings and television advertisements.

Chile expects to market around 4,343 tonnes of Hass avocados on the UK market this season – almost double last year’s figure – after harvesting a record 175,000 tonne crop this year. “There is huge opportunity to drive consumption of avocados in the UK since penetration currently rests at just 23.4 per cent,” said Adolfo Ochagavia, general manager of the association.

Only 25 per cent of the UK population bought an avocado last year, despite the fruit being one of the fastest-growing categories in the fresh produce sector. Meanwhile, an oversupply of the Hass variety has led to a fall in avocado prices on the European market, according to MNS data. However, the situation is likely to improve as Kenya, Peru and South Africa near the end of their avocado seasons.

*Source: Eurofruit, November/December 2005, No 380*

### Westfalia links up with Chile’s Subsole

South Africa’s leading exporter of avocados and mangoes has entered

into an alliance with Chilean fresh fruit exporter Subsole. Subsole is Chile’s tenth-largest exporter and a significant player in the country’s avocado business. “Chile naturally complements the South African avocado supply season,” said Claus Lippert, executive manager of Westfalia.

According to Mr Lippert, Westfalia has been actively looking for supply partners in the region for a number of years. “The alliance illustrates the vision of like-minded, world-class suppliers to collectively market avocados in different European markets for 12 months of the year under the Westfalia brand,” he explained. Meanwhile, Subsole president Migueal Allamand claimed the partnership is in response to the need to collaborate more closely with fellow suppliers in order to gain results in an ever changing market.

*Source: Eurofruit, November/December 2005, No 380*

### New leader for NZ avocado industry

Alan Thorn has been appointed chief executive of the Avocado Growers Association, replacing Dr Jonathan Cutting who has moved to Australia. He has an extensive background in research, and management positions, mainly related to the forestry industry. He took up the position on 1 February.

Alan spent 21 years of his career with the Forest Research Institute involved with leading-edge research projects. During this time he

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*News from Around the World*  
continued

was seconded to the USDA Forest Service to evaluate their timber management and has researched its impact on long-term soil productivity. His Masters thesis investigated nutritional remote sensing techniques for plantation forestry in association with scientists at the NASA Stennis Space Centre that was funded by the US Forest Service. Alan has also contributed to over 70 significant scientific publications and has presented at numerous conferences.

During the government restructuring of New Zealand science involving the creation of Crown Research Institutes in the early 1990s, Alan took up the position of client services manager at Forest Research with responsibilities including client relations, commercial business development, enterprise and sales and marketing. Part of this role was to meet clients' needs by building a model technology transfer system to deliver science outputs to clients.

With the establishment of ATLAS Technology (a software business unit of Forest Research), Alan accepted the position of Sales Manager, in this start-up business unit with the responsibility to establish strong client relationships. Alan has recently undertaken MBA Studies to enhance his business skills and anticipates applying his experience and skill sets in strategic business development, project and change management. His academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Science (University of Waikato), Master of Science (University of Georgia, USA) and Master of Business Administration (Massey University).

Since leaving Forest Research and completing his MBA, Alan has been involved with contact work in the business community in the areas of strategic business development and project and change management. Once he has settled in, Alan Thorn is keen to meet growers and other stakeholders to get a firm understanding of the industry requirements and goals. *Source: The Orchardist, February 2006, p48*

### **US: nearly 50 Million Pounds of Hass Avocados Help Kick off Super Bowl Madness**

Super Bowl to outscore Cinco de Mayo as the biggest consumption day of the year for Hass Avocados

The Hass Avocado Board (HAB) today announced that Super Bowl Sunday will mark the biggest consumption day of 2006 for Hass avocados. The HAB anticipates that football fans across the nation will devour a record 49.5 million pounds of Hass avocados during the big game -- enough to cover Detroit's Ford Field end zone to end zone in more than 11.8 feet of guacamole.

While more than 800 million pounds of Hass avocados were consumed in the United States from Nov. 2004 to Oct. 2005, more than one billion pounds are expected to be consumed during the 2005/06 season.

"Hass avocados and guacamole are synonymous with Super Bowl

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\* Quoted by Tony Whaley, Industry Consultant at the Australian and NZ Avocado Growers Conference 2001



### News from Around the World continued

parties. In fact, most people can't imagine watching the big game without them," said Charley Wolk, chairman of the Hass Avocado Board. "Growers from California, Mexico, Chile and the Dominican Republic are working hard to harvest and supply the fruit so consumers get their fill of Hass avocados during the big game."

While guacamole remains the number one way to enjoy Hass avocados, it is not the only way. Hass avocados are the perfect addition to a variety of game day dishes like guacamole, nachos, quesadillas and pizza. Visit the Hass Avocado Board Web site at [avocadocentral.com](http://avocadocentral.com) for fun and delicious recipes. *Source: HAB*

### NZ: \$135 million Bay avocado crop suffers crisis

Bay of Plenty's \$135 million avocado industry is facing a crippling downturn over the next 18 months after the widespread failure of trees to set fruit. "It is a bloody disaster," said one of the region's biggest growers, Sam Dunlop of Kauri Point, whose losses are almost total.

While early estimates of the extent of the crop failure in the Western Bay are still being assessed by the Avocado Industry Council, best guesses within the industry put next season's crop losses at 75 to 80 per cent of this year's record harvest.

It means most Bay growers face the prospect of having little or no crop to harvest until the spring-summer of 2007-08 - nearly 18 months

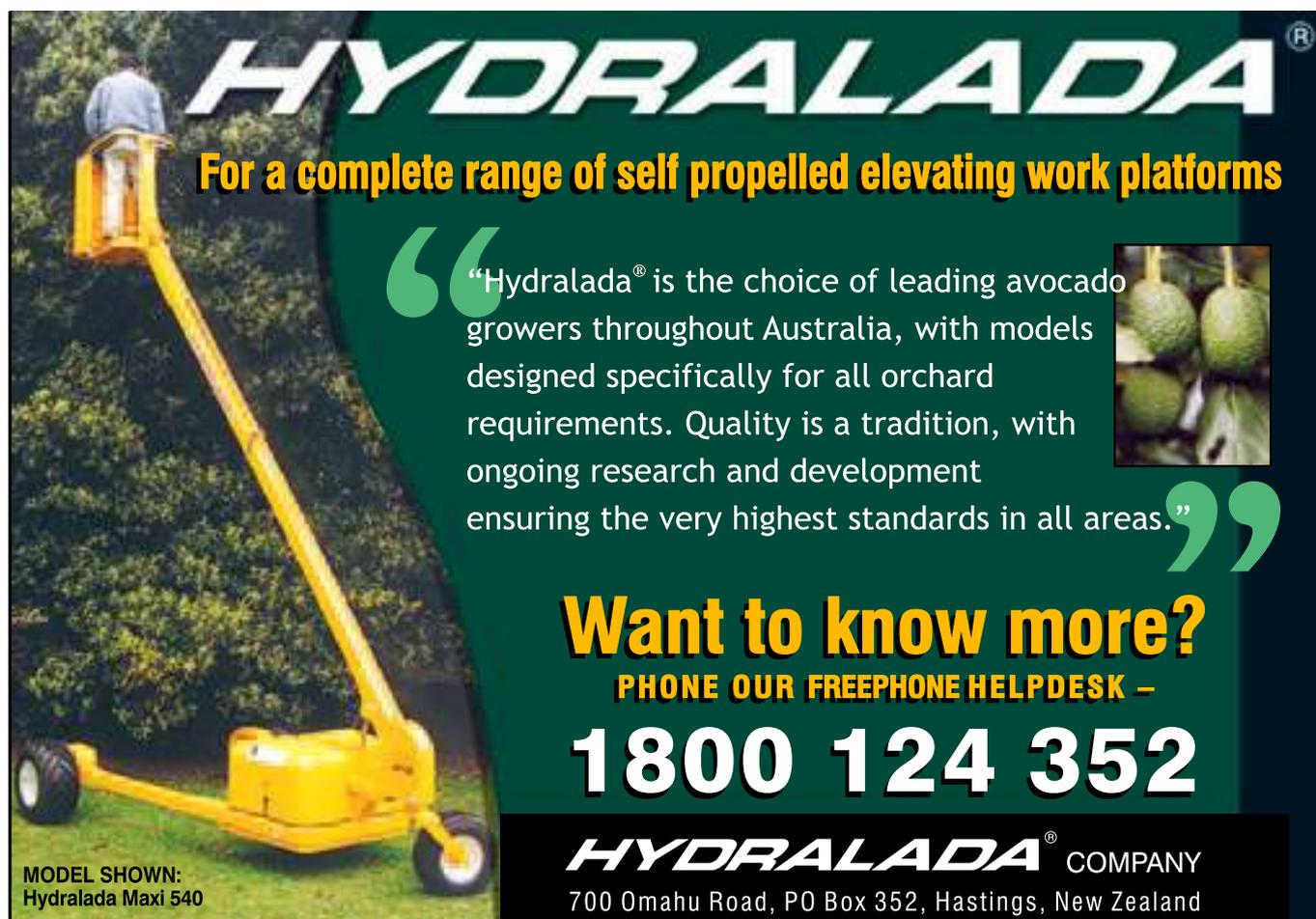
away. Mr Dunlop said growers thought they had a good pollination but nothing came of it. "They stopped sizing up and then the terrible truth dawned."

He said the implications just went on and on for suppliers, orchardists, orchard contractors, packhouses and exporters. Hard-won export markets would be under-supplied next year and higher prices will pinch the growth of the domestic market. Bay growers took the brunt of an unusual combination of circumstances, while the other major avocado growing regions survived virtually unscathed.

With the Bay accounting for more than half the country's 4000ha under avocados, it meant that the value of the crop together with on-farm and off-farm investment was worth at least \$135 million to the Bay. Mr Dunlop said the hardest hit would be growers new to the industry with a high debt to equity ratio: "Those people who had the courage to take a punt ... it will be a terrible loss to the industry if they go under."

He knows of only three orchardists from his big circle of friends and acquaintances in the industry that still have a crop. The crop failures would lead to some tough talking between growers and bankers, with refinancing or carving off a lifestyle block among the options for survival. "It is bloody serious," Mr Dunlop said.

Colin Partridge, of Team Avocado, estimates next season's crop will be 20 to 25 per cent of the current crop. Putting aside this year's bumper



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News from Around the World  
continued

crop as a one-off, he estimated next season's crop would be about 40 per cent of the 2004-05 harvest. "People are not happy ... it will be tough."

On the plus side, a reasonable number of growers had alternative sources of income, which he hoped would see them through. Mr Partridge said the low fruit set could not be put down to orchard practices because even the better-managed orchards set very little fruit. Avocado Growers' Association chairman Hugh Moore said hard times were ahead for many but he was confident the industry would overcome the downturn.

He estimated production would be down 50 to 60 per cent in the Western Bay and 60 per cent in Opotiki. Unfortunately the rules of supply and demand meant that this season's bumper harvest has not translated into a cash bonanza to tide growers over, even though sales of 2 million trays to Australia were nearly double the previous season.

Mr Moore said most growers would experience a 40 to 50 per cent reduction in orchard gate returns over the previous season, receiving \$9 to \$12 a tray compared with \$18 to \$19 a year earlier. He predicted difficult times ahead for the industry's relationship with international markets because it would not be seen as a reliable supplier.

The Bay's climate was regarded as marginal for the tropical tree. It was a cold snap from November 23 to 26 which Mr Partridge believes was a factor in the poor fruit set. The reason some fruitlets survived and others perished was a combination of the lie of the trees in relation to

# Grower Member Application Form

## Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

For Associate and Affiliate membership application forms please go to [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) or call **07 3391 2344**

### Member Details

Business name and/or trading name: \_\_\_\_\_

ABN: \_\_\_\_\_

Key contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred address (postal): \_\_\_\_\_

Address of property (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Details

Business phone no: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone no: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax no: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile no: \_\_\_\_\_

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 avocado production (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:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental management/ sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Assurance       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organic farming systems                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology/innovations  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water management                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field days                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Supply chain management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pest management                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Key political issues    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food safety                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)  |



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## News from Around the World *continued*

November's south-westerly snap and when trees flowered.

Fruitlets on trees that flowered a month before the cold snap were more resilient and survived, while fruitlets on trees that flowered two weeks later failed to develop. Another major reason was the old pattern for avocado trees to crop on alternate years. Although modern horticultural practices got around this, the tendency was more likely to rear its head after an extremely heavy crop.

Katikati grower Syd Hopkins said avocados were very temperamental trees and the cause of the problem was as much climatic as growers doing something special or something wrong. Jack Crozier, of Avocado Asset Management, said some really good orchards that never missed out on fruit had nothing. "It is a bit soul destroying. There is a lot of negativity out there which is a darn shame - it is just a bad year." Mr Crozier said people had been paying really good prices for orchards over the last 12 to 18 months. "Now they will have to hang in there and battle it out. Their next cash flow is 18 months away."

*Source: Bay of Plenty Times*

### US: Bravo Calavo avocado sales fail to halt losses

The Californian-based avocado company Calavo has reported net revenues for the first quarter to the end of January of US\$50.6m, up 6% from the corresponding quarter last year, but also recorded a net loss of \$0.67m.

However, the first-quarter net loss was \$0.88m lower than the \$1.5m loss recorded in the first quarter of the previous financial year. Revenue growth was spurred by higher sales of California avocados and processed products, the company reported.

"I am pleased with Calavo's progress in the first quarter, which is historically our smallest quarter and during which we receive the fewest pounds of California avocados," said president and CEO Lee Cole. "Despite this seasonality, we packed and sold 5.5 mln more pounds of California fruit in the most recent quarter than in last year's first period - an indicator of the anticipated record domestic crop to come in 2006 - while, most notably, momentum of avocado deliveries to our packing-houses accelerated throughout the quarter."

Calavo reported that California avocado net sales rose by around 32% while first-quarter processed avocado sales rose by 38% to \$2.2m.

International and perishable products revenues were boosted by an increase of 8.2m pounds, or 52%, in Mexican-grown avocado sales, which the company attributed primarily to the removal of US import limits in February 2005. However, higher volumes of Mexican avocados could not offset substantially lower quarterly sales of fruit from Chile and The Dominican Republic, as well as lower papaya sales.

Looking ahead, Cole said: "We view the second quarter of 2006 and beyond with great anticipation. By all indications, the volume of avocados arriving already into our California packing-houses points to a noteworthy year ahead."

News from Around the World  
continued

**Mission Buys Interest in Henry Avocado**

Mission Produce Inc., Oxnard, California, announced that they have purchased a minority interest in Henry Avocado Corporation. Mission, a global avocado packer, importer, processor, and distributor has operations in California, Denver, Chicago, New Jersey, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle and Mexico. They also are the largest importer of Chilean avocados. During the past several years, Mission has developed a national ripening and distribution network that has contributed to extraordinary growth in avocado consumption.

Henry Avocado, based in Escondido, California, is a long time, family-owned company that also focuses on distributing custom ripened fresh avocados to their customers. Pioneers in the avocado industry, Henry has facilities in San Jose and Escondido, California, and Phoenix, Arizona.

“With similar philosophies on ripe distribution, and a good match up with facilities, we feel this arrangement will strengthen both companies. We avoid duplication, and create efficiencies. This is a win-win for all.” said Mission Produce CEO, Stephen Barnard.

“Not only do the facilities match up well, the customers match up well. Mission is very strong in retail distribution, while Henry’s emphasis has been foodservice, although both companies have key accounts in both categories.” stated Phil Henry, President of Henry Avocado Corporation.

“In these times of consolidation in the produce industry, this move will

be good for all Mission and Henry customers,” said Ross Wileman, VP of Sales & Marketing at Mission. “Our ability to service our customers has been greatly enhanced by the increased volume of fruit we will have on a year-round basis. Last year, with a short crop and tight supplies in California, we were limited in our new customer growth. This move broadens our base of California fruit availability,” noted Wileman. The combined revenues of both companies exceed \$250 million.

*Source: Mission Produce*

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