A young child with dark hair and a white shirt with blue sleeves is eating a slice of avocado. The child is looking directly at the camera. In the background, there are educational posters on a blue wall. One poster shows a tomato plant with the word 'process' and another shows a smiling avocado character. The text 'Egg Tomato' and 'compost & recycle' are also visible on the posters.

# TALKING AVOCADOS

**Eating my colourful vegies and fruit**

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**Avocado R&D and Marketing  
Program Overview 2010**

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**VII World Avocado Congress 2011**

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**SPRING 2010**

Print Post Approved - 44307/0006

Volume 21 No 3



# Chairman's Perspective

The Board of Avocados Australia, the Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) and a group of enthusiastic growers, contributors and market wholesalers have been active in developing the new industry strategic plan to cover the next five years 2010-2015.

Now I can hear the sound of serious snoring at the very mention of the words 'strategic plan', and I can sympathize with you. I had the same urge when this subject came up this year.

However on reflection, I look at this avocado industry and compare it to those other horticultural crops around us and I see a difference. **A very big difference.** Our avocado industry is comfortably profitable even in peak supply periods and has a general positive feel about it.

Our industry has an extensive research and development (R&D) programme aiming to improve the critical aspects of production and we have an innovative marketing programme that is the envy of all the other horticultural industries in Australia, and we even rate a special mention from countries like Mexico and Chile who are massive avocado producers.

You would expect such a self gratifying comment from



the Chairman, but those that know me well will understand the difficulty I have with the development of strategic plans and associated paperwork.

I am reformed. I am encouraged by the outstanding success of the work done under the last 2005-2010 plan and this gives me, the Avocados Australia Board, CEO Antony Allen and the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) the confidence to plan ahead for the benefit of all Australian avocado growers from Denmark, Western Australia to Dimbulah, Queensland.

There is nothing the Avocados Australia Board or the IAC does that doesn't first refer to the strategic plan. Believe this, because it really does control the direction of the flow of funds for projects in R&D and marketing. The strategic plan directs our future development in every sense and it provides the checks and balances to make sure that your levy funds and the Federal Government contributions are spent wisely and responsibly.

One of the key aspects in the plan is the constant theme of evaluating and measuring projects for their success and appropriateness to the future of our industry.

Some statistics to show the scope of your levy funds at work are:

- Your grower contribution to the levy programme contributes about \$1.3 million and this is matched by another \$1.3 million matching contribution from the Australian Government, for a total of \$2.7 million spent annually on R&D. There are currently 61 projects underway in R&D.
- Your grower contribution to levies designated for marketing is about \$2.1 million and this spent is very strategically with one concept in mind - to increase the demand for Australian avocados. 'Australian Avocados Everyday for a Healthy Life' is the one message that will drive us forward.

The final draft of the Strategic Plan 2010-2015 will now be circulated to all growers for your review and comments. Please look it over and feel free to contact any Board member to express your point of view, or to have your suggestions and comments considered for inclusion please contact the consultant facilitating the strategic plan development, Jenny Margetts on 0418 215 276

I'm excited. I hope you will be too!

*Jim Kochi*

Jim Kochi,  
Chairman, Avocados Australia

## 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, Spicer Labels, Sinclair International and Warehouse Packaging and Design 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

Written, edited and compiled by

**Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia**

## Australian Avocados – on the food service road again

The Australian Avocados food service chef training program that debuted earlier this year went on its biggest tour yet this winter, holding training classes in five states over three weeks in July 2010. Teaming up with commercial catering giant Alliance, Australian Avocados was part of one of only two national ‘masterclasses’ Alliance conduct annually with their staff around the country.

Alliance Catering - a hospitality division of the integrated services group Spotless - feeds a staggering 180,000 customers a day across a wide variety of outlets; from schools and aged care facilities to corporate lunches and stadiums. Alliance’s food philosophy encourages its chefs to use seasonal ingredients and to be adventurous with their menus. With an emphasis on fresh produce and healthy eating, Alliance Catering and Australian Avocados was a perfect partnership.

A purchase record of more than 120,000 kilograms of fruit and vegetables each month shows that Alliance’s dedication to fresh food is more than just lip service and also presents Australian Avocados with a massive increase in usage opportunity. Avocados already have presence on Alliance menus in traditional café type fare, and interestingly, chefs are encouraged to use avo slices rather than smearing the fruit to best illustrate that it is in fact fresh, and not derived from frozen pulp.

Kicking off in Brisbane and making its way to Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and wrapping up in Melbourne, the chef training classes emphasized the importance of fruit and vegetables in the creation of a balanced menu as well as demonstrated how to offer diverse meat-free options.

Attended by more than 400 chefs and site managers nation wide, the sessions were hosted by dynamic celebrity chef and educator Peter Howard, who alongside his 40 years of cooking and 16 years of television appearances has

also written and co-authored 18 cook books and two food service textbooks. Passionate about healthy eating and Australian produce, Peter is recognised by Tourism Training Australia as a ‘living legend’ for his work showcasing our national spoils.

The presentations were lively, engaging and full of enthusiasm. Peter’s education degree also means he has excellent teaching skills so key messages about seasonality, nutritional properties and versatility of the avocado were clearly conveyed and well received. The diversity of the audience’s workplaces was also taken into account, to emphasise the appeal of the avocado for those particular consumers. For example, in Adelaide it was identified that a significant percentage of attendees were from aged care facility kitchens and subsequently the nutritional aspects, smooth texture (ease of chewing and swallowing) was highlighted. In sessions where school canteen managers were present, the health benefits of the fruit were highlighted along with its ability to act as a substitute for products with possible allergens.

The chef training sessions were of course, accompanied by several avocado tastings including the usual sensory exercise to demonstrate the range of flavours possible with the fruit: raw, salted, sugared, flash fried avocado with chili and garlic as well as an avocado and coconut shooter. Guests also got to sample tempura avocado with daikon and mustard cress, an avocado and pea mash canapé with tempeh, as well as an avocado pickled mushrooms and vermicelli stir fry. Alliance staff prepared the sample dishes to a final stage of preparation before cooking and presentation - thus adding a ‘hands on’ component to their avocado repertoire.

Feedback from the Alliance sessions was very positive. On a scale of 5, attendees ranked the classes an average 4.5 for usefulness and an average of 3.7 for likelihood of increasing avocado usage following the session.

Australian Avocados also held a chef training sessions with another commercial catering group - Delaware North, at

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their Etihad Stadium premises. Delaware North employs more than 5000 people across its thirty national locations, including airports, railway stations, national parks and resorts. Hosted by Kate McGhie, award winning chef and food writer and chair of judges for Victorian Restaurant and Caterers, the menu for this event was aimed at the corporate boxes.

Tomato seawater with finely diced avocado, ocean trout with avocado, ginger and mirin sorbet, avocado san choi bau and glazed pork belly squares topped with chocolate and chilli dusted avocado were some of the delights Kate and the Delaware North crew dished up on the day to the surprise and pleasure of the other attending Etihad chefs.

The program so far has been a great success for Australian Avocados. Follow up research with chefs who have attended indicates that 73 per cent of respondents have increased avocado usage and/or created a new avocado dish for their menu following the training.

The next stop for the Australian Avocados chef training program is the Hilton Brisbane for an intimate event exclusive to chefs of four and five star hotels which will be held sometime in the second week of October 2010.

## OrchardInfo

All Australian growers will receive both an electronic (if you have an email address) and a hard copy Orchard Profile form this year after your season finishes. These forms are used to collect orchard information including tree numbers, tree age, varieties, rootstocks and overall production. Once collated, this information will give individuals and the industry a good understanding of how many trees of different ages are in the ground and therefore provide the information necessary to do long term forecasting for the industry. It will also give individuals a good idea of what varieties are being grown where.

See below for an example form.

Block	Area	Tree No.	Age	Rootstock	Area	Production	Comments
1	1	100	5	1	100	100	
1	1	101	5	1	100	100	
1	1	102	5	1	100	100	
1	1	103	5	1	100	100	
1	1	104	5	1	100	100	
1	1	105	5	1	100	100	
1	1	106	5	1	100	100	
1	1	107	5	1	100	100	
1	1	108	5	1	100	100	
1	1	109	5	1	100	100	
1	1	110	5	1	100	100	

You would have received these forms in the past, but this year there will be a very thorough follow-up program to ensure maximum participation and therefore optimum results. We would strongly encourage you to fill in the form to the best of your ability when it arrives.

All contributors of data will receive a comprehensive report of the aggregated data at the end of the 2010 growing season (once all regions have finished their season).



## Draft Avocado Industry Strategic Plan available for Review

Over the last six months the avocado industry members have been busy developing a new 'Avocado Industry Strategic Plan' to guide investment of industry and government monies over the next five years. A draft copy of the plan is included with Talking Avocados and industry participants are asked to provide comments and feedback before the plan is finalised.

It is expected that more than \$25 million will be invested into avocado industry research and development (R&D) and promotion over the next five years. Therefore one of the roles of the strategic plan is to demonstrate to levy payers that their money is being and will be invested in the most effective way to achieve growth, development and increased profitability for the industry. Likewise, the Australian government can be assured that the public monies of industry levies and Commonwealth matching funds are being allocated wisely and are addressing government research and development priorities.

Good strategic planning is fundamental to the success and development of any business, organisation or industry. Apart from providing a clear direction (strategic intent) and defining the key outcomes required to advance the industry, it is important that the industry strategic plan defines how these outcomes will be monitored or evaluated.

The plan will also provide a management framework for Avocados Australia, and will guide industry leadership and decision making. It will assist in ensuring investment is targeted and delivering preferred outcomes for the industry.

## An overview of the Draft Strategic Plan

### Strategic Intent:

Australian Avocados Everyday for a Healthy Life!

### Key Aspirations:

The Australian avocado industry aspires to be a growing, progressive, profitable and sustainable industry and a leader in product, supply chain and industry development and innovation.

Industry Matters continued

It aims to deliver to its customers a consistent, good quality product; innovation and choice; and a product that is recognised and appreciated as Australian and an essential health food.

So that.... Australian avocados are an everyday food option/purchase.

**Objective 1:** To build a sustainable and competitive supply of Australian avocados to meet consumer needs.

<b>Strategy 1.1</b> Continuously improve the efficiency of avocado production and packhouse systems	<b>Strategy 1.2</b> To ensure that consumers can confidently purchase consistently high quality fresh avocados at retail level	<b>Strategy 1.3</b> Maintain supply/demand balance
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**Objective 2:** To increase demand for Australian avocados.

<b>Strategy 2.1</b> Conduct product research to take advantage of new market opportunities for Australian avocados	<b>Strategy 2.2</b> Conduct market segment research to better understand demand drivers
<b>Strategy 2.3</b> Increase consumer confidence in Australian avocados through effective issues management	<b>Strategy 2.4</b> Drive growth in targeted avocado market segments through effective market development and promotion

**Objective 3:** To ensure appropriate organisation, resourcing and management of the affairs of the Australian avocado industry to support the development of the industry on an ongoing basis.

<b>Strategy 3.1</b> Develop industry leadership and capacity to secure long term sound stewardship of the Australian avocado industry	<b>Strategy 3.2</b> Improve industry communication and extension to facilitate improved outcomes for industry and industry investors	<b>Strategy 3.3</b> Ensure the industry has appropriate resources/risk management strategies to function effectively
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A copy of the full draft 'Industry Strategic Plan' has been included with this edition of Talking Avocados.

We ask all avocado growers and industry members to take the time to read this document and if you would like to provide comments or feedback we ask you to do so **before 29 November 2010**. Comments/feedback can be directed to the consultant facilitating the plan or the CEO of Avocados Australia - contact details below:

**Jenny Margetts**

p2p business solutions  
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B: 07 3366 2710  
M: 0418215276

**Antony Allen**

CEO – Avocados Australia  
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B: 07 3846 6566

Source: Avocados Australia

VII World Avocado Congress hits the web

Avocados Australia is proud to announce the launch of the VII World Avocado Congress 2011 website:

[www.worldavocadocongress2011.com](http://www.worldavocadocongress2011.com)

The VII World Avocado Congress 2011 will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre in Cairns, Australia from the 5-9 September 2011. An event held every four years, the Congress is a rare opportunity for the world-wide avocado industry to come together to share and learn everything there is to know about avocados.

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The website is a resource for potential delegates, exhibitors and sponsors of the Congress to register their interest and receive up-to-date information about Congress activities, view the preliminary schedule, and access general information about Australia and Cairns.

“One of the great opportunities that the World Congress allows is the exchange of information between the Spanish and English speaking avocado world” explains Mr Antony Allen, President Elect of the International Avocado Society and CEO of Avocados Australia, “...everyone comes together, researchers, growers and marketers, all attend in large numbers.”

“This website, which is available in English and Spanish, is set to become a significant tool for communicating and keeping visitors updated about the most important event of the avocado industry” commented Miss Nataly Rubio, Congress Co-ordinator.

“Dynamic and easy to navigate, the website will give the opportunity to visitors to know all about the Congress and their visit to Australia” said Miss Rubio.

More than 1000 avocado researchers, growers, wholesalers, food service suppliers, market traders, retail and government representatives from across 15 countries are expected to attend the Congress in September 2011.

The Congress offers delegates the chance to hear expert insights on the latest techniques for growing; learn about the newest trends in avocado marketing; and listen to up-to-date information about how issues, such as the state of the economy and climate change, will impact the future of the avocado industry.



*The VII World Avocado Congress will be held in beautiful Cairns, Queensland.*

The Congress program will also allow delegates the time and opportunity to take advantage of global networking opportunities; to strengthen old relationships and establish new connections within the industry.

The World Avocado Congress 2011 website also offers information about flights and fun activities in Cairns.

Cairns is the gateway to far north Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef, offering world heritage rainforests and an abundance of natural wonders. Delegates can enjoy interesting and varied shopping, 5-star accommodation, spectacular dining, cruises and tour attractions.

“We are very excited to be hosting this event in Cairns, we are busy organising and it is shaping up to be an unforgettable event” said Ms Rubio.

Registration, accommodation, sponsorship and exhibition information will be available on the website in the coming weeks. For more information about the VII World Avocado Congress 2011 please visit

[www.worldavocadocongress2011.com](http://www.worldavocadocongress2011.com)

## Avocados Australia kicks off membership drive

Avocados Australia, the peak industry body for the Australian avocado industry, has kicked off a national membership drive this week.

Avocados Australia performs the functions a single avocado grower would find impossible to achieve on their own. By working with every part of the supply chain, from growing through to retail, they seek to continually improve the ability of growers to provide a healthy, profitable and safe product for all consumers.

“Avocados Australia is proud to represent the interests of all Australian avocado growers, but a lot of growers don’t know that we’re actually a ‘not-for-profit’ membership-based organisation” commented Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia.

There is a common misunderstanding in the avocado industry that if you are an Australian avocado grower and you pay an avocado levy then you are automatically a member of Avocados Australia. This is not true; to become a member of Avocados Australia an easy two-step membership process must be completed.

Grower-members have the exclusive the right to vote for their ‘Growing Area’ Director, which allows a grower to have their say about the direction of R&D and marketing. Grower-members can also attend grower field days and industry conferences, as well as receive member only communications.

Avocados Australia provides grower-members services with tangible benefits, these include: retail price information and dry matter testing results; crop flow data via Infocado; strategies to increase the use and consumption of avocado, and strategies to aide exporters access new markets.

“If you’re a grower, then supporting the industry is important now more than ever. It’s only through the

## Industry Matters continued

support of our members, and not industry levies, that we can lobby Federal and State governments to protect your business from bio-security issues” said Mr Allen.

Avocados Australia would like to encourage all avocado growers to support their industry and become a member. A united Australian avocado industry strengthens the capacity of the industry to be heard by politicians, industries and organisations, government departments and consumers.

For membership forms and information about renewing your membership or becoming a new member of Avocados Australia, please call 07 3846 6566 or go to [industry.avocado.org.au](http://industry.avocado.org.au) or email [admin@avocado.org.au](mailto:admin@avocado.org.au)

### Auspak Avocados stands out as most supported product

The Australian Export Company (AEC), trading as AVOZ Exports are set to take avocado exporting to a whole new level with the execution of handling and merchandising training programmes across Asia and the development of an avocado ‘Export Manual’.

The AEC was formed in May 2009 by a group of

avocado growers, packers and marketers who represent approximately 50% of all avocado production in Australia. The AEC has already positioned itself as a market leader in quality, volume and year-round supply of premium Australian avocados to international markets. The company is already exporting Auspak Avocados to customers in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait.

“We are confident that we can supply a consistent, high quality, well supported product to meet your requirements and help you grow your business with avocados” commented Mr Louis Grey, General Manager of the AEC.

The AEC offers free training to importers and their personnel, wholesalers and retailers in the handling and merchandising of Australian avocados to maximise consumer satisfaction and build consumer awareness. This project was launched in conjunction with Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) and the Global Markets Initiative (GMI) of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), with DEEDI representative Jodie Campbell appointed as Project Leader.

Training programmes have successfully been completed in Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and



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\* STANDARD 5.5KG TRAY WITH INSERT

Thailand. In total, well over 400 participants have been trained this year. Market outturn reports are currently being completed in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong to assess the result of the training conducted earlier in the year.

In addition to the training programmes the AEC in collaboration with Avocados Australia, HAL, DEEDI and the GMI developed an avocado 'Export Manual'. The first draft of this manual was presented to the shareholders on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August.

The manual describes the processes and practices used by AEC members and their in-market partners to manage fruit quality through the avocado export supply chain; from growing and packing Australian avocados for export, to transporting avocados to international markets, and handling avocados from within the market.

Information provided for each step of the export supply chain include a quality plan describing the practices, monitoring activities and records required to ensure compliance with customer specifications; procedures which provide instructions for critical practices and monitoring activities that must be followed; as well as step-by-step guides and example records. The manual also contains product specifications and common quality problems that may occur.



*Dan Cork from Natures Fruit Company completing a QA inspection of Auspak Avocados.*

The AEC is very optimistic about the future as Auspak Avocados leads the way in premium quality and as the most supported avocado export on the international market. General Manager of the AEC Mr Grey will be attending the Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong from the 8-10 September 2010 to meet with existing AEC customers and potential new customers.

## Australian Avos in your burger and on your pizza

When you buy from Red Rooster, Hungry Jacks, Eagle Boys, and many of the café coffee franchises Australia wide such as MYO, Pure and Natural and Fancy Fillings you can be assured that if avocado is a topping on your pizza or a filling in the burger or sandwich you ordered, then you are enjoying top quality Australian-grown avocados.

Smaller avocados and avocados with marked skin are deemed not suitable for the retail sector were at one time simply thrown away. This was done because consumers often believe in a common misconception that the flesh of such avocados is of a very low quality. In actual fact the flesh of these avocados are of a very high quality, but at the time, there was just no available market or processing capacity for such fruit.

During the last 12 years a few of those inside the avocado industry have established processing plants to take advantage of this opportunity; taking the best of smaller and marked avocados and processing the fruit to provide a range of innovative top quality processed products such as guacamole, hot guacamole, and sliced and diced avocado.

Simpson Farms operates one of the largest avocado processing plants in Australia, located at their Lynwood facility in Childers, Queensland. In only a short time they have gone from 42 per cent to approaching 100 per cent distribution through major food service distribution channels in Australia.

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*Industry Matters continued*

Simpson Farms has the largest supply base of fresh avocados in Australia, processing 100 per cent Australian avocados from north, central and south Queensland. Earlier this year Red Rooster adopted their high pressure chunky avocado with no preservatives or additives to go into the new Free Range D'lish burgers and wraps.



*Premium Chunky Avocado*

Commercial Manager for Simpson Farms Andrew Mead comments that Simpson Farms aims to engage and encourage the greater avocado industry to increase supply, "we need to get more growers involved in this, increase supply, and get a greater return for the industry". Simpson Farms also aims to continue to develop a range of innovative processed avocado products to meet the needs of consumers, the food service sector and manufacturing industry and engage all the major distributors to get the products out there.

Consumers can be assured that there are many in Australian avocado industry, including Simpson Farms,

who are working towards making sure that when avocado is in your burger or on your pizza, you're eating top quality Australian-grown avocado.

**Fertile volcanic soils attract Comboyne avocado investment**

By Kim Honan

The rich red volcanic soil on the Comboyne plateau is so ideal for certain crops that it's increased the value of land in the area. At their annual meeting the NSW Soils Network visited three soil monitoring sites on the plateau, including a dairy and an avocado farm.

Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority's catchment co-ordinator Simon Proust says they are three of 800 sites across the state, but the Comboyne soil is looking pretty darn good. "Comboyne's very well known for its soils, they've very deep, very fertile," he says. The soils in Comboyne are so ideal for farming avocados that increased investment in the crop has pushed up the price of land in the area.

Comboyne dairy farmer Jenny Hurrell says its left little opportunity for traditional farmers to expand. "Even though they've probably got quite a long payback period, they have bought the better land and they've planted these avocados in the hope that they'll get a good return eventually," she says "But the average dairy farmer and beef grower hasn't had that money to buy up land at higher prices."

Ross Williams has been growing avocados on Comboyne for five years. "You've got the red volcanic soils, deep soils that suit the drainage of the ground and avocados like well drained soil so they do well in this sort of dirt," he says. "You've got the aspect on the hills where you can face into the north and get good sun in the winter time."

Source: ABC

**New Agriculture Minister**

A Queenslander from Longreach, Joe Ludwig, is the new Agriculture Minister in the Gillard government. Joe is from the legendary heartland of the Australian Labor Party in outback Queensland. But it is also the area where the Nationals have a strong hold.

At the last election, voters in rural Queensland abandoned Labor. Joe talks briefly about his Labor roots, but is more focussed on the challenges ahead.

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## Some Murray Darling Basin rivers targeted for 45 per cent irrigation cuts

The Murray Darling Basin Authority says water allocations from some rivers should be cut by almost half as part of its plan to restore the health of the system.

The authority's plan recommends overall cuts of between 27 and 37 per cent from river water allocations, although the figure is slightly less if other water sources such as farm dams are included.

It says some individual rivers - such as the Warrego, Murrumbidgee and Kiewa Rivers - should be targeted for larger cuts of up to 45 per cent.

The authority says the proposed reductions would return an extra 3000 to 4000 gigalitres of water to the environment, which it says would result in the mouth of the Murray River being open nearly all the time.

The National Irrigators' Council says the proposed new sustainable diversion limits are "a dagger to the heart" of regional Australia.

"Cuts to food and fibre production of this magnitude will

hurt all Australians. It will cost thousands of jobs, put upward pressure on food prices and force the closure of farms that have been in families for generations," says CEO Danny O'Brien.

"Water is wealth for the communities of the Murray Darling Basin and taking away this much water would destroy dozens of communities and industries."

"If accepted, this plan would be a deliberate government policy to depopulate the inland of Australia, as if our cities are not under enough population stress already."

The Federal Water Minister Tony Burke has stressed that any plan to revitalise the Murray-Darling river system won't involve compulsory water acquisitions.

"If you do not want to sell your water, you don't sell your water," he says.

"There is a water trading market out there that is much bigger than the purchases that government engages in, and we purchase a fraction of what is available on that market, but we only purchase from people who are wanting to sell."

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority now plans a year of



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Industry Matters continued

consultations on the draft guide. Source: ABC

Successful Shepard Season ahead in 2011

In the last edition of 'Talking Avocados', we ran a story on the Thomas Dux Shepard Avocado Campaign. The campaign, which was extraordinarily successful, was funded equally by Shepard Australia Growers and The Harvest Company, and was supported by the Australian Avocado Marketing Levy with a \$10k contribution, through the Avocado Cooperative Promotion Program.



Brittany Pearce from Howe Farming Mareeba.

Horticulture Taskforce up and running

The Horticulture Taskforce (HTF) has held its first meeting with Chief Executive Officers from major horticultural organisations, which form the management committee, coming together in Melbourne on Tuesday 28 September 2010.

The Horticulture Taskforce (HTF) was established following the closure of Horticulture Australia Council earlier this year.

General Manager of Apple and Pear Australia and Chair of the Taskforce, Tony Russell said "the Taskforce is now getting on with the job of representing the Australian Horticulture industry."

"This body will represent all of horticulture and give it the voice that has recently been missing," Mr Russell said.

"Horticulture employs around one-third of those employed in agriculture. This is one of the key industries in Australia and we would like to see it recognised as such at a political level," he said.

Horticulture is the second-largest and the fastest growing industry in agriculture, supporting around 30,000 businesses nationally, and with a farm-gate value of \$9 billion. Total horticulture exports (including fresh fruit, vegetable, nuts and plants including flowers) were \$751 million in the 12 months to May 2008.

"It was resolved at the meeting that the HTF will seek a meeting with new Agriculture Minister, Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig, to outline key issues of concern in the hope that the industry can find solutions on behalf of the thousands of Australian producers and their families who depend on horticulture for their livelihoods."

"The HTF plans to identify key issues of common concern and respond to them on a case by case basis on behalf of its members," Mr Russell said.

"There were many issues of concern expressed at the meeting. Key issues including improving truth in labeling laws; better protecting Australia's biosecurity; seasonal labour shortages; water issues; resolving the Horticulture Code; ensuring Australia's food security; and better training and education for the next generation of workers."

"As a result of the meeting the group will be making a joint submission in response to the Productivity Commission's Draft Report into Rural Research and Development Corporations. Research and development is vital for our industry and the proposed recommendations will have far reaching consequences for our sector."

Mr Russell added that the HTF has had strong backing from across the industry and a lobbyist will soon be engaged to represent the interests of the industry in Canberra.

"Industrial relations, and the continued confusion regarding the Horticulture Industry Award, was considered to be the key concern of the group and the HTF is now seeking funds from its members to put towards a fighting fund," he said.



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Represented at the management meeting were AUSVEG, the Australian Mushroom Growers Association, the Australian Banana Growers' Council, Citrus Australia, Apple and Pear Australia, Nursery & Garden Industry Australia and Cherry Growers of Australia.

The next meeting of all members of the HTF will be held on Thursday November 25 in Sydney.

Other Members of the HTF including Avocados Australia, the Biological Farmers of Australia, Strawberries Australia, Australian Rubus Growers Association, Summerfruit Australia, the Australian Mango Industry Association and the Australian Passionfruit Industry Association will also be invited for their input on key issues facing the industry at this meeting.



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# Around Australia

## Central Queensland Report

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

Someone asked why I always talk about the weather in these reports? The answer is simple; the weather in Central Queensland is the most important part of growing avocados. We can do everything else perfectly but we have no control over the weather, and at the end of the day if it's kind to us, we all do well. Talking of the weather, what fantastic rain Central Queensland has had this spring. Normally the driest of months, the whole region has had bucket loads, Paradise Dam is overflowing and the water allocations, whether surface or ground water, are all practically 100 per cent.

The avocado trees are all looking as good as I have seen them and have flowered very well overall. It is little bit early to call what the set is like at time of writing this, and always a bit of a worry with rain and storms happening during flowering. You never really know what is going to happen, but over the next few weeks we will start seeing what sort of a crop that we'll have for the 2011 season.

A quick report seems relevant now that the 2010 season has finished up here. The estimates seemed very close to the actual numbers that came out of the region. The quality overall was very good, but in saying that, we still have to be diligent with our copper and Amistar sprays for this coming season, especially with the weather we have been having. The other factor was the price achieved throughout the season. We all had our ups and downs but overall I think everyone would be pretty happy with how things have gone.

The big news is Tengarra Farms has been sold and Billy Singh from Bingil Bay Bananas has purchased it, plenty of



work there but the rewards will soon come. To the other growers that are looking at avocados in this region all I can say is that, it's a great industry to be in, there are plenty of trees going in and as for the future - my crystal ball is a little hazy!

## North Queensland Report

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



Production in North Queensland has remained steady for the last few years. There have been some big losses in tree numbers around Mareeba, due to heavy rains in the past two years, and there has been some replacement of wet affected trees also. Actual new plantings have increased with new plantings of Shepard in the Mareeba-Dimbulah area and a large planting of Hass and Shepard in the Atherton-Tolga area. The forecast for total avocado production (Shepard and Hass) for 2011 stands at 1.4 million tray equivalents, which is an increase of around 200,000 trays on the production in 2010 and 2009. These past two years were high Shepard producing years so we may be in for a drop in production if the irregular bearing cycle kicks in. Growers from the different areas are reporting a highly variable year for 2011. The Shepard flowering started well with some early set fruit, but the main middle set looks to have been reduced or even failed, and there are still the remains of a last set in mid September. Shepard will be all over the place next year so good luck with the harvest. The Hass production, which is centred around Atherton-Tolga, has suffered from a warm wet spring, and the promise of a good flower show has dropped away to a bunch of empty panicles. Again, as with Shepard, the set is split and highly variable between blocks and even within blocks on the same property. Winter in 2010 was on Friday 13 August, and this brief cold snap may have helped the early flowers to set, but the warm weather following encouraged the trees to flush heavily and

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## Around Australia continued

compete with the middle flowering. This is our lot for the coming year and I wish all growers a kind passage through what appears to be an early, long, heavy wet summer.

### Tamborine and Northern Rivers Report

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



The Northern New South Wales and Tamborine region is enjoying a quite mild 2010 spring, which is in vast contrast to the 2009 spring that was dry, hot and dusty. In terms of flowering conditions, this has been a mixed blessing with wide spread rain ensuring plenty of moisture in the ground and regular overcast, cooler days causing less than favourable conditions for pollinators to do their job. Flowering is heavy and looking extremely healthy. Set is too early to say but fingers are crossed.

The bulk of the regions growers are in the process of wrapping up their 2010 harvests. Yields appear to be below expectation for most orchards, which is understandable considering the tough growing season we had. Reject rates also seem to be up, with growers complaining of much

monolepta damage, as well as significantly higher rates of both fruit spotting bug (FSB) and pepper spot.

Growing avocados wasn't meant to be easy, evident through this year's crop. We as farmers have benefited greatly from the education, training and wisdom of our industry's science and extension personnel, as well as the generosity of knowledge freely supplied by highly regarded fellow growers. If you as a grower have shortfalls in knowing how to get the best results out of your orchard and industry, it is important to put up your hand and ask questions to let your industry leadership best assist you.

I'd like to thank the growers of Northern New South Wales and Tamborine for the opportunity of representing them over the last three years. I enjoy it immensely and personally believe that your industry is in excellent hands.

### South Queensland Report

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



Welcome to spring in South Queensland.

On the crop front, the quality of the fruit this year seems to have suffered a bit from the rain earlier in the season

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I suspect. Up until Christmas we had very dry conditions followed by very wet conditions. We have seen a lot of small fruit that has probably died prior to the rains starting in January that meant to drop but instead decided to hang in there but never size up. This fruit has ripened quickly due to being very mature. Also post harvest problems have been more prevalent this season due to the wet conditions, so proper spray programs in these types of seasons are most important. Overall the fruit in my opinion has been ready earlier than normal and this is now showing with fruit color and sunburn as well as reports of fruit drop as well. The current conditions are also an area of concern for next seasons flowering, so let's hope for some fine weather.

The industry strategic plan has now been basically put together by all involved, which has been a big job and it's heading your way to look over and see that we have got all points covered for the industry for the next five years. If you have anything at all to add please contact the relevant contacts, or myself, and I will pass this on. Any input will be appreciated.

It's election time again so I would just like to wish the members standing in these regions all the best and I look forward to working with you.

## Sunshine Coast Report

By Henry Kwaczynski, Avocados Australia  
Director for the Sunshine Coast Growing  
Area



2010 brought another mixed bag in terms of crop size and returns to growers. Some areas reported excellent returns while others reported as low as 30 per cent of usual production. Flowering and crop set looks much better for 2011. As usual, Mother Nature will have the last word. The last month has been wetter than the previous few years. Fingers crossed that all the planets will be aligned and the Sunshine Coast will fare well in 2011.

In many of my reports I mention the high level of urban development and the pressure this is placing on agricultural land. 'Tile farming' is alive and well in our region. The tussle continues between state and local governments regarding the allocation of land for subdivision. The state is pushing for a major release of land for cheap and affordable housing, while the local council is more focused on controlled and judicious release of land to maintain the diversity of the region. The result is a patchwork of developments with farms being surrounded by housing developments, leading to restricted farming practices and disillusion with authorities and uncertainty about their farming future.

Another issue facing primary producers is the impact of the new water authority (UntiyWater) and its pricing structure. Some farmers are facing access charges for water infrastructure, whether or not they actually use 'town' water. At the time of writing of this report, the jury is still out on this issue. This is another instance of bureaucratic insensitivity towards farmers and the pressures they face.

The Sunshine Coast is fortunate to have two marketing bodies located in the region that for a number of years have served the avocado industry well. These are Nature's Fruit Company and Sunfresh. I urge you to seek information and, in line with my hobby horse about the importance of collective marketing, seriously consider engaging one of these companies to market your fruit.

The total levies collected from the avocado industry are expected to be around five million for marketing and research and development. This significant amount of money is managed by Avocados Australia on your behalf, to maximise return on your farming and levy investment. It ensures the implementation of appropriate marketing/promotion and research/development campaigns which align to the industry's strategic objectives - a prosperous and vibrant industry with a strong future focus.

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*Around Australia continued*

**Western Australia Report**

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



At the time of writing this, harvest north of Perth is nearly complete and is also well under way in the Bussleton/Capel region. Yields north of Perth have been well down on last year, but flowering looks good for next year. Fruit has been moving through the system steadily with strong volumes supplied nationally, but New Zealand fruit will begin to replace Australian fruit on supermarket shelves on the east coast during October.

A very heavy flowering in some of the Manjimup/Pemberton region may lead to heavy leaf drop and a corresponding period of heavy supply as growers remove exposed fruit from the risk of sunburn - this period needs to be managed carefully so an unnecessary period of oversupply does not occur. Communication with your packer/marketer and good forward thinking sales planning will be vital to avoiding this scenario.

The south west corner of Western Australia has suffered one of its driest winters on record. Thankfully frost damage has not occurred in this region, although significant

frost damage around and north of Perth has impacted mango and citrus plantings as well as vegetable crops. A small area of avocados near Gingin was also impacted. Growers in the south west region who rely on surface water catchment for irrigation are in many cases facing water shortages for the first time. Not only are many dams short of their normal storage capacity, continued spring and summer flows into these dams will be significantly less or non-existent. Soil moisture monitoring and water budgeting during the season will be critical. Many growers have begun irrigation somewhat earlier than normal, this coupled with heavy flowering and good crop loads will increase the normal irrigation requirement, only exacerbating the problem. Soil moisture during flowering is critical and this is one period that should not be cut back.

The water shortage in the Manjimup/Pemberton region serves to highlight the importance of the current proposed Warren-Donnelly Surface Water Allocation Plan and its potential impact on our industry. As one of the largest consumptive users in this catchment the avocado industry needs to ensure the best possible outcome for avocado growers going forward - and that is not the case in its current form. I will continue to keep growers in this catchment updated on the plan as it goes through a review process.

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## Tri State Report

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



I am starting to wonder what relevance the word 'average' has in the English language. We have endured a cool start to spring that is far from average. Average temperatures of four degrees below in the long term, and only two days for the month eclipsed the average temperature. As a consequence, flowering is quite delayed by possibly as much as two weeks.

As you can see from the photo I am somewhat follically challenged so the beanie has maintained its presence for much longer this year much to the boss's disgust (she detests it). Flowering is still looking very strong, and the positive of all this is that by flowering later we have a greater chance of having fruit setting weather conditions and achieving above average (that word again) crops. As a farmer I must find the positive in everything.

The increased flows in the Murray River have lifted both irrigator allocations and irrigator outlook throughout the Tri State region, and it is great to see some positive spirit.

A lift in prices for other commodities is now required to help growers out of the drought. We all await the Murray Darling Basin report and the dreaded sustainable extraction limits that will be imposed to see the effect on our long term viability as irrigators

This positive spirit was certainly present at our September field day held recently at Waikerie, again well attended by around sixty growers. Thanks to the South Australian Avocado Growers, Sumitomo Chemicals and the Adelaide Market avocado agents Costa Farms, La Manna and United Fresh for helping make the day a resounding success. The guys at Waikerie who did the organising did a fantastic job. We were extremely fortunate to get Tony Whiley down to talk on the topics of flowering pollination and rootstocks, with the aim of achieving consistent yields in later producing areas with Mediterranean climates. Tony's experience in Western Australia, New Zealand and Chile stimulated a lot of thought and we all went away with the brain cells functioning overtime, working out how we can adapt the information to our own farms. Again, we had a number of new growers attend and we have a significant and growing trend for new plantings through the district to replace the orchards lost through the recent drought.

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# Eating my colourful vegies and fruit

*Update on the industry's new early childhood program 'Eating my colourful vegies and fruit. An avocado sampler of sensory food learning experiences.'*

The Australian avocado industry's foray into early childhood education kicked off on 17 August 2010 at KU Centennial Parklands Early Childhood Centre. This event was hosted by Avocados Australia CEO, Antony Allen; Australian childhood educator, Shelley Woodrow; and Australian nutritionist and avocado nutritional advisor, Zoe Bingley-Pullin. At the launch, the avocado resources were unveiled with the help of Mayor Sally Betts of the Waverly Council. This public relations (PR) launch, was attended by key stakeholders in the early childhood care sector as well as media.

After the launch, the first delivery of the program went underway, which saw 72 early childhood centres sign up to the program.

The centres feedback is now flowing into the avocado industry and it seems the educational resources have provided the educators with great tips and ideas to create wonderful food learning opportunities.

The tray of avocados provided with the kit has meant avocados have been a special focus of the hands-on food activities with educators reporting sensory exploration, songs, seed planting, using puppets to retell the story of avocados from the 'Little Green Book', tasting discoveries and making avocado-based recipes.

With the current concerns about the long-term health of young Australians and the increase of diet-related diseases at an earlier age, the industry's contribution to education about healthy eating habits is timely and has been welcomed by the early childhood sector as well as the media. According to a recent National Nutrition Survey 1, 25 per cent of two to five year old children had eaten no fruit, and 22 per cent had eaten no vegetables on the day of the survey. This is of particular concern as

research 2 suggests that developing a taste for vegies and fruit at a young age is critical for the development of lifelong healthy eating – 70 per cent of our food and taste preferences are established by age 3.

Providing early childcare educators with the educator-developed 'Eating my colourful vegies and fruit' resources equips them with user-friendly and colourful materials to engage children in a food tasting adventure, that will guide and encourage a lifelong healthy relationship with vegies and fruit.

The kit resources include:

- A resource book for educators which includes background, notes, and a step-by-step guide to five food learning experiences covering sensory exploring, tasting, making and more.
- A large format poster - 'Tasting the

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging (1995) National nutrition survey. Foods Eaten, Australia. ABS, Canberra

<sup>2</sup> Birch LL(1999) 'Development of food preferences', Annual Reviews in Nutrition, 19: 41 – 62

## AVOCADOS at Croxley Hall Childcare Centre



We looked inside the avocado and found the seed pip to grow.



We put on a blindfold to guess the vegetables & fruits by feeling & smelling them



We also used the avocado spyglass to find lots of green coloured things around the room. Yummy avocado sandwiches and crackers with avocado have been on the menu for lunch and afternoon tea.



Avocados at Croxley Hall Childcare Centre

rainbow of colourful vegies and fruit' - featuring almost life size photographs of vegetables and fruit arranged in a 'fruit and vegie rainbow'. The poster can be used on the wall, table or floor and includes food-related sensory words to encourage vocabulary and language development.

- A 'Rainbow Colour Swatch' consisting of five brightly coloured samplers in a range of hues and shades for each colour of the vegetable and fruit rainbow. This tool will enable educators to lead matching, sorting and comparing exercises with real foods and those featured on the poster - finding 'same', 'similar' and 'different'.
- 'My Food Finder' is an avocado shaped view finder to focus children's attention during their exploration of fruit and vegetable colour, shape, texture and size.
- A set of picto-recipe cards providing a sequence of three steps through an avocado-based snack making activity for children.
- The print resources are supported by an informative website with printable samples from the resource kit.

The approach the industry has taken with this resource to ensure 'buy in' from educators is to have engaged experienced childhood educators Shelley Woodrow and Nadine McCrea from the University of New England (UNE) to develop the resources based on 'best practice' approaches to food learning and to position avocados in the broader nutrition context of;

- eating lots of vegies and fruit (eating the rainbow of colours),
- language development and literacy and through sensory food experiences,



- and encouraging children to try new food.

By linking avocado-focused experiences to purposeful learning and thinking beyond a single food focus this kit is earning accolades from educators and key stakeholders alike. For example, in Victoria, the Cancer Council and Diabetes Australia, who jointly manage the early childhood healthy lifestyles initiative 'Kids - Go for Your Life', have facilitated the introduction of the kit to early childhood centres through an encouraging introductory email.

### Next steps

Filming for a DVD, which supports educators' use of the kit, begins in mid October 2010. Three early childhood centres in Melbourne and one in Armidale will be showcasing different aspects of the 'Eating my colourful vegies and fruit' resource in action. The DVD will also include tips for preparing food with young children, suggestions for including avocados on the menu and nutritional information about avocados from Zoe Bingley-Pullin.

Based on the learnings from the first round of delivery, a further 368 early childhood centres will be signed up from the end of January 2011 to be part of the program through to June 2011.

Feedback from the initial round of 72 early childhood centres is very encouraging. The resources have enabled educators to provide rich real-food learning experiences encouraging young plant investigators, sensory food detectives, colourful food explorers, green snack makers and budding rainbow gourmets. By June 2011, the aim is to have a total of 440 early childhood centres implement the 'Eating my colourful vegies and fruit' program with a wonderful sample of avocado-focused food learning experiences.



*The kit in action at the launch at Centennial Parklands Early Childcare Centre.*

# Sunfresh Export Promotion 2010

Sunfresh Marketing Co-op is a Primary Industry Co-operative that was established in July 1995 as a grower/packer organisation to market avocados and other sub-tropical fruit for growers in the South East of Queensland. For over ten years the company has demonstrated its commitment to develop and grow exports by establishing strong international partnerships in Thailand and other South East Asian countries. This has led to market growth, in-store promotions and opportunity to have input into managing the avocado category at the retail level. The penetration of South East Asian markets and in particular Thailand is crucial to the continued growth of avocado exports from Australia. Promotions to increase consumption of Australian Avocados in Thailand has been led by Sunfresh and supported by Avocados Australia and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), and has had outstanding results to date. During this time the demand for Australian avocados in Thailand has increased from 10 tonnes to the current 200 tonnes per annum.

Choice Foods Thailand was established in 1972 and the company imports Australian produce of impeccable quality to Bangkok's international hotel industry. Today, Choice Foods is one of the largest and the longest surviving food importers in Thailand. Their offices growing throughout Thailand have established lasting relationships with the best hotels and restaurants across the country as well as their valued suppliers. These relationships are built on a strict set of values: Quality, Service, Integrity and Value. They search for the finest quality produce and begin by meeting every producer personally and knowing how it is grown, fed and harvested. The producer's philosophy on food must match to the exacting standards of Choice Foods to have them represent their interests in Thailand.

## Aims of the promotion

*To increase consumption of Australian avocados in Thailand.*

Sales of avocados increased during the period by obtaining new customers, notably one supermarket in Chiang Mai who would not have been obtained as a customer without the promotion and low prices. Price is extremely critical in the Thai market for fruit. 2010 have increased over 2009 sales by 27 per cent.

*To increase awareness of the health attributes to young mothers.*

An advertising agency was commissioned to develop a series of advertisements directed at expectant mothers and those with young families. Product Consultant reports indicated that most of their buyers were females interested in the health aspects of avocado.

*To increase awareness of the difference uses of Australian*

*avocado.*

The same advertising agency was commissioned to develop, from a Thai perspective, recipes which would appeal to Thai customers. These were given out at the point of sale.

*Offer price stability to the Australian growers in the domestic market in an oversupply period.*

During the weeks preceding the promotion and during the promotion several pallets of avocados were sent by air to Thailand. This gave growers an increased farm gate return on fruit exported. The 'middle man' was cut out from the wholesale aspect and returns increased by 15 per cent for fruit exported.

*Continue an education program with key personnel in supermarket chain stores on handling avocados.*

Choice Foods Sales Executive was constantly visiting the stores, Product Consultants, category buyers, and management at the various head offices. Pictorial charts for handling avocados in both the English and Thai language have been developed by Avocados Australia and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and have been distributed to the retailers.

*Continue to educate consumers in the health attributes of Australian avocados.*

One supermarket chain operates restaurants in each of their stores and this has become a draw card for inexpensive meals and at the same time shopping for their daily needs. The supermarket caters for all demographics using a 24 hour opening strategy. The Executive Chef sets the menus and each week promotes a particular product in their restaurants for the week. During the avocado promotion a menu was designed which included avocado and seafood salad as their weekly special menu and sold for just 109 Baht (AUD\$3.90).

## Anticipated outcomes

Increased demand and volumes of Australian avocados sold in Thailand by 30 per cent over 2009 by using sea freight vs air freight.

This year the promotion was held in July 2010. The challenge faced was to make the decision to run with the promotion with the background of Thailand being involved in its most violent upheaval certainly in modern times and possibly in its history. Commitment had to be made to advertising, printing and hiring of product consultants when there was little knowledge of how the political turmoil would evolve. It was decided that the advantage in freight cost offered by sea freight was not worth the risk of spoilage, due to political turmoil, and opted for air freight which although slightly more expensive gave much more

flexibility. In taking the decision of air freight vs sea freight, sales increased over last year by 25 per cent. Whilst this result was less than the desired outcome it was unknown at the time of setting targets that Thailand would face such a major disruption that would have such a severe affect on retail sales and the food service industry with little to no tourism during the period of unrest. Sales post promotion on average are higher than prior to the promotion and in a climate where all food sales are down. Avocados are just beginning to become established and with Avocados Australia and HAL's assistance we can see a quantum leap in the coming years. The supermarkets participating in the promotion are as follows:

Tops Supermarkets,	Foodland Supermarkets
Carrefour,	Paragon Supermarket
Villa,	UFM Fuji
Tantrapan,	Emporium Department Store
Central Food Hall	

Awareness of the health benefits of avocados increased in regards to young mothers and babies by promoting avocados as a healthy alternative using advertising media.

This year a secondary emphasis was placed on the health

aspect of avocados and an advertising campaign was designed. Advertisements were placed in the 'Mother and Child' magazine with three full page advertisements being inserted into the July edition. Three posters were designed reflecting the health benefits of avocado and placed strategically in the supermarkets above where avocados were displayed. A new recipe leaflet was designed and printed in the Thai language, again reinforcing the health benefits, with recipes more suitable to Thai flavours. The recipe leaflet was handed to consumers to provide ideas for different uses for avocado.

Hospital paternity and maternity unit staff are key educators and are long-term advocates on health and nutrition. Mothers and prospective mothers seek out information from popular magazines such as 'Mother and Child'. Mothers often exchange information and experiences at maternity unit sessions on Sundays. Choice Foods provides pregnant mums as staff at the maternity unit sessions. These mothers are vocal advocates of avocados, they claim that they feel better, their skin is softer and they avoid stretch marks post-pregnancy as a result of their avocado consumption. This information has been a good marketing angle for the messages to be passed on through these social networks.

**Why Sunfresh is your #1 marketing choice**

- Leaders in innovative, future-focused research and development
- Experienced, friendly and reliable customer service
- Grower-owned cooperative working for growers
- Largest direct exporter of Australian avocados
- Reputation for outstanding quality control
- Consistent high returns
- Lowest fees
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Marketing avocados and selected subtropical fruits

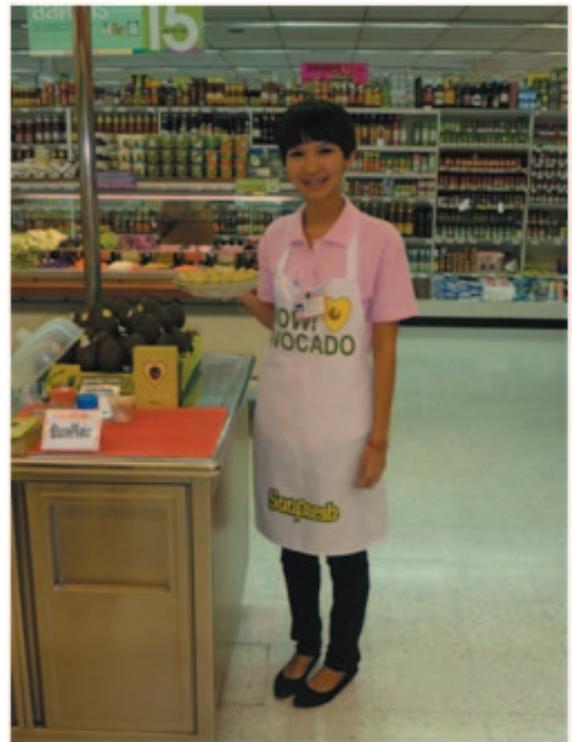
*Sunfresh Export Promotion 2010 continued*

Product consultants were used this year but concentrated their deployment over busier days to obtain maximum benefit. They displayed fruit, prepared samples for tasting and assisted customers to choose fruit for eating today, tomorrow and the next day. Fruit had been stickered with a label 'ripe in 4 days', 'ripe in 3 days' or 'ripe' to allow the customer to quickly look at the fruit and have confidence and understanding when the fruit will be ripe. Surveys carried out by the Product consultants gave good intelligence of the consumers' knowledge of avocado. Where Product consultants were located they engaged with an average of 700 customers per day, a total of 21,000 customers. This contributed to the awareness of Australian Avocados as well as the price. The response from customers varied from dislike to surprise. The overall response was more accurately assessed by the large increase in sales. From the surveys taken a clear message was received that there needs to be constant information on the health benefits of avocados and its uses, available for consumers to continue to increase the consumption of avocados in Thailand.

*Decrease over-supply of small fruit on the domestic markets and increase returns to growers.*

During the period of late June to mid August a major proportion of the Sunfresh smaller size fruit was on the export market, not the domestic market. A price was set and maintained through the promotion, which represented increased prices to growers by 15 per cent compared to domestic market prices.

*Increasing awareness of correct avocado handling procedures* is on-going for both retail chains and consumers. We believe that the Thai market has matured to a point where a majority of consumers of avocados know and like avocados. They continually ask about the health benefits of avocado and we will continue to develop new recipes promoting Thai flavours and their health attributes. In the five years Sunfresh has been associated with Choice Foods, observations in stores over that period show that the educational initiatives are having a positive impact on retail buyers as well as consumers. In chains



*Product Consultant demonstrating in a supermarket.*

stores where 'the ripe for tonight' initiative has been offered you see ripened fruit on the refrigerated shelves and some green fruit on shelves unrefrigerated. Previously you would have seen all hard green fruit on refrigerated shelves.

At other stores not being serviced by the Sunfresh importer we witnessed hard green fruit on refrigerated shelves and other fruit that was well past its use by date. In one supermarket we witnessed a customer picking up 10 avocados one by one looking for a ripe fruit - to no avail - she walked away empty handed. While in Thailand, Sunfresh and Choice Foods Sales Director were able to convince one chain to move from receiving fruit from an agent with no support or education, to Choice Foods supplying avocados with the back up support and training required for successful growth of sales of avocados. Ongoing training for managing avocados correctly is



*Advertising in 'Mother and Child' magazine with new recipe leaflet.*

reinforced constantly. Further training will be carried out for the Thai retailers on an on-going basis.

Overall, the avocado promotion was successful once again although the challenge was market confidence in tough political times in Thailand. All of the goals on the promotion were achieved and it is recognised that the Thai market is becoming more mature. When the ‘ripe for tonight’ program was introduced some years ago a gradual increase each year in sales of ripe fruit has been seen. Consumers now have a better understanding of selecting a ripe avocado for purchase, coupled with recipes for different uses of avocados, confidence is growing.

The annual promotion for avocados in Thailand puts the avocado under the spotlight in supermarkets for a period of time allowing more people to ask about avocados and in particular taste a ripe avocado. The health benefits of the avocado are a draw card for Thais in healthy eating. While we are witnessing more young people purchasing avocados, this is a positive opportunity to continue to promote the avocado to young mothers and their babies.

Sunfresh and Choice Foods will continue to work together in ensuring that Australian avocados will be made

available in Thailand for twelve months of the year. The health benefits of Australian avocados are still being reinforced and ensure continual education is undertaken with trade partners to empower them to increase their avocado category.

*Project Number AV09517 ‘Co-operative Promotions’ was jointly funded by Sunfresh and using matching avocado grower marketing levies through HAL and supported by Avocados Australia.*



# For Sale



## Fechner Avocado Orchard

This stunning property has the distinction of being the first avocado property established in South Australia. Planted almost 50 years ago, and operated by the Fechner family for the past 35 years, this property has sparked an industry that has thrived and grown throughout the state.

The property is comprised of the original Homestead, restored and renovated to perfection, in excess of 1800 avocado trees and a state of art packing and processing plant.

Inclusions:

- Modern Homestead surrounded by rose gardens lush green lawns and overlooking avocado orchard.
- Established orchard consisting of 1800 trees on 3 titles within the Golden Heights Irrigation District.
- State of art processing and packing plant with the capacity to process 50,000 trays annually, insulated, air-conditioned with cool rooms, storage and easy access.

Price on application

**Ray White**™

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Cary Hocking on 0488 414 460 RLA: 195714

# Using Lower Storage Temperatures to Improve Hass

*Peter Hofman, Roberto Marques, Barbara Stubbings, Liz Dann, and Lindy Coates*

*Agri-science Queensland, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, Maroochy Research Station, Nambour and Meiers Rd Indooroopilly*

The ability to delay the ripening of avocado fruit for several weeks can allow more cost-effective transport from farm to market, especially for export. It can also help balance supply and demand by holding fruit from over-supply times to higher price periods. However, the balance between improved returns and possible quality loss needs to be carefully considered since quality often declines with longer storage.

Reducing product temperature reduces its respiration rate, and is the most effective way of delaying ripening and deterioration after harvest. With most produce, a fine balance exists between not delaying ripening and spoilage sufficiently if the temperature is too high, but causing chilling injury if the temperature is too low. The balance is even more critical with longer storage times. With avocado, the main quality problems with lengthy cold storage are skin spotting (black spots less than 3mm diameter) and discrete patches (black patches on the skin greater than 3mm diameter) if temperatures are too low. Internally, postharvest disease caused by fungal pathogens and physiological disorders like diffuse discoloration (dark grey to brown areas of the flesh) can occur if temperatures are too high or fruit are stored for too long.

Poor production and harvesting practices can increase skin spotting (caused by physical damage during harvesting and packing) and fruit diseases, while poor storage and ripening can cause discrete patches and diffuse discoloration and increase the severity of skin spotting and rots.

We previously showed that flesh rots and diffuse discoloration are more severe when fruit are stored at 5°C compared with 2°C (Vuthapanich 2001). However, the risk of discrete patches means that Hass avocado fruit cannot be reliably stored below 4-5°C without additional treatment. Other practices such as controlled atmospheres (CA) reduce fruit respiration by lowering oxygen and increasing carbon dioxide concentrations in the storage environment. Currently, CA is recommended for seafreight journeys longer than 15-20 days, but this increases freight costs. Treatments that eliminate discrete patches during storage at 1-3°C would allow lower temperatures and potentially result in fewer problems with diseases and physiological disorders.

We have also shown that discrete patches can be reduced by preconditioning the fruit at about 6°C for 3-4 days

before cold disinfestation at 1°C for 16 days (Hofman et al. 2003). We were curious whether this preconditioning treatment would allow cold storage at less than 5°C for longer than 20 days. We investigated this within a Queensland-Israel Cooperative Agricultural Research Program (QICARP) project funded by the Queensland government. Preliminary work within this project identified that preconditioning then storage at 1°C only allowed about 20 days storage before unacceptable skin damage developed. Therefore, we investigated preconditioning followed by storage at 1-5°C. Storage at 2°C appeared to work well, so we investigated this in more detail.

## Storage between 1°C and 5°C

Commercially picked and packed Hass fruit were obtained from the end of the packing line from three orchards in South East Queensland. The fruit were transported to the postharvest laboratories at Maroochy Research Station (Nambour) within eight hours of picking. The following treatments were applied:

No storage	no preconditioning treatment or storage. Ripened immediately after harvest.
P, 1°C	preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days, then stored at 1°C for 31 days.
P, 2°C	preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days, then stored at 2°C for 31 days.
P, 3°C	preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days, then stored at 3°C for 31 days.
P, 4°C	preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days, then stored at 4°C for 31 days.
P, 5°C	preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days, then stored at 5°C for 31 days.

After removal from storage and before the skin had started to change colour, the severity of skin spotting and discrete patches was rated as the percentage of skin affected by the disorders. The fruit were then ripened at 20°C (no ethylene). When each fruit had reached the eating soft stage they were cut in quarters and the severity of postharvest disease (body rots [anthracnose] and stem end rots) and physiological disorders (mainly diffuse discoloration and vascular leaching) was rated as the percentage of the flesh volume affected.

Storage increased skin spotting and discrete patches compared to no storage as expected (data not shown). Lower storage temperatures increased skin spotting and slightly reduced discrete patches. However, storage temperature did not significantly affect the percentage of externally acceptable fruit at removal (based on the

# Avocado Fruit Quality after Storage

number of fruit that had 50 per cent or less of the skin affected by skin spotting and 10 per cent or less affected by discrete patches).

**Table 1** shows that the severity of body rots, stem end rots and diffuse discoloration was less at the lower storage temperatures; resulting in a higher percentage of fruit with acceptable flesh quality than at higher storage temperatures. These results suggest that Hass fruit could be stored at about 2°C with preconditioning without significantly affecting external appearance at removal, but resulting in significantly better quality of the ripe flesh after 31 days. Therefore we decided to investigate 2°C storage after preconditioning in more detail. Table 1. Effect of storage for 31 days at 1-5°C (after preconditioning at 6°C for three days) on the ripe fruit flesh quality of Hass avocado fruit. The percentage of acceptable fruit at ripe indicates the number of fruit that had 10 per cent or less of the flesh affected by defects.

Treatment	Severity at ripe (% of flesh volume affected)			% of acceptable fruit (flesh)
	Body rots	Stem end rots	Diffuse discoloration	
No storage	2.5 <sup>b</sup>	0.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.1 <sup>c</sup>	94 <sup>a</sup>
Pre-conditioned, then stored for 31 days at:				
P, 1°C	4.3 <sup>b</sup>	6 <sup>b</sup>	2.8 <sup>c</sup>	57 <sup>b</sup>
P, 2°C	4.5 <sup>b</sup>	5.9 <sup>bc</sup>	1.5 <sup>c</sup>	58 <sup>b</sup>
P, 3°C	8.2 <sup>a</sup>	19.6 <sup>a</sup>	8.2 <sup>b</sup>	35 <sup>c</sup>
P, 4°C	10.4 <sup>a</sup>	14.4 <sup>a</sup>	35.1 <sup>a</sup>	9 <sup>d</sup>
P, 5°C	8.6 <sup>a</sup>	15.6 <sup>a</sup>	11.5 <sup>b</sup>	25 <sup>cd</sup>

Numbers in each column with different letters indicate that the treatments produced statistically different responses ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

## Testing 2°C storage for 30 and 40 days

To test whether preconditioning at 2°C storage is a better storage treatment than 5°C (the currently recommended storage temperature), average-sized Hass fruit were obtained from two trial sites within the project 'Rootstock improvement for Australian avocado industry – Phase 3' (AVo8000). The fruit were picked from five trees each grown on clonal 'Velvick' and Hass rootstocks, and from five Hass trees grown on seedling rootstocks adjacent to the trial. The treatments were:

1	No storage - no preconditioning treatment or storage.
2	No preconditioning then stored at 5°C for 30 days.
3	No preconditioning then stored at 5°C for 40 days.
4	Preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days then stored at 2°C for 30 days.
5	Preconditioning at 6°C for 3 days then stored at 2°C for 40 days.

The fruit were assessed soon after removal from storage for skin spotting and discrete patches, then ripened at 20°C (no ethylene) and assessed for quality as described above.

We repeated this experiment on fruit from two of the rootstock project trial sites, with similar treatment responses. The fruit from trees grown on the different rootstocks also responded fairly similarly to storage treatment, so only the results for 'Velvick' rootstock from one of the research sites are presented here.

**Table 2** indicates that storage temperature did not affect the severity of skin spotting or discrete patches after 30 days storage. Storing at 2°C for 40 days increased skin spotting and discrete patches severity compared with 5°C storage, but these effects would have little commercial impact because of the low severity. However, storing at 2°C with preconditioning significantly reduced the severity of body rots, stem end rots and diffuse discoloration compared with storing at 5°C without preconditioning in both the 30 and 40 day storage treatments. In fact, 2°C storage for 30 days resulted in similar rots severity as with no storage. Therefore 2°C storage with preconditioning resulted in more acceptable flesh quality than 5°C storage without preconditioning.

**Plate 1** shows that fruit preconditioned then stored at 2°C retained green colour longer after removal than when stored at 5°C, and also had little storage-related skin damage and better flesh quality. These fruit also reached eating ripe 2-4 days later than 5°C stored fruit, allowing more time for distribution to consumers.

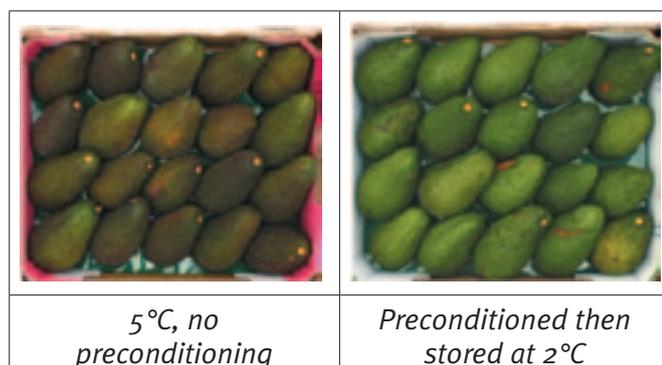
**Table 2.** Effect of storage for 30 or 40 days at either 5°C (with no preconditioning) or at 2°C (after preconditioning at 6°C for three days) on external and internal quality of Hass avocado fruit. The percentage of acceptable fruit at ripe indicates the number of fruit that had 10 per cent or less of the flesh affected by defects.

## Using Lower Storage Temperatures to Improve ‘Hass’ Avocado Fruit Quality after Storage

Treatment	On removal from storage		At ripe			
	Severity (% skin area affected)		Severity (% of flesh volume affected)			% of acceptable fruit (flesh)
	Skin spotting	Discrete patches	Body rots	Stem end rots	Diffuse discol.	
No storage	N/a	N/a	1.9 c	0.6 b	0.0 d	92 a
<b>30 days storage</b>						
2°C, preconditioned	3.0 b	0.0 b	3.4 c	1.6 b	1.8 cd	66 ab
5°C, no preconditioned	2.9 b	0.0 b	16.6 a	7.7 a	11.8 b	0 c
<b>40 days storage</b>						
2°C, preconditioned	8.5 a	2.4 a	7.1 b	2.4 b	5.1 c	48 b
5°C, no preconditioned	4.0 b	0.3 b	17.0 a	8.1 a	21.0 a	0 c

Numbers in each column with different letters indicate that the treatments produced statistically different responses ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). N/a = not assessed.

### Soon after removal from storage



### At eating ripe

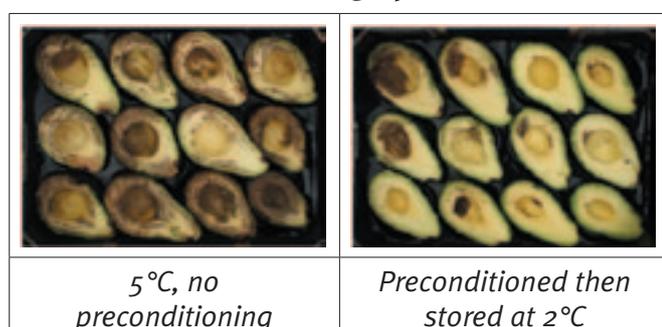


Plate 1. Hass avocado fruit stored for 40 days. The fruit were either not preconditioned then stored at 5°C, or preconditioned at 6°C for three days, then stored at 2°C.

### Other factors contributing to skin damage after storage

We have reported earlier that skin spotting increases during harvesting and packing, and that more discrete patches develop after cold disinfestation (no preconditioning) on fruit taken from the end of the packing line compared with fruit taken straight from the tree (Hofman 2005). This suggests that discrete patches after cold storage can be reduced by minimising skin spotting. We repeated this trial within the QICARP project by harvesting fruit at three farms directly from the tree into trays, and sampling commercially harvested fruit from the field bins in the field and at the shed, and after brushing and at the end of the packing line. Skin spotting and discrete patches severity was rated several days after packing and fruit was also stored at 5°C for 20 days with no preconditioning, or preconditioned at 6°C for three days then stored at 1°C for 17 days.

The results (Table 3) confirmed that skin spotting increases during picking and packing (no storage treatment). This could also increase skin spotting and discrete patches at removal from storage and reduce external appearance. For example, with 5°C storage discrete patches severity was higher in fruit from the end of the packing line compared with fruit packed into trays straight from the tree (off-tree). Similar effects occurred with skin spotting with 1°C storage. Therefore, reducing skin spotting could increase the percentage of externally acceptable fruit from 42 per cent (end packing line) to 100 per cent (off-tree) with 5°C storage and from 78 per cent to 93 per cent with 1°C storage

Preconditioning helped prevent discrete patches from developing at 1°C. This contributed to almost 80 per cent of the end packline fruit having acceptable external

## continued

appearance soon after removal from 1°C, compared with about 40 per cent after 5°C storage.

Reducing water loss from the fruit can also reduce skin damage during storage. South African research (Bower 2005) showed that sealing fruit in plastic bags can reduce water loss and skin damage during low temperature storage. The increased skin spotting with 1°C compared with 5°C storage may be because of a greater moisture loss at this lower temperature.

**Table 3.** The effect of picking and packing on external quality of Hass avocado fruit. Samples were taken either directly from the tree (off-tree), or from the field bins in the field or in the shed, or after brushing, or at the end of the packing line. Fruit were either ripened at 20°C with no storage, or held at 5°C for 20 days, or preconditioned at 6°C for three days, then held at 1°C for 17 days.

Where fruit were sampled	No storage	5°C	Precond. then 1°C
<b>Skin spotting</b>			
Off-tree	1.8 f	2.5 f	3.3 f
Bin field	8.1 de	4.7 ef	12.0 cd
Bin shed	13.1 c	5.0 ef	11.3 cd
After brush	14.8 bc	3.4 f	17.8 b
End packline	23.3 a	5.6 ef	26.8 a
<b>Discrete patches</b>			
Off-tree	0.0 f	0.7 ef	2.3 de
Bin field	0.0 f	1.6 ef	4.3 cd
Bin shed	0.0 f	4.2 cd	6.0 c
After brush	0.0 f	9.9 b	5.6 c
End packline	0.0 f	14.9 a	6.0 c

For each defect, numbers with different letters indicate that the treatments produced statistically different responses ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

## Conclusions

These results suggest that we may be able to improve Hass avocado cold storage performance by preconditioning and storing at 2°C. The preconditioning treatment reduces skin damage while the lower storage temperature reduces flesh damage from rots and physiological disorders. Further reduction in skin damage may be achieved by reducing skin injury during harvesting and packing, and preventing moisture loss from the fruit at all stages after harvest, and particularly during precooling and cold storage. It is

likely these treatments will reduce the need for CA sea freight for journeys of about 20-30 days. However, further investigation is required to:

- Confirm that 2°C after preconditioning is effective for Hass fruit from different growing regions, maturities and seasons.
- Compare performance against CA storage at 5°C. The above trials only compared against 5°C with no atmosphere control.
- Compare preconditioning then 2°C storage with atmosphere control.
- Determine whether more careful attention to moisture loss will further reduce skin damage after preconditioning and low temperature storage under commercial conditions.

## Acknowledgements

We wish to thank growers for access to orchards and packhouses, Tony Whiley for access to his Horticulture Australia Ltd-funded field sites, and the Queensland Government for financial support through the QICARP program.

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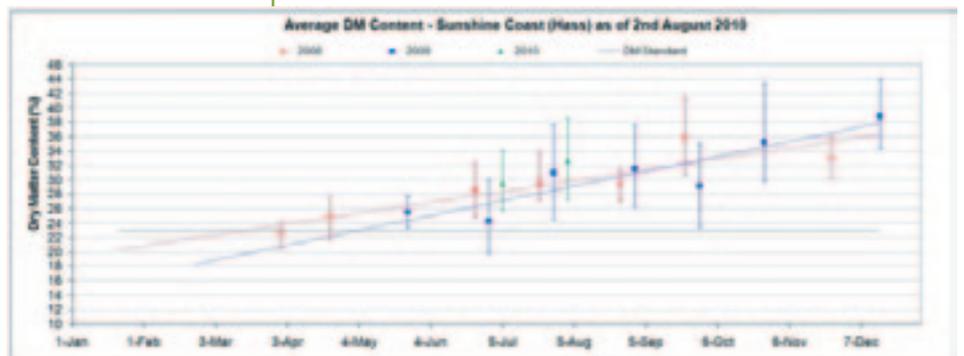
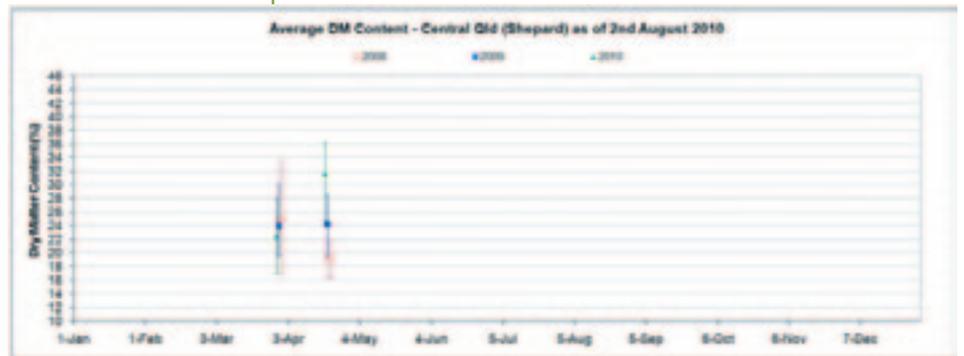
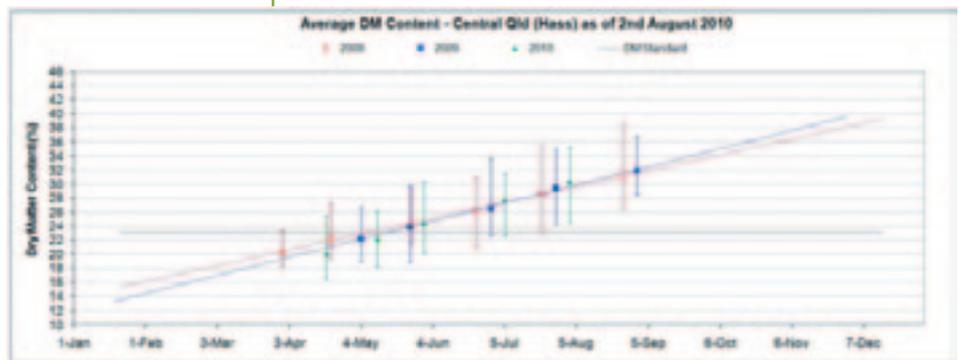
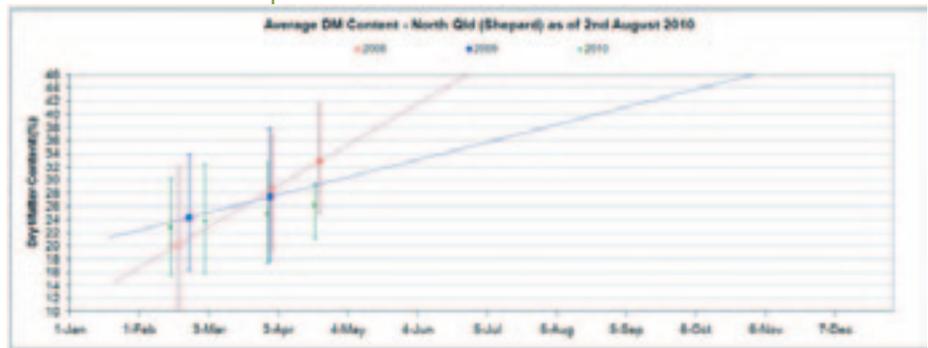
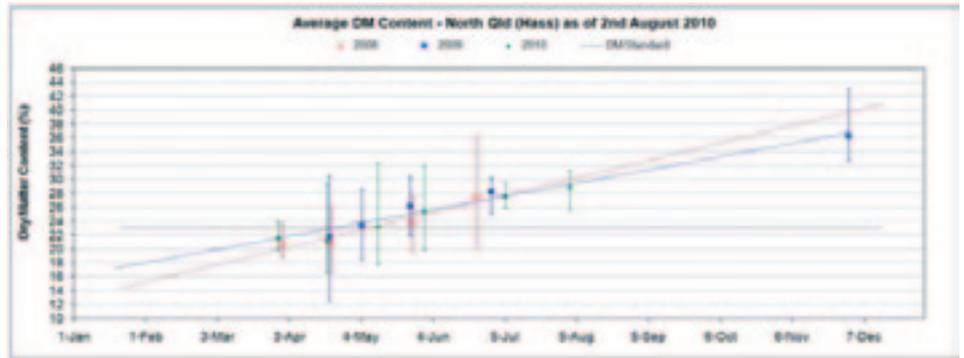
# Dry Matter Testing

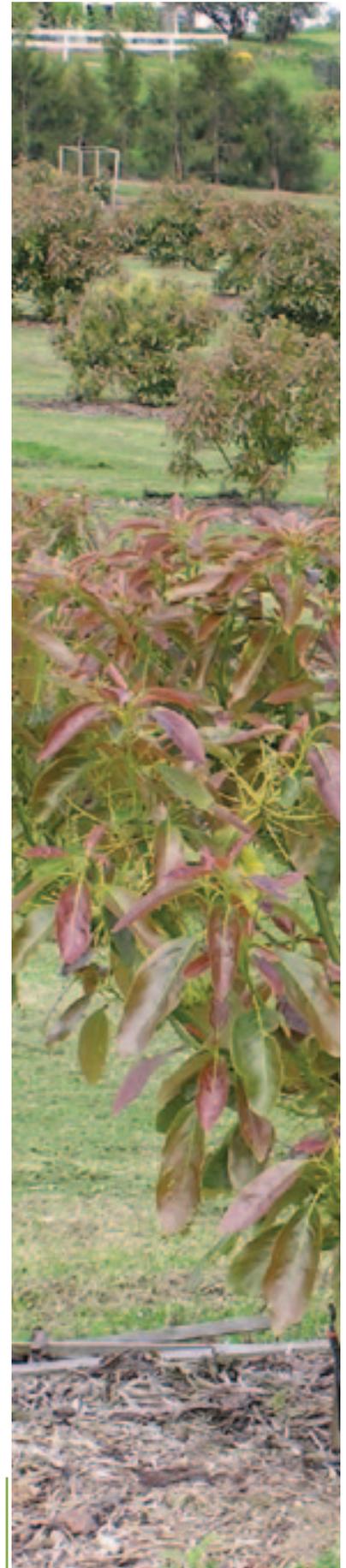
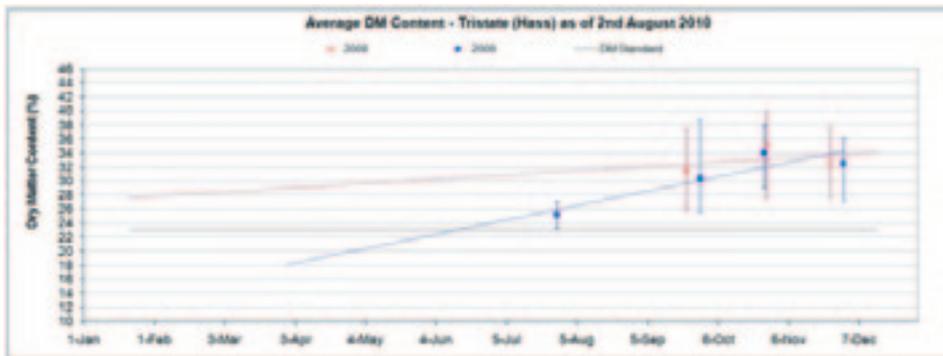
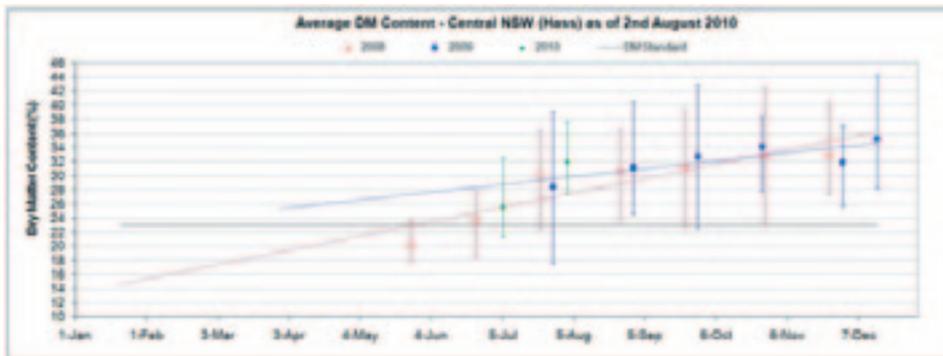
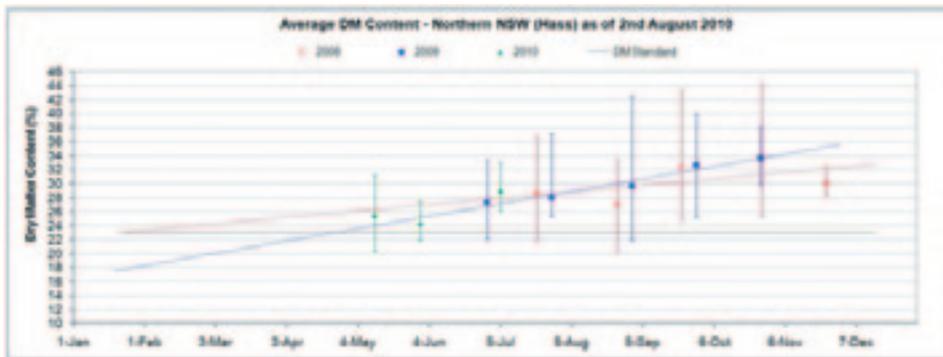
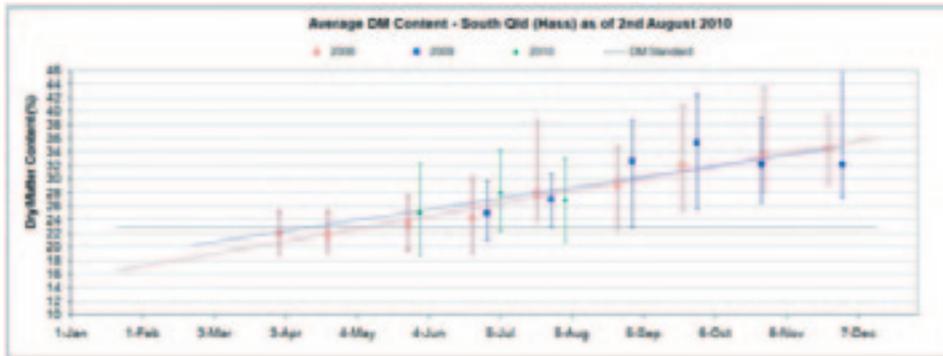
At the beginning of each growing regions season there are still varying degrees of fruit quality issues related to the marketing of immature fruit. Consumer research was conducted in 2007 which determined that harvesting Hass avocados that had a lower dry matter (DM) percentage, as a measure of maturity, than 23 per cent impacted on consumer purchasing. As a result the industry standard for Hass was increased from 21 per cent to 23 per cent DM.

To monitor the progress made in reducing the amount of immature fruit that is harvested in Australia, since 2007 avocados have been collected on a monthly basis from the wholesale markets and then tested for dry matter content (%). The average, highest and lowest values are calculated for each growing region and these results are published on the Avocados Australia website ([www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au)). Individual dry matter results are also sent to the growers whose fruit has been tested.

Below are the most up-to-date graphs illustrating average, highest and lowest dry matter percentages for each growing region by month.

In summarising the results to date, there was still some Hass fruit from North Queensland and Central Queensland testing below the industry standard of 23 per cent in early June. Southern Queensland had some fruit testing below the industry standard into early August, some Northern New South Wales fruit was testing below the standard into early June and there was some fruit testing below the standard into early July.





# Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010

John Tyas

Industry Services Manager, Horticulture Australia

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) is a national research, development and marketing organisation. HAL is an industry-owned company that invests more than \$90 million annually in research and development (R&D) and marketing projects for the benefit of horticulture. HAL works in partnership with the horticulture sector to invest in programs that provide benefit to Australian horticultural industries. The avocado industry invests through HAL in R&D and marketing programs using avocado levies and voluntary contributions. All R&D funds are matched, dollar for dollar, by the Australian Government through the HAL program.

The avocado investment program is reviewed and adjusted annually in line with the industry's strategic plan, developed in 2005. A new strategic plan is currently being developed to guide investments over the next five years. There are three key platforms of the current strategic plan which are being addressed through various projects: 1. Projects to drive Revenue Growth, 2. Projects to improve Production and Marketing Systems, and 3. Projects to facilitate sound Industry Management.

Projects relevant to the avocado industry are funded through four different mechanisms and these are:

1. Avocado grower levies,
2. 'Voluntary contributions' (VC projects),
3. 'Multi industry' projects where the avocado industry jointly funds a project with one or more industries (MT or HG projects) and
4. 'Across industry' projects that are funded by all horticultural industries including avocados (AH projects).

VC projects that relate to avocados can be found below with the grey shaded background.

MT or HG projects funded by avocado levies can be found below with the yellow shaded background.

AH projects can be found below with the blue shaded background

Below is a snapshot of the current avocado program funded through HAL. For further details on the specific projects, we encourage you to contact the relevant Principle Investigator.

## Revenue Growth

### AV10500

#### Avocado domestic marketing program

**Project Start:** 1-Jul-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jun-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Ms Gunjan Tandan, Horticulture Australia Ltd, 02 8295 2300

#### Service Providers:

Creative: Gallery De Pasquale - Cameron Parker - 07 3251 7757

Digital: Liquid Interactive - Samantha Pearce - 07 3363 5300

Media Buying: IKON - Alex Pacey - 02 9290 7527

Sampling: Tongue - Nikita Kalia - 02 8986 3947

Public Relations: Impact - Samantha Goodman - 02 9519 5411

Foodservice: Whiteworks - Stewart White - 02 9557 1433

Funding source: Marketing Levies

#### Summary

During 2009 research was conducted in three stages. Stage two was an evaluation of the new creative direction for avocados moving into 2010. This was done using a qualitative methodology. Four focus groups of light to medium avocado users reported their behaviour.

Based on the research results, over the next three years the new strategy will specifically target light and medium users of avocados, aiming to shift the fruit from being a versatile product ingredient in the kitchen to an indispensable ally, a must-have.

The strategy aims at tackling one of the problems identified in the recent research and that is of wastage. It was noted that 41 per cent had thrown away at least some avocado in the last month. This increased among respondents aged 25-34 and families. Important to note here is that some portion of the 41per cent also accounts for avocados being thrown away due to poor quality, not being ripe, etc.

As avocado production is expected to increase, the demographics were considered using the bread & butter research as well as AC Nielsen HomeScan to identify groups that would offer not just short-term volume growth but also secure the market share for avocados in the long-term. Hence, the target audience for the next three years is:

1. Bustling Families - Primary Target Audience (large households where main grocery buyer would be 40+ and the oldest child in their teens and staying at home)
2. Start-up & Small-scale Families - Secondary Target Audience

The promotional activity will be in the marketplace from July 2010 with some press material appearing from February 2010.

#### *Media*

Moving forward the focus of the media activity reflects the move towards an everyday usage message building on the versatility platform built from the 'add an avo' campaigns. This shift manifests itself most clearly in the television activity which has seen the avocado marketing program make a larger commitment to pay TV and, more specifically to the Lifestyle Network.

#### *Creative*

New creative has been developed for this year's promotion, with the campaign line evolving to 'Add an Avo Every Day'. This new campaign line will strengthen the call to action. New advertising material has been created demonstrating how avocados can be used in a variety of useful, easy and everyday ways, in order to drive more regular use.

#### *Website and SEO*

The new strategy means new additions to the website, but also finessing what is currently available. There will be new additions to the website (such as new look for the homepage, focus on quick and easy ways to add an avo everyday, etc.) so keep an eye out to see the upcoming developments.

#### *Sampling*

In 2010 avocados will increase NRL sponsorship activity, placing product sampling teams at selected NRL games. Through avocado sampling during the matches, NRL fans will have a firsthand association of avocados with their game. In addition to this, to reach avocados' key audience of mothers with infants, there will be an avocado branded stall at the Pregnancy, Babies & Children's (PBC) Expo to be held in Sydney and Melbourne and possibly another state.

#### *PR- Footy and Early Childhood Initiative*

The PR Footy campaign will be further extended this year and there will be a focus on driving awareness of the recipe competition at a grass roots level. Besides the Footy PR program, an early childhood initiative was launched at an early childhood centre on the 17 August, 2010. A scoping study completed in 2009 identified early

childhood teachers and carers as being key influencers in child education settings and an R&D program has been developed to produce avocado focused educational teaching resources for the educators. To support this R&D program, the PR campaign will launch a media announcement of this initiative by the industry and develop media kits as well as hold briefings with key freelancing dietitians & nutritionists; food journals and parenting titles.

#### *Nutritionist*

Zoe Bingley-Pullin has been contracted again on behalf of the industry as the avocado spokesperson. Zoe will help in developing content for the regular monthly updates on the website, be an active contact on the website forum as well as provide content for the EDM's (electronic direct mailers). The PR campaign will be using Zoe in media releases to further enhance the campaign and gain more media coverage.

#### *Domestic co operative promotions*

Based on the success of previous year's cooperative promotions, an allocation has been made to encourage growers, state organizations, market authorities, wholesalers and retailers to promote in a consistent manner to the nationally developed positioning to build brand equity.

#### *Foodservice Program*

The second year of the foodservice program will include further chef training and provider support funded from matched R&D levies (see below). The promotion activities will include PR and advertising.

## **AV10005**

### **Avocados in Early Childhood Initiative 2010-11, Implementation Strategy**

**Project Start:** 1-Jul-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jun-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Shelly Woodrow, Woodrow Consulting Pty Ltd, 03 95349921

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

This project aims to increase the knowledge and awareness of avocados amongst teachers through an early childhood avocado-focused educational resource which has been developed and trialled throughout 2009/10. The resource will provide Long Day Care and Preschool educators with a range of language development focused food learning experiences.

## Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued

The second phase of the 'Avocados in Early Childhood Initiative' is planned for 2010-11. The first month saw the finalisation of print production of the learning package and the development of the tools needed to begin the targeted roll out strategy.

The resources and program was made available by phone invitation to 440 Early Childhood centres including, Long Day Care Centres, Kindergartens and Preschools. Clusters of EC centres in six metropolitan regions and one regional town in four states were offered the opportunity to run the program in either October 2010 (NSW, VIC) or May 2011 (QLD, NSW, SA, VIC). Concentrating the locality of the participating centres will allow supporting agencies such as Area Health Service dieticians, early childhood nurses, EC providers and trainers to be briefed about the program and encouraged to support the centres in their locality.

As well as the package of resources, there will be an accompanying DVD that will be completed by November 2010. The DVD will provide educators with vital information, inspiration, tips and suggestions about the nutritional benefits of avocados as well as ideas for using the learning resources and avocados in the learning setting.

An online information resource supporting the program (within the existing Australian Avocados website framework) further ensures access to the program materials to the 440 participating EC centres. The Early Childhood website introduces and supports the offline activities of the educational program, demonstrates the objectives and value of the educational materials, incorporates case studies and work samples and builds up a database of early learning professionals.

The information compiled from the evaluation and action research conducted throughout the delivery program will inform the refinement of the resources and process for scaling up in future years.

### **AV09012**

#### **Food service - Provedore program**

**Project Start:** TBA

**Project Completion:** TBA

**Principle Investigator:** TBA

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

#### **Summary**

##### *Project Under Development*

This project aims to engage with food service provedores to understand their needs and provide information and resources to assist them with meeting their customer's needs.

### **AV10009**

#### **Avocado Chef Training**

**Project Start:** 1-Jul-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jun-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Stewart White, Whiteworks, 02 9557 1433

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

#### **Summary**

In late 2009, Australian Avocados embarked on a program intent on engaging with food professionals via a series of master classes to better educate the food service industry about Australian avocado versatility, seasons, types, handling and purchasing. The program spanned six months across the Eastern Seaboard and targeted a variety of food service sectors, including clubs, "star" hotels, restaurants, pubs and cafés.

The 2010/2011 Australian Avocado Fresh Avocados Masterclass sees the program launching in two new sectors and tested in two new states. Vegetarian Masterclass sessions will be held with commercial catering group Alliance in Western Australia and South Australia as well as along the Eastern Seaboard to be part of the group's national education program for its chefs. The program will also be introduced into the TAFE curriculum, accompanied by specifically developed educational materials.

Whiteworks will continue to target leading restaurants and "star" hotels in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland as these chefs are best likely to deliver the outcomes of versatility and creativity of use as well as high volume usage.

### **AV10501**

#### **Avocado 10/11 Export Marketing Program**

**Project Start:** 1-Jul-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jun-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Wayne Prowse, HAL, 02 8295 2300

**Funding source:** Marketing levies

#### **Summary**

This project aims to support avocado exports through promotion and market development activities.

The two activities to be supported in 2010/11 are 'Cooperative Promotions' and the 'Australia Fresh Program'. Cooperative promotion activities will be considered for funding through a formal process of calling for proposals.

The 'Australia Fresh Program' is a multi industry marketing project which provides industries with international advertising and access to participate in a range of international trade shows. The major activities of the program raise Australia's profile in export markets providing synergies across Australia's fresh produce industries across a marketing mix that includes:

- Australian stand and networking events at Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong each September.
- Australian stand at Fruit Logistica - Berlin each February.
- Advertising for Australian horticultural produce in Asiafruit and Eurofruit trade magazines and other suitable mediums.
- Positive trade PR messages for international produce journals.
- Ongoing development of the Australia Fresh Website targeting international buyers as a source of produce information and connections to suppliers.
- Ongoing development of Australian themed point of sale material for use in targeted retail chains in the developing Asian markets.

## AV09000

### Identifying bioactive components and portion sizes in avocados for consumer health

**Project Start:** 10-Jul-2009

**Project Completion:** 20-May-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Dr Jenny Jobling, Applied Horticultural Research P/L, 02 9351 3498

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

#### Summary

Avocados have long been seen as a nutrient rich food, particularly as they are a good source of heart healthy monounsaturated fats. However, further research reveals avocados contain a variety of bioactive chemicals which may be beneficial to human health. Avocado contains significant amounts of beta-phytosterol; phytosterols are plant analogues of cholesterol which act to inhibit intestinal absorption of cholesterol, thereby further enhancing the beneficial effects of avocado on the cardiovascular system. Avocados also contain vitamins C and E as well as significant levels of the carotenoid lutein; each of which exert antioxidant actions in the body.

An initial search of the scientific literature reveals much of the research surrounding avocado is dated.

This project aims to establish guidelines for the

horticultural industry on the regulations governing nutrient claims for avocado. It will also characterise the nutritional content of avocado and the extent of scientific research on potential health benefits and develop recommendations for priorities of the nutritional components in avocado.

The project will also establish a suitable portion size for avocado based on existing government and non-government recommendations and conduct dietary modelling which incorporates the portion size into a healthy, balanced low fat diet.

Finally, the project will determine baseline consumer knowledge about the nutritional values of avocado, as well as interest and appeal in potential nutrition and health claims. The information generated from the bionutrient study and the consumer focus groups can be used to develop new information for promoting to consumers the correct portion size and health benefits of eating avocados.

## AV07023

### Avocado weekly retail price survey

**Project Start:** 25-Jun-2008

**Project Completion:** 30-Aug-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### Summary

The Australian avocado industry is experiencing an extremely large growth phase in production with a 25 per cent increase in 2007 and a further increase of 17.5 per cent forecast in 2008. Creating an environment in which market forces work efficiently to clear product quickly through the market is essential under these conditions. Currently, the retail avocado market tends to operate independently from these market forces, therefore creating the situation where market signals are not clear and fruit can become backed up in the system. Although growers have a very good understanding of the prices they are receiving for fruit there is not an up to date retail price reporting system to alert them when market forces aren't operating to clear the market. Equally, consumers are also unaware at any point in time as to the price differentials between wholesale prices growers are receiving and retail prices they are paying.

This project is aimed at providing clear retail price data to assist consumers and the market to make informed decisions.

Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued

**MTo8060:**

**Consumer tracking study**

**Project Start:** 1-Dec-2008

**Project Completion:** 1-12-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Steve Sheppard, Brand Story Pty Limited, 02 8399 3850

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levy and marketing levy (multiple industries)

**Summary**

This project provides an on line tracking study to monitor a range of marketing metrics for assorted horticultural industries. The objective is to track consumption, attitudinal and purchasing behaviour and category perceptions; track change in product positioning for the participating industries and their impacts on key performance indicators, and to assist future strategic planning development.

The project uses a national data base for tracking responses via an online questionnaire. The study is national, with the target market of main grocery buyers.

The study will be conducted in six waves over two years with three debriefs to industry, using a total sample of 1800 people.

The outcomes will assist in planning and market development projects by monitoring changes in environmental and market factors affecting the drivers of the horticulture industry.

**MT10017:**

**Driving Demand Growth through Understanding Consumer Purchase Behaviour (Retail Scan & Homescan Analysis)**

**Project Start:** 01-Aug-2010

**Project Completion:** 14-June-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Roger Bramble, HAL, 02 8295 2305

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levy (multiple industries)

**Summary**

*Project Not Yet Approved*

This project aims to provide the Fruit, Vegetable, Dried Fruit and Nut industries with the knowledge required to increase consumer demand. It creates a unified approach to the processing, analysing and reporting of both supermarket sales data and consumer purchase data.

This project funds: (1) the acquisition of Retail Scan Data (from one major retailer) and Homescan Consumer Data (from a consumer panel of 10,000 households); (2) the servicing and professional analysis of this data; and (3) the reporting of industry trends and market development strategies associated with the insights gained from the data.

Retail Scan Data analysis and Homescan Consumer Data analysis will be analysed in tandem by external experts to optimise their value.

**Production and Marketing Systems**

**AV09001**

**National Avocado Quality & Information Management System**

**Project Start:** 1-Oct-2009

**Project Completion:** 30-Sep-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

The aim of this project is to bring together all of the results from AV06006 ('Scoping of a national avocado quality system and management of avocado industry information systems') and the supply chain projects that were managed by it and develop and implement an integrated quality and information management system. The supply chain projects managed by AV06006 identified where the industry currently sits in terms of quality and productivity and points in the supply chain where issues related to productivity and product quality should be addressed. It also identified learnings from overseas and other industries for developing a quality standard and maintaining that standard.

AV06006 was also successful in implementing and rolling out a system for managing critical information from sectors of the industry including production and productivity (OrchardInfo), fruit dispatches to market (Infocado - packhouses) and sales to retail (Infocado - wholesalers and retail price surveys).

The information generated regarding these two critical components of the industry ie. quality and productivity, is now available and in a format which can be used to develop quality and production management systems.

Two of the main issues which impact on the returns to avocado growers are related to fruit quality management

and the efficiency of avocado production and marketing systems. Both of these issues are being addressed through this project.

Continued management of the multifaceted information management system in the form of Infocado and OrchardInfo provides the industry with accurate production, sales and productivity data on which to make all future decisions.

Development of a framework for and assisted management of a quality management system will provide the industry with a tool to differentiate premium quality fruit. This will assist in targeting different segments of the market.

### **AVo8018**

#### **Development of an avocado ripening manual**

**Project Start:** 15-Jun-2009

**Project Completion:** 31-Jan-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Terrence Campbell, Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies and voluntary contribution

#### **Summary**

This project aims to improve avocado quality outturns through the development of best practice in avocado ripening. Ripening of avocados has been an under researched and documented process within the avocado supply chain. The ripening process is a critical point in determining the quality outcome for avocados and quality improvement is an essential industry strategy to improve consumption. The project aims to document the ripening processes and procedures for avocados.

### **AV10006**

#### **Avocado supply chain education materials – Phase 2**

**Project Start:** 2-Aug-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Nov-2012

**Principle Investigator:** TBA

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

#### **Summary**

*Project Under Development*

The resource audit conducted as part of the supply chain mapping project in 2007 (AVo6026) identified all the materials that are available to assist members of the supply chain to improve quality and efficiency. The audit identified a number of gap areas in terms of education materials. This project aims to fill those gaps where the

research results are available.

Significant research has been conducted over the past 10 years which still has relevance in assisting members of the supply chain to supply a better quality product to the consumer more efficiently. There is however gaps in the availability of educational materials to assist various sectors to implement these improved practices. Some of the material that is available needs updating to make it more relevant.

### **AVo8034**

#### **Avocado retail quality monitoring - Phase II**

**Project Start:** 01-Apr 2009

**Project Completion:** 31-Oct-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Limited, 07 3846 6566

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

As part of its key strategic focus on improving the quality of the avocados offered to Australian consumers, Avocados Australia and Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) are continuing a project to assess and improve current industry practices affecting customer and consumer satisfaction with the end product. The industry is adopting a staged approach to achieving this.

The Supply Chain Improvement project (AVo6009) is a two phase project which has been developed to specifically address objectives P1.1, P1.2, P2.1 and P2.2 in the strategic plan. The first 12 month phase was aimed at identifying where the industry currently sits in terms of quality and efficiency and identification of points in the supply chain where further work is required to make improvements in these areas.

This project forms part of phase 2 which has resulted from the recommendations of phase 1 to address the gaps.

Phase 1 has produced 3 outputs

1. Benchmarks for industry performance in eating quality (primarily maturity and freedom from rots or bruising) - from the consumer research and sensory research conducted in 2007 and 2008.
2. A supply chain resource audit of the industry.
3. A supply chain situation analysis for the industry.

This project forms part of output 3. To date, consumer sensory testing has been completed to determine quality levels which provide an acceptable consumption experience for consumers and hence do not negatively impact on future purchasing decision. The results from

*Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued*

this work in summary have indicated that consumers prefer fruit of maturity between 22 per cent and 28 per cent dry matter (DM), creating a competitive advantage by supplying fruit increasingly along this range. The results indicated that 85 per cent of consumers prefer to buy avocados at a level of ripeness that they can consume that evening and that that level of ripeness is in the range of ripe to soft ripe. Consumers indicated that any internal quality defects to more than 10 per cent of the overall flesh at all price points would impact negatively on their next purchase intent.

The first stage of this project was aimed at measuring how much fruit at the retail level currently fulfils consumers quality demands and where there are significant differences in quality, between store types and/or seasons.

**MT06020**

**Improving Market Access R&D for the Australian Horticultural Industries**

**Project Start:** 1-Jul-2006

**Project Completion:** 1-May-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Various providers. Contact Brad Wells, HAL, 02 82952300

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies (Multiple industries)

**Summary**

This multi industry project aims to implement the Horticulture Market Access R&D Plan. A number of projects are funded through contributions from relevant industries to implement the plan. The current projects supported from the avocado industry are:

- MTo6022 - Generation of dimethoate and fenthion samples to maintain market access. This project aims to provide data to support ongoing access to dimethoate and fenthion
- MTo8036 - Ecology and pre-harvest control of fruit flies for systems approaches to market access for fruit fly host commodities. This project will conduct a formal study of Queensland fruit fly movement at different scales as it relates to the improved use of MAT and bait sprays for pre-harvest control. This will help to develop systems approaches to control Queensland fruit fly.

**MT10021**

**Determination of cold tolerance in immature stages of Australian pest fruit fly pest species**

**Project Start:** 1-Dec-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jul-2013

**Principle Investigator:** Mr Peter Leach, Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation, 07 4057 3679

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies (multiple industries)

**Summary**

*Project Not Yet Approved*

Research on cold treatments to control fruit fly in has been undertaken over the last four decades. The major focus of this research has been on two species: fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly. Unfortunately, has over ten species of fruit fly which could be categorised as serious quarantine pests. The fact that there is no data on the tolerance of tropical fruit fly species to cold treatment is a major risk to both current and future export protocols.

The aim of this multi industry project is to develop testing procedures to determine the cold tolerance of Australian pest fruit fly species. This will allow negotiation of robust protocols based on science rather than relying on trading partner's interpretation of a particular species pest status (e.g. and the efficacy of cold treatment against fruit fly). The data packages will also have benefits for producers in fruit fly free areas should an incursion by a tropical fruit fly species occur. Under such circumstances trade would be able to continue (using a cold treatment) until the incursion is eradicated. Without data packages on cold tolerance, trade may be lost until eradication is complete.

**AV09005**

**Coordination of Export Development for Australian Avocados**

**Project Start:** 10-Mar-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Nov-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Lois Grey, Avoz Exports, 0488 071 800

**Funding source:** Matched R&D voluntary contribution

**Summary**

The overall aim of this project is to increase exports of Australian avocados to key export markets in Asia and the Middle East (UAE). This will assist in managing the supply/demand balance in the Australian industry, with an aim to maintaining profitability in the Australian avocado industry.

The Avocado Export Company (AEC) is intended to be the primary vehicle to drive Australian export market growth. The AEC has as its shareholders, avocado production, packing and marketing businesses that represent in excess of 50 per cent of Australian production volume. The business structure that it has adopted provides a mechanism for potentially all Australian growers and packers to participate, if they wish (assuming they meet the obligations required of a company shareholder).

To achieve its goals the AEC has recognised the need to address, as a priority, a number of the export market development needs outlined in Avocado Export Road Map (HAL Project AVO6010: Export Development for the Australian Avocado Industry).

Outputs from the project will include:

- Export Market Development Plan for the Avocado Export Company.
- In-market research reports related to key markets.
- Market out-turn reports related to the shipments of Australian avocados from the Avocado Export Company.
- Export Manual with details re: product specifications, treatments, handling, packing etc. for growers and packers.
- Product handling training guide and manual for importers/wholesalers.
- Product handling and merchandising training material appropriate for retailers in key export markets.
- In-country training of importers and key retailers on avocado handling practices.
- Training for participating export growers on requirements to meet product specifications in selected export markets.
- Communication Plan and related media to increase Australian avocado growers understanding of the benefits of exporting, considerations and requirements to meet international market requirements

## AV07001

### Investigation of the distribution and incidence of Avocado sunblotch viroid in Australia

**Project Start:** 10-July-2007

**Project Completion:** 31-Dec-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Dr Andrew Geering, QLD Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, 07 38969353

**Funding source:** Matching R&D Levies

#### Summary

Avocado sunblotch viroid (ASBVd) is a serious constraint to avocado production in many of the major production areas of the world such as the USA.

Area-freedom from ASBVd would provide great benefits for the Australian avocado industry, especially by opening up market opportunities through the removal of quarantine barriers preventing the international trade of fruit to some countries. Official recognition of area freedom from any pathogen is guided by the International Plant Protection Convention, which states that pathogen-free status must first be established and then be maintained through a range of regulatory actions, routine monitoring and the provision of extension advice to producers.

In this project, baseline data will be provided on the distribution of ASBVd in Australia, which will form the basis of any decisions to seek area-freedom status from ASBVd, or alternatively, if ASBVd is found, provide information on its economic impact. To process the large numbers of samples arising from the surveys, it is necessary to develop high throughput testing methods utilising automated equipment, the second objective of this project.

## AV07000

### Improving yield and quality in avocado through disease management

**Project Start:** 02-Jul-2007

**Project Completion:** 30-Sep-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Dr Elizabeth Dann, QLD Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### Summary

The aim of this project is to improve avocado fruit standards by optimising fruit yields, fruit quality and

## Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued

tree health while, in alignment with changing attitudes, reducing the use of chemicals to control diseases in orchards. Avocado fruit are downgraded or destroyed by fungal diseases causing anthracnose and stem-end rot. Root rot caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi* constrains productivity and if not actively controlled will eventually kill an avocado tree. Of increasing concern, has been the anecdotal evidence of the spread of the brown root rot fungus, *Phellinus noxius* and little is known of its impact on the avocado industry.

It has become evident that rootstocks have significant influence on the overall health of the avocado tree, so it is vital that attributes of the many rootstocks available worldwide are assessed for their superiority (and suitability) in Australian conditions. The aim is to select rootstocks with superior tolerance to root rot and, at the same time, have a positive impact on fruit yield and fruit quality. The use of phosphorous acid in avocado is essential to maintain economic yields and high quality fruit even with relatively tolerant rootstocks. Current data suggests that timing of application is critical as seasonal growth patterns can significantly influence movement of chemicals in a tree. It is important that the current application programme is evaluated and the cost effectiveness of application improved. In addition to optimising phosphorous acid application, new products such as defence activators and systemic fungicides with improved post-infection activity will be assessed for their effectiveness in disease control.

The project will focus on three main areas:

1. Improved management of root rot caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.
2. Improved management of fruit diseases such as anthracnose and stem-end rot.
3. A scoping study to determine the incidence, severity and control options of the fungus, *Phellinus noxius*.

The industry will benefit with:

Improved selection of root rot tolerant rootstocks suitable for Australian conditions.

1. Improved fruit yields and quality.
2. More efficient integrated management of root and fruit diseases.
3. Improved cost effectiveness of phosphorous acid application.
4. An impact study on the occurrence, incidence, economic impact and control options of *Phellinus noxius*.

### AV10001

#### Improving yield and quality in avocado through disease management, Phase 2

**Project Start:** 1-Oct-2010

**Project Completion:** 31-Sept-2014

**Principle Investigator:** Dr Elizabeth Dann, QLD Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### Summary

*Project Not Yet Approved*

The loss in productivity due to poor tree health and sub-standard quality fruit is a continuing concern for individual avocado growers and the industry alike. The aim of this project is to enhance avocado fruit standards by optimising fruit yields, fruit quality and tree health, by improving management of insidious diseases affecting fruit, roots or whole trees. Strategies which reduce the reliance on chemical fungicides will be assessed, in accordance with public and regulatory attitudes and policy both in and overseas, and the adoption of effective 'softer' options encouraged where possible.

This will be achieved by a series of field and laboratory trials, some of which will continue from the previous project (AV07000), for example assessment of selected material under high *Phytophthora* conditions. Other field trials will build upon results obtained in AV07000 with respect to phosphorous acid applications, and assessment of fungicides and non-pesticidal products purported to reduce diseases and boost health in other crop systems. A new area of field and laboratory/glasshouse research will be the assessment of cultural and chemical options for the management of brown root rot.

Briefly, benefits to the industry will include:

1. Improved management of *Phytophthora* root rot, via resistant rootstock material and more effective applications of phosphorous acid.
2. Enhanced fruit quality and yields, via improved integrated management of postharvest diseases.
3. Investigation of management options for brown root rot, caused by *Phellinus noxius*.

**AV09024****Mechanisms of cultivar and race-based disease resistance in avocado****Project Start:** 11-Jun-2010**Project Completion:** 1-Jul-2013**Principle Investigator:** Dr Andre Drenth, University of Queensland, 07 3201 1762**Funding source:****Summary**

This project is the first in an ongoing program of avocado research scholarships.

It is well established that rootstock influences resistance of avocado (*Persea*) to anthracnose in fruit (*Colletotrichum gloeosporioides*) and root rot (eg. *Phytophthora cinnamomi*). However, little is known about the physiological, molecular or biochemical bases underlying this resistance or tolerance. The aim of this project is to determine key characteristics among rootstocks from the three ecological races of avocado which correlate with disease resistance. Once these characteristics are identified, we can use them as markers to screen and select for higher levels of resistance among large number of cultivars or races of *Persea* sp. Knowledge of these underlying mechanisms and identification of molecular or biochemical markers correlated with improved disease resistance will significantly speed up breeding and selection for superior material for the industry. The project has linkages with existing HAL/Avocados Australia funded projects on avocado disease management and rootstock evaluation.

**MT10008****Development of a lure-based monitoring system for fruit spotting bugs****Project Start:** TBA**Project Completion:** TBA**Principle Investigator:** Dr Harry Fay, Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation, 07 4048 4663**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies (multiple industries)**Summary***Project not yet approved*

This multi industry project aims to develop an effective trap and lures for fruit spotting bugs, as well as strategies to use them as critical monitoring tools in the most vulnerable crops.

Fruit spotting bugs (*Amblypelta* spp.) cause significant damage to more than 25 different tree fruit and nut crops and some vine fruits through the coastal and sub-coastal areas of , northern NSW, the and north west Western Australia. Endosulfan is the mainstay of fruit spotting bug control but will start being removed from sale in 2010.

The recent successful procurement of a pheromone-based lure for *Amblypelta lutescens* following the earlier identification of the components of the *A. nitida* pheromone provide an opportunity to develop effective monitoring systems in a range of crops. This requires the development of an efficient trap in which to use the lures, together with optimization of the lure component ratios for both species. Once achieved, the lures and trap will be tested in the major susceptible crops to determine the best deployment strategies. The project will result in an effective monitoring of spotting bugs and will allow rationalization and optimization of insecticide use through more effectively timed and targeted spraying.

**AV08000****Rootstock improvement for the Australian avocado industry – Phase 3****Project Start:** 01-Jan-2009**Project Completion:** 01-Dec-2012**Principle Investigator:** Dr Tony Whiley, Sunshine Horticultural Services Pty Ltd, 07 5441 5441**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies**Summary**

The avocado industry has continued to expand for the most part, using an ad hoc range of rootstocks selected by nurserymen for which there is no data to substantiate their performance. Despite a technically sound nursery scheme (ANVAS) to supply disease-free, true-to-type trees to the industry, the development and use of superior rootstocks largely remains in limbo. 'Velvick', (predominantly West Indian race), is one local rootstock selected about 20 years ago where a body of performance data is slowly being developed both within and overseas. Recent studies in Australia comparing postharvest anthracnose development of Hass fruit from trees grafted to different rootstocks, have found that fruit from one line developed less disease compared with others.

During Phase 1 of this project a range of rootstocks from both Mexican and Guatemalan race populations were identified and propagated as either seedlings or vegetative clones. They were then grafted to either Hass or Shepard

*Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued*

and planted out in replicated experimental blocks in the major avocado production districts of (completed on 31/12/2004). The second phase of the project monitored the growth and early production of trees in the various locations where experimental sites were established. Additionally, rootstocks from the elite recovery program in Phase 1 were multiplied for field planting and evaluation with new selections recovered during Phase 2.

Phase 3 will move on to more detailed assessment of tree growth, yield and postharvest (physiology and disease characteristics) fruit performance. The project will also recover and propagate new elite rootstocks for future evaluation wherever the opportunity arises.

**AVo8002**

**RNA silencing-based phytophthora root rot resistant avocado rootstocks for improved production of GM free fruit**

**Project Start:** 28-Nov-2008

**Project Completion:** 30-Oct-2011

**Service Provider:** Dr Neena Mitter, QLD Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries, 0434 628 094

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

This project aims to use the cutting edge revolutionary technology of RNA silencing to engineer avocado rootstocks for resistance to Phytophthora root rot. RNA silencing can provide high-level pathogen resistance by specific targeting of pathogen sequences in transgenic plants. A key advantage of RNA silencing mediated resistance is that dsRNA has no translational ability to produce a functional protein. This technology will be utilised to target essential genes in *P.cinnamomi* and deliver it by means of transgenic rootstocks. Thus, when the fungus will attack the transformed rootstocks it will be recognised by the homologous gene silencing triggers targeting the essential genes of *P. cinnamomi*; this will result in killing of the invading fungus or making it non-pathogenic.

A Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPI&F) internally funded proof-of-concept project that commenced in October 2007 will deliver the tools targeting essential genes of *P. cinnamomi* ready for introduction into commercial rootstocks for protection against the root rot pathogen. The proposed HAL project will generate real outcomes for an important target disease for the avocado industry. It aims to deliver glasshouse tested Phytophthora root rot resistant rootstock/s established and ready for field trial.

The big advantage of using this approach is that although the rootstock will be genetically modified (GM), the grafted scion will remain non-transgenic and will produce GM-free fruit.

**AVo7008**

**Field evaluation of superior avocado rootstocks with ‘Hass’ and ‘Shepard’ as scions**

**Project Start:** 15-Sep-2007

**Project Completion:** 31-Dec-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Danielle Le Lagadec, Qld DPI

**Funding source:** Matched R&D voluntary contribution

**Summary**

Rootstocks can have a significant influence on avocado yields, tree health, growth & disease susceptibility. The Australian avocado industry is based largely on seedling ‘Velvick’ rootstock and not much research has been conducted on alternative rootstocks in . Internationally, the importance of rootstock in maximizing avocado productivity is well recognized and large investments have been made over the past few decades in this field.

Some of the superior rootstocks derived from these international breeding programs have been imported into by Birdwood Nursery, ANFIC, and has been established in a well randomized trial at Goodwood Plantation, Childers, . The trial, consisting of 33 rootstocks including both clonal and seedling material with Hass and Shepard as scion, was established in 2004. This trial has the potential to identify rootstocks superior in yield and quality to those presently used by the industry. A superior rootstock would have significant financial benefits to the avocado industry. It is therefore proposed that the effect of these rootstocks on tree performance continues to be monitored for the next three years. Thereafter, the top rootstocks could be established and evaluated in other avocado growing regions of Australia.

**AVo9017**

**Avocado germplasm maintenance**

**Project Start:** 01-June-2009

**Project Completion:** 2-May-2011

**Principle Investigator:** TBA

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

*Project Under Development*

The avocado industry recognises that the declining government agency support for strategic industry

resources has put at risk the continued maintenance of avocado germplasm that has been imported over the last 30 years. The maintenance of the material is an essential risk management strategy for the Australian industry. The aim of this project is to provide ongoing security for avocado germplasm maintenance in Australia.

## **AVo8020**

### **Evaluation of sustainable avocado orchard management practices**

**Project Start:** 30-Jan-2009

**Project Completion:** 30-Nov-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

There are increasing demands on growers to optimise fruit yield and quality, reduce chemical use, develop market opportunities and meet consumer expectations to remain competitive. There are a range of products and orchard management practices either being used by growers or recommended by various companies for use in avocado production, often with little scientific validation. The effectiveness of orchard management practices on fruit yield and quality need to be validated before wider industry recommendations can be made.

This project will identify sustainable orchard management practices used by growers across Australia, evaluate the effect of these strategies on tree health, fruit yield and quality and determine the cost effectiveness of these strategies compared to current industry recommendations.

## **AVo9009**

### **Information package to assist growers overcome biennial bearing**

**Project Start:** TBA

**Project Completion:** TBA

**Principle Investigator:** TBA

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

*Project Under Development*

The issue of biennial bearing in avocados is seen across all production areas in Australia and the also globally. This project seeks to establish a large scale international project in partnership with New Zealand, USA, Mexico, Chile and South Africa, to challenge the understanding and develop solutions for the issue of biennial bearing in

avocados.

Australian research capacity is limited in this area of science, as is the world. The ability to work jointly and draw on the avocado researchers and funding is the only way the Australian industry will be able to achieve a positive improvement.

This project aims to collate the best information available throughout the world and develop a large scale international collaborative project.

## **AVo7017**

### **Avocado production in the south west using reduced water supplies**

**Project Start:** 2-Nov-2007

**Project Completion:** 1-Oct-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Alec McCarthy, Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia, 08 9780 6273

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D voluntary contribution

#### **Summary**

Water use in agriculture is increasingly coming under scrutiny, this along with the steady decrease in winter rainfall and pressure on water supplies is putting pressure on avocado producers to use irrigation water as efficiently as possible. A potential water saving has been identified that may enable avocado producers in the south west of Western Australia (WA) to use less irrigation water per hectare with minimal impact on fruit yield and quality.

The aim of the project is to identify and demonstrate a new irrigation schedule strategy that will enable avocado growers in the south west of WA to use less irrigation water per hectare of avocado production, with minimal impact of fruit yield and quality. In most avocado orchards of the south west, there will be trees that are in a heavy production cycle (on year trees) and those in a light production cycle (off year trees). The trees in the different production cycles use water at different levels. Traditionally, growers irrigate to minimise water stress, this means irrigating to the needs of the highest water users.

The strategy in this trial is to irrigate the orchard to the 'on year trees'; these are usually the lower water users, due to reduced vegetative growth. This will require the use of suitable soil moisture monitoring equipment, with the 'irrigation monitor' trees changing from season to season to allow for the 'on off' cycling of the trees.

*Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued*

The outcome of the trial will be improved irrigation techniques that require reduced water inputs per hectare of avocado production. It will reduce water wastage due to over irrigating the lower water usage trees, which will reduce leaching of nutrients into the environment under these trees. It should also improve tree health in soils where water logging occurs due to the over irrigating. Predicted water savings could benefit in several ways, reduced input cost, reduced water requirements for the current orchard area, water availability to allow for increased plantings or environmental water needs.

**MT09026**

**Protecting pollination for the Australian horticultural industry Stage 2**

**Project Start:** 30-Mar-2009

**Project Completion:** 31-Jul-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Kim James, HAL, 08 63891407

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies (Multiple industries)

**Summary**

This multi industry project aims to address the risks of loss of pollination by Honey Bees. Honeybees are the key pollinator in some crops, particularly in horticulture, and an important pollinator in others, including some pasture species and broadacre crops.

The industries reliant on honeybees for pollination, are facing the risk of incursion of Varroa destructor. Incursion of this mite pest would substantially increase beekeepers' costs, reduce their productivity and limit the current extensive movement of hives around . Moreover, it would destroy the feral honeybee population leading to the loss of much of the incidental honeybee pollination that many horticultural industries now rely upon.

This project provides funding to implement the Pollination five year plan. HAL has worked closely with the Rural Industries R&D Corporation (RIRDC), the Australian Honey Bee Industry Committee (ABIC) and the Pollination Australia alliance via the Pollination R&D Committee to develop the research and development, biosecurity risk management and education and training priorities.

**Industry Management**

**AV09025**

**Australian avocado Export Efficiency Powers consultation**

**Project Start:** 1-Nov-2009

**Project Completion:** 1-Dec-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

The purpose of this project is to inform, assess and implement the application of Horticulture Australia Limited's (HAL) Export Efficiency Powers (EEPs or the Powers) to avocado export markets after industry consultation.

If industry consultation reveals sufficient support for an avocado EEP then a formal submission will be prepared for HAL and Australian Government consideration.

The Horticultural Marketing and Research and Development Services Act 2000 enables HAL to enforce regulations in regard to specified horticultural products and specified horticultural export markets. The Powers are exercised in a way that is consistent with HAL's Constitution and its Deed of Agreement with the Commonwealth. HAL uses the Powers in conjunction with other marketing tools for the stated purposes of sustainable development of export markets and achieving a higher return for growers.

The implementation of the EEP for the Australian industry will allow the orderly and sustainable and profitable development of export markets for Australian avocado growers.

**AV08045**

**Avocado Industry Communications Strategies**

**Project Start:** 15-May-2009

**Project Completion:** 1-Mar-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

Communication is absolutely essential to stay in business in today's world and it's a priority to keep a constant watch

on any and every piece of information that will improve the bottom line of the avocado business. Avocados provides growers with a mix of communication tools.

This project will provide all avocado growers and associated businesses with factual and timely information relating to the industry issues and their businesses. As a key performance indicator the project aims to deliver information to over 95 per cent of the production base in and that includes at a minimum of 90 per cent of growers.

All known levy paying avocado growers will be provided the opportunity to receive the information in their preferred format. The other stakeholders would also be provided the communication package.

This project aims to ensure the continued and improved communication throughout the avocado industry. Avocados are geographically spread across , with avocado growers in all states and Territories except the ACT. The overall objective is to work towards all industry members having access to similar opportunities to gain access to or contribute to industry information and to maintain a presence at international avocado meetings.

## **AVo8025**

### **Avocado resource audit web database**

**Project Start:** 15-May-2009

**Project Completion:** 31-Dec-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

This project aims to develop and implement a web based database of all known avocado industry resources. Large amounts of important information are housed in various areas including Peak Industry Bodies, research organisations and other government departments. The project will develop a knowledge portal for industry stakeholders using database content developed through the Avocado Supply Chain Mapping and Resource Audit project, AVo6026.

## **AV10007**

### **Infocado Summit 2010 and Extension to Industry**

**Project Start:** 1-Oct-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Nov-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

#### **Summary**

This project funds an extension event - The Infocado Summit, to be held in October 2010.

In 2004 Avocados Australia began the process of developing a crop flow system, subsequently named Infocado, to meet an identified need to collect more meaningful and timely industry data. The system is an internet based system which allows the collection and reporting of historical and anticipated volumes of avocados entering the Australian and export markets. It was specifically developed to provide businesses in the avocado industry with better information to assist with their management and marketing decisions.

The Market Awareness Program will produce a newsletter and complimentary CD, very much like the ones developed for the Across Industry program newsletter. This CD and newsletter will have information on it gathered at the Infocado Summit which will be held at the end of October 2010 in Melbourne.

This newsletter and CD will be sent out together with 'Talking Avocados' – the quarterly avocado newsletter, it will also be promoted through the avocado website and email newsletter.

## **AVo9029**

### **Planning for the VII World Avocado Congress in 2011, Cairns Australia**

**Project Start:** 1-Jun-2010

**Project Completion:** 1-Jul-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Antony Allen, Avocados Australia Ltd, 07 3846 6566

**Funding source:** Matched R&D voluntary contribution

#### **Summary**

The Australian avocado industry has been awarded the VII World Avocado Congress in 2011 (7WAC11). This Congress attracts over 1000 industry delegates from around the world. Delegates include researcher, marketer and growers from over 18 avocado producing countries. The Congress is the preeminent avocado event in the world.

The 7WAC11 is to be held during 4-9 September 2011 in Cairns Australia. Avocados Australia is the host organisation as designated by the International Avocado Society.

Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 continued

The world avocado congress is an event of significant size which has a long lead time, planning and development processes to ensure a successful congress outcome. Avocados Australia needs to ensure resources are applied internally and externally over the next 15 months to organise a successful congress. This project will allow the resourcing and planning for the congress to be undertaken.

**AV10002**

**Avocado information delivery**

**Project Start:** 1-Nov-2010

**Project Completion:** 31-Dec-2013

**Principle Investigator:** Mr Simon Newett, Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation, 07 5453 5800

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

*Project Not Yet Approved*

This three year project will focus on information products to assist Australian avocado growers grow good quality avocados at a competitive cost. Information from previous Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPIF) publications together with the wealth of information generated in the previous avocado extension project (AV06003) will be used to produce 'grower friendly' information products. A steering committee that includes growers, and research, development and extension (R,D & E) staff, will be formed to guide the project and ensure that the information is what growers need and that it is presented in a way that can be used by them. A scoping investigation will also take place into costs and methods of production; this may lead on to the development of another project that focuses on the economics of avocado production.

**AV10004**

**Biosecurity capacity building for the Australian avocado industry: Laurel Wilt**

**Project Start:** 1-Oct-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Sept-2012

**Principle Investigator:** Dr Andrew Geering, Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation, 07 3896 9353

**Funding source:** Matched R&D Levies

**Summary**

*Project Not Yet Approved*

wilt, caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola*, is one of the most immediate and serious biosecurity threats to the Australian avocado industry. This pathogen is transmitted by the ambrosia beetle *Xyleborus glabratus*, a native of Asia with a geographic range extending from to and . *X. glabratus* has a symbiotic relationship with *R. lauricola*: female beetles bore into the sapwood of trees to create brood galleries and at the same time inoculate the tree with the fungus. The beetle larvae then feed off the fungal hyphae as it colonizes the wood.

The aims of this project are to develop a surveillance and diagnostic capacity for *X. glabratus* and *R. lauricola* in . Diagnostic protocols developed in the USA will be validated in Australia to ensure that these protocols are capable of discriminating these exotic organisms from endemic relatives. Finally, a diagnostic manual will be produced for use in Australia.

**AV09003**

**Climate change and climate policy implications for the Australian avocado industry**

**Project Start:** 1-Dec-2009

**Project Completion:** 31-Dec-2010

**Principle Investigator:** David Putland, Growcom, dputland@growcom.com.au , 0408984039

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

**Summary**

The first aim of this project is to analyse the impact of projected climate change on a variety of avocado fruit production regions across Australia, linking a regional analysis of climate change risks with viable adaptation strategies. This will be achieved through combining reviews of both scientific and grey literature with existing and projected climate data for avocado growing regions throughout Australia.

The second aim of this project is to assist Australian avocado growers and industry representatives to understand the theory, process and impacts of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) on the avocado industry. In achieving this, this project will review existing literature relating to the development of the CPRS and use the carbon footprinting tool HortCarbonInfo (developed by Peter Deuter from Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries) to estimate emissions from an avocado farm.

Key project outputs will include:

- Collation of regionally based data on existing climate variability in identified production regions.
- Collation of regionally specific data on climate change projections for temperature and rainfall for key production regions in 2030 and 2050.
- Discussion of the potential impact of projected change on different production regions, covering issues such as temperate change, water availability and pest and disease activity.
- Identification of specific management strategies that could be used in key growing regions to adapt to climate change.
- An easy to comprehend summary of the key mechanics of the proposed CPRS.
- A broad summary of the role of the agricultural sector in the proposed CPRS.
- Measurement of the extent of emissions and estimate of carbon sequestration per hectare in a typical avocado production system.
- Clear statement of the risks and opportunities associated with the commencement of the CPRS for the avocado industry.

## AV09008

### Avocado Industry Strategic Plan

**Project Start:** 31-Mar-2010

**Project Completion:** 1-Nov-2010

**Principle Investigator:** Ms Jenny Margetts, p2p Business Solutions Pty Ltd, 07 3366 2710

**Funding source:** Matched R&D levies

#### Summary

Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and the national avocado industry are required to develop a new avocado industry strategic plan to guide industry investment over the next five years.

The key objective of the project is to develop a plan which will provide clear strategic direction for the avocado industry and, in particular, the avocado levy investment program managed through HAL.

As part of the process a review of the previous strategic plan will also be undertaken, an up-to-date industry situational analysis will be completed, research into other industry initiatives will undertaken, a future scenario planning workshop will be conducted and an economic analysis of high priority areas will be undertaken.

In total three industry workshops (one incorporating the

future scenario planning workshop), plus a number of working group meetings, will be conducted to ensure that industry is engaged and that suitable consideration is given to the components of the strategic plan.

The methodology also allows for adequate consultation with the broader industry.

## AV10900

### Partnership Agreement

**Project Start:** 01-Jul-2010

**Project Completion:** 30-Jun-2011

**Principle Investigator:** Service agreement between Avocados Australia Ltd and Horticulture Australia Ltd

**Funding Source:** Matched R&D Levies and Marketing Levies

#### Summary

This project covers a range of activities to be conducted by Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) and Avocados Australia in managing the avocado levy investments. These include management of the Industry Advisory Committee; conduct the Annual Levy Payers Meeting and effective consultation between Avocados Australia and HAL.

## Across Industry Program

The across industry research and development (R&D) program is funded through matched R&D levies and voluntary contributions. A contribution of 2 per cent from all HAL-funded R&D projects is allocated to the across industry program to fund much needed R&D that is of benefit to all horticulture industries. Below are the projects endorsed for inclusion in the 2010-11 Across Industry program. Further information is available from Warwick Scherf, Horticulture Australia Limited, 02 8295 2300.



## Avocado R&D and Marketing Program Overview 2010 *continued*

Project No	Title	Project Start	Project Completion	Organisation
<b>Outcome 1: Enhance the efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and integrity of the supply chain for the total industry to provide clear market signals.</b>				
MT09043	Enhancing confidence in product integrity in domestic and export markets	2009/10	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
MT10029	Managing pesticide access in horticulture (cont from AHO4009 and MT07029)	2010/11	2014/15	AgAware Consulting Pty Ltd
AH09003	Plant protection: Regulatory support and coordination	2009/10	2013/14	AKC Consulting Pty Ltd
AH09009	Food security discussion paper	2009/10	2009/10	Horticulture Australia Pty Ltd
<b>Outcome 2: Maximise the health benefits of horticultural products in the eyes of consumers, influencers and government.</b>				
AH09023	Health and wellbeing in horticulture	2009/10	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
<b>Outcome 3: Position horticulture to compete in a globalised environment.</b>				
AH09018	Office of Horticulture Market Access – National Director	2009/10	2011/12	Stephen Winter and Associates
AH09019	Office of Horticulture Market Access – Technical (SPS and Research and Development) Manager	2009/10	2010/11	Kalang Consultants
AH09021	Office of Horticulture Market Access - Operations Support	2009/10	2011/12	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10008	Future Focus - Ongoing Maintenance	2001/11	2012/13	Horticulture Australia Ltd
<b>Outcome 4: Achieve long-term viability and sustainability for Australian horticulture.</b>				
AHO	Horticulture Water Initiative	2009/10	2009/10	RMCG
AH09014	Climate Change Initiative 2009/10	2009/10	2009/10	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10003	Horticulture component of the National Climate Change Research Strategy for Primary Industries	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH09027	Investing in Youth Successful Scholarship Applicant	2009/10	2013/14	Rural Industries R&D Corporation (RIRDC)
VG09158	Online Interface for Horticulture Commodity Statistics - Phase Two	2010/11	2011/12	Bureau of Rural Sciences
AH10000	Updating Statistical Handbook for Horticulture	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10006	Pesticide spray drift in horticulture - a response to new guidelines from the APVMA	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10007	Horticulture Balanced Scorecard	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10009	Response to Productivity Commission	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
<b>Outcome 5: Other</b>				
AH10010	Contingency allocation – for key issues as they arise	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10800	Across Industry Program Annual Report	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd
AH10011	Across Industry Program Admin	2010/11	2010/11	Horticulture Australia Ltd

# VII World Avocado Congress 2011



Three years ago the VI World Avocado Congress was held in Chile; at that time the International Avocado Society decided that Australia would host the VII World Avocado Congress in 2011. The world wide avocado industry will come together next year from the 5-9 September in Cairns, Australia. Congress organizers have already commenced planning to provide the necessary resources to meet the delegates' expectations.

The World Avocado Congress is held every four years; previously in in South Africa (1987), California (1991), Israel (1995), Mexico (1999), Spain (2003) and Chile (2007). The Congress is delivered in both English and Spanish as it attracts over 1000 avocado producers, wholesalers, food service providers, market traders, retailers and government representatives from across 15 countries around the world.

The VII World Avocado Congress will hold sessions to discuss topics such as genetic resources, pest and disease management, cultivation techniques, post harvest and processing, and marketing. These sessions will offer delegates an opportunity to listen and discuss the latest research and information concerning production and management issues. The Congress program also offers information about marketing as well as discussion panels related to the market trade worldwide.



The website has been designed as the main resource for delegates to be updated about Congress activities, to know the preliminary program and to access to general information about Cairns.

## Registration

Registrations will open on November 1 2010. Delegates have the option to secure a cheaper price by registering for the Congress before March 4 2011.

For more details, please visit our website:

[www.worldavocadocongress2011.com](http://www.worldavocadocongress2011.com)



## Sponsors and exhibitors

To be a sponsor of the VII World Avocado Congress will ensure a high level of recognition and an opportunity to promote your business through advertising, direct mail and promotional material before, during and after the Congress.

The Congress is the most important event on the world wide avocado industry calendar. Our goal is to make easier the access for your business to the sponsors' benefits by helping you to meet your marketing goals and budget.

The exhibition area will be the main meeting point which will have an Internet kiosk, morning/afternoon tea and refreshments, this provided an environment suitable for delegates and exhibitors to create business relationships between them.

For more information, please contact the organizers of the event at:

[sponex@congresomundialdelaguacate2011.com](mailto:sponex@congresomundialdelaguacate2011.com)

# Welcome to Cairns - so much to see and do!



## News from Around the World

### Israeli Avocado growers are expecting NIS 165 million in revenues

Israeli avocado growers are said to be expecting NIS 165 million in revenues from the avocado harvest that has just began.

In a press release, Ilan Eshel, director of the Organization of Fruit Growers in Israel, noted that revenues this year will be 10 per cent more than last year, primarily due to the increased value of the euro against the shekel in recent months and the better quality of the harvest.

Eshel also expects an increase in avocado prices in the domestic market. About 80,000 tonnes of avocados are expected to be harvested this year, 55,000 tons of which are to be exported, primarily to Europe. Source: port2port.com

### Californian Avocado Commission to assess shrinkage of avocado groves from space

The California Avocado Commission plans to begin annual satellite picture taking of crops in the two-county San Diego and Riverside area in March, coupled with flyovers from aircrafts provided by a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to determine whether the avocado-

rich region's crop is slowly disappearing.

The Irvine-based commission has developed a proprietary "digital signature" technology to detect the moisture level in avocados, according to Gwen Peterson, an Alpine-based consultant who works on the technology.

The commission snapped the "signature" of the local groves in 2005 and the end of 2009, but now it will be done annually because the cost of obtaining the "remote sensing" information has fallen in price substantially, Peterson said.

The commission has become worried about the disappearance of groves in San Diego and Riverside counties following anecdotal stories that growers were either removing the trees to replant other crops, or turning off the water on groves to "shrink" the stumps and force less watering, or simply let the land go fallow. Higher water costs are to blame, she said.

The aerial imagery comes from the USDA, while the satellite infrared remote sensing data is purchased from operators of Landsat and Spot satellites, Peterson said. The Landsat program is made up of a series of Earth-observing satellites jointly managed by the U.S. space agency NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. Landsat satellites take specialized digital photographs of the Earth.

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

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*News from Around the World continued*

Spot satellites are run by a French space agency.

“Up until this year, we could afford only doing this once every four years,” Peterson said. The next acreage update on the avocado groves is scheduled in March, she said.

Avocado grove acreage in San Diego and Riverside counties has declined from 2005 to 2009. Riverside has seen its acreage fall 19 per cent to 6609 from 8154 while San Diego’s has dropped 26 per cent to 19,133 from 26,004. Meanwhile, the three-county area of Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo has grown 32.7 per cent to 30,335 from 25,534 over the same period. Peterson said the drive to plant more avocados in the area north west of Los Angeles is due to cheaper water rates than the Riverside and San Diego area. Source: nctimes.com

**New Zealand avocado export estimate down**

The Avocado Industry Council is predicting an export crop of 1.78 millions trays this season; 300,000 less trays than predicted before the storms.

Council chief executive Alan Thorne said most of the losses would be among Bay of Plenty growers, with those in Northland escaping relatively unaffected by the week of rain and high winds which began on September 17.

“We are estimating a total crop of three million trays, with 1.78 million for export and 1.22 for local market, reducing our previous estimates by 300,000 trays,” he said.

Although it was too soon to say what impact wind damage would have on flowering, experiences from trees damaged in a similar storm in Northland three years ago showed that most trees recovered to set a good crop.

“We will be working with affected growers to advise them on storm recovery management for their orchards,” Mr Thorne said.

Some Bay of Plenty growers would receive little or no income from their orchards after almost a week of high winds which stripped fruit from trees and felled others.

Mr Thorne said some growers could be feeling quite traumatised by the storm, which was so bad at times that it was too dangerous to venture out to survey the damage.

When the winds eased, many growers were greeted by the sight of hundreds of fruit on the ground and the prospect of little of no income for another 12 months.

“Unfortunately, there is no Government or financial assistance for these growers but as an industry we are investigating what can be done to help in other ways,” said Mr Thorne.

Some of the fruit could be suitable for processing for oil but Mr Thorne is urging growers not to be tempted to sell

windfall fruit on the local market which would “do nothing for the industry’s image”.

It was the height of the trees, some as tall as shelter belts, and the turbulence caused by the extremely strong winds which had led to so much damage on some orchards, while other orchards, or individual trees, remained almost untouched.

Given the strong gusts and the terrain of the region, with ridges and gullies, it was almost inevitable there would be damage, Mr Thorne said. “It’s the turbulence which does the damage, tumbling and spinning over the ‘leading edge’ of the orchard shelter belt or outer trees - similar to the wing of a plane - and effecting trees sometimes several metres into the orchard.”

The crop this season wasn’t expected to be a big one with the biennial bearing trees described as having an “off year”. The concern now was that flowers forming for next year’s hopefully larger crop would escape undamaged. Source: bayofplentytimes.co.nz

**Peru and Chile seek an alliance to export Hass avocado to the U.S.**

Mexico, California and Chile are the major suppliers of Hass avocado in the US market, however, Peru, which this year sent its first trial shipment after obtaining approval of a Phytosanitary Protocol in the US, has ambitious plans in a long-term alliance with Chile to offer a commercial window of 12 months that confronts the gigantic Mexican supply.

“We look forward to working with the Committee (Chile) and the Chilean Avocado Importers Association in promoting the fruit in the United States, since the two countries can offer the American market a new window of 12 months, and by that we mean an alternative to Mexican avocado,” said Arturo Medina, general manager of the Association of Hass Avocado Producers of Peru (PROHASS), as he manifested to the Portal Fruit of Chile.

Medina said that in 2010 Peru only exported a small sample of 20 containers because they are testing the quarantine treatments required by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (APHIS). Peruvian exporters are waiting for approval by that body in a study to ensure that the Hass avocado is not a host of fruit flies in order to be able to export larger volumes.

According to Arturo Medina, this “will be beneficial not only for the Peruvian Palterer sector but for all avocado-producing countries in South America including Chile, since this disease occurs throughout the region.” Based On: Agronegociosperu

## Hass Avocados Board kicks off its sports entertaining campaign

Building on past efforts to support sales of Hass avocados during the fall time frame, the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) will again be implementing a sports entertaining marketing campaign. Set to the theme of 'Kick Off with Hass Avocados', the program will encourage consumers to incorporate the fruit into game day meals.

The 'Kick Off with Hass Avocados' program will 'kick off' in the fall at a time when there is a strong supply in the market from multiple countries of origin. However, it is an umbrella effort that was developed to further tie Hass avocados to sports throughout the year and to support sports-related promotional efforts being conducted by HAB and its member organizations. The effort, developed by HAB, has become an industry-wide promotion with both the California Avocado Commission (CAC) and the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA,) providing additional funding to expand the promotional impact of the program.

In support of the 'Kick Off with Hass Avocados' program, HAB has purchased a million dollar integrated advertising buy on FOX Sports Net. HAB's sports entertaining-themed advertising spot, which features former college and NFL® player John Lynch, will air throughout the college football season during all of FOX's college football game broadcasts. Additionally, as part of this buy Hass avocados will be integrated on-air into FOX's 'College Football Magazine' show; sports entertaining-themed online advertising will be promoted on FoxSports.com; and FOX Sports will host HAB-sponsored tailgate events at key college games during the season to allow fans to sample Hass avocado game day recipes.

HAB also secured Food Network chef Tyler Florence as the spokesperson for the program. Florence has starred in a number of well-known cooking shows on Food Network, including 'How to Boil Water', a cooking show for novices; 'Food 911', his hugely popular 'recipe rescue' show; as well as his signature series, 'Tyler's Ultimate' and has published multiple best-selling cookbooks.

Florence has worked with HAB to develop two avocado-centric recipes that are ideal for game day meals and will be distributed to media nationwide. He also will be promoting Hass avocados as a delicious addition to any game day menu in media interviews with television outlets in top-tier markets throughout the country as part of a satellite media tour. Additionally, he will be featured in multiple online videos produced by HAB that will be available on HAB's website and promoted through HAB's social media outlets. The online videos will showcase Florence demonstrating both of the avocado-centric

# Grower Member Application Form

## Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

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

## Member Details

Business name and/or trading name:

---

ABN:

---

Key contacts:

---

Preferred address (postal):

---

Address of property (if different):

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## Contact Details

Business phone:

---

Home phone:

---

Fax:

---

Mobile:

---

Email:

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## Corporate Structure

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

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

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

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

## Special Interests

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

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

## Grower Member Application Form continued

### Payment Options

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

**Cheque**

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

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

**Credit card** (please circle):

MasterCard    Visa

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

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

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

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

### Privacy Options

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

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

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

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

**Avocados Australia**  
**Reply Paid 8005**  
**Woolloongabba Qld 4102**

(no stamp required within Australia):

For more information or assistance please go to

**[www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au)** or call on **07 3846 6566**



## News from Around the World continued

recipes and offering quick tips about avocados.

Online efforts are serving as one of the main components of the program, with the introduction of a year-round sports entertaining micro site, which can be found at [Sports.AvocadoCentral.com](http://Sports.AvocadoCentral.com). The site will serve as an online resource for consumers to plan their next game day meal, by featuring Hass avocado recipe ideas and tips and allowing consumers to share their favourite recipes on commonly used social networking sites or via email. The site also will feature an online recipe contest where consumers can upload photos, videos and blogs of their best avocado 'Kick Off' recipe. The winner will receive an all-expenses paid trip to the 2011 Rose Bowl Game including airfare, hotel and behind-the-scene passes to the Rose Bowl Parade.

"We have seen tremendous growth in the category during this key supply period and are thrilled to have some of our member organizations involved in this year's program," said Jose Luis Obregon, managing director of HAB. "With a television advertising buy in excess of \$1 million, well-known chef and TV personality Tyler Florence serving as the spokesperson and a consumer recipe contest with a grand prize trip to the 2011 Rose Bowl Game®, HAB feels our efforts will lead to an increase in sales at the retail level."

Retailers also will be able drive sales for Hass avocados in their stores by utilizing HAB's 'Kick Off with Hass Avocados' themed point-of-sale materials that highlight game day avocado recipes and include information about HAB's online recipe contest and its prizes.

### California main destination for Peruvian avocados in US

Peruvian avocados are consumed in California; the US state with the highest demand of the product. California is the main destination for Peruvian avocados, reported the Peruvian Economic and Commercial Counsellor in Los Angeles, Ricardo Romero.

He said that about 21 tonnes of avocado dispatched to Los Angeles from Peru arrived Wednesday in good condition. Peruvian fruit is expected to be stocked in most major supermarkets across the state. "The first shipment of Hass avocados to California, main destination of the product, is excellent news that we must feel proud of," he added.

Source: [www.andina.com](http://www.andina.com)

## Mexico: The avocado export to the US was reduced to over 50 per cent

While noting that “70 per cent of the packers” that handle the export of avocados are national, the president of the Association of Producers, Packers and Exporters of Avocado from Michoacán, Ricardo Vega Lopez admitted that “most of the volume is being taken by international companies.” He also acknowledged that exports to the American Union were reduced to over 50 per cent.

Vega Lopez also said that the last cycle of exports to the American Union, which closed just two months ago did not meet the original goal, “We sold about 180 000 tonnes. The goal of 300,000 tonnes was not reached and this is the

first orange light that comes to us, because it was in a year in which Chile and California had lots of fruit. Because of this the market space reduced and we also had to reduce our volume.”

He added that “this light must indicate that we have to go and refine our marketing strategies so that even if other countries have a lot of fruit, we can compete and win the market.”

In relation to the climatological contingencies of this year he said that “there is involvement for some producers. This may mean that the frosts and hailstorms will contribute to this season that is starting to have less available production and that is why we are adjusting our export expectation”. Based On: *cambiodemichoacan.com.mx*



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