

# TALKING AVOCADOS

Avocado promotions strategies

Avocado Study Group meetings

Supply Chain Project update

Infocado Update

SUMMER 2008

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# Chairman's Perspective

## Calendar year 2008

Looking back over 2008, there are two recurring themes in my column:

- Smarter marketing to overcome marketing challenges, and
- The need to embracing change

These two are interconnected and I believe they remain pivotal to the success of our industry. As the financial world changes around our ears, we too need to be flexible and agile so we can continue to thrive in the ever changing environment. If we ignore the need for smarter marketing, it will be to our peril. I say again that the days of sending fruit to the market and hoping for the best are now well and truly over.

We must continue to seek a balance between opportunity and demand in the domestic as well as international markets. Explore the opportunities on the international market, but don't ignore the domestic market. Strategies in marketing need to be flexible so that as opportunities come along, they are carefully assessed to ascertain the opportunities for maximum return on your investment, in the short as well as the long term.

During 2008, Avocados Australia has undertaken many high value projects. Several of these have already or will into the future have a major impact on our industry.

## Infocado

This system continues to grow and to provide invaluable marketing data for the avocado industry. It is heartening to see the growing cooperation between the contributing growers, wholesalers and retailers to Infocado, to make it the significant marketing tool it has become. It is a tribute to the Infocado system, that other industries have acknowledged its impact and success and introduced it to assist with the management of their respective commodity.

## Project support

Through its program of cooperative support, Avocados Australia has provided information and assistance to many avocado related commercial entities. The projects have been diverse, covering a range of innovative marketing and research and development elements.

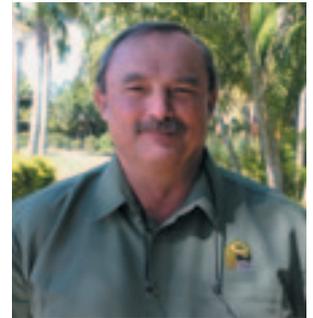
## Export Development

You will all know that this is a 'hobby horse' of mine, and I am delighted that Avocados Australia is facilitating the development of a steering group, working towards an efficient and effective export marketing platform. The goal is to create a coordinated and unified approach to export, ensuring a consistently high quality fruit and a long line of supply.

## Looking forward to 2009

Our industry is facing many challenges in the coming year –

we will have an increase in production (likely to be nudging 50 thousand tons), increased competitiveness in the world markets, increased input costs for farming activities, and continuing uncertainty of the world financial situation. These are just a few of the challenges that we are all facing. Let me assure you that



Avocados Australia will continue to strive to exact the best return on investment for the levy dollar for all growers.

Avocados Australia has operated under the new corporate structure for 5 years, and is well placed to face the future. In accordance with its constitution, it constantly reassesses its performance to determine whether it meets its strategic objectives and grower expectations. Avocados Australia is also keen for feedback from growers and others involved in the industry.

I would like to extend my sympathy to growers who have been adversely affected by the world financial crisis or by the ongoing issues with water shortages. Both these situations are bitter pills to swallow, as they are primarily completely out of our control.

I acknowledge and appreciate the great work done by Antony Allen, Avocados Australia CEO, and his team. These people all work tirelessly to ensure that Avocados Australia remains a relevant and high achieving company.

Finally, I offer my best wishes for a happy and successful 2009 to all growers, Avocados Australia Office Team and Avocados Australia Board Directors.

*Henry Kwaczynski*

Henry Kwaczynski  
Chairman, Avocados Australia

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# Industry Matters

Written, edited and compiled by

**Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia**

## Avocado volume continues to grow

The Australian avocado industry continues to expand at a rate that is unprecedented in the industry's history. The table below indicates the previous 12 months and the estimated crop volume in 2009. The ongoing need for promotion, demand development and export development is essential, the industry's R&D and promotion programs are fully leveraged to drive demand for and quality in avocados.

The other important area that all growers and marketing groups need to be working on in coordination and supply management in partnership with their wholesalers and other supply chain partners.

Jan 08 to Dec 08 Dispatches and Jan 09 to Dec 09 Australian Avocado Production Estimates 5.5kg eqv trays		
Region	2008	2009
North Queensland	1,017,208	1,291,361
Central Queensland	2,591,773	3,926,486
Sunshine Coast	492,155	624,838
South Queensland	1,215,004	1,148,235
North NSW	452,369	338,026
Central NSW	706,119	652,706
Tri State	125,219	148,365
Western Australia	928,325	816,831
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,528,172</b>	<b>8,946,847</b>

## Avocado promotions ready to launch

The first phase of the 2009 year promotion campaign will be launched in February 2009. For the second year the national promotion program will begin in February 2009. The industry's promotion resources now deliver a promotion program from February through to November. A range of magazine, word of mouth, online and TV form the first stage of the avocado promotion campaign for 2009.

The strategic direction continues to focus heavily on versatility, demonstrated by recipe usage. Targeting the female grocery buyer 20-39 years, both media and creative relies on introducing new uses for Avocado supported always by specific recipe usage.

This phase is being rollout in print advertising, such as, Better Homes and Gardens, Woman's Day, New Idea, Notebook, Cosmopolitan Who Weekly, New Woman, Delicious, Super Food Ideas, Good Taste and health and parenting titles such as Mother & Baby, Practical Parenting, Australian Parents, Out & About Kids, Little Kids and Pregnancy & Birth.

TV will target very successful free to air cooking shows where avocados will feature, with ADD an AVO ads running during the shows along with a number of pay TV channels.

Word of mouth (WoM) will be expanded the WoM approach provides essential information directly into our target market. WoM has been

shown to be a very creditable and effective way of transferring information through out the community.

The tag line is ADD an AVO, focusing on the versatility and usage, demonstrating that you can add an avocado to just about any meal. Health and nutrition closely follows the versatility message. Keep a look out for the ADD an AVO message. We will keep you posted on each phase over the coming year. The July 2009 to November 2009 phase will be confirmed in March 2009. (More on page 15)

## No new MIS next year: Timbercorp

Australian agribusiness, Timbercorp, will not offer any new managed investment schemes next year amid a worsening economic environment.

Chief executive, Sol Rabinowicz, said the decision was part of a strategic review of the company. "Based on this review and given the current economic environment, the Board believes the best course of action is to transform the business away from its focus on investment management into a fully integrated horticulture and forestry company," Mr Rabinowicz said. "While there will be no new MIS projects next year, Timbercorp will continue to manage investments on behalf of its 18,000 investors."

"This decision to stand out of the MIS market will reduce earnings in 2009, but it offers major benefits to Timbercorp, including reducing costs, simplifying the business structure and allowing the company to focus on its planned asset sales and retiring debt." Timbercorp said it would reconsider whether to offer MIS projects in 2010 and remained an "interested party in the ongoing test case before the Federal Court on the taxation status on future MIS".

Mr Rabinowicz said strong earnings growth was expected from 2010 onwards "irrespective of revenue from new sales". Mr Rabinowicz said Timbercorp had also indicated it would sell its plantation forestry land portfolio on a sale and leaseback arrangement. "The sales of forestry land or selected horticultural assets will take place as a sale and leaseback transaction to ensure Timbercorp can still pursue our growth plans in the agribusiness sector and continue to generate strong returns for Project investors," he said.

Earlier this month, Timbercorp cut its full-year profit forecast by more than 20 per cent as it made provision for replacing grapes. The company has a significant portfolio of agricultural land, water rights and crops. It also operates an integrated forestry business and is the part owner of several horticulture operations.

"We have a world class portfolio of horticultural assets and investments that generate long-term recurrent revenues with organic growth locked in over the long-term," Mr Rabinowicz said. "The restructuring of the company announced today will achieve a more streamlined and cost-effective business model for Timbercorp, best suited to the business's needs moving forward." Source: The Weekly Times

## Buyers' market as farmers sell up

Billions of dollars worth of rural property is up for sale across Australia as the global credit crisis - and the age-old pressures of low returns and high debt - force owners, both big and small, to sell up.

"Early indications are that much more property will come onto the market," the principal of Ray White Rural, Lex Heinemann, told The Australian Financial Review.

"We look on 2009 as being very challenging. Suffice to say, it definitely appears a buyers' market and buyers should receive increasingly good value for money in 2009."

Falling interest rates, improved commodity prices, above-average rain for most regions in the past three months, and a weaker Australian dollar will go some way to supporting the rural sector. However, the sheer volume of property on the market - and the uncertainties of the credit crisis - will keep pressure on prices. Source: Qld Country Life

### Endosulfan, carbendazim fingered for fish mutations

A pesticide banned in more than 50 countries but still used widely in Australia has been implicated in the chronic deformities and deaths of thousands of fish in the Noosa River in recent months.

The two-headed bass, which survived for only 48 hours after hatching, are the victims of spray drift from neighbouring macadamia nut plantations, an aquatic health expert, Matt Landos, has warned the Queensland Government.

The pesticide endosulfan and the fungicide carbendazim are identified in Dr Landos's report, which was sent to the state's Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries on October 31. Both chemicals have been linked to birth and reproductive defects, liver toxicity and cancer.

Dr Landos, who operates the commercially run Future Fisheries Veterinary Services and is the vice-president of the Australian College of Veterinarian Scientists' Aquatic Animal Health Chapter, said there were no other probable causes to explain the fish and larval mortality at the hatchery.

"The timing between the mist spraying and the affected larvae fits hand in glove," he said. Dr Landos's report also found that chickens, sheep and horses raised at the Sunland Fish Hatchery at Boreen Point were recording abnormally high levels of foetal deaths and birth defects.

The chemical giant DuPont voluntarily withdrew the fungicide carbendazim, along with its parent compound benomyl, from the US market in 2001, but they continue to be used legally in Australia. New Zealand will become the 56th country to enact a ban on endosulfan on Friday.

In October the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, to which Australia is a signatory, will consider elevating the pesticide to the final stage of assessment, which if passed would trigger a worldwide ban.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, which last week told the Sydney Morning Herald it had no plans to review its 2005 guidelines on the legal horticultural uses of endosulfan, said yesterday it was concerned by Dr Landos's allegations and was seeking advice from the federal Department of Environment.



The registration status of carbendazim was already being reviewed, the authority's spokesman, Dr Simon Cubit, said, due to its links with developmental abnormalities in animals. The Queensland Government yesterday promised further testing at the Noosa hatchery. The acting Premier, Paul Lucas, urged people not to jump to conclusions. Source: Qld Country Life

### Emissions impossible?

When Australian agriculture meets the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) next year, it faces an extraordinary scenario in which stands to lose up to 8pc of farm cash margins to a scheme it plays no part in.

Agriculture has been written out of the CPRS as being in the "too hard basket", but in fact the scheme as it is currently designed will still overwhelm farm profits, according to a new report from the Australian Farm Institute (AFI).



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.***



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## Industry Matters continued

Not only will agriculture wear additional costs passed on from players within the CPRS, like the transport and fertiliser industries, but it faces lower returns from large processors obligated to pay out under the scheme.

To cap off what AFI executive director Mick Keogh calls the "all stick and no carrot" nature of the CPRS, nowhere in the design of the scheme is there any incentive for farmers to innovate with offsets like forestry or soil carbon sequestration.

Nor are there imbedded incentives for research organisations to plunge money into emissions-reduction R&D, with no apparent means of making a return on the investment.

The result, says the AFI report, headlined *Emission Impossible*, is that by 2016, the farm sector could be bleeding between 2.4pc and 7.8pc of its cash margins to the CPRS, with no ability to trade on its assumed ability to sequester carbon, other than through voluntary markets yet to be devised.

Should agriculture be included under the CPRS in 2015, as is currently being discussed, outcomes could be even worse. Even if government recognises agriculture as "trade exposed" and provides 90pc of emissions permits at no cost, AFI's modelling suggests that farm cash margins across the sector would drop between 3-24pc.

If agriculture is brought under the CPRS umbrella with no upfront assistance, cash margins could in some sectors—notably medium-sized beef-sheep enterprises—shrink by more than 100pc. Looked at from all angles, the CPRS is currently a "dead end" for agriculture, Mr Keogh concluded. Source: *The Land*

### Coles Mosman Park: Best Avocado Retailer in Western Australia

Coles Mosman Park WA is the winner of the Excellence in Retailing Avocados award, a category of 2008 WA Fresh Produce Awards.



Judging took place over several months using a 'secret shopper' technique. Judges commented that Mosman Park's fresh produce department was spotless; avocados were displayed in a prominent position within the department and occupied a significant display space. Avocados were all of excellent quality, displayed in a single layer and a

range of sizes and price points was available

Avocado growers have endeavoured to reward retailers who display fruit in a single layer, with sprung fruit and a range of price points and sizes available. Ideally a full range of colour, separated by ripeness, would also be available to consumers.

In this year's Excellence in Retailing Avocado Awards, Coles stores were judged to best meet these judging criteria, and Melville, South Hedland and South Perth stores were named as finalists. Independent retailer Peaches Fresh Market of South Fremantle was also named as a finalist.

### Natures Fruit Company turns 20 years old

Queensland's Natures Fruit Company is celebrating its 20th year in operation after emerging from humble beginnings. The co-operative, based in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, is now the leading marketer of avocados in Australia. Things started back in 1988 when a group of avocado growers in the area joined to form a cooperative packing and marketing operation. More than 600 000 trays are today marketed annually under Natures Fruit Company brands representing production from several hundred co-operative members. Source: *Blues Country*

### Anger grows over guest worker delays

Fruit growers are angry about delays to a pilot Pacific Islander guest worker program, saying a chronic shortage of pickers and packers is costing them money. Under the plan, announced by the Federal Government last August, up to 2500 workers from Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu would get seven-month visas to work in orchards in Swan Hill and Griffith over the next three years.

The first intake of Pacific Islanders was supposed to arrive at the beginning of the picking season in December but fruit growers are yet to receive a single worker.

Leon Caccaviello, who manages a citrus, wine grapes and stone fruit property near Swan Hill, said he would love to hire 30 Pacific Islanders. "I don't understand why it is so God-damn hard — it's government bureaucratic bloody red tape." Mr Caccaviello said he had been forced to rely on backpackers.

He said Tongans were honest, religious people who were willing to learn and work hard to support their families and, unlike backpackers, were not in Australia "just to drink". "People in the city want the best produce they can find, they want their fruit to look like it has been hand-painted. "That only comes from people who know what they are doing." Mr Caccaviello said he had an extra 162 hectares available for planting, but was stymied by the lack of labour. "The export markets are there, but we just don't have the manpower — that's the killer," he said.

Summerfruit Australia chairman Ian McAlister said fruit growers had been left "waiting and waiting".

"The Government says something is going to happen and then the bureaucrats take over and it all goes pear-shaped," he said.

"Our stone fruit season is three-quarters over ... by the time they get the workers here, there will be no work for them."

## The Pacific Islander trial is modelled on a scheme in New Zealand.

A 22pc boost to New Zealand's strawberry crop in 2007 was attributed to Tongan labour. Opposition immigration spokeswoman Sharman Stone accused the Government of "inefficiency, bungling and a lack of ministerial oversight".

"They had the New Zealand model to simply replicate; it's not as if this is rocket science," Ms Stone said. "The Rudd Government sold this pilot as support for our Pacific neighbours hard hit by climate change and economic downturn. These nations need an explanation."

The National Farmers Federation, which proposed the Pacific Island scheme three years ago, has estimated the horticulture industry is short of 22,000 workers each season, leaving \$700 million of produce to rot each year. Chief executive Ben Fargher said: "We need to make sure all the I's are dotted and the T's crossed and then we can try to get the program expanded over time."

A spokeswoman for Employment and Workplace Relations Minister Julia Gillard said the first group of up to 100 Pacific workers was expected to be recruited later this month. Source: The Age

## Aweta extends sensor range with "taste sensors"

Several years ago, Aweta introduced their non destructive Acoustic Firmness Sensor (AFS). This year they also introduced their dry matter

sensor, to determine the internal quality and taste experience of avocados and mangos.

While the AFS was originally introduced for analyzing internal quality problems on apples, the sensor quickly developed itself as a "Ready to Eat" sensor for avocados, mangos and kiwis. The ripeness of these products was determined in the past only by means of an impact measurement. This impact measurement was only providing superficial information about the products. As mangos and avocados ripen from the inside, predictions of the ripening process were hard to make with only an impact measurement. By adding the acoustic measurement to the impact measurement, Aweta is able to make a complete product analysis. As a result, the products have to be measured normally only once. The combination of acoustic analysis from the inner side and impact measurements on the skin allows Aweta to judge whether a mango or avocado shall go to the supermarket for example on Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. Without the acoustic measurement, one was not able to judge whether the internal softening of the product and the products had to be measured on impact several times.

The ripening process of the avocados and mangos is among other issues, related to the amount of dry matter present in the products. The more dry matter present in the product at harvesting, the quicker the fruit will ripen. Knowing the amount of dry matter in each product, a grower would be able to judge which products can be transported over a long distance or whether they shall be sold locally.

The dry matter content of a fruit also relates to the sugar levels of the

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## Industry Matters continued

mango. A product with a higher dry matter value will provide higher sugar content at the end. For avocados the dry matter content is directly related to the amount of oil in an avocado. Avocados with higher oil content prove to be more tasteful than products with lower oil content.

To allow a grower or a re-packer, to make the best judgement about the ripening process of the products, but also about the (future) taste of each product, Aweta has developed a dry matter sensor. This sensor can be combined with the AFS measurement, to provide a complete picture about the product:

- impact measurement for the hardness of the skin
- acoustic measurement to analyse the inside of the product by means of sound distribution/adsorption
- dry matter measurement to determine taste and ripening process

All the above measurements can be provided at 6 products per second. Source: Aweta

### Australian government details unit pricing plan

Supermarkets will be required to display and advertise the unit price of all packaged grocery items by the end of this year, under a federal government plan. Details of the government's approach to the roll-out of a nationally-consistent, mandatory unit pricing regime were released on Thursday. The planned scheme achieved a balance between consumers and business, Consumer Affairs Minister Chris Bowen said.

Under its scheme, unit pricing will apply to all store-based retailers who have a grocery display area greater than 1000sqm and who supply at least a prescribed range of food-based grocery items. Online retailers who supply at least a prescribed range of food-based grocery items will also be required to comply. They will be required to include unit pricing on print advertising and website advertisements, but not broadcast advertising.

Unit pricing is the display of goods per unit measure - per 100 grams, 100 millilitres, per metre or per item. "Unit pricing will help consumers compare packaged grocery items of different sizes easily and quickly," Mr Bowen said in a statement. The scheme will be useful where the sizes of packaged items are similar but not identical, he said. The government intends consulting with the retail and grocery industry before finalising the code.

### Report calls for national biosecurity body

A review into Australia's biosecurity system recommends AQIS and Biosecurity Australia merge to form a national authority, as part of a major overhaul. That's one of 84 recommendations made to the Federal Government from a panel, chaired by consultant Roger Beale.

The report says Australia's biosecurity agencies are under-funded and suggests the government spend \$260 million a year to improve them, plus another \$225 million to upgrade information technology. It also recommends replacing the hundred-year-old Quarantine Act with a new Biosecurity Act. While the apple and pear industry wants AQIS and

Biosecurity Australia to remain separate, Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke says a merger is important.

"What there would be though, and this is what the apple and pear industry would want to bear in mind, import risk assessments will be dealt with by a separate organisation that will be the Biosecurity Standards Commission." Source: ABC

### Hava Tassie avo

Avocado season has begun on the north-west coast of Tasmania. That's right - Tasmania - that chilly island south of Australia that's so well-known for growing cold-loving plants like berries and swedes. Not so well-known for tropical fruit.

But surprisingly, it can grow avocados. It's just a matter of having the right variety.

Dick and Lo Shaw planted their avocado orchard at Spreyton because they'd had enough of mowing the grass and weeds on their hill. "It was a bit pointless growing apples or pears - everybody does that - so, try something that nobody's tried before," Dick said. The trees were planted in 1995, and are now cropping heavily. Dick says in a good year his 120 trees can produce half a tonne of avocados.

The Shaws researched heavily before they planted the orchard to find the best varieties for Tasmanian conditions and they have found the Hass, Bacon, Reed and Sharwil varieties crop best. "It's trial, error, and watch like a hawk to see what's happening. If you see problems you try and work out what's going on," Dick said. Dick's a keen record keeper and tracks the performance of each tree. He's also keen on graphs. "I've fiddled around with numbers and enjoy numbers, and like to see if parts of the orchard are operating better than others, and if so why."

The Tasmanian avocados are sold to restaurants and grocers, and the Shaws can't keep up with demand. And did you know an avocado doesn't ripen until it's picked? That means Dick and Lo can eat their fruit all year round. Instead of a "house cow", they have a "house Hass". "It remains for our own consumption and the last ones were picked three or four weeks before the next season's were ready to start," he said.

Source: ABC

## Maturity Testing

Mareeba DPI&F clients, please note new maturity test prices

\$15 for 1 sample	\$30 for 2 samples
\$42 for 3 samples	\$54 for 4 samples
\$66 for 5 samples	\$78 for 6 samples

Five fruit per sample please

**Reminder:** Samples must be received at Mareeba DPI&F by 12pm on Mondays and Thursdays.

## Brand New Avocado Packing Shed for Western Australia

ADVANCE Packing and Marketing Services (APMS) is the home of West N' Fresh and they provide professional fresh produce services to the complete supply chain.

They currently pack avocados for over 30 growers which equates to 250+ hectares of avocados and have an outstanding reputation within the wholesale and retail markets for both high quality produce and professional operating standards and currently market approximately 50% of the W.A. avocado crop.

The Directors of ADVANCE Packing and Marketing Services (APMS) have well over 50 years of knowledge and experience in avocado production and marketing. It was this dedication to the avocado industry that led Karri Country Produce, West Pemberton Avocados and French's Group 89 to join forces and develop this facility which will cater for the quickly expanding industry.

The APMS have employed an experienced Management Team which consists of Jennie and Wayne Franceschi and Tracey Hutcheson who bring a variety of skills to the business.

It's this variety of production, business, management and marketing skills which makes the team at APMS so strong and they are extremely excited to be servicing the growers of this region.

They are dedicated to future growth and consumption of fresh produce

and aim to achieve this by:

- Building Consumer Awareness
- Constantly developing our relationships with retail partners
- Servicing the needs of growers to maximise return on investment
- Providing consistent, continuous quality produce
- Providing **complete** traceability of produce

Using modern facilities and maintaining exacting standards of Quality Assurance

The benefit for the grower is clear and APMS is able to provide competitive rates, complete product traceability, unrivalled reporting, management of quality assurance programs, grower buying schemes and remote access to records via the internet.

In addition to this APMS hosts bi annual grower conferences and is in the process of co-ordinating an 'Orchard Improvement Group' where growers can share knowledge and information.

"One of the most exciting aspects of the new facility is the software program commissioned from ABC Software, Hawkes Bay New Zealand" said Jennie. It will provide growers with complete traceability of their produce and the reporting features can also help growers to manage their orchards more efficiently and make management decisions. "We were very selective when choosing a program" said Jennie "and we now

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Industry Matters continued

have one that will be a benchmark for the industry”

The branding of produce can be vital to its success and with this in mind; APMS have invested time and resources into developing what they believe to be outstanding and innovative new brands.

“We wanted to promote Western Australian avocados as a premium product” said Tracey “and avocados from the South West have a reputation for quality and taste”.

“Our products need to be packaged accordingly to attract the premium prices they deserve so we have utilised new printing methods and colours to attract both the buyers and the consumer’s attention”.

Our Gotta Luv Em range is for premium produce and we have developed a range of promotional materials to support its launch. A great deal of time and thought was put into the selection of the packaging colours and we chose bright red for the box as it is the colour which stimulates appetite and signifies royalty in many countries” said Tracey. It was also a colour that would stand out in the market place and we visited many wholesale outlets to research and get feedback from consumers. “We are hoping that this brand will make our Gotta Luv Em avocados the most sought after in the market place which will command the very best prices available” she said.

“We have developed the ‘Avolicious’ brand for produce which doesn’t meet the exacting standards of Gotta Luv Em but can still fetch high

prices if branded appropriately. The packaging is plainer than Gotta Luv Em and has a very crisp, fresh finish to attract buyers who are seeking great avocados but don’t mind slight irregularities externally”.

**Horticulture growers worried about research cuts**

New South Wales tropical fruit growers fear their leading research body the DPI is pulling out completely from tropical research. It follows a State Government announcement that eight Department of Primary Industry research centres will soon be closing, including the one for tropical research.

Australian Macadamia Society CEO Jolyon Burnett says closing the centre won’t just affect farmers, but the whole region. “The sort of flow on value of the activity that all the farms and the service sector and others provide, we estimate the tropical horticulture could be worth close to half a billion dollars to this region,” he says. Source: ABC

**DPI&F biotechnologist takes top award in technology**

DPI&F principal biotechnologist Dr Neena Mitter has won the Women in Technology, University of Queensland Biotech Researcher award for her work contributing to the primary industries sector.

MECHANICAL

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Dr Mitter won the award for her involvement in innovative projects including the development of a needle-free vaccine for livestock and disease-resistant horticultural crops.

"It was a privilege to receive the award among a pool of other talented industry innovators," Dr Mitter said. "This award reaffirms the contribution DPI&F scientists are making to the agricultural industry." It also highlights the achievements of women in working towards positive action for society at large through technology," she said.

Dr Mitter said she was thrilled that her work had been recognised at last month's WiT annual awards' ceremony in Brisbane. "I feel the award is a result of my experiences across both plant and animal science and my training and work experience in traditional, as well as modern revolutionary, technologies," she said.

Dr Mitter has been a biotechnologist and molecular biologist for 15 years, and after completing post-doctoral research at the University of Hull in the UK, joined the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in India as a scientist. Her contribution to the development of a disease-free strain of chickpeas earned her the prestigious Young Scientist Award from the then Prime Minister of India.

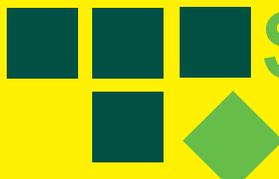
Having continued her successful career after moving to Australia seven years ago,

Dr Mitter has also played an active role in the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Queensland and India for scientific collaboration in agricultural biotechnology.

The principal biotechnologist said that she couldn't imagine what she'd be doing if she wasn't in the field of science and technology. "Everyday holds a promise of a new discovery, a new insight and the wonderful feeling that the discovery or idea may make the world a better place and deliver something meaningful for the community," she said.

The WiT awards are tailored to recognise success and achievement in a range of fields covering both the information and communication technology and biotech industries.





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# Around Australia

## Central Queensland Report

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



I hope everyone has had a relaxing Christmas and New Year break because by the look of the fruit on the trees around this region there's an awful lot of work coming up. This is by far the biggest crop sitting on the trees that CQ has ever had, yes we still haven't started picking and there is plenty that can happen but watch out.

The water situation is good, there have been increased allocations in the groundwater system and the surface water has not increased as yet but there seems plenty available if we need to buy water to finish off the crop.

We have had some extremely hot dry days around Christmas and New Year, the trees were really sucking some water and especially being so dry and with limited reserves, there has been some increased fruit drop around the place. My feelings are the full effect of this may not show up until closer to harvest though.

Thank you to the Reynolds family for putting on the last study group meeting with Simon Newett and co. Also thanks to Simon, Eddy Dunn, Henry Drew and co who make these things so worth while. Unfortunately both John and I weren't able to make it but from all accounts it was appreciated by all who were lucky enough to be there.

This year is by far the best opportunity to have a united, concerted effort to start exporting. There have been numerous meetings and a real effort by all to put in place an entity which would be the face of the Australian industry on the world export stage. We still have many hurdles to cross but for our industry to blossom we need this to succeed.

As we come closer to harvest and with a big crop looming people become very keen to start harvesting and try to get some of the early money. Here we have to be very careful and make sure our fruit is not only mature but tastes good, this is critical as once our customers get a bad taste in their mouth we lose them for weeks if not months. This year we cannot afford to go losing customers!

## North New South Wales Report

By Tom Silver, Avocados Australia Director for the Northern New South Wales Growing Area



I am pleased to report that North NSW avocado growers have just enjoyed one of the most successful seasons on record. Yields were strong, quality was good and the all important returns were fair and relatively consistent. Growers are undoubtedly beginning to benefit from the substantial increase in demand which has been occurring over the last few years. To the industry I say well done, though our biggest challenges may well lie ahead.

The 2009 growing season has kicked off nicely with good leaf flushes, fruit sizing well, regular rain and warm humid days. Growers need to be diligent with pest monitoring and control programs as good fruit weather generally means good for everything weather.

Most growers would be aware by now that following the NSW state government November "mini budget"; it is set to close down eight agriculture research stations including the Centre for Tropical Fruit Research at Alstonville. Besides the political issues of selling off a public asset deemed financially unviable for a short term gain and the loss of extension services, employment and skills in the area, New south Welsh persons would do well to be concerned that the closure of the centre which was originally established due to its frost free status would result in operations shifting back to frost prone Wollongbar or elsewhere resulting in an extensive and probably expensive start up lag. Furthermore Alstonville will be well suited to future research involving climate change, its ongoing monitoring and how horticulture may be able to adapt to climate variations which will in turn affect food security. Alstonville Tropical Fruit Research Station is also a prime location for bio-security research both domestic and international and needs to be able to offer a rapid response in the case of any risks or outbreaks.

I encourage all growers to take an avid interest in this issue and lobby their political representatives at all levels including Federal. A strong effort to turn round this decision and avoid further cuts to our future research capacity Australia wide will be time well spent. The brain of our businesses is science, research is king and we cannot walk away from our small piece of the tax payer's pie that up til now has given the avocado industry so much.

I hope all growers had a Merry Christmas and wish them a successful and happy new year.

## Central New South Wales Report

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



As we reflect on the year, it certainly has been full of surprises. Coastal growers have had some of their best returns on record, helping to offset lower yields than were enjoyed in 2007. The harvest continues to be a good one for most growers in the area. Quality has been excellent with most cool climate growers having good yields. Solid volumes will continue to be produced from this region into February 2009.

In terms of world events, who would have predicted that oil would be less than \$50 US/barrel by the end of the year, where interest rates would have moved to, and how share market values have been affected. One thing is for sure - our profit margins will continue to be squeezed. Growers will increasingly need to obtain better returns by working together. Whether this means

group purchasing of inputs, marketing together or simply sharing a machinery pool, co-operation will be essential to preserving viability. Growers should also take comfort that they are part of one of the most powerful horticultural industries in the country, which is better positioned than most to adapt to the changing world economic environment.

In terms of the 2009 season, it is now quite clear that next years crop has been significantly reduced for many growers. A cold weather event occurred in October which resulted in one or two nights of below 10°C temperatures. This had an unfavourable effect on flowering, inhibiting the production of fruit. The worst affected areas are south of Coffs Harbour through to Sydney. On top of this, many orchards have suffered hail damage, further depressing the likely 2009 outcome.

Finally, on behalf of all growers in Central NSW I would like to thank Antony and all his staff for another year of extraordinary efforts and achievements. I hope all in the industry have had a pleasant and relaxing break and are looking forward to making the most of 2009.

### Tri State Report

By Colin Fechner Avocados Australia Director for the Tri State Growing Area



Spring has generally been cool and dry. South Australia and parts of Victoria have had one of the driest Spring's for many years, we are still on 15% water allocation and Sunraisa is on 0%. Good thing is that leased water is available and the price is lower than last year.

In mid December, most of the Hass has been harvested with Gwen and Reed still to be finished in January. The crop on those areas that had water has been good. While prices till end of November were good the prices have dropped back.

The Hass in this region has matured 2 – 3 weeks earlier than usual with growers having to finish harvesting in a hurry. Agents have

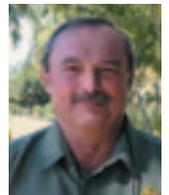
blamed the low prices on New Zealand fruit being ripe and having to be sold cheap just to move them and on a lot of extra fruit from NSW and Qld that were left too long. This has depressed the market.

Next years crop is still to be determined. Most trees flowered heavy but the set is variable. The weather during flowering was warm with cool nights. They flowered over a prolonged period but there were few bees. A lot of apiarists didn't bring their hives into the area as there is a lot of citrus have been hedged hard or died, so there was little bee activity.

I would like to wish everybody a prosperous New Year and may you get through this coming year with less stress and challenges than this last year.

### Sunshine Coast Report

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



Crop levels for 2008 appear to have been lower than projected, while returns to growers per carton appear to have been better than the previous year. There is a promising fruit set for 2009, of course barring any weather disasters. To date the thunderstorms have been coming thick and fast, but fortunately no hail to speak of. For those interested in statistics, our yearly annual rainfall of 1800 mm was well and truly exceeded by early December.

I have previously mentioned pressure from developers, Local and State Government, keen to turn good agricultural land into house blocks. I recently read an article in a Brisbane newspaper reporting that several hundred hectares of agricultural land near Caboolture has been earmarked for development. The developer described this occurrence as 'very, very exciting'. While no-one would begrudge the farmer the right to sell his property, this statement shows the total lack of regard for the intrinsic value of good agricultural land. It's a constant tug between people wanting to come and live on the beautiful Sunshine Coast, and the

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#### Anderson's Nursery

Graham & Vivienne Anderson  
Duranbah Road  
**Duranbah NSW**  
Ph: 02 6677 7229

#### Avocado Coast Nursery

Greg Hopper  
Schulz Road,  
**Woombye Qld**  
Ph: 07 5442 2424

#### Birdwood Nursery

Peter and Sandra Young  
71-83 Blackall Range Rd  
**Nambour Qld**  
Ph: 07 5442 1611

#### Turkinje Nursery

Peter & Pam Lavers  
100 Henry Hannam Drive  
**Walkamin Qld**  
Ph: 0419 781 723

## Around Australia continued

continued existence of viable agricultural land in this region.

I note with interest that Sunfresh Marketing Cooperative, based in Palmwoods, has entered into a business and marketing alliance with a new fruit packing company in the Bundaberg region. I am sure you will all join me in wishing this project every success.

I wish all those involved in the avocado industry in this region a happy and prosperous 2009.

### Western Australia Report

By Jennie Franceschi Avocados Australia Director for the Western Australia Growing Area



Western Australia has been experiencing a very cool spring which has allowed growers to get a head start picking exposed fruit. This has been due to a heavy leaf drop and a preventative measure in case we experience another heat wave like last year.

The quality of fruit harvested has been exceptional and fruit size has generally been large. The Perth metro season has concluded and the south west is in full swing.

Growers from the south west of the region are now waiting to see if the cool weather will affect their fruit set and next year's cropping figures.

A new industry steering committee based in the south west of the state has been formed and the main focus of the group is to look into orchard improvement and research and development projects.

### North Queensland Report

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



The summer is upon us and so comes the rain. Thankfully we have avoided the wild storms that have visited SE Qld but we have had frequent heavy electrical

storms, heavy downpours and some isolated hail. The best is yet to come as the monsoon trough gets itself ready to move down from the equator and bring the heavy guns with it. That's it for a weather report. The rest you will have to get from the news channels.

The Shepard crop looks like being a normal to heavy one. This is a surprise considering the unusual winter and prolonged flowering period. We now have 2-3 flower sets and the first set should be ready for picking in early February for some young trees. The later sets will catch up and be ready in late February through March and April.

The Hass crop looks to be large also and is sizing particularly well and be ready for harvest in early April.

Now, I mention these dates for the benefit of those that think February comes before January and April comes in place of March. Over the past 20 years, in my experience, Shepard and Hass behave to a preset plan. These fruit accumulate dry matter at their leisure not mine or yours. Perhaps the nitrogen release from the summer storms sweetens up the cycle a bit but not by much.

Growers should take extreme care this season to pick only fruit of acceptable dry matter because the market will be heavily supplied and fruit is going to have to hang around in storage before placement in the stores. Immature fruit, incorrect field handling and incorrect cool chain management will result in rotten fruit and severe losses financially to you. The industry loses also because the consumer will react to poor fruit by not buying and this causes the backlog to build up and the problem builds.

Take care, listen to the advice of your agent and good luck On a brighter note, I welcome and congratulate Etienne Theart to the chair of ATAGA. Etienne has thrown himself head first into the avocado and mango industries and his enthusiasm is sure to reap benefits for his operation and for the avocado industry in North Queensland. It is a please to see some young farmers showing such strong interest.

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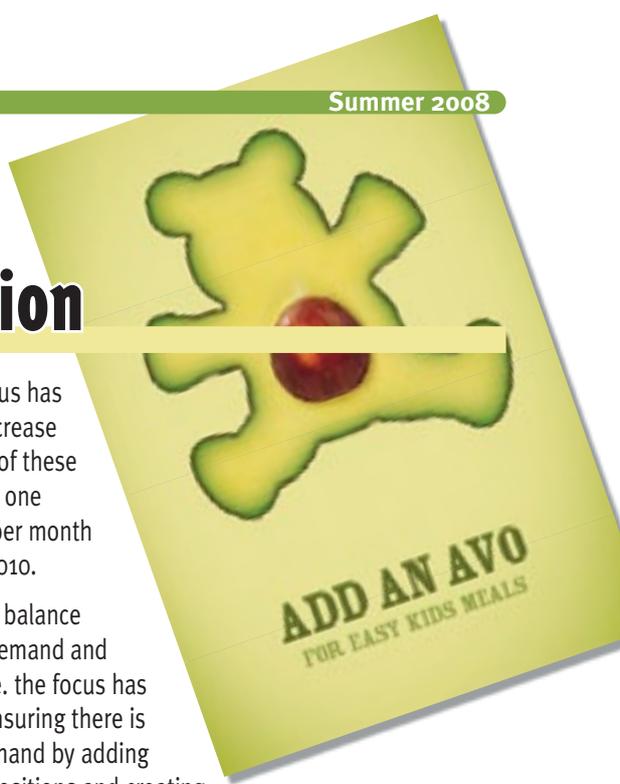
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# Avocado promotions strategies working hard to grow consumption



The ongoing 2008-2009 national promotion campaign is the largest the avocado industry has conducted ever.

The campaign has utilised online, television and magazine advertising, and sampling sessions to target female grocery buyers 20-39 years (primary target) and 40-54 years (secondary target). The target market was chosen based on the recommendations from consumer research carried out in 2005 by Bread and Butter and on additional research data. Key messaging centred on introducing new uses for avocados and was supported by recipes.

The industry's goal for the marketing program is to build strong demand for an increasing level of production at profitable prices to growers.

To achieve this goal the strategic objectives of the marketing plan are to:

- Convince occasional users to increase purchase frequency -

i.e. the focus has been to increase frequency of these users from one purchase per month to 1.5 by 2010.

- Maintain a balance between demand and supply - i.e. the focus has been on ensuring there is steady demand by adding value propositions and creating an emotional bond with the product. This helps in minimising the seasonal influence on avocado purchasing.
- The third strategic agenda is the value propositions mentioned in the point above - i.e. these values help consumers to connect with the product and help in a general

Avocados	February				March					April				May					June				
	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5
<b>February to June 2009</b>																							
<b>MAGAZINES</b>																							
<b>Tier 1 W20-39</b>																							
Delicious																							
Super Food Ideas																							
Australian Good Taste																							
Diabetic Living																							
Recipes+																							
Notebook																							
Womens Health																							
Fitness First																							
Fernwood magazine																							
Womans Day																							
New Idea																							
Who Weekly																							
Better Homes & Gardens																							
<b>Tier 2 - Mums &amp; Bubs</b>																							
Mother & Baby																							
Practical Parenting																							
WW Australian Parents																							
Pregnancy & Birth																							
PPC Mum's Group Sampling																							
<b>TELEVISION</b>																							
<b>Pay TV</b>																							
Lifestyle FOOD - Jamie's Kitchen Australia Sponsorship																							
Lifestyle FOOD - Jamie's Kitchen Australia TVC																							
Lifestyle FOOD - Jamie's Kitchen Australia O&C Billboards																							
Key Programs and Channels																							
<b>FIA TV</b>																							
Better Homes and Gardens																							
in program billboard around Karen Martini segment																							
in program integration w/ Karen Martini																							
<b>ONLINE</b>																							
Mass/Health/Lifestyle/Retail																							
Online - 2009																							

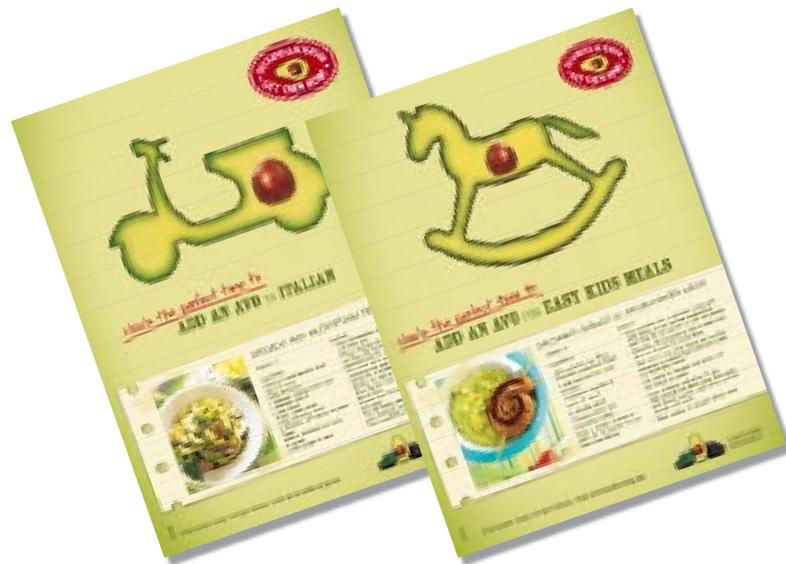
Avocado promotions strategies working hard to grow consumption continued

population push, through communication of vitamin and mineral content.

- Expand into niche markets - i.e. focus on new segments that will provide the industry with new channels to promote the product.
- Decrease whim purchases and increase planned purchases - i.e. make avocados top of mind by showing their versatility.

Online to December 2008

Digital communication is the fastest growing medium in advertising. It allows organisations to communicate with consumers quickly, cost effectively and in a more targeted way. The objective of the avocado online advertising campaign was to drive traffic to the Australian Avocados website. The success of



Avocados	July				August				September				October				November				
	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23
<b>July 2009 to June 2010</b>																					
<b>MAGAZINES</b>																					
<b>Tier 1 W20-39</b>																					
Delicious																					
Super Food Ideas																					
Australian Good Taste																					
Everyday Food																					
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Womens Health																					
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<b>Tier 2 - Mums &amp; Bubs</b>																					
Mother & Baby																					
Practical Parenting																					
WW Australian Parents																					
Pregnancy & Birth																					
PPC Mum's Group Sampling																					
PPC Family Group Sampling																					
<b>TELEVISION</b>																					
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Lifestyle FOOD - Jamie's Kitchen Australia Sponsorship																					
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in program billboard around Karen Martini segment																					
in program integration w/ Karen Martini																					
<b>ONLINE</b>																					
Mass/Health/Lifestyle/Retail																					
Online - 2009																					





have drawn away entrants.

As a result of lower entries levels, compensation was negotiated with the Lifestyle network to the value of \$42,965, negating the cost of the promotion. The additional airtime actually came to \$49,158. Compensation from the Lifestyle network also included an eDM, dedicated to avocados, that was sent to the Lifestyle database. This was valued at \$5,000. The additional value recouped on the TV spend was 56 per cent.

## Magazines till Dec 2008

Advertisements ran in prominent women's magazines *Delicious*, *Super Food Ideas*, *Good Taste*, *Notebook*, *Woman's Day*, *Everyday Food*, *New Idea*, *Who Weekly*, as well as niche magazines *Diabetic Living*, *Women's Health*, *Fitness First*, *Fernwood*, *Mother and Baby*, *Practical Parenting*, *Woolworths Australian Parents* and *Pregnancy & Birth*.

The media spend on advertising was leveraged by an additional 81 per cent of free-of-charge coverage in the magazine which took the form of editorial and recipes.

## Word-of-mouth sampling to Dec 2008

Sampling this year, conducted by PPC Sampling, yielded very positive word-of-mouth results.

Mums commented that they had "not thought" of giving avocados to their children and for their children to taste avocados in a presentation and respond positively was "just what we needed to encourage us to feed our children avocados".

Results from the mums' circuit show that after sampling avocados in presentations, 92 per cent of people said they would purchase and consume more avocados. Similar results were recorded within the family circuit, 89 per cent said they would purchase and consume more avocados after the PPC presentation.

The recipe booklet distributed on the mums' circuit was well received with mums saying they appreciated "fresh inspiration" when cooking, and to have such "healthy, yummy recipes" to choose from was great.



The recipe booklet distributed on the family circuit was also very well received. Mums were grateful for child-friendly recipes that the whole family could eat. Education on the palette change in children between one and three years of age was supplemented by new inspiration from the pages of the HAL Avocado recipe book.

## Nutritionist spokesperson

Nutritionist Zoe Bingley-Pullin came on board this year as the avocado spokesperson. She developed the nutrition content for the website and will be assisting the industry with ongoing campaigns.

## The campaign for 2009 (January 2009- June 2009)

The avocado promotion campaign over the next six months will complete the strategy mapped out for the 2008/09 financial year. Activities will be similar to those reported on above with the objective of increasing consumption by highlighting the versatility of avocados through relevant and inspiring recipes and other content.

In September 2008 the Avocado Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) endorsed additional funds to further enhance the existing media plan from January to July 2009.

The main objective of the plan is to ensure a strong call-to-action message reaches consumers. The call-to-action addresses the need to increase consumption of avocados from March when a high volume of avocados will enter the market.

Additional funds will help enhance the existing media plan thereby increasing reach with the aim of maintaining a balance between demand and supply. Funds endorsed will be allocated to media promotions and online activities.

Existing creative material will be 'tweaked' for this end of the campaign.

## Online

The online campaign will be further extended from January 2009 to June 2009. Rather than just doing display advertising within



Avocado promotions strategies working hard to grow consumption continued



online environments, avocado content will be placed on other editorial pages to engage audiences where they are getting their other news of the day, thus gaining greater opportunity to entice them to click through and visit the avocado website.

Sponsorships will be placed with three publishers:

Fairfax Digital

Yahoo 7

News Digital

Fairfax Digital is the home of all the digital mastheads which sit under the Fairfax umbrella. These include:

[www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au)

[www.watoday.com.au](http://www.watoday.com.au)

[www.brisbanetimes.com.au](http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au)

[www.theage.com.au](http://www.theage.com.au)

[www.essentialbaby.com.au](http://www.essentialbaby.com.au)

[www.cuisine.com.au](http://www.cuisine.com.au)

In October 2008 more than four million unique users visited the Fairfax Digital network of sites, making them the most popular online news network in Australia.

The Yahoo!7 portal, [www.yahoo.com.au](http://www.yahoo.com.au), is the home to a variety of channels including news, lifestyle, sport, email and shopping to name a few. This portal also houses all of Channel 7's TV content and Pacific Magazines' magazine content.

In October 2008 more than five million unique users visited the Yahoo!7 web portal.

Yahoo!7 uses behavioural targeting technology which allows them to track a unique user (you or me) through their individual internet address (IP address). It is possible to track what this user does on the internet and advertisers are able to serve them online banner ads according to their specific online behaviours.

For example, if Ms Jo Average is interested in health, beauty and fitness and visits these types of websites – advertisers are able to track this and serve her advertisements relating to health, beauty and fitness.

This means through Yahoo!7 behavioural targeting the avocado industry will be able to more specifically target consumers with an interest in health, food and nutrition.

News Digital is the home of all the digital mastheads which sit under the NewsCorp umbrella. These include:

- [www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au)

- [www.theaustralian.com.au](http://www.theaustralian.com.au)

- [www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph](http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph)

- [www.news.com.au/couriermail](http://www.news.com.au/couriermail)
- [www.news.com.au/heraldsun](http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun)
- [www.ntnews.com.au](http://www.ntnews.com.au)

In October 2008, 3.5 million unique users visited the News Digital network of sites.

An investment will also be made to track the performance of the avocado industry's online promotion campaign through Adconian. Adconian offers similar behavioural targeting tactic to that used by Yahoo!7, however it operates on a bigger scale.

Instead of targeting users within the Yahoo!7 portal of sites, Adconian can target all users visiting close to 80 per cent of Australia's websites.

The search criteria 'Avocados' is at present performing well in the unpaid search listing. The search campaign will run continuously throughout the year, as payment occurs only when somebody clicks on the avocado ad and a continuous presence keeps the brand at the top of consumers' minds.

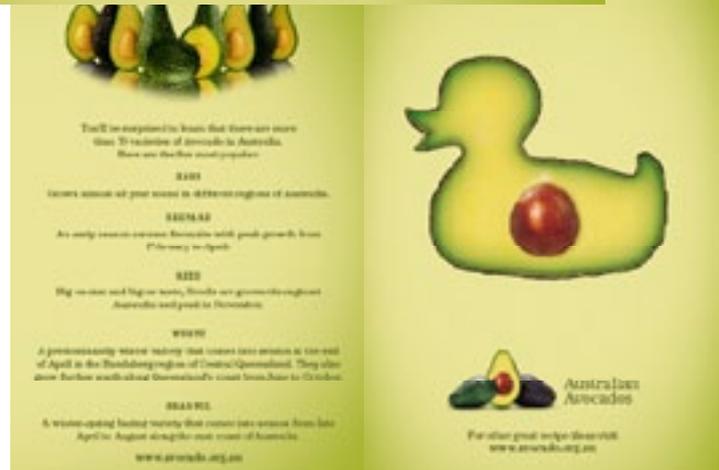
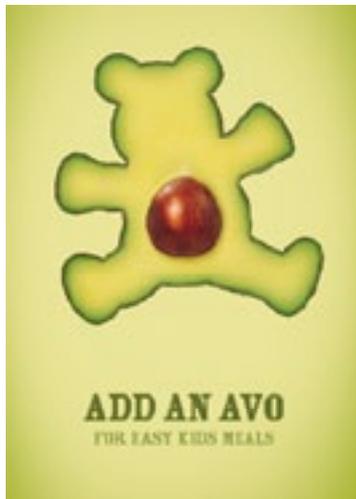
### Television

The avocado industry will partner with *Better Homes and Gardens* on Network 7 which airs Friday at 7:30pm in the five metro cities- Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. This will be an integrated partnership, allowing the industry to get in-program cooking content.

Similarly on Pay TV activity, in addition to sponsoring *Jamie's Kitchen*, spots will be bought on channels such as Fox 8, Arena, and W as well as UK TV. This will ensure the right mix of spots.

### Magazines

Analysis of existing media used in the 2008 avocado campaign showed that the current committed magazine schedule delivers a solid number of insertions across a strong mix of titles from February to June 2009. It already reaches 56 per cent of the target audience who will view the ad 2.48 times, i.e. anymore insertions in these titles would have a minimal affect on reach therefore, new titles will be explored. The magazine schedule will be enriched by



Avocado promotions strategies working hard to grow consumption continued

buying an ad space in *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. By buying one insertion in this magazine advertising will reach 60 per cent of the target audience 2.69 times, which implies that there will be an increase of four reach points.

**Avocado Consumer Website**

The avocado consumer website strategy, commencing in January 2009, will have the following objectives:

- Engage with consumers already registered in the database
- Increase volume through database subscriptions
- Drive sales through a call to action during peak season: March – September

It will also ensure the nutritional advice on the website is credible, referenced accurately and complies with Food Standards Australia New Zealand requirements and HAL’s health claims policy.

The goals of the consumer website strategy will be to:

- Ensure that those on the existing avocado consumer website database are people ‘of value’ and persuade them to refer like-minded friends and family to the site.
- Increase volume, drive sales and engage with consumers on the database through a relevant program that will inspire more purchase occasions for avocados
- Give consumers a reason to increase usage of avocados in a way which is engaging and rewarding.

A program which is content-rich and drives frequency of consumption will be launched in March. It will run for a 30-day period and will incorporate 30 different engaging ways of using avocados. The focus will be on recipes, nutritional benefits, health and beauty, with the program proposition being “revitalisation”.

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  - 2 Afron cherry pickers • spring fed dam
  - elevated • stunning views
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Contents are available for viewing with the selected items.

Avocado nutritionist and industry spokesperson Zoe Bingley-Pullin will help develop the 30-day program that incorporates tips for mind, body and spirit.

The ‘Revitalisation’ program will feature on the avocado consumer website.

**Word-of-mouth sampling**

The word-of-mouth sampling program will start in February 2009 and will be ongoing until July 2009. This is an excellent platform to educate young mothers with babies (six months to two years) about the benefits of avocados.

**PR campaign**

Because avocados are regarded as an occasional (treat) food and purchases are driven by a specific use or occasion, there is an opportunity to leverage avocados’ role in at-home entertaining.

The American avocado industry successfully leveraged the Super Bowl to establish avocados’ role in at-home entertaining, and while the promotion started in the 1990s, it is now well and truly established (Super Bowl Sunday is second highest eating occasion for avocados with 10 million kilos consumed and its ‘at-home party day’ averages 18 guests per party).

In 2009 the Australian avocado industry will start to build its own ‘at-home entertaining’ positioning through a relationship with the NRL.

Planned activities include the season launch, an in-store campaign, publicity and a recipe competition.

The season launch will include:

- A competition targeting women in league/wives and girlfriends (WAGS) to nominate their best avocado recipe/ guacamole recipe.
- One recipe selected per region/team to be promoted to media and consumers during the campaign.
- Consumer season launch via the *Today Show*.

The in-store campaign will:

- Focus on State of Origin at-home parties.
- Use two of the WAGS' recipes to feature on point-of-sale: one recipe promoting New South Wales the other promoting Queensland.

Publicity activities will include:

- Seeking involvement of Queensland State Premier, Anna Bligh, to issue a statement calling on all Queenslanders to buy an avocado to support their Origin team.

- Using WAGS' recipes as the heart of media promotions. These will be distributed at local and state level. Eg St George Dragons Fiery Guac recipe would be sent to Illawarra media.
- Using targeted approaches (eg. *Footy Show*, *Better Homes & Gardens TV*, *Fresh TV*) regarding avocados and the perfect footy party.
- Focusing the short lead media package on recipe selection and nutrition (eg, swap pies for guac). Include statistics on kilojoule intake versus energy output while watching the footy final.
- Zoe Bingelly will file an online story on football eating.

The People's Choice Recipe competition will include:

- Encouraging consumers to vote for their favourite WAG/team recipe.
- The winning recipe will be announced on the *Today Show*, providing a campaign 'book end'.
- A national media release announcing the People's Choice Recipe and advice to grocery buyers about how to use avocado at footy final parties.

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# Avocados Australia New Maturity Standard

## Interpretation and implications of dry matter consumer research for avocados

Consumer sensory research was conducted in 2007 to determine consumer's preferred level of Hass avocado maturity and more importantly the impact that supplying fruit below that level of maturity has on consumer's future purchase decisions.

As was to be expected Australian consumers showed a progressive increase in preference and intent to buy avocados as the Dry Matter content (level of maturity) increased.

Consumer acceptance of the quality of avocados was relatively high at about 90-95%, but declined significantly to 70% if the Dry Matter was below 23%. In essence, the gap between 23% Dry Matter and 28% Dry Matter represents the range where competitive advantage is gained by providing Australian consumers with better tasting avocados, with higher rather than lower Dry Matter.

Furthermore, information on relationships between liking scores and choices of food products, predict that around 70% of consumers would choose 26% Dry Matter avocados over 22% Dry Matter avocados.

Based on these results from independent scientific consumer research the Avocados Australia Board is recommending from 2009 a new maturity standard of 23% minimum Dry Matter at time of harvesting for the Australian avocado industry. Growers are encouraged to aim for dry matter above 23%, to achieve the best tasting avocados.

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# Supply Chain Project update

During 2008, Avocados Australia and HAL commissioned HortResearch to conduct an online survey of consumers across Australia to determine consumer response to the internal quality of avocados.

One thousand Australian consumers from across the country were surveyed. Respondents were recruited on the basis that a quarter fell into each of the categories of 'high frequency' (Weekly), 'medium' (Fortnightly) 'occasional' (Monthly) and 'very occasional' (Quarterly) eaters of avocados.

The project addressed three key objectives:

- Determination of price impact, incidence and severity of three common defects (bruising, stem end rot and vascular browning) on consumer purchase intentions;
- Determination of the response to ripeness indicator stickers;

and

- Determination of awareness and purchase relevance of health benefits associated with avocados.

## Price Impact, incidence and severity of three common defects

The study demonstrated that all three factors (i.e. price, severity of defect and incidence of defect) significantly impacted on consumers' future purchase decisions.

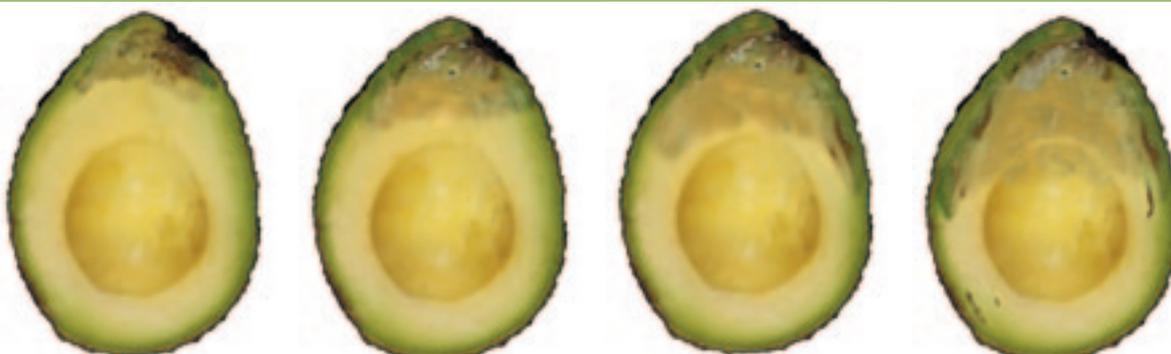
Generally, severity of defect had the highest relative importance, followed by price, then incidence, suggesting that increases in severity of defect have the greatest negative impact on future purchase intentions of avocado consumers. Severity refers to the level of damage i.e. What percentage of a piece of fruit is unusable (see below), Incidence refers to how often you experience this level of quality.



A) Bruising demonstrating 10%, 25%, 33% and 50% affected flesh



B) Vascular Browning demonstrating 10%, 25%, 33% and 50% affected flesh



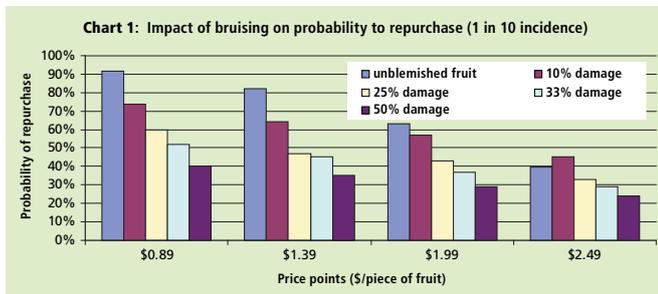
C) Stem End Rot demonstrating 10%, 25%, 33% and 50% affected flesh

Supply Chain Project update - continued

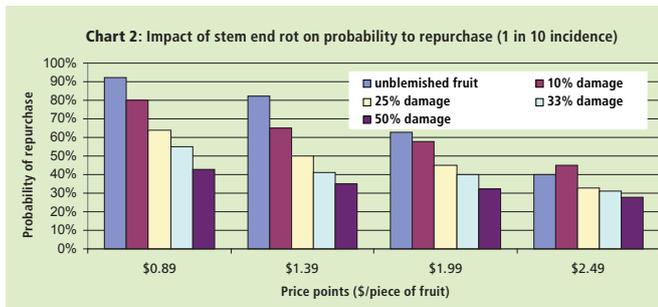
The charts below demonstrate the impact of severity of the defect and price points on bruising and stem end rot given that these factors and quality issues respectively had the largest impact on future purchasing decisions.

For Bruising and Stem End Rot, increases in price from \$0.89 to \$1.39 resulted in reduced likelihood of purchase for even the lowest levels of severity or incidence. Tolerance to damage decreased significantly as price increased.

**Chart 1** shows that even at a price of \$0.89 each a consumer is 15% less likely to purchase a next avocado even if they have only experienced slight damage (up to 10% of flesh affected by bruising) in their last purchase. At a price of \$1.39 the probability reduces by nearly 20%.



**Chart 2** shows similar results for stem end rot. Retailers therefore have to accept that even if consumers are loyal, high incidences of even fairly low levels of defect carry with it the penalty of low returns.

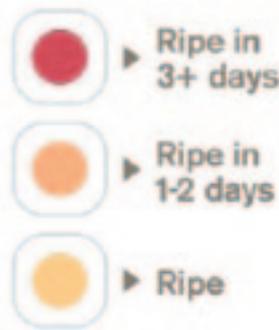


Determination of the response to ripeness indicator stickers

Survey respondents were shown an image of packaging for avocados that had a ripeness indicator sticker on the outside of the packaging.

This technology is not currently available in the market, but the aim of this section was to gauge the market potential of the concept.

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements regarding the technology, what sort of premium they would place on avocados with this sticker, and where they would prefer the sticker to be placed.



The concept of ripeness indicator technology was well received, although there appeared to be a strong preference for loose avocados, rather than packaged. This may be related to the notion that loose avocados are better quality than those in packages, or may be a reaction against packaging in general.

It may also be an effect of the status quo bias – “loose” is what is currently available, and is what consumers are used to. “Packaged” with an indicator is new and it is not clear if the benefit will actually be gained.

Nevertheless, the concept was initially presented to the respondents in packaging and given a good response. It is therefore likely that this form of presentation would be acceptable if the alternative of loose avocados with stickers was unavailable.

A significant proportion of the population (40%) would pay at least some premium for avocados labelled in this way, and this proportion could increase if experience with the technology consistently provided positive benefits to the consumer in terms of better quality.

Determination of awareness & purchase relevance of health benefits associated with avocados

The most important health benefits of avocados identified by the survey respondents were:

1. that they contained Vitamin E and other antioxidants;
2. that they contained more vitamin B1, B2, niacin, folate, potassium and magnesium per serving than any other fruits or vegetables;
3. that they contained more folate than any other fruit; and
4. that they contained more than 14 essential vitamins and minerals.

Fewer than half of the respondents in this study were aware of this benefit which demonstrates a large potential to increase consumption through promotion of avocado health benefits.

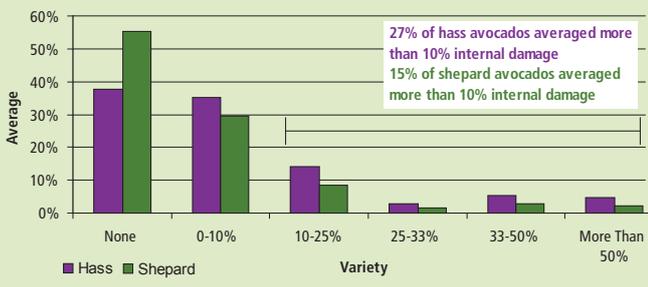
Awareness differed as a function of consumption frequency, with weekly frequency consumers of avocados more likely to be aware of these benefits than monthly or quarterly consumers, suggesting that communication of these health benefits may motivate less frequent consumers to increase their consumption.

How do the retailers stack up?

In order to use the online survey results above (particularly regarding impact of price and quality on purchase) to assist members of the supply chain maximise consumer repurchase, it was imperative that we measure the level of quality that consumers are currently experiencing.

Avocados Australia has therefore implemented a project to measure the level of quality at the retail level over a 12 month period. Fruit is collected from 16 retail outlets in 4 major capital cities on a monthly basis. This project was completed in September 2008 and preliminary results are already available.

Chart 3: Calculated Average of Total % Damage for each Variety



The results illustrated that 27% of Hass fruit had more than 10% damage to flesh and 15% of Shepard had more than 10% damage (see chart 3). Further analysis of the results showed that the 3 factors contributing most to damage were bruising (33% of fruit displayed some level of bruising), followed by body rots (26% of fruits displayed some level of body rots) and stem end rot (17% of fruit displayed some level of stem end rot). Chart 4, 5 and 6 illustrate the level of damage by month.

The preliminary results combined with online survey results indicate that consumers are encountering significant quality issues which are impacting on purchasing and therefore the bottom line of all those within the supply chain. Once the final results are analysed the industry will have the tools to calculate

the exact impact on purchasing that the current levels of quality are having. As well as monthly results by blemish type, data will also be available comparing store types and states.

Chart 4: Calculated Average for % Bruising by Month

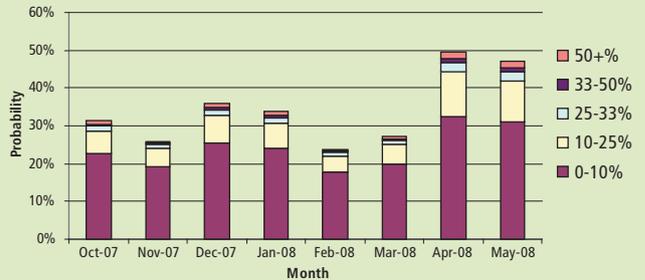
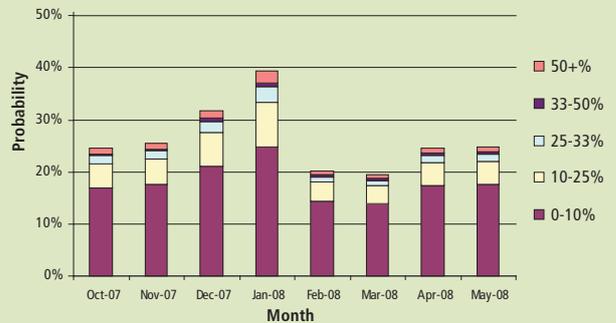


Chart 5: Calculated Average for % Body Rot by Month



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# Next round of Avocado Study Group meetings

Simon Newett and Peter Rigden,  
DPI&F Nambour, Queensland

Twenty six workshops have been held around the country to date and there are another sixteen coming up before the project finishes in early 2010. The topics for the next round are outlined in the table below and invitations will be sent out prior to each workshop with more details. We look forward to seeing you all at the meetings in 2009!

Study group	Meeting	Time of year	Topic to be addressed
North Qld	4 <sup>th</sup>	Late April	Nutrition including fertigation
Central Qld	5 <sup>th</sup>	Late February	Nutrition
Sunshine Coast	5 <sup>th</sup>	April	Irrigation
West Moreton	5 <sup>th</sup>	April	Biennial bearing, Workplace Health & Safety, Chile avocado tour report
Northern NSW	3 <sup>rd</sup> (final)	Sept.	Insect Pest Management
Mid Coast NSW	3 <sup>rd</sup> (final)	May	Disease management (including <i>Phytophthora</i> and anthracnose)
Central Coast NSW	3 <sup>rd</sup> (final)	May	Soil health
Tristate	3 <sup>rd</sup> (final)	Wed 17 June	Avocado phenology and physiology with respect to flowering, pollination and biennial bearing
West Australia	4 <sup>th</sup>	May	Rootstocks

## Meeting minutes soon to be available via the Internet

Minutes for each group's meetings have been prepared and distributed to the members of that group however growers will soon be able to view the minutes of all the study groups via the Avocados Australia website growers' section.

To get onto the site please go to [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) and select the industry tab in the top right hand corner of the page. This will take you to the grower section. Then you select the "LOGIN" tab and using your login details to enter the grower login section, from there you will see the minutes from each meeting. If you have any problems please contact Avocados Australia on 07 3846 6566 for help.



Guest presenters Eddy Dunn (T-systems) and Henry Drew (Growing Greener Growers) conducting a practical demonstration of pest monitoring at the recent Central Queensland study group meeting



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## The industry event not to be missed!

This biennial conference incorporates the interests of Avocados Australia [www.avocado.org.au](http://www.avocado.org.au) and New Zealand Avocado Growers Association and Industry Council [www.nzavocado.co.nz](http://www.nzavocado.co.nz) in the industry event of the year!

It is anticipated that over 400 delegates from both countries will attend and represent the interests of the ever growing \$190M Australian and New Zealand avocado industry.

The conference will be held at the award winning Cairns Convention Centre and will feature the Atherton Tableland avocado growing district in far North Queensland. Along with a well developed academic program, an exciting social calendar has been incorporated to ensure delegates and their partner's experience all that Cairns has to offer!

Topics will include presentations and workshops on:

**Avocado Growing:** the basic growing cycle, climate change, alternate bearing, canopy management, high density plantings, rootstocks, pollination, irrigation and many more.

**Avocado Handling:** temperature management, new technologies for disease control and dry matter sorting, packing advances, export requirements and many more.

**Avocado Consumers:** the Australian and New Zealand promotion programs, retail – what is next, education tools, the latest consumer research, avocados in food service and many more.

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# Corrections to Rootstock tables in TA 19 #3

## Corrections to Tables in the article, Field evaluation of superior avocado rootstocks with 'Hass' and 'Shepard' as scions (AV07008) in the last edition of Talking Avocados, Vol 19 No 3.

**Table 1.** Clonal and seedling rootstocks included in the trial with 'Shepard' and 'Hass' as the scions. The country of origin is given in parentheses

'Shepard'	
Seedling rootstocks	Clonal rootstocks
'Ashdot' (Israel)	BM-1 (RSA)
BW18 (Aus)	BM-2 (RSA)
BW197 (Aus)	
BW2 (Aus)	
BW78 (Aus)	
'Degania' (Israel)	
'Reed' (USA)	
'Velvick' (Aus)	
'Zutano' (USA)	
'Hass'	
Seedling rootstocks	Clonal rootstocks
'Ashdot' (Israel)	BC101 (Aus)
BW127 (Aus)	BC128 (Aus)
BW128 (Aus)	BC16 (Aus)
BW140 (Aus)	BC19 (Aus)
BW16 (Aus)	BC197 (Aus)
BW181 (Aus)	BC62 (Aus)
BW19 (Aus)	BC7 (Aus)
BW197 (Aus)	BM-1 (RSA)
BW2 (Aus)	BM-2 (RSA)
BW5 (Aus)	'Duke 7' (USA)
BW6 (Aus)	'Velvick' (Aus)
BW62 (Aus)	
BW68 (Aus)	
BW7 (Aus)	
BW70 (Aus)	
BW78 (Aus)	
BW80 (Aus)	
BW93 (Aus)	
'Degania' (Israel)	
'Reed' (USA)	
'Velvick' (Aus)	
'Zutano' (USA)	

**Table 2.** Seedling rootstocks with 'Shepard' as scion. Average actual and theoretical yields obtained during the 2008 season

Rootstock	Avg yield per tree (kg)	Theoretical yield tons/ha at 11 x 5m spacing#
'Velvick'	68.8	12.6
BW78	63.6	11.5
BW18	61.0	11.0
BW197	60.9	11.0
'Degania'	58.8	10.6
Ashdot'	51.3	9.2
BW2	46.0	8.3
'Zutano'	40.0	7.2
'Reed'	39.1	7.0

# Actual tree spacing of the trial, 11 x 5m; 180 trees/ha

**Table 3.** The average actual and theoretical yields from 'Hass' for the 2008 season on seedling rootstocks.

Rootstock	Avg yield per tree (kg)	Theoretical yield tons/ha at 11 x 5m spacing#
BW80	105.0	18.9
BW2	104.0	18.7
BW62	94.2	17.0
BW78	93.3	16.8
'Degania'	91.7	16.5
BW6	90.3	16.3
BW127	90.2	16.2
BW70	87.6	15.8
BW140	87.2	15.7
BW93	86.1	15.5
'Velvick'	86.0	15.5
BW19	85.1	15.3
BW197	84.7	15.2
'Ashdot'	81.5	14.7
BW7	80.0	14.4
BW128	79.8	14.4
BW181	78.5	14.1
BW5	77.0	13.9
BW16	76.6	13.8
BW68	72.8	13.1
'Reed'	65.9	11.9
'Zutano'	60.8	11.0

# Actual tree spacing of the trial, 11 x 5m; 180 trees/ha



# News from Around the World

## USA Avocado research set to pay off

Avocado research set to pay off, officials say during production seminars. Research breakthroughs, expanding markets and a projected production upswing mean a positive future for avocado growers despite a steep production cut this year, avocado officials and growers across California said this week.

California Avocado Commission production researchers and officials held a series of seminars at San Luis Obispo, Ventura and culminating on Thursday, Dec. 11, at Temecula during which they told growers new research, methods and conditions could mean more than doubling the domestic output per acre within a decade.

"It's very exciting," said Guy Witney, avocado commission industry relations director overseeing the research programs. "We have a large and expensive competitive grant program, but I believe it is a wise expenditure of dollars. "We want short-term and mid-term profitability that can ensure long-term sustainability," Witney said. "We are improving productivity, efficiency, profitability, viability and sustainability."

Research under California Avocado Commission contracts tied to resulting new production methods should mean "2,000 pounds per acre increases three times every four years; 6,000 pounds in 12 years," said Witney, "or I'll retire."

Avocados generally come in two-year cycles of high and lower production. But the 6,000 pounds would mean a doubling of the current 6,000 pounds per acre average rate.

The meeting at Temecula's South Coast Winery Resort drew about 60 people, including many top avocado industry officials, just as new industry marketing figures and projections became public. Those assessments showed a steep drop in production this growing year ending September 2009, followed by a booming forecast for 2009-10 and beyond.

The avocado commission is funded by mandatory assessments collected from state growers based on crop value. It is overseen by the state and features a grower-elected board of directors. Efforts go for marketing, advocacy, research and education.

California produces about 90 percent of the nation's avocados with state fruit considered the highest quality in the world. Mexico, Chile, New Zealand, the Dominican Republic and Peru also produce about 500 million pounds - half the world's output - annually.

The avocado commission spent about \$400,000 last year on research projects addressing growing methods, breeding techniques, pest control and post-harvest practices, said Witney and Reed Webb, a Temecula attorney, grower and official on the production research committee.

"We're getting \$7 back for every \$1 investment," Webb said. "About half our growers are growing 96 percent of our crop." He said other areas of the world are out producing California, which has to compete.

"We want to have a compact tree that tolerates heat and cold and saline waters that can withstand droughts, not susceptible to root rot and you can plant to grow fruit in two years," Webb said. "We want to produce more fruit, larger fruit and cut down on the nasty habit (use) of Hass avocados." Source: Capital Press

## Mexican fruit flies found in Azusa, CA, USA

Four Mexican fruit flies have been found in the area this month and authorities are launching a campaign to combat the pest, which threatens California's \$32 billion produce industry, officials said Tuesday.

All four of the flies, including one mated female, were found in Azusa, Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner spokesman Ken Pellman said. "A mated female is a big problem, because that indicated there's a breeding population," Pellman said. If the flies were to catch a foothold in California, it would have significant effects on the state's agricultural industry, Pellman said. "It would be costly, and there would be more pesticide use," he said.

The find triggered a response from agricultural officials, who have announced a quarantine of produce in and out of the Azusa area, as well as planned releases of hundreds of thousands of sterile Mexican fruit flies to disrupt breeding, Pellman said.

Organic pesticides will be used at the sites where the flies were found, and fruit will be stripped from trees within 100 meters, Pellman said. "So far we haven't found larvae," he said, which is a positive sign.

Three flies, including the mated female, were found Dec. 8 and Dec. 12 in traps in the area of 1st Street and Vernon Avenue, Pellman said. Another fly was found Dec. 3 in a trap near Lemon Avenue, just north of 5th Street, he said. Any time more than one fly is found in an area, county officials and the California Department of Food and Agriculture responds, Pellman said. A single fly was found in Alhambra in November, but a response was not triggered.

According to a report issued earlier this year by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "The Mexican fruit fly (*Anastrepha ludens*) is a destructive pest of fruit. In the United States, the Mexican fruit fly attacks apples, apricots, avocados, grapefruit, mangos, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, prunes, oranges, and tangerines, as well as other fruits."

The quarantine of produce for Azusa and the immediately surrounding area will mainly effect only those in the agricultural industry, Pellman said. "We do ask people who do grow their own fruit to not take it out of the area, at least for the time being," he added. Source: San Gabriel Valley Tribune

## New Zealand risks ag in emissions trading

New Zealand's agricultural sector, which in 2008 pumped NZ\$8.2 billion into the nation's economy, contributes half the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

*News from Around the World continued*

Arguably the world's purest adherent to the principles of free trade, New Zealand is also the most "trade exposed" nation on earth, with every loss to its export-reliant agricultural sector a hit on the country's bottom line.

That hasn't stopped the Kiwis deciding to put agriculture into its emissions trading scheme (ETS) in 2013—albeit with strong opposition from the farm sector.

In a report published in the Australian Farm Institute's review of emissions trading and agriculture, New Zealand researcher Suzi Kerr and ETS design specialist Andrew Sweet confirmed that there are still more questions than answers about agriculture's inclusion under the NZ ETS.

In favour of the effort, the authors pointed out that if New Zealand can pull off its attempt, particularly its efforts to reduce livestock emissions, it will have generated valuable knowledge that will be in demand around the world.

They also pointed out that in making a firm decision on agriculture's inclusion, the nation ramps up research and innovation that will ripple throughout the sector.

For instance, reducing methane emissions from ruminant livestock is likely to make the animals digest food more efficiently, and become more productive.

But having made the commitment to include agriculture in its ETS, the authors make it clear that New Zealand is still some way off understanding how this might be achieved.

Questions about the point of obligation for collecting emissions credits, what offsets might be included, and whether smaller operations should be included in the scheme, are still outstanding.

The survey concludes that "significant challenges" remain before agriculture can be included in New Zealand's emissions trading program. Source: Qld Country Life

**Greek avocado production decreases by 80%**

Inclement weather conditions have caused serious problems in the Greek avocado sector for the third year in a row. The annual production in Chania (Crete) amounts to about 4,000 tons, which is 90% of the total Greek avocado production. The most important varieties are Fuerte, Hass and Ettinger.

Most avocado growers on this island have been hit by unexpected bad weather conditions. Snow and frost during February 2008 and a heat wave a few weeks later caused severe problems. It is expected that only 800 tons will be fit for trading. Especially the damage to the variety Fuerte is substantial. Source: Freshplaza

**Mexico: featuring the new APEAM board**

On the 18th of November in Uruapan Michoacan, Mexico's President, Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, with SEMARNAT Secretary

Juan Elvira Quezada and SAGARPA Secretary Alberto Cardenas Jimenez, as well as the Governor for the State of Michoacan, Leonel Godoy Rangel and the city Mayor for Uruapan, Antonio Gonzalez Rodriguez presided over the New APEAM board's formal inauguration which is formed by Alejandro Alvarez del Toro as president, Antonio Villaseñor Zurita, Mario Rivas Barragan and Sergio Guerrero as board members.

They will be responsible for the next 2 years of this associations operations in the Mexican Avocado Industrie's affairs within the US Hass Avocado export program which is now in its 11th year and to this date has exported close to 210 000 tons of Mexican Hass Avocados in the current year, the first season was 1997 - 1998 and the total volume for that period was approximately 6 500 tons for the US North East Markets. Source: Freshplaza

**'Sexy fruit' offers huge challenges**

Nearly 10 years ago John Schnackenberg swapped his Queen St corporate career for a Bay of Plenty avocado orchard. He now heads a fast-growing industry targeting a quarter of a billion dollars in value but facing growing pains of inconsistent harvests and securing export markets. Schnackenberg's is a story with a Hollywood ring to it and he would never go back to his old life as a finance manager in Auckland. But growing avocados has not been easy.

Industry output has rocketed from 3454 tonnes in 1996-97 to 26,766 tonnes in 2007-08, with the value more than quadrupling from \$15.4 million to \$64.7 million.

Schnackenberg, chairman of the Avocado Growers' Association and Avocado Industry Council, has 15ha in the Bay of Plenty with about two-thirds in citrus fruit and a third in avocado. "It's frustrating and can be unforgiving," he says. Last season the industry started with a record crop before a storm in July devastated orchards around Whangarei with the loss of about half a million trays and many trees. Total tonnage was still up 16.5 per cent on the next biggest season of 2005-06.

But this season's crop is down nearly 50 per cent because of an alternate bearing problem which sees larger harvests followed by smaller ones. Alternate bearing is a big worry, Schnackenberg says. "Customers want a consistent supply, people who are in the supply chain, the packers, the harvesters, invest in a certain amount of equipment and if half of it is going to lay idle every other year it raises the cost of picking."

Alternate bearing is not a choice of growers or a consequence of disease, but the industry is yet to fully identify why orchards can vary between high and low harvests. "I guess the moral of the story is good, consistent management - orchard practice management mitigates to a degree the natural tendency of trees to alternately bear." Many farmers undertake the right actions but still have a problem. "That's been quite demoralising for our growers." The challenge of managing an orchard is made greater

by the fact that care can vary from one tree to the next. "There is not a prescriptive approach to avocado farming."

Last season's crop totalled 4.9 million trays but based on known plantings it is expected to rise to about 12 million trays in the 2015-16 season with a target value of \$250 million, Schnackenberg says. Export trays last season totalled 2.6 million and earned \$48.5 million in markets including Australia, the United States and Japan. The primary focus is to harvest for export, and produce that does not make it into an export tray is made available to the local market. Source: NZ Herald

### California avocado crop could be smallest since 1980

An avocado shortage is looming next spring. California farmers expect to harvest the smallest avocado crop since 1990 and possibly even as far back as 1980. Hot weather in June, at just the wrong point in the growing season, is responsible for the shortfall. The crunch will come in late spring and early summer, when imports from Mexico and Chile are at their lowest.

Prices shouldn't explode, but they'll creep into the higher range of what consumers expect, said Wayne Brydon, field service manager for the California Avocado Commission. "Retailers see avocados as a prime produce item that already has good margins, and they probably won't want to raise the price far up," he said, but "they have some room to maneuver."

California, which produced 330 million pounds of avocados last year, is by far the largest producer of avocados in the United States, supplying 85 percent to 90 percent of what is grown domestically. Florida also grows avocados. The shortage will be more pronounced in Texas and the eastern half of the nation because California growers will favor longtime customers in Pacific coastal states, Arizona and Nevada, Brydon said.

Yet even during May to July, when California avocados are king, there still could be enough competition to help regulate prices, said Avi Crane, owner of Prime Produce International, an avocado packing house in Orange, Calif.

Avocados in Mexico are grown at different elevations and latitudes, making the fruit almost a year-round crop and giving farmers there a degree of flexibility over when they have fruit to sell, said Ben Faber, a University of California Cooperative Extension avocado expert. "Mexico is so huge that if they see good prices here, they will divert fruit up here to capture those higher prices. And that drives up prices in Mexico, too, so it is very clever," Faber said.

Mexico, the world's largest grower of avocados, exported about one-third of its crop to the United States this year and is expected to send an additional 500 million pounds of the fruit north next year, Brydon said.

Chile, another large grower, is expected to ship about 180 million

# Grower Member Application Form

## Avocados Australia Limited

ACN 105 853 807

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

### Member Details

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

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

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

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

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

### Contact Details

Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Corporate Structure

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

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

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

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

### Special Interests

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

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

## Grower Member Application Form continued

### Payment Options

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

**Cheque**

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

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

**Credit card** (please circle):

MasterCard    Visa

Credit card number:

Name on credit card:

Expiry date:

Signature:

### Privacy Options

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

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

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

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

**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

pounds to the United States next year, mostly after August. Americans buy almost 1 billion pounds of avocados annually, and the demand is growing. "Twenty years ago, basically most avocados were eaten in California, Arizona and Texas. Now they eat them in Wisconsin," Faber said.

California growers are expected to produce about 210 million pounds of avocados in 2009. That's about one-third less than this year's crop and about half of what farmers had hoped for, Brydon said. "The problem is that it was hot and dry at just the wrong time for avocados," Brydon said. The state's avocado regions, which stretch from San Diego County to San Luis Obispo County, suffered five to seven consecutive days of 100-degree weather in June, which damaged the fruit that was just beginning to mature on the trees, he said. The Golden State is responsible for development of the premium Hass variety of avocado.

Although archeologists have found evidence that avocados were cultivated in Mexico as early as 500 B.C., the coveted Hass is traced to a single tree in the backyard of Rudolph Hass in La Habra, Calif., in the 1920s. That tree is the genetic origin of every Hass avocado in the world.

The tree succumbed to root rot in 2002. The Avocado Commission reports that its wood is in storage in a nursery in Ventura, Calif., awaiting a decision on a memorial to what has become known as the Hass Mother Tree. Source: Chicago Tribune

### US: Football fans to consume 46.3 million pounds of Hass Avocados on Big Game Day

The Hass Avocado Board (HAB) today announced it anticipates that football fans across the country will devour an estimated 46.3 million pounds of Hass avocados during the Big Game on February 1. That's enough avocados to cover Tampa's Raymond James Stadium football field, end zone to end zone, 17.8 feet deep. Big Game Day is projected to be one of the largest Hass avocado consumption days of 2009, with more than 92 million Hass avocados set to be eaten by consumers at their gridiron parties.

From the classic guacamole dip, to topping off burgers, chili and nachos, avocados add a creamy and delicious flavor to a variety of Big Game Day foods. However, Hass avocados are not only tasty additions to game day snacks; one-fifth of a medium avocado, or about one ounce, has 50 calories and contributes nearly 20 beneficial nutrients to the diet.

"Over the years, we have watched consumers' craving for Hass avocados grow surrounding the Big Game – it truly has become a must-have ingredient on football party menus," said Jose Luis Obregon, managing director for HAB. "The fruit is so popular with sports fans because Hass avocados are delicious, and people with any skill level in the kitchen can use them to whip up a tasty snack for guests to enjoy while watching the game."

While guacamole is always a staple dish at any football party,

using avocados as a main ingredient in other dishes can turn ordinary snacks into zesty, gridiron-worthy meals. For some fresh recipe ideas that can easily be prepared before kick-off, check out the Hass Avocado Board's Web site at [www.avocadocentral.com](http://www.avocadocentral.com).

One game day recipe sure to tackle the hunger of rabid football fans is the new "Pulled Pork Sliders with Hass Avocado and Caramelized Onion." These bite-sized treats are perfect for game day entertaining, as most of the preparation can be done ahead of time, keeping the party host out of the kitchen and enjoying the party. Source: HAB

### Diversification helps Calavo avoid woes and thrive

Financial news for Santa Paula, Calif.-based Calavo Growers Inc. couldn't have been much better in its fourth-quarter earnings report. Fourth-quarter net income surged 235%, marking the company's highest-ever single quarter total and a 10% expansion in revenues, according to a release.

For the three months ending Oct. 31, net income increased to \$4 million compared with \$1.2 million during the corresponding period last year. Final-period 2008 revenues totaled \$93.6 million, compared with \$85.3 million in net sales in last year's fourth

quarter. "It's basically what we expected," said Lee Cole, Calavo's chairman, president and chief executive officer. "It's what our projections were."

Cole attributed the record earnings to the company's recently implemented strategy of diversifying its product line to include tomatoes, papayas, mushrooms and pineapples, along with Calavo's well-recognized brand of avocados. "We should've diversified long ago," Cole said. "We're growing in the avocado business as well. The last couple years, we had freezes which interrupted supply. Now, we have avocados coming in from Chile, Mexico and New Zealand. "Mexico will more than make up for (what's expected to be a small crop this year in California)." Cole said he doesn't expect Calavo's growth to be slowed by an ever-tightening economy.

"The food industry doesn't seem to be affected the way other sectors have been," he said. "People have to eat, and I guess you give up things you don't have to have first. We're actually up probably 20% on the avocado side from a year ago." Cole said Calavo now is looking forward to Super Bowl XLIII Feb. 1 in Tampa, Fla., arguably the largest consumption date of avocados during the year. "Avocado sales (for Super Bowl Sunday) are going to be bigger than ever it appears," he said. "Our sales are doubling coming into the period." Source: The Packer



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