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News

Avocado biosecurity plan launches at the VII World Avocado Congress - 07/09/2011

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The Australian avocado Industry Biosecurity Plan and the Orchard Biosecurity Manual will be launched today at the VII World Avocado Congress in beautiful Cairns, Queensland. The biosecurity planning documents are a well received boost to protection against exotic pests for Australian avocado production.

The biosecurity planning documents are based on a risk analysis which identified specific insects, diseases and fungal infections that could damage avocado crops should they get into Australian orchards. The analysis was coordinated by Avocados Australia, Plant Health Australia (PHA) and Biosecurity Queensland, and brought together key researchers working on avocados in Australia.

Identified threats include avocado thrips which are causing large economic losses in Californian avocado orchards, avocado seed weevils which are a major pest in Central America, and Laurel wilt which is emerging as a significant pest of avocados in the US.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed, according to Mr Antony Allen, CEO of Avocados Australia. "The new Industry Biosecurity Plan lists all the potential high risk pests as well as identifying the steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of them coming into the country and spreading throughout orchards. It means we have an agreed plan based on the latest scientific advice and we can spring into action should any of these nasty pests be found here," said Mr Allen.

The avocado industry is worth around \$180 million at the farm gate each year with around 1,000 growers in Australia and 70% of production grown in Queensland. Apart from the potential losses to individual growers, the avocado industry sustains many rural communities, so there is much to protect. The Orchard Biosecurity Manual has been written for these growers, according to PHA Executive Director and CEO, Greg Fraser.

"The main findings from the Industry Biosecurity Plan have been translated into a manual for growers, showing them what exotic pests to look out for, and recommending actions that all growers should be taking as a matter of course to reduce the risk on their properties," he said.

Practices that the manual recommends include cleaning vehicles and equipment, ensuring the hygiene of people moving on and off a property, and collecting all plant waste and disposing of it away from nursery and orchard areas and water sources. "Biosecurity is everybody's business" says Greg Fraser, "and needs to be a priority for all orchards."

Download the [Industry Biosecurity Plan](#) and [Orchard Biosecurity Manual](#) now.

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Avocados Australia Limited is the Peak Industry Body in Australia for Avocados. We are a "not for profit" membership based organisation. Our members are Avocado growers along with associated businesses and industry people.

Avocados Australia seeks to work with all parts of the chain from production through to the consumer. By working together we seek to continually improve the ability of growers to provide a healthy, profitable and safe product for all consumers. As part of this continual improvement we guide a "research & development" and "marketing and promotion" program for the Australian Avocado industry.

The Australian Avocado industry comprises 1100 growers across the country and produces 49,500 tonnes of avocados each year worth **\$AUD180 million at farm gate and \$430 million at retail level.**

Key growing areas are North, Central and Southeast Queensland, Northern and Central New South Wales, the Sunraysia or Tristate area (South Australia, Victoria and South Western New South Wales) and Western Australia.

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