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Avocado consumers know best: just ask them - 15/05/2007

Over the last few weeks Australian avocado consumers were asked how they like their avocados to taste.

The Australian avocado industry is undertaking a major project in the area of avocado quality improvement.

The industry is investing in a greater understanding of what drives consumers in the purchasing of avocados. The first ever consumer avocado sensory survey was undertaken in Brisbane this week.

HortResearch, Queensland Department of Primary Industry, HAL and Avocados Australia have teamed up to ensure this essential consumer work is expertly undertaken.

"We have improved the quality of avocados enormously over the last 5 years, explained Mr Antony Allen, Chief Executive Officer of Avocados Australia, but we still have room to improve and avocado growers have set a strategic goal to deliver continued quality improvement over the next 5 years."

Some of the areas that consumers were surveyed for;

- their preferred fruit firmness levels,
- preferred ripeness,
- what techniques and senses consumers use to select a ripe avocado,
- how they use avocados at different ripeness stages,
- how internal damage affects future purchasing patterns,

And very importantly, how much they like the taste of the fruit, along with other important insights to help the industry make improvements and deliver a preferred quality product.

"Another very important result of this consumer survey is the development of measures and benchmarks to assess how effective our industry's quality improvement investments have performed, now and in the future," said Mr Allen.

"Our industry produces avocados for consumers 52 weeks of the year, Mr Allen said, and we need to be constantly listening to and learning from our consumers to grow avocado consumption."

For further comment:

Antony Allen, Avocados Australia CEO on 0438 132 477 or 07 3391 2344

This project was facilitated by HAL in partnership with Avocados Australia and was funded by the avocado grower R&D levy. The Australian Government provides matched funding for HAL's R&D activities.

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 1200 growers across the country and produces 40,000 tonnes of Avocados each year worth \$AUD100 million at farm gate and \$375 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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