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Friday, 3 October 2014

The latest industry news at your fingertips

'Guacamole' is the Australian avocado industry's fortnightly email newsletter delivering the latest news of relevance to the Australian avocado industry.

Make sure you check out:

[Update on HAL review](#)

[PERMIT14813 - for use of phosphorous acid on avocados](#)

[Infocado system changes](#)

[Marketing Update: Measuring that Avocado Feeling](#)

[Chilean avos win final approval in China](#)

[AU: Recently the Avocado Levy came under fire](#)

Grower Update



Update on HAL Review

Following the HAL review undertaken by ACIL Allen Consulting which concluded earlier this year, HAL prepared a detailed response to the Minister for Agriculture. The Minister, his department and the HAL Board are currently working on the arrangements for a new entity to replace HAL which will be grower/levy payer owned, with a new Statutory Funding Agreement commencing 4 November 2014.

AAL is very concerned with the lack of formal communication about the changes with the industry representative bodies which are the current owners of HAL, and the conduit of information to levy payers. We understand that this lack of communication is in line with the Minister's requirements.

Horticulture levies investment management is a complex business and change of this magnitude needs an appropriate amount of time to be properly planned and managed. Whatever changes are proposed, one would expect a sensible transition timeframe to ensure minimum disruption to important programs that are currently underway and in train. However, the message that we are getting is that there is unlikely to be much of a transition process with major changes to come into effect from 4 November (6 weeks from now). The problem is, no-one knows what these changes will be and there have been no opportunities for industry to provide input or comment. We are simply expected to have blind faith in the Minister's decision. Whether the changes will lead to better outcomes for levy payers is anyone's guess at this point.

There are many unanswered questions and levy payers are being left in the dark despite ongoing efforts by industry representative bodies to engage.

Unanswered questions include:

- What the new model will be
- How the levies and matching funds (for R&D) will be invested
- Who the new Board will be and how they will be selected
- How levy payers will become members/registered and what voting rights they will have
- How advice will be provided to guide the industry specific and across-industry investments
- What role industry representative bodies will have in communication or advice

Industry communication programs are also under threat. Avocados Australia's communication program is highly valued by industry stakeholders (91% satisfaction from our July 2014 stakeholder survey). However, in line with a 'Minister's letter' to HAL, HAL have refused to fund the industry communication program beyond 31 October. Hopefully common sense will prevail with the new organisation and a new communications program will be established soon after 4 November when the new company commences operations.

It is ironic that these changes are purported to be for levy payer benefit, but there has been absolutely no engagement with levy payers or the bodies that represent them to gauge whether the changes will be for the better. Hopefully we will be provided with some information soon that we can share.

PERMIT14813 - Allowing for use of phosphorous acid on avocados

The Australian Pesticides and veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) have issued Permit 1413 for the use of phosphorous acid on avocados to address Phytophthora root rot (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*). This Permit was in force from 18 September 2014 and is valid until the 30th September 2017.

[Click here](#) to view Permit14813.

Infocado system changes

As Infocado moves into its eight year of operation it is easy to see just how far this revolutionary information system has progressed and the benefit it has produced for the avocado industry. It has evolved rapidly from its original form and become more accurate as time has progressed. Infocado - like most other online applications - needs to be upgraded from time-to-time so it can remain current with the ever-changing business environment.

The main advantage of this upgrade is that it will allow users of a wider range of computer operating systems to participate in providing their crop data.

To be able to contribute to the system previously, Infocado contributors needed to download Formatta Filler, a program which allows the contributor to enter data. This technology has now become quite dated and a wider range of computer operating systems are now emerging.

To assist current and new users of the system, Web Forms will replace Formatta Filler.

From the user's perspective, the basic design and layout of forms and Infocado system functions won't change but Web Forms provides some advantages:

- Web Forms can be printed by clicking a PDF button on each form and printing the PDF file
- Users replacing old PC's no longer need to download and install Formatta Filler
- Users with Apple Macs or iPads can use and access the Infocado system
- Web Forms will open with Internet Explorer (not versions 7 or 8), Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari.

Infocado users will be provided with more details.

Any questions or queries about the above can be directed to **Nathan Symonds** AAL's Supply Chain Program Manager by email supplychain@avocado.org.au or call toll free 1300 303

971.

Marketing Update

Measuring that Avocado Feeling

Throughout the development of the new television campaign, Avocados Australia and HAL have undertaken a rigorous process of consumer research to ensure that the final ad is delivering the right message to consumers. This process involved initial concept research to select the best idea, testing the final idea before producing the ad and then testing the finished ad before being launched. At every stage the results have provided reassurance that the investment in the ad will help achieve the overall objective of growing the consumption of Australian Avocados.

Now that the ad has been launched it is important that the process doesn't stop. As previously updated, Avocados Australia have a number of ways to track the campaign effectiveness and consumer behaviour against objectives. These include the longitudinal Fruit Tracker (MT14014), Nielsen data (MT14012) and our dedicated campaign tracker (AV13014 & AV14008). The campaign tracker is a dedicated survey that replicates the Project Accelerator strategic research which was first implemented in October 2012 defining our new segmentation and direction.

The new advertising campaign was launched late April and ran for a total of 7 weeks in two bursts on television until the end of June. Directly after this campaign burst Avocados Australia implemented the campaign tracker survey in early July. The objective of this survey was to assess the effectiveness on the advertising campaign on the attitude and purchasing behaviour of our target segments Avocado Enthusiasts and Avocado Lovers as well as measure the overall awareness of the campaign.

The key results of the survey are great news for Australian Avocados and have been summarised on an Infographic, [click here](#) to view this. The results indicate that since the last survey the proportion of Lovers and Enthusiasts have grown and now represent 67% of total avocado purchase volume which is a key marketing objective. Importantly the ad makes consumers feel both Hungry and Happy, makes them want to buy an avocado with 60% saying the ad makes them want to eat an avocado. Overall the recommendation from the research results was that continued investment in television advertising using this ad would continue to deliver positive returns for the industry.

Industry News

Chilean avocados win final approval in China

Official signing of the import protocol in China means shipments can get underway from this week. Read more by [clicking here](#).

AU: Recently the Avocado Levy came under fire

Western Australia's three largest avocado growers intend to lobby the state government for major reform of the avocado levy. Read the article by [clicking here](#). [Click here](#) to read AAL's response in full.

Can't wait for Guacamole? You can read all the latest [Avocado News](#) and industry-related [National & International News](#) on the Avocados Australia industry website.

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