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[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Membership](#) | [Events](#) | [Growers](#) | [Services](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#)

5 February 2016

The latest industry news at your fingertips

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

Make sure you check out:

[Avocados Australia responds to price hike and market manipulation claims](#)
[Two weeks left to apply for Horizon Scholarship](#)
[Marketing update](#)

[Infocado and retail prices update](#)

[Dry Matter Testing Service](#)

Industry news

[High tech study using satellites to map Australia's mango, macadamia and avocado crops](#)
[Federal Treasurer says backpacker workers must pay tax, as farm groups worry tax increase will lead to worker shortage](#)
[AU seeks more ag representation in premium markets](#)
[New HortNZ chief ready for the challenge](#)
[Avocado industry hits back at claims of price manipulation](#)
[NZ: High avocado price gives record grower returns](#)
[Peruvian Hass avocado exports reached US\\$305m in 2015](#)
[Avocados from Mexico presents the wacky Super Bowl spot again](#)
[Mexico strengthens protection of its avocados](#)
[California Avocado season begins](#)



Avocados Australia responds to price hike and market manipulation claims

The last fortnight has seen Australia's avocado industry in the spotlight as a result of higher seasonal prices and claims of market manipulation.

Avocados Australia's CEO John Tyas and Chairman Jim Kochi have been quoted widely in local, national and international media across all forms of media - print, radio, online publications and television.

Both explained the price rises as a consequence of supply and demand imbalance in mid-January with rain events in both WA and NZ which delayed harvesting and fires in WA which slowed up transport.

They also responded to market manipulation claims by explaining the flowering to harvest periods in the different growing regions and the longer term consequences to crops and quality if harvesting programs were altered, explaining it is not in growers' interests to do this.

"The last 10-15 years has seen demand for this delicious superfood increasing significantly as the Australian public has become better educated about its versatility and nutritional values heralding it as a 'superfood'," Mr Tyas said.

"This has also seen the fruit endorsed heavily by emerging food movements such as the raw food, paleo and no sugar movements.

"This demand is also the result of great marketing which has educated consumers about the inherent properties of avocados - funded by industry and commercial suppliers/retailers," Mr Tyas said.

"The industry has made a large effort to improve the quality and consumer confidence and because Australians now have a year-round supply, avocados have become a staple for many shoppers."

Mr Tyas and Mr Kochi both emphasised that the price spike was a short term issue and retail prices will ease in the next few weeks before returning to normal in April when supply will increase again.

"We have been working hard over the past few years to ensure our avocado consumers enjoy a good quality fruit and this along with excellent marketing has lifted the demand for avocados as households know they're getting good value for money," Mr Tyas said.

"It's simply not in our best interest to provide a lesser quality fruit to our consumers, just as it's not in our best interest to have avocados at unaffordable prices.

"We want avocados to be consumed by more people, more frequently as there are very large increases in supply forecast in the next few years."

Click [here](#) to see The Today Show's interview with John Tyas on Saturday 30 January.

Two weeks left to apply for Horizon Scholarship

FIRST-year university students who are studying an agriculture-related university degree only have two weeks left to apply for the Horizon Scholarship.

The Horizon Scholarship, an initiative of the Rural Industries R&D Corporation, in partnership with industry sponsors, provides \$5,000 per year for the duration of a student's university degree. Applications close on Friday, 19 February 2016.

The Horizon Scholarship also offers students annual industry work placements that give them first-hand exposure to modern agricultural practices, access to industry leaders, professional development workshops and opportunities to network and gain knowledge at a range of industry events.

To be eligible for The Horizon Scholarship students must be entering their first year of university and studying a degree related to agriculture, such as agricultural science, rural science, livestock/animal science, veterinary science or agribusiness and plant science.

#avocado prices prompt a new sign at a Superior Fruit and Wendy's Kitchen at Graceville in Brisbane.



Students must also have started their tertiary studies no longer than two years after leaving high school.

Scholarship recipients will be selected on the basis of their commitment to a career in agriculture, as well as their leadership potential and high school academic record. The Scholarship winners are announced in March 2016.

Application forms can be completed via the RIRDC website at www.rirc.gov.au/horizon.

Marketing update

By the Hort Innovation Marketing team.

Avo e-newsletters kick off on Australia Day

The first of our Avocado Lovers e-newsletters went out this year to celebrate Australia Day. The content included 7 of the 'Aussiest' avocado recipes including avos on the BBQ; chicken and avo damper; a bloody mary with an avocado twist; chilli con Kanga (yep chilli con carn with kangaroo and avocado); avocados stuffed with prawns; avo ice-cream; and the most Aussie of the them all ... avocado and vegemite toast.

We also included a few of *Ben's Menu* recipes to continue to promote our dedicated avocado shows currently airing on Network 10.

While our newsletters are monthly, we will be sending out our next installment before 14 February to align with Valentine's Day and to complement the launch of our Perfect Match campaign, our social media project showcasing great taste combinations featuring avocados.

If you would like to get a copy of our e-newsletters - go to our avocado consumer website (<http://www.avocado.org.au/>) and sign up - you will find the link on the top right corner.



for AVOCADO LOVERS

7 of the Aussiest avocado recipes to help celebrate Australia day.

Here it is guys. Australia Day, a time where we get to reflect on the brilliant history of our great island nation and one of the most aussie fruits out there; the avocado! Now you might be thinking avocado's, Australian? What are they talking about... Well as it turns out avocado's have a deeply rooted history in Aussie culture.

They were first planted in 1840 at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney, and quickly became the backbone of many Australian towns. Today growers are widespread with orchards found from the north-east to the south-west of the country. Each leaving their own legacy on our great southern land.

So really what better way to celebrate the day, than by celebrating with the fruit that's given us so much!

To make it easy we've thrown together seven of the Aussiest recipe's we could find below!

Which one will you choose?

Avo, Avo, Avo, - Oi, Oi, Oi!

1. Nothing's more Australian than 'chucking it on the barbie!' Why not grill it up with our Grilled and Filled avo recipe!

Consumer Website

We are currently doing a complete audit on our consumer website to get a better understanding of the content our audiences are seeking and reviewing the structure to ensure the site is consumer friendly and easy to use. Changes will be gradually made over the coming months to ensure there is no disruption to the site and to minimise impacts to the users.

Changes will include a more fluid sign-up process for e-newsletters, content review and refresh as required and additional recipes (and also look at where these are housed and how you can search for them). We are also reviewing our search engine optimisation - to make sure we are ranking high on Google searches for content.

The effects will not be clearly noticeable, but the evaluation and reports will provide insights

into the website's performance - allowing us to effectively evaluate spend on this project and our return on investment.

The truth about the avocado pricing

Over the past few weeks, as to be expected, we are seeing some negative comments from our consumers/followers on our social media pages regarding the high prices of avocados. Our strategy so far has been to address each comment and provide our position (price is indicative of supply and demand, seasonality, the fires and rain in WA, rain in NZ - all impacting supply etc) as they appear. This is often a social strategy as directly going out with communication can exacerbate the situation. After continuous monitoring over the past few days, we have seen the comments increase, so we are providing a few dedicated posts on this subject. We will be putting additional information (media releases and Today Show interviews etc) onto our website to support our messages. The social posts will be factual while encouraging consumers to continue to support Australian Growers and continue to love the product!! We will continue to monitor our sites and adjust messages as required.

Perfect Match

Perfect Match is the next social media project which will showcase the matching of avocados with foods such as salmon, chicken, chocolate and haloumi. Four short films will be developed that will create an emotional connection with avocado consumers and get them to think about matching foods and preparing dishes beyond avocado on toast.

The avocados will have 'first dates' with chocolate and salmon etc in intimate cafe/bar and restaurant settings. We will be using real food (characterised by using props such as eyes and clothes) to bring in some humour. The scenes will include miniature furniture to add to the novelty. The script will include a few funny one-liners ("you look smoking tonight" and "you are one fine bird") and dishes will include avocado and chocolate mousse; avocado and chicken salad; avocado and haloumi fritters and avocado and chicken pasta.

The result will be social media content that will be fun, light-hearted and sharable - while providing inspiration for consumers to use more avocados with one of its 'perfect matches'.

The films will launch on Facebook on 14 February.



Infocado and retail prices update

Past Infocado Reports and Retail Prices data are available for access from the Avocados Australia website. You can regularly access this information by going to the Avocados Australia website industry.avocado.org.au.

Please note the project AV12007 Data Collection to Facilitate Supply Chain Transparency finished on 17 November 2015 so Retail Price data will no longer be provided in the previous format.

To access Infocado reports [click here](#).

With the new Project AV15004 beginning, so does Retail Prices once again, but in a new format.

The retail pricing provided each week from next week will be collected via the internet rather than in-store as was the case previously. It will also largely focus on Coles and Woolworths.

The data will be quite narrow compared with the system used previously, but will provide indicative retail market pricing and a source of long term retail price data for the industry.

Dry Matter Testing Service

Mareeba DAF

The avocado dry matter testing service will again be offered by Mareeba DAF in 2016, carefully conducted by Anahita Mizani (*pictured with Kaila Ridgeway*) - Department of Agriculture and Fisheries PHD student from the University of Queensland.



DM standards for optimum avocado quality are 23% for Hass and 21% for Shepard and other varieties.

Each sample (5 fruit pieces) should be delivered to Mareeba DAF, 28 Peters Street on Wednesdays prior to 12pm. DM results will then be sent to growers mid Thursday afternoon.

The cost is \$20/sample, with discounts for more than 2 samples. For more information please contact Kaila Ridgeway, Mareeba DAF, (07) 4048 4623 or 0417335271.

Industry News

The high tech study using satellites to map Australia's mango, macadamia and avocado crops

In a small lecture theatre at the CQ University campus in Bundaberg, Dr James Underwood is giving a presentation about his work capturing images of mango, macadamia and avocado trees. [More](#)

Federal Treasurer says backpacker workers must pay tax, as farm groups worry tax increase will lead to worker shortage

The Federal Government says it will pursue a tax increase for backpackers who work in Australia, despite complaints from farmers that it will hurt the rural economy. [More](#)

AU seeks more ag representation in premium markets

The Australian Government continues to deliver measures under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, as part of which five new agricultural counsellors have now begun their work in key export markets, namely Vietnam, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, China and Thailand. [More](#)

New HortNZ chief ready for the challenge

Recently appointed as the chief executive of Horticulture NZ, Mike Chapman has spent 10 years as CEO of the New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers (NZKGI). Before then he was CEO of regulator Kiwifruit New Zealand. Chapman, replaces Peter Silcock, who stepped down after 25 years in the role. [More](#)

Avocado industry hits back at claims of price manipulation

As the price of avocados climbs higher, the peak industry body has described claims that Western Australian growers are to blame for the high prices as "ludicrous". [More](#)

NZ: High avocado price gives record grower returns

Avocado prices have been strong in Australia and New Zealand this season as there has been a continuing growth in demand for this nutritious and healthy super fruit. [More](#)

Peruvian Hass avocado exports reached US\$305m in 2015

The head of a Peruvian state-backed agricultural promotion agency has highlighted great

opportunities for crop conversion to Hass avocados, after the country reached US\$305 million in exports of the fruit last year. [More](#)

Avocados from Mexico presents the wacky Super Bowl spot again

Avocados From Mexico made its Super Bowl debut last year with a wildly fanciful trip to prehistory where the first draft was being held. The ad by Texas agency, GDS&M, established Mexico as the home of avocados and got America talking. A job well done considering the weight of the competition. [More](#)

Mexico strengthens protection of its avocados

The National Health, Food Safety and Quality Service (SENASA) stated that it protected the cultivation of avocado in 528 municipalities of 27 producing states, which represents an annual production of 1,520,694 tons. [More](#)

California Avocado season begins

With America's appetite for avocados escalating every year, the arrival of Fresh California Avocados in the market is cause for menu celebration. Foodservice operators count on Fresh California Avocados for their hand-picked quality and consistency, Golden State origin, rich flavor, silky texture and the seasonal appeal to a range of dishes. [More](#)

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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