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News

Quality of Australian avocados is improving in-store - 17/07/2013

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Overall results show that the internal quality of the top two main varieties of avocado (Hass and Shepard) has improved since Avocados Australia's fruit quality improvement program began in 2008. In particular avocado fruit in retail stores are showing less bruising than they did five years ago.

Research and development investments over many years are paying dividends for both consumers and industry. The on-going Retail Quality Monitoring Surveys are providing clear evidence that the avocado quality improvement program and related R&D activities - funded by Horticulture Australia Ltd (using the national avocado levy and matched funds from the Australian Government) - are making dramatic in-roads into improving fruit quality for consumers. The Queensland Government, through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, has also provided significant resources to help achieve this outcome in collaboration with Avocados Australia.

Avocados Australia's quality improvement program focuses on the entire avocado supply chain and provides the latest best practice educational resources (in print & online) and training direct to growers, packhouses, transporters, wholesalers and retail staff.

The quality surveys involve testing for internal quality at the retail level.

The surveys take place in four capital cities including Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. In each city, 16 stores are surveyed on a monthly basis. Up to 15 pieces of fruit are sampled (depending on availability) from each store and tested for the percentage of overall damage and then proportions attributable to specific types of damage, including bruising, body rots, diffuse flesh discolouration, stem end rot and vascular browning.

Avocados Australia CEO, John Tyas, said that by being able to improve the quality of Australian avocados in retail outlets every member of the Australian avocado supply chain is working to build consumer confidence in buying Australian avocados.

"All sectors of the supply chain impact on the final quality of avocados available at the retail shelf. Consumer research shows that Australian consumers love Australian Avocados but we need to ensure they can consistently buy fruit that meets their expectations and we will continue to direct R&D resources to achieve this outcome. The progress from our efforts thus far is a good example of the benefits that can be achieved for industry and consumers through collaborative industry and government R&D funding," said Mr Tyas.

The Australian avocado industry comprises 850 growers across the country and in 2010/11 produced 49,612 tonnes of produce worth an estimated gross value of production (GVP) of \$207 million and \$519 million at the check-out counter. Production for 2012/13 is forecast to be 59,686 tonnes of avocados.

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