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News

Step by Step Towards Science Based Protection for Australian Avocado Growers - 11/12/2006

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Avocados Australia welcomes the improvements to the mitigation measures that were first implemented on the 21 November 2006 to protect Australian avocado growers from Avocado Blight. Avocados Australia recently uncovered this disease in New Zealand and is very concerned to prevent the disease spreading into Australia.

"The measures that were put in place on the 21 November 2006 lacked scientific rigor", explained Mr Henry Kwaczynski Chair of Avocados Australia. "We sought expert advice on a number of aspects, and were extremely concerned about the lack of science to prove the effectiveness of two out three of the chemicals being used to protect Australia growers" Mr Kwaczynski added.

"Australian avocado growers have a large number of competitive disadvantages to contend with, without being lumbered with this potentially devastating exotic disease," said Mr Kwaczynski.

If implemented and policed effectively, the improved mitigating measures that were put in place as of 5 December 2006, should offer protection to Australian avocado growers from this destructive disease. Australia and Chile are the last two avocado producing countries free from this costly disease.

Avocados Australia is very concerned about the effectiveness of policing the mitigation measures in orchards and packing sheds in New Zealand. There had been a number of breaches with the first set of measures, and New Zealand avocados are still being held in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney due to errors in the clearance process in New Zealand. There have also been a number of containers prevented from being loaded on to ships in New Zealand for similar errors.

"The written protocol won't protect us. AQIS has to effectively implement and police the protocols", said Mr Kwaczynski. "The verification of spraying in orchards and the effectiveness of the in-orchard spray application continues to worry us", he explained.

Avocados Australia will continue to work to ensure the protection of our industry from this disease. Our work has not stopped.

For further comment:

Henry Kwaczynski, Avocados Australia Chair on 07 5442 1767 or 0409 261 461

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 1300 growers across the country and produces 40,000 tonnes of Avocados each year worth \$AUD80 million. 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.

For more information contact Avocados Australia at admin@avocado.org.au

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