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News

VII World Avocado Congress a rich harvest - 12/10/2011

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Last month, the VII World Avocado Congress was held in Cairns, Queensland. This five day premier event brought the global avocado industry together and a \$5 million boost to the region's economy.

Avocados Australia had the honour of hosting the World Avocado Congress at the innovative Cairns Convention Centre. 850 avocado producers, wholesalers, food service providers, market traders, retailers and government representatives from 24 countries around the world attended this amazing event.

"Unlike any other event, the World Avocado Congress brings everyone together; researchers, growers and marketers, all attend in large numbers," commented Mr Antony Allen, President of the International Avocado Society and CEO of Avocados Australia. "One of the great opportunities the Congress allowed was the exchange of information between the Spanish and English speaking avocado world."

The VII World Avocado Congress was sponsored by the foremost avocado marketers in Australia, the US, New Zealand, and Mexico; they included Avocados from Mexico, Costa Exchange, Mission Produce and Primor Produce. "Without the invaluable support of our sponsors the Congress would not have been such a fantastic success" said Mr Allen.

The rich Scientific Program included more than 230 presentations from leading industry experts in the fields of genetic resources, pests and diseases, culture management, post harvest/processing, marketing and the commercial stream. The Congress was very lucky to secure plenary speakers Dr Michael D'Occhio, Professor of Food Security at the University of Queensland, and Dr Gabrielle Persley who has spent over 25 years working in international agricultural research and development.

Renowned chef, food presenter, recipe writer, and internationally awarded cookbook author Kate McGhie received glowing reviews from delegates for her demonstration on using unripe avocados to brilliant effect as well as exciting approaches to hot dishes with avocado.

The Industry Exhibition became a 'hub' of networking for both delegates and exhibitors to reaffirm old contacts and establish new relationships within the industry. Consistent traffic through the Industry Exhibition was a guarantee thanks to the Welcome Reception, Congress lunch breaks, as well as all morning and afternoon teas being held there. The 35 exhibitors that made up the Industry Exhibition were thrilled with the high level of exposure the Congress brought to their businesses/organisations.

The Industry Exhibit was the perfect opportunity for the Australian avocado industry to debut their new mascot 'Alvin Avocado'; Alvin features heavily in the industry's education material, ranging from a colour and ripeness poster to avocado handling posters.

The Social Program took delegates to visit real 'Aussie' avocado farms on the Atherton Tablelands and to Kuranda and the Rainforestation Nature Park set on 100 acres of world-heritage rainforest. It also included the Gala Dinner where delegates latin danced the night away in celebration of the end of such a great event.

Peru will be the host nation for the next World Avocado Congress in 2015, beating both California and Colombia in what was a very close bid. ProHass CEO Mr James Bosworth has now assumed the role of President Elect of the International Avocado Society.

President Elect of the International Avocado Society and ProHass CEO, Mr James Bosworth at the VII World Avocado Congress 2011 Gala Dinner.

According to ProHass general manager Arturo Medina, Prohass developed a marketing strategy some time ago in order to have the support of most of the World Avocado Congress attendees from other countries. He went on to add that the Peruvian delegation positioned the image of Peru amongst thousand of people participating in the Australia congress, including producers, exporters, importers, researchers, etc.

"The goal is big and we want to organise the best World Congress yet – we have the conditions to do it," commented Mr Medina.

Full papers, Powerpoint presentations and a gallery of pictures for the five day VII World Avocado Congress 2011 are now available at www.worldavocadocongress2011.com

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