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VII World Avocado Congress begins in Cairns - 06/09/2011

Today, the most important event on the global avocado calendar, the VII World Avocado Congress, is being held in beautiful Cairns, Queensland. Hosted by Avocados Australia at the Cairns Convention Centre from 5-9 September 2011, this is an event not to be missed!

The VII World Avocado Congress is sponsored by the foremost avocado marketers in Australia, the US, New Zealand, and Mexico. Sponsors include Avocados from Mexico, Costa Exchange, Mission Produce and Primor Produce.

The Congress will be delivered in English and Spanish to cater for over 800 delegates comprising of avocado producers, wholesalers, food service providers, market traders, retailers and government representatives from 15 countries around the world.

With key opinion leaders and decision makers present and with over 80 percent of Australian and global avocado production attending the Congress, it is the ultimate international forum for worldwide avocado and allied industry stakeholders to exchange ideas.

"One of the great opportunities that the World Congress allows is the exchange of information between the Spanish and English speaking avocado world" explains Mr Antony Allen, President Elect of the International Avocado Society and CEO of Avocados Australia, "Everyone comes together, researchers, growers and marketers, all attend in large numbers."

Congress sessions begin today, including the plenary session. Delegates will have the opportunity to hear throughout the course of the Congress over 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.

Plenary speakers include Dr Michael D'Occhio and Dr Gabrielle Persley. Dr D'Occhio is a Professor of Food Security at the University of Queensland; he will present at length on the topic of global food security, an issue that attracts considerable public and policy attention. Dr Persley has spent over 25 years working in international agricultural research and development. Dr Persley is currently working with the Crawford Fund, advising on aid policy as well as driving and expanding international agricultural research programs.

Renowned chef, food presenter, recipe writer, and internationally awarded cookbook author Kate McGhie will join the plenary speakers and present 'Avocado Alchemy: Who Said It Isn't Easy Being Green' where she will demonstrate how to use unripe avocados to brilliant effect as well exciting approaches to hot dishes with avocados.

Delegates of the VII World Avocado Congress also have the opportunity to enjoy an extensive Social Program including a field trip and cultural activity, as well as a Gala Dinner. The Field Trip and Cultural Activity will have Congress delegates visiting working avocado farms on the Atherton Tablelands followed by an afternoon exploring beautiful Kuranda and the Rainforestation Nature Park; which is set on 100 acres of World Heritage rainforest. The Congress will end with a grand Gala Dinner where delegates will be entertained by Chukale and the Rat Pack's Back. Post-touring options are also available, in addition to an Accompanying Person's Program that runs in conjunction with the Congress.

For more information about the VII World Avocado Congress 2011 please visit www.worldavocadocongress2011.com.au

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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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 1100 growers across the country and produces 49,500 tonnes of avocados each year worth **\$AUD180 million at farm gate and \$430 million at retail level.**

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.

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