



MEDIA RELEASE

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Avocado growers have not altered their harvest to create higher prices

Australia's avocado growers have not altered their harvesting to manipulate avocado pricing, according to Avocados Australia's CEO John Tyas.

This follows recent suggestion in the media that Western Australian growers had ramped up their pre-Christmas market supply to boost sales at lower prices in the lead up to Christmas, causing a post-Christmas shortage and price spike.

Historically the summer period (January/February) is a lower supply period and this would normally push prices up as a result.

"There is a limit to how much growers can vary their harvest schedule," Mr Tyas said.

"There are too many steps in our supply chain to ramp up supply – the growers would need to contract extra pickers, and the knock-on effect is that the packers would need to schedule extra staff and more trucks for transport and this simply can't happen at a moment's notice.

"Growers have an annual program they need to work to in order to get their crop harvested in a timely manner.

"They cannot leave fruit on the trees too long either because the longer it is on the tree, the greater the risk of damage from environmental influences."

Mr Tyas said leaving fruit on the tree for too long also affects the potential yield for the following year.

Avocados are a living, fresh product and they cannot be stored for long periods either like some other fruit, vegetables or nuts.

"It is ludicrous to think that growers would push fruit through at lower prices to create a supply shortage and demand spike that they can't meet. The post-Christmas shortage was simply due to harvest delays caused by wet weather and fires in WA causing transport delays."

"We have worked hard over the past few years through our strong marketing program to ensure that Australians understand what a wonderful, delicious and nutritious product we have, and at the same time, we've worked equally hard with our supply chain and retailers to ensure our households receive the best quality fruit," Mr Tyas said.

"We want our fruit getting to consumers in the freshest possible state, and a consistent supply plays an important role."

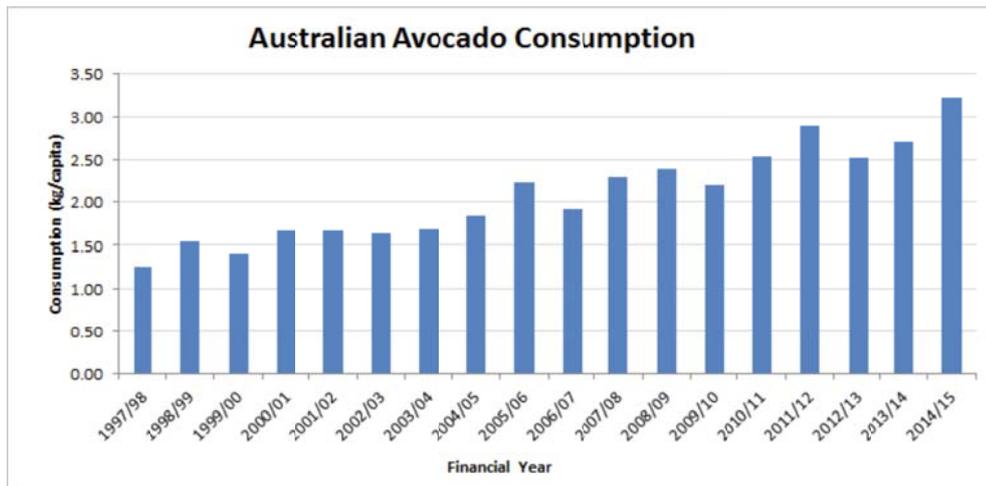
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(Facts at a glance over....)

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Growth of Australian per capita consumption of avocados since 1997



Source: Avocados Australia Quarterly Infocado Reports, ABS Population data

- In 2014-15 Australia produced 57,595 tonnes of avocados valued at \$355-million (GVP) and \$767-million at retail.
- Avocados are produced around Australia from the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland down the East Coast of Queensland and New South Wales, through the Sunraysia and Riverland (South Australia and Victoria), to South-West Western Australia.

About Avocados Australia

Avocados Australia (AAL) is the representative industry body for the Australian avocado industry. We provide a range of services to our members and the broader industry to foster growth and development.

Avocados Australia is a “not for profit” member-based organisation and our members include avocado growers, 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, an industry Research and Development Program and a Promotional Program for the Australian avocado industry is managed in conjunction with Horticulture Innovations Australia and a range of external service providers.