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22 December 2016

### The latest industry news at your fingertips...

'Guacamole' is the Australian avocado industry's fortnightly email newsletter delivering the latest news to the Australian avocado industry.

Due to layout changes prior to our new look being launched next year, please scroll down to view articles.



## New training videos for retailers and wholesalers to improve fruit quality

The avocado industry has developed two new videos to help avocado ripeners and retailers get the best out of their categories.

[Click here](#) to view the short video developed specifically for wholesalers to provide various tips on how best to ripen, store and handle avocados.

[Click here](#) to view the short video developed specifically for retail staff that provides various tips on how best to ripen, handle and display avocados.

These videos were developed with assistance from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and funded by Hort Innovation using the avocado R&D levy and matching funds from the Australian Government.

All industry stakeholders are encouraged to register at our online [Best Practice Resource](#) to access other resources developed specifically for avocado businesses.

## ATO issues warning about registration issues for backpackers

The Australian Tax Office's (ATO) registration process for employers of working holiday makers is currently not working.

The ATO has apologised for the inconvenience and according to the announcement made on its website this week, the office is working hard to fix the problem as soon as possible and expects the form to be available well before 1 January 2017.

"Registration has been extended to 31 January," the website says.

“If you can’t register because of our system issues, and you are employing working holiday makers, you will not be penalised as long as you register by 31 January 2017. You can still use the new withholding tax rate of 15% from 1 January 2017.”

From 1 January 2017, the working holiday maker tax rate of 15per cent will apply from the first dollar earned.

Backpackers holding a visa subclass of 417 or 462 will not be able to claim the tax-free-threshold regardless of their residency status and must provide a tax file number (TFN), otherwise, employers will need to withhold at the top rate of tax.

Employers have also been warned not to employ or pay someone for work if they don’t have permission to work in Australia.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## More than 20 scholarships up for grabs

*Source: Hort Innovation media release (21 December 2016)*

The nation’s Horticulture research and development corporation, Horticulture Innovation Australia (Hort Innovation), today urged growers and people working in the supply chain to apply for one of 22 scholarships to help propel their business to the next level.

Closing on December 31, the Masterclass in Horticultural Business scholarships include 15 for vegetable businesses, three for the nursery industry, and four for general horticulture.

Hort Innovation Chief Executive John Lloyd said the Masterclass in Horticultural Business will arm participants with world-best-practice skills that can immediately be put into practice.

“This scholarship opportunity is ideal for upcoming leaders looking to learn how to apply practices that have proven effective not just in horticulture locally but also overseas,” he said.

Delivered with world leading agriculture university, Wageningen in the Netherlands, renowned university Lincoln in New Zealand and key provider, the University of Tasmania, the Masterclass is the first of its kind in Australia.

Offered online with three face-to-face sessions, the Masterclass will run from February 2017 to December 2017, with around eight to 10 hours per week of engagement required.

Key areas of study include:

- Horticultural Management
- People and Culture
- Supply Chain Management and Logistics
- Financial Management and Law
- Horticultural Marketing and Communication
- Global Trends and International Business
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Business Development and Strategy.

Mr Lloyd said scholarships will be awarded by a selection committee based on the perceived contribution applicants will make to the future of their industry, with a particular focus on innovation.

“Australian horticulture sectors are hugely innovative with a strong appetite for delivering a consistent, quality product for consumers while increasing production efficiencies and ultimately boosting farmgate returns,” he said.

“We look forward to seeing some great outcomes from the scholarship participants in this course, and encourage anyone with a drive to take their sector to new heights to apply.”

For more information, including an application pack, go to the University of Tasmania [website](#).

## Infocado and retail prices update

Past Infocado Reports and Retail Prices data are available for access from the Avocados Australia website. You can regularly access this information by going to the Avocados Australia website's [Infocado](#) and [Retail Pricing](#) pages.

## Industry News

### Australian News

#### Plant Health Australia videos give varroa mite warning

Plant Health Australia (PHA) has issued a blunt warning about the impacts the bee colony pest, varroa destructor mite, would have if it became established in Australia. The organisation has released a series of videos which detail what the pest is, its impacts and ways producers can improve their pollination biosecurity. [More](#)

#### James Whiteside new Ausveg CEO

James Whiteside has been announced as the new CEO for industry body Ausveg, effective 9 December. Whiteside succeeds Simon Bolles, who stepped in as interim CEO following Richard Mulcahy's retirement in May 2016. [More](#)

#### Fresh produce rivals in different expansion plan

Giant fresh produce producer, Costa, is expanding its avocado business, acquiring the Avocado Ridge orchards and packaging operations from the Carney family. At the same time, its competitor Perfection Fresh, is expanding by undergoing a rebranding. [More](#)

#### New biosecurity app to help growers

A new app called Farm Biosecurity, from Plant Health Australia, brings biosecurity into the smartphone age. The new app enables farmers of both crops and livestock to create their own personalized biosecurity plan that meets their farm's needs. Plant Health Australia's national horticulture manager, Alison Saunders, said the app is framed around the six biosecurity essentials which should make it easy to follow by anyone who is already familiar with them. [More](#)

#### Woolworths case loss raises questions about the ACCC's supermarket strategy

Last week, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) lost a Federal Court case. It was trying to prove that Woolworths had engaged in "unconscionable conduct". The ACCC had alleged that Woolworths sought to systematically obtain payments from various suppliers in order to reduce a profit shortfall. [More](#)

#### ACCC won't appeal Woolworths unconscionable conduct decision

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) said it will not appeal the Federal Court decision which dismissed its claim that Woolworths had engaged in unconscionable conduct through its "Mind the Gap" scheme. [More](#)

### International News

#### Avocados building a healthy image

Now that it's able to tout the fact that it's healthy—not simply nutritious—the next step for avocados seems to be encouraging consumers to think beyond the humble, albeit popular, guacamole. "We're seeing that in both consumer and foodservice, people are more aware that avocados can be a healthy part of their diet and a great addition to menus," says Mark Garcia of the Avocados from Mexico marketing board. [More](#)

#### New brand, new tagline

Family. Fresh. Fun. It's the tagline of newly formed brand Darling Group, which incorporates long-established businesses Global Fresh New Zealand, Global Fresh Australia, Just Avocados and, most recently, JH Leavy & Co. [More](#)

#### NZ: Seeka aims to dig up a Gem

In New Zealand, Seeka chief executive Michael Franks has confirmed that the company has launched the first phase of its commercial planting program for new avocado variety Gem. Franks said the Gem variety had advantages over Hass avocados due to it being less prone to alternate bearing, it was high-yielding, and also that it could be planted at a higher density, the *Bay of Plenty Times* reported. [More](#)

#### Monsanto shareholders approve Bayer deal

Shareholders of Monsanto Company (NYSE: MON) have given the green light to a US\$66 billion takeover from a German multinational Bayer AG. If regulatory approvals go ahead, the

merger would combine two of the world's largest companies involved in crop protection, crop science and seeds. [More](#)

#### **Oxitec's 'self-limiting' GM Medfly ready for open field trials**

After a series of successful contained environment studies across various countries, U.K.-based Oxitec is now ready to move to open field trials for its 'self-limiting' Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly). The studies demonstrated the GM Medfly's ability to successfully mate with others in the wild and subsequently suppress the pest population. The efficacy of the Oxitec Medfly and existing control methods were also examined. [More](#)

#### **U.S. interest rising in Peruvian avocado programs, says Mission Produce exec**

U.S.-based company Mission Produce says next season will likely be its 'first full avocado harvest' from Peru, coinciding with a push from the industry to diversify supply sources in the wake of the recent Mexican conflict. [More](#)

#### **Peru: Camposol to open Chinese office**

Chinese market openings for Peruvian avocados, and more recently blueberries, have led the South American country's largest agri-exporter Camposol to put plans in motion for the opening of a Shanghai office. [More](#)

#### **Avocado pits could provide eco-friendly fuel**

Around the world avocados are increasing in popularity. Whether they are used in Mexican cuisine, such as guacamole, or on eaten on toast, people love them. While we love the rest of the avocado, nobody pays any attention to the pit and just throws it away. This may soon change though, as recent studies have shown that some day, avocado pits may be used as a power source. [More](#)

#### **Mexico: Bioactive coating prolongs the life of Hass avocados**

Scientists at the Department of Food Research (DIA) at the Faculty of Chemistry (FCQ) of the Autonomous University of Coahuila (UAdeC), have developed a natural bioactive coating to prolong the shelf life of Hass avocados. [More](#)

#### **Mexico to open trade offices in Dubai and Russia**

Mexico is seeking to replicate the success its avocado had at the Super Bowl by selling thousands of tons of avocados at the football World Cup, to be held in Russia 2018. Meanwhile, the country faces an uncertain trade outlook with the United States, if president-elect Donald Trump carries out his threats against Mexican products. [More](#)

#### **Avocados promise great things for Colombia's agriculture**

Many Colombian products have a great export potential, but avocados stood out this year and are promising great things for the country's agricultural sector. According to Pro Colombia, avocado exports have increased by 266,3% so far this year, from US\$ 7.3 million in 2015 to US\$ 27.1 million up until October 2016. These figures make it the country's second most exported fruit, only after bananas. [More](#)



*Above: SQ Director Daryl Boardman's Sunnyspot letterbox decorated for Christmas.*

**From all of us at Avocados Australia, have a fabulous festive season and stay safe.**

**The office will be closed from Friday 23 December 2016 until Monday 9 January 2017.**

**Can't wait for Guacamole? You can read all the latest [Avocado News](#) and industry-related [National & International News](#) on the Avocados Australia industry website.**

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