

WE'RE ALL ABOUT AVO'S

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Welcome to our autumn newsletter,

I have heard a few people now refer to 2020-21 as the season that kept giving. Coming to the end of it, we found some growers had more fruit to finish with than first estimated. Despite this, we did get all the export crop off and I'd like to thank everyone involved in our avocado supply chain for a huge team effort over last season.

It was a great season results wise and considering the challenges we faced with Covid-19, the high percentage of small fruit, size picking, and changing export customer requirements, we are satisfied with the results of the two pools. We had to change our initial marketing plans in order to morph along with these challenges, but the team did a great job of that, and growers also adapted with us as we managed size picking and multiple picks per orchard in some cases.

We've barely had time to catch our breath and we are into the next season – the Grower Services team is estimating the crop for 2021-22 and the marketing team are preparing their communications with our international customers. In May we are holding an internal review of the 2020-21 season covering every facet, with each department from harvest to marketing presenting what happened over the season and highlighting their challenges and wins. From this we will look at the areas where improvements can be made for the season ahead – most of the improvements all come down to a goal of improving and maintaining quality which translates to more fruit in trays for you and better outcomes for us with our customers. We will report on outcomes of our review at our end of season grower meetings being held 11 May in Whangarei and 13 May in Omokoroa – please check our e-bulletins for further details.

On quality – this season was the best we have had in recent years and we will be looking further into this to see how we can maintain and build on this great performance.

Initial report on crop is that it is 10-15% up on last season and with a wetter summer than previous and greater attention to irrigation and moisture management over this period we hope that the size profile will be back within our key size range.

Inside the following pages, John and Kyra give a roundup of what's happening in the growing regions; Jacob updates us on Pool 1 results; Jude has included a lot of important reminders on GLOBALG.A.P; Erica gives good direction on crop load management; and we introduce our new Grower Advisory Group.

Regards,



Andrew Darling



Good turn out at our February workshop on crop load management for tree health and return crop.



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IN THE MARKETS

JUST AVOCADOS EXPORT 'POOL 1' RESULTS ANNOUNCED

Results for Just Avocados' export 'pool 1' for the 2020-21 season have been announced with an average orchard gate return across premium sizes of \$27.27 per tray. A positive result after a challenging year.

We are proud of the results for export pool 1 as the season to date has had some significant challenges, both from a grower perspective and a packing and marketing perspective. We really appreciate the support that Just Avocados growers have shown as we have collectively navigated our way through the season.

Good returns were hard won amid volatile demand through Covid-19, shipping delays, and an industry-wide issue with small fruit of 28 count size and smaller.

Where small fruit was identified as an issue on orchard, most growers recognised the opportunity to size this and as a result they increased both their dollars per tray return and total volume harvested.

In one case analysed, select picking early and leaving smaller fruit to size for later harvest resulted in an increased overall return of upwards of \$0.85 orchard gate return per tray over the total volume harvested.

Through management of size picking in the early pool, the volume of 28 count and smaller being harvested was close to 38%. We managed to remain under 50% for the entire season, whereas the industry overall is circa 56%. This will have a material positive impact on Just Avocados growers' overall orchard gate returns.

When looking at total profitability from export and domestic markets, our top performing growers are now doing circa \$70,000 per hectare orchard gate return.

The domestic market to date has been stable with average class 2 orchard gate returns ranging from \$26.75 to \$20.53 for 16 – 28 count sizes.

Growth in this category and the ability to extract a premium through direct supermarket channels is something our domestic marketing partners, Zeafruit, continue to improve.



Andrew Darling and Jacob Darling of Darling Group and Just Avocados are pleased with their export 'pool 1' results delivered to growers in early February.

Just Avocados' focus on orchard health and return crop encourages harvest of large volumes in the first half of the season.

We offer three marketing options which suit different growers depending on their individual goals. The first export pool is designed to accommodate production focused growers who want to get a large portion of their crop off prior to flowering to assist with tree health and return crop.

The initial plan was to have 70% of fruit loaded out by 18 November 2020 putting it into the early pool and consignment marketing options; however, through leaving fruit to size and forecasts of good returns from the Australian market, this changed to 50%, with 50% in the remainder of the season.

Production and returns are the key drivers to profitability, and we need to ensure as an export company we focus on orchard health while delivering premiums out of the marketplace especially in a season like we have just had.

Just Avocados' returns for small fruit (30 count size - 36 count size) range from an OGR of \$22.30 to \$18.70 per tray. Overall, for export pool 1, Just Avocados has produced an average OGR of \$24.99 for all class one sizes including 42 count size.

Individual growers will have different OGRs based on their own individual size profile and specific packhouse's



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packhouse's packing and packaging rates.

Further results will be announced for Just Avocados' export pool 2 which is currently being finalised following the closing out of export programme in late February. ●

ON THE ORCHARD

JOHN'S JOTTINGS – ORCHARD NEWS FROM NORTHLAND AND SOUTH AUCKLAND

Well, 2021 didn't start the way I thought it would with me completely rupturing my Achilles tendon just before Christmas and being laid up for ten weeks. Anyway, I am out of the cast and moon boot now and starting the lengthy rehab programme under the guidance of a physiotherapist.

Because of this, I have not been out on orchards, but I have still had contact from growers from South Auckland to the Far North. From what I am hearing, the set around Whangarei is a bit patchy, with some well up on last year, and others down. The one orchard I have been on showed good fruit sizing for this time of the year.

South Auckland and Far North are on a par with last year or slightly ahead in terms of crop load.



New season fruit sizing well.

MOISTURE MONITORING

Growers that have installed electronic soil moisture probes are giving some great feedback on this soil moisture recording device. All are saying that it has changed their irrigating practices and being able to see in real time on their phone or computer, the changes in soil moisture levels is incredible. As with all horticultural crops, real



An unfortunate accident prior to Christmas meant I have been laid up at home over summer

innovation generally comes from growers with some guidance from consultants.

GROWERS

I am watching closely the growers that have covered their orchards, are experimenting with radical planting distances, and those about to experiment with espalier wire systems to train closely planted trees.

We welcome in the new growers who have recently purchased orchards and are enthusiastic about improving the previous production of the properties. There is still strong interest in people buying existing orchards or developing bare land into orchards. I get a great deal of enjoyment helping these new entrants into the industry.

NZ AVOCADO SPRAY DIARY

The new NZ Avocado spray diary, "Avo Diary", is up and running and I have just been to an industry training session if anyone is wanting assistance.

It is the first major upgrade of the diary in over 20 years and the new format is very good. I suggest you login and have a look around, the first thing that should appear is your orchard map. Check this for accuracy regarding area and block names.

The main differences are that you can only login through the Avo Hub area and the way the amount of spray you use is entered differently.



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Instead of entering the amount per 100 ltrs of chemical you used, the entry is based around total water used, total chemical used, and total area sprayed.

You can also enter you AvoGreen pest monitoring results, which link into your spraying activity. Foliar and ground fertilisers can also be entered in the usual manner. ●

ORCHARD NEWS FROM THE BAY OF PLENTY

Export season has finished with outcomes we are excited to report about. Growers with fruit in the early pool have received their final payment with results exceeding our expectations. Fruit quality this year has been outstanding possibly a combination of low rainfall, growers adopting consistent pruning methods allowing more light into the trees and improvements in logistics and harvesting methods.

FRUIT SIZE FOR 2021-22

The crop is looking promising overall this season and there is a general consensus that fruit size seems larger now than it was at the same time last season.

When considering environmental factors affecting fruit size, data presented on www.metservice.com on rainfall for the months of June and November 2020 and February 2021 saw dramatic increases over those months in the 2019-20 season even though overall there was only 43ml more rain in the 2020-21 season than the previous season. The average high temperature in November 2019 was 29.2°C, compared to 24.7°C in November 2020. The average high temperature in February 2020 was a whopping 33.6°C compared to 27°C degrees in February 2021. This historical data might be a good example of too little too late with moisture and fruit size, keeping in mind this season's fruit size is yet to be measured but something to watch.

With fruit growth being affected by timing of moisture at sufficient levels for fruit fill in the early development stages of fruit growth, as researched by Teruko Kaneko's thesis in *Water requirements for 'Hass' avocado flowering and fruit development in New Zealand*, it's important to understand rainfall and temperature (affecting evapotranspiration) implications on your irrigation plan and not leaving it too late or not applying enough water. It is best to have your irrigation plans and monitoring well in place before pollination to ensure your trees are well equipped for production.

Remember mulch is your biggest ally when making the most of your irrigation, capturing and holding moisture in well-developed soils rich in organic matter will support water usage.

AUTUMN

Autumn has landed, and leaf and soil testing is underway. Last year we did a workshop on how to collect leaf and soil samples, the video is still available for viewing on our Grower Facebook Group. In the Group, click on the topic Soil and leaf sampling / testing from the list to the right of the discussion threads to bring up our resources in this area or go to www.facebook.com/groups/1235687423294960/post_tags/?post_tag_id=1329136367283398. Your local rural merchants should have kits they can provide for testing.

Autumn is also a great time of year to carry out a soil observation test to check for structure, worm counts, topsoil depth, root health, and moisture. This is a good time to test soil biology, testing for Mycorrhizal fungi is important as they are so beneficial in feeding nutrients to the trees check with your labs and ask for Mycorrhizal test options <https://soilfoodweb.co.nz/> or <https://www.linnaeus.co.nz/>.



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THRIPS

There is pressure from thrip population increasing with temperatures and moisture being favourable. Thrips can take hold without good management and will affect your packout. The key is to respond quickly to your monitoring reports and early on in the season to reduce the risk of infestation.

When using chemicals to control levels, ensure a follow up spray is booked in with your contractor to break the life cycle as eggs are not affected by spray and will hatch after application and repopulate.

If you have been considering the use of targeted beneficials, now is the time to give Bioforce www.bioforce.co.nz a call and discuss your requirements for a spring application of Mite-A as they need time to breed these little guys ready to inoculate your orchard in spring.

AN INTERESTING READ

I read an article recently about carrot cement. Making concrete more sustainable, improving its strength and incredibly giving concrete an electrical charge - potentially being

used to generate cars as they pass over it! Made me wonder what little secrets avocados might have in store for biotechnology
www.horizon-magazine.eu/article/carrot-cement-how-root-

[vegetables-and-ash-could-make-concrete-more-sustainable.html](#). We are in the right business with the movement of research into food products to replace petroleum based chemical products as well. ●

COMPLIANCE COUNTS

Jude Reyland, Grower Compliance Coordinator

With the 2020 season behind us, we are already gearing up for 2021! The world's focus on sustainability and "good agricultural practice" is increasing and our customers are expecting us to be role models in sustainable practices such as worker welfare, environmental management, and integrated pest management. The Global G.A.P. programme helps demonstrate sustainable "good agricultural practices" on orchard providing significant assurances to our customers.

MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY (MPI) AND THE FOOD ACT 2014

It is a requirement for all food producing businesses to be registered with MPI under a food safety programme. Under the Food Act 2014, growers and packhouses need to meet the requirements of National Programme 1 (www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/running-a-food-business/national-programmes-steps/steps-for-national-programme-1/). Growers that are certified to GLOBALG.A.P. standards meet the requirements of National \ Programme 1 but still need to be registered with MPI. There are a few options for registration:

1. Authorise your grower group to manage registration for you (Just Avocados – we have added a permission section on the grower details form for 2021-22).
2. Growers independently GLOBALG.A.P. certified who do not wish to be registered through the grower group can register for National Programme 1 through your local council:

a. Western Bay of Plenty District Council

(www.westernbay.govt.nz/rules-regulations-and-licenses/food-registration/food-premises/food-control-plans-and-national-programmes)

b. Far North District Council

(www.fndc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Licences/Licence-application-forms/Food-licence-applications)

c. Waikato District Council

(www.fndc.govt.nz/Our-Services/Licences/Licence-application-forms/Food-licence-applications)

a. Auckland Council

(www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/licences-regulations/business-licences/food-businesses-quality-grading/open-food-business/Pages/what-is-a-national-programme.aspx)

b. Whangarei District Council

(www.wdc.govt.nz/Business/Licences-and-permits/Food-premises)

3. If a Grower has multiple sites in multiple districts, register directly with MPI

a. MPI (www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/running-a-food-business/national-programmes-steps/steps-for-national-programme-1/)

ALL growers wishing to be registered under the Grower Group (Just Avocados Ltd) who DO NOT currently have an MPI Food Registration number need to complete the following form online:
www.horticulturenewzealand.forms.tack.com/forms/nzgap_food_act_registration_just_avocados_grower_group

We have contacted most growers directly that fall into this category. If you are unsure that you are registered, you can check the MPI Public Register link:
www.mpiportal.force.com/publicregister



GLOBALG.A.P.

GLOBALG.A.P. REMINDERS

All growers are required to be audited under the GlobalG.A.P. compliance programme annually. If a grower does not intend to harvest due to significant crop failure for example, you can request to be "paused" from the programme for a period of one year/season. A "GlobalG.A.P. paused" form will need to be completed showing the grower will continue to maintain the practices and intent of Global G.A.P. and that the grower will continue to

maintain the practices and intent of Global G.A.P. during the period of suspension. This form can be obtained from your Grower Services Representative – Kyrá or John or directly from Jude the Grower Compliance Coordinator (jude@justavocados.co.nz).

During the audit process the compliance team will endeavour to assist you as much as possible with any corrective actions you may need to provide. It is important to note that all corrective actions are due within 28 days of the audit date. Failure to provide your corrective actions within this time frame can result in the grower being removed from the Grower Group Compliance Programme. Should the orchard sell, change ownership or move to another packing facility a "GlobalG.A.P. remove" form will be required to be completed which can also be obtained from your Grower Services Representative or directly from Jude our Grower Compliance Coordinator (jude@justavocados.co.nz).

COVID-19

All business are required to display their COVID posters for all visitors to scan. Hand sanitiser should also be provided when required. If you don't already have a poster, follow the link below – it only takes two minutes to complete:
www.qrform.tracing.covid19.govt.nz/



GLOBALG.A.P REQUIREMENTS WHEN IRRIGATING/FERTIGATING

As per the Water Quality and Conservation Risk Assessments provided in your GLOBALG.A.P. folder, ensure your irrigation/fertigation system is well designed and maintained. Poorly maintained tanks and irrigation systems can increase the risk of contamination of the fruit. Annual water tests are required for all water sources except town supply (which is every two to three years).

When irrigating/fertigating trees the following questions are asked in the GLOBALG.A.P. checklist:

- **Are tools used routinely to calculate and optimise the crop irrigation requirements?**
The producer can demonstrate that crop irrigation requirements are calculated based on data e.g., weather web sites, farm rain gauges, water tension meters for the percentage of soil moisture content. Where on-farm tools are in place, these should be maintained to ensure that they are effective and in a good state of repair.

- **Where legally required, are there valid permits/licenses available for all farm water extraction, water storage infrastructure, on-farm usage and, where appropriate, any subsequent water discharge?**
There are valid permits/licenses available issued by the competent authority for all farm water extraction; water storage infrastructure; all on-farm water usage including but not restricted to irrigation, product washing or flotation processes; and where legally required, for water discharge into river courses or other environmentally sensitive areas. These permits/licenses shall be available for inspection and have valid dates.
- **Where the water permits/licenses indicate specific restrictions, do the water usage and discharge records confirm that the management has complied with these?**
It is not unusual for specific conditions to be set in the permits/licenses, such as hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or yearly extraction volumes

or usage rates. Records shall be maintained and available to demonstrate that these conditions are being met.

Water Use records are a GLOBALG.A.P. requirement even if the Resource Consent does not stipulate they are necessary.

- **Are water storage facilities present and well maintained to take advantage of periods of maximum water availability? (recommendation only)**
Where the farm is located in areas of seasonal water availability (rainwater), there are water storage facilities for water use during periods when water availability is low. Where required, they are legally authorised, in a good state of repair, and appropriately fenced/secured to prevent accidents.

RESOURCES:

www.mfe.govt.nz/fresh-water/we-all-have-role-play/land

www.boprc.govt.nz/environment/resource-consents/consent-forms-and-maps/water-take/

www.hortnz.co.nz/our-work/natural-resources/

www.industry.nzavocado.co.nz/grow_categories/grower-resources/water-resources/

RMA 1991 - Schedule 3 - Water quality classes Class 1 -

Water (being water managed for irrigation purposes)

(1) The water shall not be tainted or contaminated so as to make it

unsuitable for the irrigation of crops growing or likely to be grown in the area to be irrigated. (2) There shall be no undesirable biological growths as a result of any discharge of a contaminant into the water. ●

ORCHARD MANAGEMENT WITH ERICA

CROP LOAD MANAGEMENT

The topic for one of our recent workshops was on crop load management to ensure tree health, improved production and more consistent cropping. Of course, with all production management systems it is not just one process but always an integrated approach that ensures these improvements. We have previously mentioned how pruning and well-resourced trees also support improved yields and more consistent production but the focus for this article will be on managing your crop load and the impact it has on the tree.

POOR HEALTH TREES

In order to decide how to manage the crop load on poor health trees you first need to establish what their tree health is. The Ciba Geigy chart provides a visual guide to rate your trees from 0 to 10. Zero being optimum tree health and 10 being a tree that should probably be culled and replaced with a new tree on a clonal rootstock. Although the chart was established to rate tree health from a Phytophthora Root Rot perspective, it is also a great visual guide for general tree health as well.

I consider any tree that rates 6 or 7 and higher be placed on a remedial programme and that regaining tree health rather than production be the focus. Trees scoring a poor health rating and under the same management as healthy trees will



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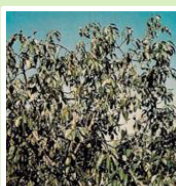
continue to decline and end up providing you with a crop that is of little value. Their fruit is often small and sunburned and is more often than not overcropping one year due to stress, with little to no crop the next. This downward spiral continues and contributes to lower overall production on your orchards. One also needs to understand why the tree is in poor health in the first place. Reasons can be poor drained soils, a high-water table in heavy rainfall years, lower lying areas, *Phytophthora* Root Rot, frost damage, severe sunburn, under resourced trees etc. The list goes on, but whatever the reason in order to turn the tree health around you need to understand why and put a remedial program in place. You can find my guide – Remedial programme for poor health trees on the Just Avocados Growers Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/groups/justavocadosgrowers/permalink/1384501125080255

Fruit on a tree is a tremendous resource drain. The more fruit on a tree or the poorer the tree health, the more stress the tree endures. The autumn and winter period also puts additional stress on the tree. Flower initiation, flower bud development, maturing fruit, slower and reduced nutrient uptake through the roots and a lower rate of photosynthates produced during this period, means that often not all the resource requirements at this time of year can be met. A healthy tree that is well resourced is able to withstand these stresses as well as a heavy crop load but a tree that has a poor health rating simply cannot. These poor health trees most often have a sparse canopy and less root mass than healthy trees which means they are not only limited in nutrient uptake via the roots or leaves but also limited with regard to photosynthates produced. By reducing the fruit load on these trees, you are freeing up resources to be rather reallocated to improving root and canopy growth, sizing and maturing any remaining fruit and also storing reserves for the upcoming flowering and spring flush.

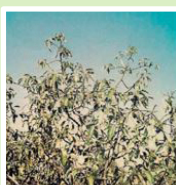
I recommend thinning fruit on any trees that have a rating of 6 and higher. Follow the guide below and remember that when you are thinning the fruit, thin throughout the entire canopy uniformly. Start by removing the fruit that has less value e.g. small, blemished, sunburnt etc. Thinning touching clusters of fruit will also ensure

CIBA GEIGY scale showing stages of tree decline.



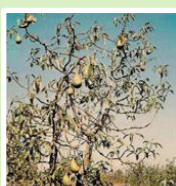
CIBA GEIGY Rating 6

Remove 30-50% of the fruit throughout the canopy



CIBA GEIGY Rating 7

Remove 50-70% of the fruit uniformly throughout the canopy



CIBA GEIGY Rating 8-10

Remove all fruit

the remaining fruit has less chance of rub damage and is also less prone to insect damage thereby increasing the potential value of the remaining fruit. As part of the thinning, some light pruning can be done. Target bony, bare terminals with exposed clusters of fruit and prune back to about 3cm girth wood or a lateral branch with leaves. Remember this is not a canopy prune but just part of the fruit thinning. Once you have thinned the fruit, ensure you spot spray any exposed fruit especially on the hotter northern quadrant to protect the fruit from sunburn. If there are any dead terminal branches, prune these back to healthy wood. It is always a good idea to follow this up with a copper spray to prevent any secondary infection or dieback. Manage these trees as per the remedial program.

HEALTHY TREES

The focus on healthy trees is to be vigilant in always ensuring you have enough flowering wood for the next season's crop. This season's spring and summer flush is next season's flowering and fruiting wood. Without this, higher yields and more consistent cropping is not possible. If these trees are carrying a heavy crop and are under resourced or are impacted by biotic or abiotic stresses the result could be a very high percentage of determinate flowering and fruit set.

With the low percentage of flowering wood for next year's crop it would result in a considerable downturn in production. Ideally you would want to avoid this scenario by controlling what you can. Some examples would be:

- Ensure you have maintained good winter leaf health and nutrition as this helps resource flowering and spring flush (Six Spotted Mite control, frost protection, winter foliar sprays, open canopies to maximise light on the leaves to optimise photosynthesis).
- Take leaf samples end winter just before flowering to ensure you are aware of the nutrient levels and can make any corrections before the impact on flowering, fruit set and spring flush.
- Look after root health as this supports good nutrient and water uptake in spring which helps push the Spring flush (mulch, soil and root stimulants, Phytophthora Root Rot management etc).
- Consider harvesting 60-70% of the crop early enough so as



Determinate fruit.

not to drain resources and impact future production (e.g. not enough resources for the spring flush).

- Pruning seasonally so that you always have a balance between productive and vegetative wood which not only ensures flowering wood but also ensures that the vegetative percentage is able to contribute a higher percentage of resources as it is not supporting a crop.

If, however, you find yourself in spring with a predominately determinate fruit set and not enough Spring flush pushing through to ensure an adequate crop for the next season, you need to react quickly:

- Inform your advisor so that your nutrition programme can be adjusted to encourage spring and summer flush. This needs to be done cautiously as pushing too much flush will cause fruitlet drop as it competes for resources. Foliar sprays are helpful in this instance as the uptake is rapid. Time solid fertiliser application with good soil moisture levels to optimise uptake. If fertigating, apply more frequent applications, again to optimise uptake and help push the spring or summer flush.
- Spring flush can be affected if

there is not enough rainfall in spring to ensure adequate soil moisture levels for water and nutrient uptake. In this instance strongly consider foliar sprays.

- If your orchard is under irrigation, ensure you are checking moisture levels and irrigating enough.
- If no response is seen within 4 to 6 weeks, then consider crop management. This would mean either harvesting some of the current season's crop so resources can be reallocated or if that is not an option you may have to consider some fruitlet thinning.
- You will always have a percentage of determinate set but what you are aiming for is always ensuring you have enough flowering wood to ensure a good return crop. There is a natural fruitlet drop in spring which can also free up resources for spring flush so read your trees before reacting. We have very successfully pushed flush from behind determinate fruit set ensuring great return crop despite the dry spring and summer seasons we have had.

For the recording of this workshop, please access the following link:
<https://www.facebook.com/justavocados/videos/150117753647482>

Autumn is a busy season, and we have great resources to guide you through what has to be accomplished. We cover:

- **Soil, leaf & microbial sampling**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/justavocadosgrowers/permalink/1329131640617204>

- **Land prep and soil corrections for spring planting**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/justavocadosgrowers/permalink/1385204891676545>
- **Phytophthora root rot control**
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1235687423294960/post_tags/?post_tag_id=1357606227769745

- **Pruning**
<https://justavocados.co.nz/orchard-management-pruning-for-maximum-yield/>
- **Fungal rot management**
- To access our **Autumn action plan** please click on this link: www.justavocados.co.nz/autumn-action-plan/ ●

FEATURE

NEW GROWER ADVISORY GROUP FOR JUST AVOCADOS

Just Avocados, Katikati-based avocado supply group, has brought together a group of enthusiastic avocado growers from across the regions to provide guidance to their team on Just Avocados' value proposition and operating policies.

Andrew Cutfield, general manager of investor relations and supply at Just Avocados says the grower advisory group was formed out of Just Avocados' former Grower Trust which was originally put in place to oversee the avocado pool rules.

"The value of the Trust expanded beyond its core requirements to become a wider influencer and sounding board for Just Avocados in terms of our strategic direction.

"The value of having a group of proactive and commercially minded growers at the table was still important to the business and so hence the Grower Advisory Group was created."

Currently the group has four representatives who are growers from Katikati, South Auckland, and the Far North.

Andrew says the role of the Grower Advisory Group is to act as a further conduit between growers and Just Avocados, acting as a sounding board for Just Avocados as well as representing the interests of growers and being another point of contact for suppliers to air key concerns with.

"This is a group of people that are looking at the business from the outside and providing constructive feedback on how we are walking the talk.

"Through this group we are also getting feedback from the field and the opportunity to develop deeper relationships with our growers."

Steve Smith, an avocado grower of four years and Chair of the group is



Three of the four representatives of Just Avocados' new Grower Advisory Group - Iain McGillivray, Steve Smith and Grant Kokich.

passionate about assisting growers and especially about sharing his knowledge gained through the journey of his own orchard purchase and its rejuvenation from a run-down state.

"As a relatively new grower with a background in communications and primary production I would like to think I can be a useful point of contact for growers as well as providing Just Avocados with input to their programmes and strategies. Both parties are dependent on each other for success and the advisory group is a means to achieve this.

"If I have a particular area of expertise, it is probably understanding what new growers are going through or the questions that prospective growers should be asking."

Steve says his journey into the avocado industry has been a huge learning curve but feels he is at the point now where he is making good

decisions and can share some of that wisdom.

The group is currently made up for four growers with a diverse mix of experience but with a shared passion for avocados and the New Zealand industry. David French from Glenbrook Beach, near the Manukau Harbour has been growing avocados with partner Jocelyn for 25 years. He served on the NZAGA Board as a grower representative for several years up until 2015 and has recently covered part of his orchard with an overhead canopy.

Iain McGillivray from Katikati has been growing avocados for 13 years and along with wife Liz, is very involved in industry activity and technical trials. They assisted the industry by participating in an audit with Chinese officials in 2018 when the NZ industry was going through the process to gain access to China.

Grant Kokich from Ngataki in the Far North has been growing avocados for ten years. He is continuing to

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convert his land and develop high density plantings and is achieving production yield in excess of 20 tonnes per hectare on two orchards managed with wife Samantha.

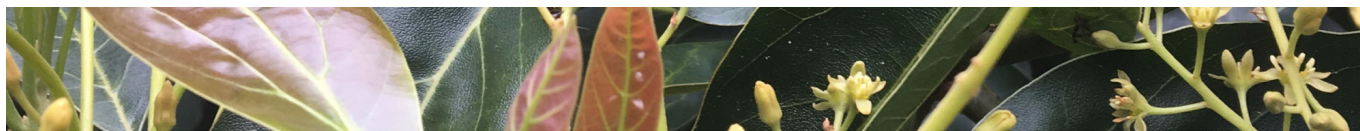
Steve says that the benefit to growers of this group is that they have a semi-independent point of contact that they can discuss their issues with,

without the perception of having a marketing or sales pitch being put to them.

"Across the Grower Advisory Group there is some really interesting experience and knowledge and because we are Just Avocados suppliers, we also understand the bumps in the road and can give our

view on things and share why we are doing what we are doing."

Contact details for members of the Just Avocados Grower Advisory Group are available on the Just Avocados website www.justavocados/about-us. ●



JUST AVOCADOS 2020-21 SEASON REVIEW

Join the Just Avocados team for a catch up and a look into the season that was (harvest, packing, quality, marketing, results) and discuss what is coming up for 2021-22.

11 MAY - WHANGAREI - 4:00PM

Upstairs, Dickens Inn, 71 Cameron Street, Whangarei

13 MAY - OMOKOROA - 4:00PM

Omokoroa Pavilion, 28 Western Ave, Omokoroa

Supper and drinks included - please advise of any dietary requirements on registration.

Please register by emailing info@justavocados.co.nz or by phoning Jacqui on 07 549 3027.




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