



# WE'RE ALL ABOUT AVO'S!

NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2019

[www.justavocados.co.nz](http://www.justavocados.co.nz) | 54 Woodland Road, Katikati | 07 549 3027

## Welcome to the June edition of the Just Avocados newsletter!

Harvest planning will be my sole focus over the next month with the export season kicking off in the next couple of months depending on maturities in your area. The team and I will be in touch with you to discuss your plans and orchard goals for the coming season.

A key factor for success this season will be having the ability to place your fruit in as many Asian markets as possible, so please consider this when applying chemicals and ensure that the MRLs and withholding periods align with your harvest plan - where practical of course. Our team are on hand to assist with this if you need any support.

Last month we welcomed a new team member and also had some internal staff changes; Luaan Erasmus has joined us as Woodland Road Business Manager, overseeing all business components at Just Avocados packing facility. Ashley Fraser who has been in the role of Quality and Compliance support has stepped up to Quality and Compliance Manager – Helen Grey has been training and mentoring Ashley and will remain in a support role, and Brett Jarvis has changed roles to Asset Manager for Darling Group and will be overseeing the management and maintenance of all equipment across Darling Group in New Zealand.

In this issue of the newsletter, Erica shares a timely guide to winter nutrition and we provide an overview of our new pool structure and consignment options, plus we have our regular updates from the team on what is happening in your area.

I look forward to updating you all in the months ahead with how the 2019-20 season export season is tracking.

Regards,  
Jarrod Redwood



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## FEATURE

### NEW POOL STRUCTURE FOR JUST AVOCADOS GROWERS

Just Avocados at their recent season review meetings announced a new export payment pool structure for their growers. The specialist avocado packer and exporter has introduced an early season pool, a late season pool and a consignment (shipment by shipment) option.

“Our new split pool and consignment options give Just Avocados growers even greater flexibility and the freedom to decide how they want their orchard business to run,” says Just Avocados’ supply and logistics manager Jarrod Redwood.

Redwood says that growers have diverse goals when it comes to what they want to achieve on their orchards and the new pool model has been designed to work with this.

“We’ve spent a lot of time understanding what drives our growers and while most are after the best export return, others look at the total crop income, then there are others who are also mindful of supporting orchard health and encouraging return crop.”

Just Avocados has moved away from a traditional season-long pool model to align with their earlier harvest strategy and provide growers with a model where they can decide which pool and option suits them best.

“Growers can place fruit in either one of the pools or both pools based on your personal goals and harvest strategy.

“You can place fruit on a shipment by shipment basis and put the remaining fruit in either pool but not in the same harvest period - for example, early harvest on consignment and late fruit in the late pool or alternatively early pool and late harvest on consignment,” explains Redwood.

Just Avocados is the only exporter offering split pools and a consignment option.



#### A GUIDE TO THE NEW JUST AVOCADOS EXPORT POOL AND CONSIGNMENT OPTIONS

##### Pool 1 / Early Season Pool

This pool will commence with the first fruit which is loaded out from the first export shipment for the 2019/20 season and will finish at the end of ISO week 46 (Fruit loaded out on or Before 17 November 2019).\*

##### Pool 2 / Late Season Pool

This pool will commence with the fruit loaded out from the beginning of ISO week 47 and will finish with the last export shipment for the 2019/20 season.\*

\*Advance and progress payments are detailed inside the 2019/20 supply agreement which is enclosed inside the grower proposal.

“Feedback we have received has so far been positive, growers are liking the ability to decide when they want to pick their fruit and how they would like that transacted.”

The long-term strategy to move to earlier harvest is a focus that has been driven by high values in Asia and fruit quality issues in Australia.

Just Avocados plans to place 50% of export volume into Australia and 50% into Asia over the 2019-20 season, this is an increase from the 30% that was placed into Asia for

##### Shipment by Shipment/Consignment

Under this arrangement your fruit will be sold on a shipment by shipment basis and not inside either pool. You will be paid an advance payment on export load out date of \$5.00 per tray with payment in full within 60 days of load out.

Important things to note

- You can place fruit in either one of the pools or both pools based on your personal goals and harvest strategy. Please indicate on the Grower Details form your pool preference and desired harvest time.
- You can place fruit on a shipment by shipment basis and put the remaining fruit in either pool but not in the same harvest period. For Example – Early harvest on consignment and late fruit in the late pool or alternatively Early pool and late harvest on consignment.

the 2018-19 season.

“The new pool and consignment options align with our strategy of placing larger and earlier volumes into Asia, reducing the need for holding fruit late for Australia at a time when fruit quality is deteriorating, fruit drop occurs and export pack outs decline.

“There is also the important factor of reducing the stress on your trees that occurs when holding significant volumes of crop.”

The exporter believes there is greater value for growers to achieve through the new pool model.

“The new options will benefit growers with improved cash flow as the

early pool will finalise early 2020.

“Late pools will be reflective of late season values therefore providing total value upside for growers who wish to hold fruit for the late value

markets.”

Growers who are interested in seeing how the new model might benefit them are invited to contact the Just Avocados team. ●

## ON THE ORCHARD

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

#### FAR AND MID NORTH

**Maturity testing is happening across quite a number of orchards in the Far North and at the time of writing one orchard has been harvested for the New Zealand market. The fruit came off a young orchard that was first to market last season as well. Maturity results are indicating that this season will be more in line with levels over the past few years rather than the exceptional early season we had last year.**

Not only are maturities in line with historical dates, the range of maturity in individual fruit is in a much tighter range, again what we have seen typically in past seasons.

Pest levels are low, but keep an eye on six spotted mite and plan your sprays accordingly.

#### PRUNING YOUNG TREES

I have been asked to give advice on pruning young trees several times over the last month. By young I mean no older than two years old.



Trees competing with weeds.

The most common problem I came across is when one or two, and sometimes up to four branches coming out close to the graft have been left. Clonal trees in particular will throw branches in this area. These branches then dominate the central leader of the tree and will lead to poor tree structure as the tree grows in subsequent years. They quickly become a much greater diameter than central leader if left. Nip these branches off as soon as they appear, or remove them with a sharp pruning saw if they are a year or two old.



Nicely mulched trees.

Young trees also struggle if they have weed competition to deal with as well. If using a herbicide, be careful around the soft bark on the trunk. Spray guards are a good idea. Also, a layer of mulch will keep moisture in and weeds down. A layer of about 100mm thick is ideal.

If you need further advice on young tree care and nutrition just ask Kyra or me.

#### COMPLIANCE

As the new harvest season looms now is a good time to ensure you have all your compliance and export registrations up to date.



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Avocado New Zealand will be rolling out a new version of the spray diary shortly. As you finish harvest you will be able to start using the new version.



New season fruit ready for dispatch.

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## INDUSTRY RESOURCES

The New Zealand Avocado website is full of useful information for growers. I am as guilty as anyone at not taking advantage of this. I encourage you to login and start having a look around particularly under the "Grow" tab <https://industry.nzavocado.co.nz/grow/>.

## WATER TESTING

A quick reminder that if it is a few years since you had your water tested



Water testing kit.

you should look at getting it done again. The testing kit is available from Hills Laboratories and will check for the presence of e-coli and faecal coliforms. ●

## ORCHARD MANAGEMENT WITH ERICA

### AUTUMN AND WINTER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FLOWERING AND FRUIT SET.

**As our trees start to gear up for flowering, it is important to supply them with the correct resources at the right time.**

In order to supply our trees with the correct resources it needs when it needs it, we need to first understand the tree phenology so that we can be two steps ahead.

With the seasonal change of lower temperatures and shorter day lengths, flower initiation is being triggered within the tree. Hormones trigger the transition from vegetative to floral buds but it is the nutrient levels and balances that drive this reaction and the carbohydrate levels that determine the stamina of this reaction.

This pre-flowering and flowering stage is one of those critical stages that we as growers need to ensure the tree has all the resources it needs, in order to optimise production.

### Actions to be implementing now to support the imminent flower initiation and the current crop:

Firstly, ensure correct **nitrogen levels**. Too much of a good thing is not always a good thing! Excessive nitrogen in the tree at this time will swing the balance in favour of vegetative growth, thereby compromising potential flowering and fruit set.

Low **cytokinin levels** in relation to other hormones will inhibit floral bud development. As cytokinins are

produced in root tips, trees with fewer healthy roots or an imbalanced root to shoot ratio, are likely to have reduced cytokinin levels. A heavy prior crop will also most likely have exhausted most of the tree's resources, resulting in amongst other things, reduced root mass and also reduced cytokinin levels. Apply products to boost root health and vigour and soil health and fertility. Foliar sprays of seaweed products will boost cytokinin levels as seaweed extracts are particularly rich in cytokinins.

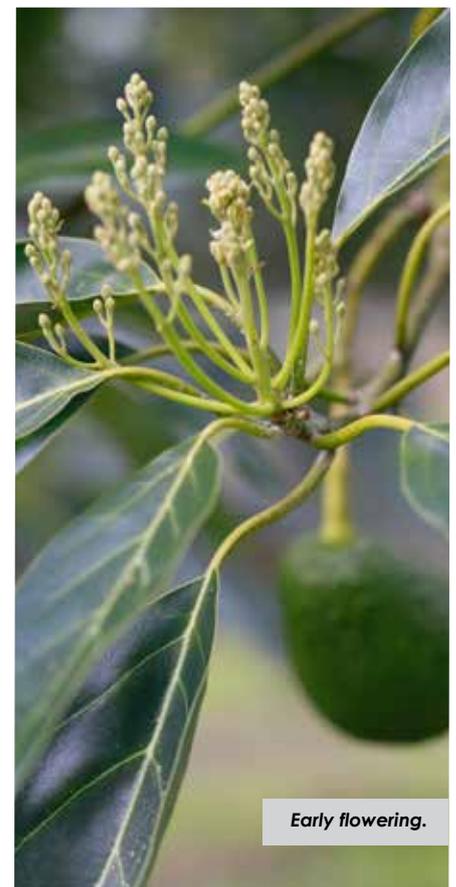
**Boron** is a highly-undervalued element. It increases flower production and retention, pollen tube elongation and germination and seed and fruit development. In order for fertilisation to take place, the pollen grain, needs to first be transferred to the stigma. It then has to germinate and a pollen tube needs to grow all the way down the style to the ovule to transfer the male gametes. Boron improves the pollen germination and increases the length and vigour of the pollen tube, greatly enhancing fertilisation. Boron tends to have restricted mobility in plants and is also one of the most leachable elements which often contribute to a deficit at the important draw-down time at reproduction.

Avocados are an incredibly boron-hungry crop and their low flower to fruit ratio can be substantially improved with a foliar spray of boron at the pre-flowering stage. Boron also plays an important role in regulating the plant hormone levels responsible for flower initiation and fruit development. Another reason to ensure the all-important pre-flowering boron spray is applied.



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Early flowering.

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**Calcium** and boron work in such close synergy that in the absence of sufficient calcium, boron toxicity can even occur. Calcium also fulfills many essential roles in the sexual reproduction of flowering plants. It is also called the "trucker of all minerals" because it directly affects all mineral uptake. It is therefore advisable to apply calcium at this stage as well, not only for the flower development and fruit set but also for its role in the current developing crop. Calcium governs cell wall strength and not only improves fruit quality but also aids in resistance to anthracnose and post-harvest rots. The most critical time and our window of opportunity for accumulating calcium levels in the fruit is in the period when the young fruit are still developing.



Trees in full bloom.

**Potassium** is extremely important during this fruit-fill stage. Insufficient levels of potassium reduce the yield potential and quality of the crop and ultimately our pockets!

**Zinc** is one of the most important elements in carbohydrate metabolism in plants. Most enzymes that play a role in carbohydrate metabolism are activated by zinc. Zinc is also an essential micronutrient for protein production in plants. One of the sites of protein synthesis is the pollen tube. So once again an often-neglected

micronutrient plays a big role in carbohydrate metabolism which in turn determines the stamina of critical reactions at this important reproductive phase and also in improving the flower to fruit ratio.

Lastly but definitely not least, are our all-important **pollinators**. Without these guys, all the pruning and fertilising and money you've been spending will all be in vain. Remember to book your hives now for the start of delivery at about 10% open flower. In our climate,

we rely heavily on pollinators. Without the bees, the pollen cannot get transferred onto the stigma, fertilisation cannot take place and fruit cannot develop. So, more bees mean raising your odds on a higher fruit set, higher crop, higher returns!

Remember to ensure compatibility when mixing your chemicals and fertilisers. If you are concerned about any incompatibility or phytotoxicity, contact the manufacturers or do a jar or spray test. ●

## ORCHARD NEWS FROM THE BAY OF PLENTY

### HARVESTING

**Harvesting in the Bay of Plenty has just started; we've had a few growers' fruit through the packhouse already.**

If you would like to watch and follow your fruit while it is being processed and packed, we encourage you to do so. Myself or someone in the packhouse will take you through all

the way from the fruit being washed, sorted and graded through to packing. It's what you've worked hard for all year so to see the final result packed and ready for market is most satisfying. I have started Dry Matter sampling on some younger orchards which are looking promising for early harvest, contact me if you would like a sample taken.

### KATIKATI FIELD DAY

We had a fantastic turnout for Katikati field day in May and it was



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Great turnout at our fieldday on Kulala Orchard.

a stunning autumn day at Kulala Orchard. Thank you to everyone who attended and to our very dedicated hosts Andre and Debbie Buitendag. Many aspects of orcharding were discussed on the day including a technical talk about fruit quality with >>



Established tree being pruned with Erica's method.

Erica Faber and on orchard we looked at irrigation and fertigation, beneficial inputs including liquid fish into the soil.

We discussed on orchard outcomes from pruning large established trees with Erica Faber's pruning technique shown in this picture where you can see a small tree starting to form from being pruned down low allowing plenty of sunlight for new growth to develop. You can see the large branches in behind that will be taken down slowly over the next few years as the new developing limbs start to produce.

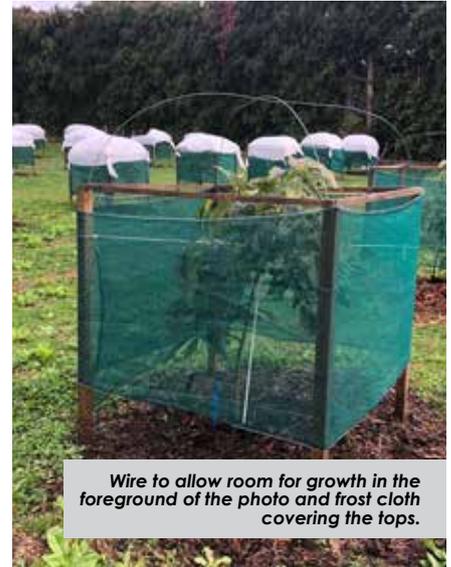
A key take home point from Erica about pruning was its essential role in helping to reduce the environment where rot forming pathogens can thrive. Pruning allows light and air movement into the canopy which

helps dry wet conditions.

The young trees on Kulala Orchard are very well cared for with large surrounds allowing plenty of room for growth. Mulch has been spread out past the drip line to prepare and change the soil in anticipation of new roots developing into virgin soils, building a good organic matter layer for surface roots to develop into.

**FROST**

It's getting cold out there! The NZ Avocado website has many articles listed on frost protection that provide information on what the options are and what might be best for your orchard - see <https://industry.nzavocado.co.nz/grow/frost/>. The Just Avocados team are available if you require help with



Wire to allow room for growth in the foreground of the photo and frost cloth covering the tops.

decisions you make about the best frost protection approach for your trees.

**2019-20 SEASON PROPOSAL**

You should have received our proposal in the post by now. Please do get in contact with me if you have any questions about this and the new pool and consignment options.

**SOIL HEALTH WORKSHOP**

In the latest AvoConnect update there is an invite for a Soil Health Workshop with Dr Ash Martin on 28 June in Katikati - I encourage you to attend, it's a free workshop, gaining more understanding of soil health is important in the future of growing and crop production. See the details on the NZ Avocado website <https://industry.nzavocado.co.nz/events/ash-martin/>. It would be great to see you there! ●

**QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

**EXPORT REGISTRATION**

**I encourage you to get on to your NZ Avocado export registration asap to ensure you have all the necessary compliance sorted in time for harvest. As usual, this process is completed online and this year though the new Avo Hub. Before you start, you will need your username and password for the Avo Hub, your crop estimate for the coming season, and your PPIN. Remember to select Just Avocados as your packer/exporter so that the registration details are sent automatically to us.**

Make sure you get in early to register at the discounted price.

- Registrations on or before 12th August 2019, are \$172.50 including GST
- Registrations after 12th August 2019, are \$345.00 including GST

**SPRAY DIARY**

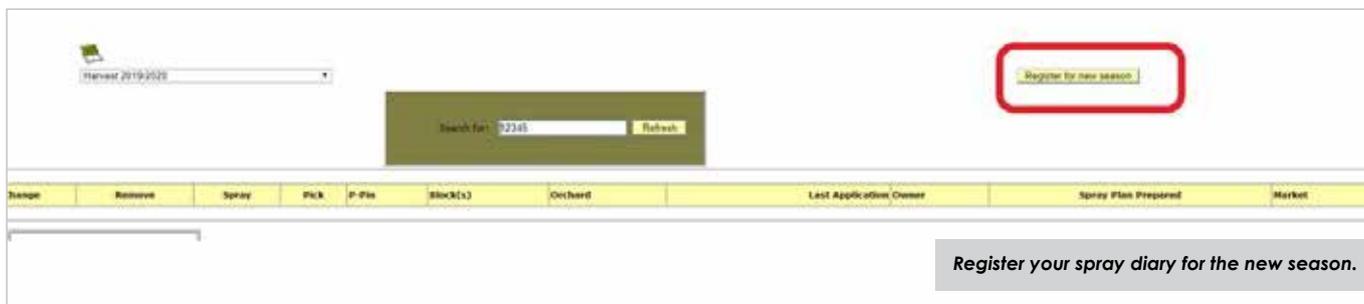
NZ Avocado has now rolled the Spray Diary to the new season. Growers will also need to register their spray diaries for the new season. The good news is that this is the last time you will have to do this as NZ Avocado will be introducing the new spray diary in the coming months.

The new "Avo Diary" will capture both spray applications and



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AvoGreen results. Users of this software will be wider than just growers, packers and spray contractors – they will now include AvoGreen Operators and orchard managers.

This new system is nearing completion and NZ Avocado will be holding training sessions in a few weeks for growers and other industry members – look out for details in AvoConnect.

### AVOGREEN

For those growers who don't have their orchard monitored by Just Avocados, please remember to send through your monitoring reports to me on a regular basis -ashley@justavocados.co.nz.

### NZGAP

Its nearing that time of year again when NZGAP inspections will need

to be completed. One of our friendly team members will be in touch in the coming months to arrange a time to complete the inspection. If you are a new grower with Just Avocados and have not completed a NZGAP inspection previously please contact me. ●

## IN THE MARKETS

### NZ MARKET UPDATE

**The new season avocado market is always a challenging yet rewarding period to engage. This season has started extremely well; limited early season passes have made for a stable market and the ability to plan and execute a programme with confidence.**

Demand has been driven in sizes 24/30 which have offered slightly better retail price points.

As retail values decline large fruit sizes will start to become more attractive as currently 16 to 20 sized fruit are quite expensive and demand for this size range has been minimal. This will even out over the next week or so.

Four weeks into the season and we now have more orchards clearing

across the industry and other marketers are vying for access after a period on the side-line. The key issue is that they need to maintain discipline around ripening and pricing – something that was lacking from a couple of early entrants this season.

Our programme has been tracking well. Ripening time-frames are five to seven days and fruit condition has been excellent to this point. Reports from our retail customers are indicating that maturity levels are more consistent this season and feedback on eating quality has been good.

Our promotional calendar has commenced and we have an ongoing spread of adverts in place with our retail partners. This will reset retail sell-values to a lower level and generate increased consumer

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interest. This is vital after some negative media messages during the off-season window.

Values have dropped incrementally from early season highs whilst maintaining good cool-store door values. The higher early season values are now disappearing which is to be expected as fruit volume increases across the market and previously empty sectors fill up. ●

