

## **Army-Navy Avocado Business Increasing**

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Early in 1942, Calavo began investigating the possibilities of having the Army and Navy use avocados on their regular menus. The reactions at first were not too encouraging, because the Army and Navy had had little or no experience in serving avocados in years past. Military food authorities did, however, grant permission for Calavo sales promotion staff members to call on various military establishments, to make direct contacts with the food personnel there.

The progress on this work was slow, but steady. From the beginning, it was an educational job, and one that called for infinite patience. Just getting into an Army camp, without a previous appointment to see a designated individual, is a task in itself. Then, on arriving at the camp, the Calavo representative might find that the particular officer was away, or unavoidably detained on other business, which meant either a return call or an effort to get in touch with other officers who had charge of food purchasing or preparation.

Principal effort was devoted to appearing before Cooks and Bakers Schools. At these classes, Calavo representatives gave lectures to the soldier-students, and demonstrated proper methods of preparing and serving avocados. Along with these demonstrations and lectures, Calavo prepared a special portfolio titled "How to Use Avocados." This gives recipes in 100-portion servings, such as are used by the Army. Over 35,000 of these portfolios have been distributed to Army and Navy food personnel in the past 8 months.

The Schools have a continued rotation of students, so that the education of one class in avocado handling is merely one step. It must be repeated with each of the succeeding classes, which means a year-around educational program.

### **Contacts With Supply Officers**

Entirely separate from the direct educational work in the Cooks and Bakers Schools, contacts must be made with the Quartermaster Market Centers and the Supply Officers who have to do with the purchasing of food. In addition, the "listing" of avocados on menus must be arranged for with the authorities at the various Army Service Commands. These authorities have to be satisfied that avocados fulfill the Army's nutritional requirements, that the fruit will be available in the desired quantities at the time called for, and that the cost will be in line with the Army's feeding allowance. All of the work has to be carefully planned, followed through with dispatch, and constantly checked back.

When orders are placed, the job is far from finished. For example, orders were received from the Army for a number of carloads of avocados to be served in a specified area late in April. This fruit had to be "ready for use" on certain dates, which meant arranging for unloading of the cars several days in advance and checking each box of fruit for ripening. Some of the fruit had to be placed in cold storage, others left at room temperature—to permit all of the fruit to be at the same stage of softness when ready for use.

These larger orders from the Army were practically a "personal attention" proposition. It was only by such painstaking attention, all the way down the line, that orders like these were followed through to successful completion.

### **Profiting Next Season by Past Experience**

Much that was learned in 1942-43 can be used to advantage next season. Many of the contacts made will be most helpful, and both the military food purchasing authorities and the personnel in numerous Army camps are no longer strangers to avocados. It is hoped that the volume of Army and Navy business, which approximated 10 carloads in about one month during the Spring of 1943, will be even further expanded (and earlier in the season) in 1943-44.

While the foregoing deals largely with Army avocado business, the set-up with the Navy was similar. The same type of approach, education and follow-up has been employed by Calavo staff members at Navy Bases and training stations.

Mass feeding of avocados to men in the military services has presented many problems not encountered in dealing with civilian consumers. Very considerable progress has been made. This year's experience will stand Calavo in good stead when the new crop is ready to market.