

Israeli Avocado Industry

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Avocado cultivated land in Israel is about 7,000 hectares. It was reduced significantly because of years of low production and low income. The production in 1993-94 was 43,000 tons, 29,000 tons (67%) of which was exported. The amount exported was about the same as in 1992-93 (27,000 tons), but much reduced as compared to 1991-92 (55,000 tons). The FOB income in 1993-94 was US\$1,255 per ton-more than in 1992-93 (\$1,201 per ton) and in 1991-92 (\$1,157 per ton).

Our main markets were France (53%), Germany (15%), England (9%), Benelux (8%), and Scandinavia (7%). It is expected-that the recent peace treaty in the region will open new markets for Israeli avocados.

Last season was characterized by a high production of 'Ettinger', yielding about 40% of the total production. 'Hass' (24% of the total production) and 'Fuerte' (19%) were next in importance. Other exported cultivars are 'Reed', 'Nabal', 'Pinkerton', and 'Ardith'.

'Hass' continues to be the most important cultivar, followed by 'Fuerte', which is decreasing gradually. 'Ettinger' is increasing in area because of its high production, early harvest, and excellence as a pollinizer. 'Reed', 'Pinkerton', and 'Ardith' are increasing in area, too.

Several new cultivars are being tested in various growing zones. These cultivars are either introduced from the U.S.A. ('Ace', 'Fino', 'Green Gold') or are products of the Israeli breeding project ('Iriet', 'Adi', 'Gil'). Several other promising types are still being investigated.

Several agrotechnical problems are being addressed. These are mainly related to water amount and quality. Water resources have reduced continuously during the recent years, and water quality is declining. At the same time, water cost is increasing (about US\$0.2/m³). Water issues are of high priority for both California and Israeli growers. It is sure that growers in both countries will benefit from cooperation in joint research projects in this subject. The research should cover not only water amount and timing, but also the use of recycled water.

Other research projects being carried out are improving productivity by testing new cultivars as pollinators, growth hormones, increasing fruit size in 'Hass', and investigating physiological skin browning in 'Fuerte'.

During the last decade, several orchards infected with *Phytophthora cinnamomi* have

been identified. About 200 hectares are infected, spreading in various avocado growing regions of Israel. No doubt, more emphasis should be placed on this problem, which is the most important obstacle to expanded avocado production worldwide.

The Third World Avocado Congress to be held in Israel in October 1995 will be a good place to be updated on recent avocado practices and research. It is hoped that many California Avocado Society members will come and visit the Holy Land and its avocado industry.