

California Avocado Society 1996 Yearbook 80: 23-25

REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

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The Australian Avocado Growers Association has encouraged integration of packing and marketing operations. Quite some progress has been made in the formation of cooperatives, group marketing organizations, and product marketing groups—for example, Shepard avocados in the early season and Gwen in the late. Shepard growers have been most successful producing and jointly marketing their variety produced in a tropical climate (Latitude 16° S). A. A. G. F. promotion is being increasingly directed to in—store samplings, which has provided an excellent audit function and has indicated that group marketers are supplying improved quality at retail outlets. Countrywide distribution of baby pamphlets is continuing. It may be significant that small sized fruit is selling better (both price and volume) than ever.

Our research and development budget is now doubled. Work continues on the control of anthracnose and stem end rot, fruit flies (we now have papaya fruit fly which has infiltrated from the Torres Strait Islands), fruit spotting bug (pheromones us. insecticides), etc.

AVOMAN

The objective of the AVOMAN ("avocado management") project is to improve the productivity and quality of avocado production in Australia. It aims to achieve these goals by forming grower productivity groups and providing various orchard management tools (largely software based) for growers to use. AVOMAN is a six year project funded in part by the growers themselves.

The management tools are developed in partnership with the growers to ensure their usefulness and to encourage adoption. So far, two prototypes have been released to Australian growers, the second being in mid 1996. Over 170 growers (20% of Australia's industry) have taken the opportunity to get a copy of the software. A third prototype is due in 1997 before the final version in 1998. Strong emphasis is placed on grower feedback, and hands—on training for members of the regional productivity groups is provided.

The final AVOMAN software will include facilities to record details of individual orchard blocks, (such as leaf and soil analysis results, soil texture, variety, tree size, etc.), a diary type planner to record orchard operations, highly customized agronomic recommendations (derived by integrating information from the records with rules built into the software and regional phenological cycles), reminders for important jobs and a reports module. A wide variety of reports will be available, ranging from historical farm records to spray diary reports for use in quality assurance systems and comparative

analyses of costs and important yardsticks.

A second software product to come out of the project will be AVOINFO. The first version of AVOINFO is due for release in 1997 and will consist of bibliographic details and abstracts from over 4,000 avocado related publications. Several industries have granted permission for inclusion of their material in AVOINFO, including the California Avocado Society with respect to material from its Yearbooks, thereby allowing the capture of some very important historical information. AVOINFO will be published on CD-ROM.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

The 1997 conference will be held as a joint Australian/ New Zealand function in Rotorua, New Zealand, September 19 through September 26. Researchers from both countries will enhance the effectiveness and promote cooperation between the two producing areas. C. A. S. members will be most welcome.

The contact is: June Bronger, N. Z. Avocado Growers Assn. Inc.

P. O. Box 266 Tauranga, New Zealand

A pre-conference tour of northern North Island and a post-conference field day in the Rotorua area are included in the week. Should attendees wish to carry on to Australia, we will make you most welcome. (The additional cost is minimal.)

POLLINATION STUDIES

C. A. S. Yearbook readers may be interested in knowing that we have in the last three years been studying the effect of pollinators on 'Gwen'—in particular, 'Bacon' and 'Ryan' which flower at similar times on my property. We will be adding to these the variety 'Ettinger', which has a good reputation for pollinating 'Hass' in Israel. I am hopeful of having the parentage of these fruits analyzed by Prof. Margaret Sedgely of Adelaide University.