

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE ON THE AUSTRALIAN AVOCADO INDUSTRY

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El Nino has affected the east coast such that we have a major drought inland. While most avocados are grown near the coast, the net result is that the avocado crop is down. Slightly higher prices have compensated for the smaller crop, with Gwen prices now approaching those of Hass. The adverse weather pattern has brought severe droughts to historically very high rainfall areas in neighboring Papua, New Guinea, and Fiji.

Our September Biennial Conference held jointly with the New Zealand Avocado Growers Association in Rotorua, New Zealand, attracted a cosmopolitan attendance of 275 from six countries.

A Pre—Conference tour and a field day added practical information to that given at the conference.

New Zealand has a lush countryside, horticultural pursuits being protected by elaborate windbreaks—some so old and high that they are being cut back. The fruit grown is of excellent quality.

We are grateful to all of the presenters of papers, both local and exotic. Those comprising the latter group—namely, Arpaia, Milne, Lovatt, Salazar-Garcia, Wolstenholme, and Lahav (in absentia) are indicative of a World Avocado Congress.

THE STATUS OF "AVOMAN"

After three sessions of education and improvement on the concept, **Avoman** will be released to growers in its final form in July 1998. With all this information (avocado information on a CD) and guidance, we will be on the road to continuous improvement as avocado growers.