

## THE PIONEERS IN THE AVOCADO INDUSTRY

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The development of the avocado industry has been unique in that organization and research were born of foresight rather than of necessity. On May 15, 1915, a few far-seeing men met to form an Association for the study and development of the avocado in California. May I read you what the first president said at the organization meeting:

"The purpose of the Association is the improvement of the culture, production, and marketing of the Ahuacate.

"The accomplishment of this purpose cannot be obtained by individual effort, however intelligent and persevering. Many here remember the first crude efforts at organization in the citrus industry of California. The perfecting of the present organization in that industry was long and painful. During this period there was tremendous waste of individual effort. Land not adapted to citrus culture was often planted to citrus fruit. Poor varieties were planted and unscientific methods were frequently used in the raising and handling of the fruit. Even after the crop was harvested the market facilities were poor and for many years, therefore, an industry sound in itself, had the appearance of being uncertain and speculative. You know how, by intelligent cooperative effort, most of these difficulties were finally overcome.

"The purpose of this Association might be said to be to avoid the mistakes and profit by the experience of those engaged in similar kinds of fruit culture. To this end, cooperation is absolutely necessary. The combining into the Association of the many nursery men, orchard growers, experimenters, and scientists interested in this new industry, makes it possible to accumulate and hold accessible to members the result of work of the various individuals. This will prevent duplication of endeavor and serious failures."

Then the president went on to mention various activities that would be undertaken by the Association, such as Education of the Public to the value of this unknown fruit (even the name which they intended to call it was not yet definitely decided, as witness the word "ahuacate," the first name chosen by the Association). They would attempt to prevent land frauds through a refusal to countenance "absurd stories about fabulous profits." They would investigate Varieties and encourage exploration and bud selections to produce more perfect varieties. They would investigate General Cultural Practices to improve and develop same. They would investigate the Nutritional Value of this "ahuacate" or "avocado," not only as a fresh fruit but its by-products—and would publish the information so gathered, in the form of a Year-Book.

The president closed his address as follows: "We believe that all interested in the avocado should become members of our organization, first, because they will receive direct benefits in the way of information, access to statistics, assistance in either buying or selling fruit or nursery stock, and whatever other advice or assistance we can give. Second, because they are receiving and will continue to receive a great indirect benefit from the educational work we are doing, which is, in the eyes of the public, lifting our business from the position of a fad to the rank of a legitimate agricultural industry. We need the help of all of you, not only because we need the membership fees, but fully as much we want the strength of yourselves as individuals in our organization. We want to stand in reality and in the eyes of the public, as a strong organization, a unit for the sane advancement of the most promising young agricultural industry started since the introduction of the walnut, orange, and lemon." And these, in 1915, were the ideals of the Association.

As the avocado acreage of 1915 consisted of a few backyard trees and one or two groves of hit-or-miss varieties, and the crop consisted of a few basketsful of fruit, to those who had not the vision of these pioneers, this ambitious program must have seemed ridiculous.

Now as we look at our 13,000 acres planted in all the most favored spots in Southern California, at our five-million-pound crop (estimated) for the coming season of 1931-32, we can only thank those pioneers who saw so clearly and worked so closely together in the up-building of an industry.

Each promise made by those pioneers has been fulfilled. Encouraged by them, the search for the best varieties was undertaken by Government and private explorers. Then the careful study of these importations, combined with bud selection of the more promising specimens, has resulted in the selection of two dozen of the best out of the five hundred varieties that have been investigated. These two dozen varieties are marketed as "Calavos."

This association of pioneers sponsored the formation of a marketing organization in 1924, the Calavo Growers of California, which has successfully coped with the problem of marketing the tremendous crop increases, measured in terms of hundreds of per cent, year after year.

This Association has firmly stood against the tendency on the part of wildcat speculators to mislead the public with fabulous statements as to the miracle nature of the returns to be realized through avocado growing. Always the Association has plainly stated that the future profits to the grower would depend upon a sufficient number of *good* trees to make a *commercial* grove, planted in *good* soil, and given *intelligent* care. And the Association has endeavored through a study of cultural practices to find out just what were good trees, good soil, and intelligent care.

In the Minutes of the second meeting of this Association of pioneers, only a few months later, in 1915, it is mentioned that both the Universities of California and Southern California were studying the nutritional value of the avocado. Since that time nutritional research has been one of the principal types of work undertaken by the Association.

Perhaps the simplest way to show how the promises of these pioneers have been

fulfilled will be to give a list of the present activities of the Association:

THE CALIFORNIA AVOCADO ASSOCIATION promotes the advancement and general welfare of the avocado as a horticultural industry through:

1. Holding Quarterly Meetings at which Horticultural Experts and Practical Growers exchange ideas.
2. Through its Variety Committee which constantly studies new and old varieties and reports its findings for the good of all Growers.
3. Through publishing a Year-Book in which everything of importance to the industry is recorded, including talks given at Round-Table meetings.
4. Through maintaining an Information Bureau to answer its Members' questions.
5. The Association is now supporting seven research investigations in nutrition, carried on by nationally recognized authorities.
6. The Association makes exhibits at County Fairs, Orange Shows, Food Shows, etc., for the general education of the public.
7. The Association cooperates with State and National authorities to prevent the introduction and spread of injurious insect pests and diseases.
8. The Association works for Standardization, Tariff, and other legislation of benefit to the industry. The 15 c tariff procured on all importations other than those from Cuba, is one specific piece of work done by the Association.
9. The Association is constantly on the lookout for stolen fruit.

If you already know how best to secure seeds or trees, to plant and take care of them, if you have already met the most famous scientists and experienced growers and have settled for yourself all cultural problems, if you are already contributing to the advancement of the industry, YOU may have no need of the Association but WE have NEED of YOU. But on the other hand, if you are still learning in this young industry, and you wish to help your fellow-growers in this most useful work, and associate with men devoting themselves to the development of the avocado,

**SEND IN YOUR APPLICATION NOW FOR MEMBERSHIP—TO THE CALIFORNIA AVOCADO ASSOCIATION**

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