

APPRAISING AN AVOCADO GROVE

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A farm appraiser is one who has a broad understanding of agriculture, experience in handling farm problems, a thorough knowledge of land and the principle of appraising, and the analytical ability to see and evaluate all phases of each case.

"The function of the appraiser is to serve as a curb against unwise investments, and tends to conserve the wealth of the party for whom the appraisal is made." ¹

An appraisal is an estimate of value, based on an orderly collection and analysis of pertinent data, and the forming of an opinion which, logically, follows from the information obtained.

In this paper, there will be no attempt to cover all phases of appraising an avocado grove, but will cover, more or less in outline form, the essential points a qualified appraiser will consider in formulating his opinion of the value of a grove. The appraisal of farm buildings is not considered in this paper.

Most of the following factors will influence the opinion of the appraiser.

1. The Community.

- A. Distance to market centers, both from the standpoint of family needs and orchard supplies, as well as marketing facilities for his crops.
- B. Community advantages, such as schools, churches, utilities, roads, etc.
- C. Desirability of the home site. View and surroundings; class of adjoining properties; type of neighbors, etc.
- D. Climatic factors. Rainfall, wind, temperature.
- E. Taxes.
- F. Selling prices of comparable properties in the area.
- G. Deterants may be physical, economic, social or general.

2. The Physical Aspects of the Property.

- A. Boundaries. Is the property irregular in shape or of uniform dimensions? Fenced or open? A legal description and plot of the property is usually required.
- B. Topography. Slopes and exposure may affect production. Elevation and air drainage affect temperatures. Drainage, erosion and flood hazards may be important factors, any of which may originate on adjoining or nearby properties.

C. Soils. Classification, texture, depth, productivity. The quality of soil is one of the most important factors in evaluating a farm property. In most avocado growing sections, there is considerable variation within a given property, a condition usually not noted, and rarely taken into consideration in the layout of an irrigation system. Too often soils are not suited for avocados where other factors are favorable. Only the trained observer will detect undesirable soil conditions which will affect the growth of mature trees on virgin land, or newly planted land.

D. Weeds and native plants indicate soil and climatic conditions.

3. *Source, Dependability and Quality of Water Supply.*

A. Well. May be limited supply or of poor quality. Too often a well supply is in an area of receding water table and may be adequate for young trees but insufficient when trees are mature. In a water district having limited supply, the well may furnish the needed supplement. A reservoir may greatly improve the effective use of water from a small well supply.

B. District or Water Company. The source, dependability and quality of supply are important. Type of system (gravity or pressure), method of delivery (periodic or demand), quantity of delivery, and price will influence cost of operation.

4. *Irrigation System, The type of installation will have considerable influence on the amount of labor involved.*

A. Furrow.

B. Sprinkler

a. Portable or permanent.

b. Overhead or under tree.

C. Pipelines. Kind, age, condition, size or pipe, location.

5. *Trees.*

A. Variety. Are they suited for the district? Are they standard known varieties for which there is a good market?

B. Condition. Grafted, diseased, rodent damage, insect damage.

C. Age. Are they large or small for age?

D. Spacing. Square planted, regular spaced, contour planted? Number of trees per acre?

E. Crop. Wherever possible, production records should be studied as an indication of future production.

F. Method of weed control.

G. Fertilizer practices.

After obtaining the information as outlined above, the qualified appraiser will be able to make a careful analysis of the data obtained and prepare a lucid report, giving his opinion of the value of the grove.

¹ *George L. Schmutz in "The Appraisal Process".*