

550 MILES OF AVOCADOS

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As anyone knows who has traveled the distance, California is a long state and avocados can be found growing and producing throughout nearly its whole length. Commercial plantings exist from San Diego County in the south to Butte County near the northern border.

Percentagewise, the bulk of the crop is grown in southern California, from Santa Barbara County south to the Mexican border. Small but long-established plantings can be found in Tulare, Fresno and Butte counties and considerable interest in additional acreage is now being expressed, particularly in the central California counties. A small planting of the Bacon variety has been made in Kern County and a trial orchard of several varieties has been established in Madera County.

From the standpoint of water, soil and climate, there appear to be several areas in central and northern California where avocados may be grown. The question of which, if any, desirable variety will give good consistent production is perhaps the most perplexing for the untried areas and only time will give the answer. Trials are under way, however, and the answer will be forthcoming.

The present situation, problems, and outlook of the major avocado-producing counties are described in the articles by the California Farm Advisors, which follow in this Section.

Several references are made to variety improvement through topworking. There is increased recognition that a strong and vital industry can only be built and maintained on a relatively few varieties which are good and consistent producers of fruit which meets the demands of marketability and consumer acceptance. Varieties which do not meet the requirements should be topworked to varieties that do.

Since a program of topworking for variety improvement was inaugurated three years ago, surveys indicate that 73,288 trees have been topworked.

By county, the number of topworked trees are as follows:

County	1956	1957	1958	Total 3 years
San Diego	7,438	7,402	5,134	19,974
Orange	2,568	5,266	4,097	11,931
Los Angeles	4,928	4,242	2,600	11,770
Riverside - San Bernardino	1,183	1,554	1,135	3,872
Ventura	3,698	3,000	3,470	10,168
Santa Barbara	6,833	2,453	6,287	15,573
	26,648	23,917	22,723	73,288

By variety the trees which were topworked to another variety consisted of:

Fuerte	36,707 trees
Other	36,581 trees

Fuertes were topworked to a more productive and consistent variety. The "Other" varieties consisted primarily of seedlings and many named varieties of poor quality, odd shapes or low production — undesirable varieties in the avocado industry.

For the new tops, the following varieties were used:

Hass	45,700 trees	62%
Bacon	10,012 trees	14%
Zutano	5,930 trees	8%
Fuerte	3,823 trees	5%
Rincon	2,645 trees	4%
Others*	5,178 trees	7%

**Others include Jalna, MacArthur, Anaheim, etc.*

A good start in avocado variety improvement has been made and the topworking program is continuing.