

## **Janus Looks Again**

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## **CLOSING REMARKS**

We have experienced a remarkable event. How can anyone possibly summarize in any useful way the exchange of knowledge and thought that were the products of this Congress?

I came here believing the answers to our industry's many questions would be answered. I am leaving knowing that we have but scratched the surface of what there is to know, and that many important questions remain unanswered. But I am leaving secure in the knowledge that I am better informed, better equipped to deal with the questions and problems that are part of our challenge-and believing that is the legacy of this Congress for all of us.

Those of us who were privileged to participate in the planning and construction of this Second World Avocado Congress had splendid goals for it. I don't remember that we ever set them down in writing, as we should have done, but we talked together about what we hoped the Congress ought to accomplish and might accomplish. High among our goals was "to bring worldwide focus on yet unsolved problems, find out where the latest research is being done, and who's already doing new things." Now the planning and the building are behind us, and it is time to evaluate how well the goals were served.

My Roman friend Janus and I have looked back upon the past week and have some thoughts to share with you. In the past five days, we have been exposed to a prodigious amount of information covering a wide variety of subjects pertinent to the cultivation, handling, and marketing of avocados. What we have heard and seen can help us to shape the shape of the future to what we would like it to be.

What are we going to do about that opportunity? What are you going to do about it? I have attended many meetings in the course of my career. So many, many times, I have seen the same scenario enacted. We hear exciting and inspirational words from brilliant and inspiring speakers whose wisdom we cram into our minds with good intentions to benefit therefrom and we go back to our homes and continue to do exactly what we have always done! That is an exaggeration, perhaps, but it is discouragingly close to the way it really is.

We resist change. Let us not respond in that way, this time. None of us, of course, can possibly use all of the information that has been offered to us this week. But surely there were elements of the course that each of us can put to good use. Surely there were ideas expressed during the past five days that should inspire us to positive action-to use our own minds and energies to improve our practices and our product and our understanding of the problems and opportunities before us and our recognition of just how interdependent we are upon one another and to make that reality work for us.

Certainly, there was no shortage of things to ponder! Researchers from throughout the world reported to us their work on breeding, on root-stocks, on nursery practices, and techniques. Others gave us new knowledge about pests and diseases and controls and cures. We delved into fruit physiology and plant nutrition and botany and even archeology.

We had a penetrating look at marketing approaches and perspectives, the vital essence of our industry that producers too often take too much for granted. There is no point in producing better fruit more abundantly if no one wants it or knows that he should want it or even knows what it is! This Congress has given us important insights into the marketing side of our business.

We are in a business, you know. But even more important than all of the technical and economic and historical and practical information to which we have been exposed is an experience we have had in the past five days that is not listed in the program book.

That is the experience of meeting and talking with 300 or so fellow beings from a couple of dozen countries with diverse conditions and varying points of view, but all with a common focus on one thing: the profitable production and distribution of the avocado.

Despite whatever cultural and economic and language differences there may be among us, we are bound together by our common interest in a singular gift of Nature-the avocado.

It is that common interest and the need to develop it for mutual benefit that makes us, as I have said earlier, interdependent. It is our ability to manage and capitalize upon that interdependence that will assure that the global avocado industry achieves its full potential. The effective exercise of those skills mandates that we work together in some intelligent way. We have taken some small steps in the right direction. We must continue walking down the path, together. I said on Monday, and I will say again: It won't be easy, but the goal can be won.

Futurist Alvin Toffler has told us, "A new civilization is emerging in our lives, and blind men everywhere are trying to suppress it." It is my hope that there are not blind men among us. It is my hope that, in our new found wisdom and with our good common sense, we will understand that we are in fact interdependent, and that recognition of our interdependence will give us the strength to take our global industry to our objective in common.

World Avocado Congress II is about to end. As we leave it behind us, we take with us the power to shape the shape of things to come. We possess the power to affect the world's food supply in a significant way. We who attended this Congress have the power to consolidate and lead a global avocado industry. Let us pledge ourselves to use that power wisely. The destiny of the global industry may well be in our hands.