

## **Infocado gathers essential avocado crop flow data**

*Julie Petty and Joanna Embry (Avocados Australia)*

### **Abstract: Infocado gathers essential avocado crop flow data**

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The internet based Infocado program was developed in 2005 and was aimed at collecting meaningful and timely data on the volume of avocados entering the Australian market place. This information assists individual businesses and the Australian avocado industry to make informed management and marketing decisions. Information on weekly dispatches, weekly and seasonal forecasts and wholesale stock levels and sales for each growing region are collected. Approximately 130 packhouses and 25 wholesalers participate in the program which accounts for 85% of production in Australia. Infocado reports summarising this data are distributed to all contributors on a weekly and quarterly basis.

Infocado has proven to be an important tool for contributors who can now begin analysing consumer trends throughout the year when fruit volumes fluctuate in the market. Furthermore, contributors can track how changes in retail prices and fruit availability impact consumer decisions.

Infocado provides access to timely avocado crop flow information which is integral in ensuring supply chain efficiency. It is anticipated that in the future Infocado will continue to grow to include information relating to consumer purchasing behaviour such as shopper penetration, purchase frequency and spend per occasion. The aim of this reporting is to link the data relating to how much fruit is being supplied, to the data relating to where that fruit is ending up, how it is being purchased, and by whom. Recipients of Infocado will be able to use this information to track what is happening with supply and the interaction of supply with consumer demand.

## **Infocado reúne datos esenciales de flujo de cultivos de aguacate**

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Infocado es un programa basado en Internet, desarrollado en 2005 con el objetivo de recolectar datos e información actualizada sobre el volumen de los aguacates que entran en el mercado australiano. Esta información ayuda a las empresas y a la industria del aguacate en Australia para la gestión y las decisiones de marketing. Se recoge información semanal sobre despachos, pronósticos estacionales, niveles de venta de existencias al por mayor y ventas de cada región de cultivo. Cerca de 130 empacadores y 25 mayoristas participan en el programa que representa el 85% de la producción en Australia. Infocado informa en resumen estos datos y se distribuyen a todos los contribuyentes sobre una base semanal y trimestral.

Infocado ha demostrado ser una herramienta importante para los contribuyentes, esto los ayuda a comenzar a analizar las tendencias de consumo durante todo el año cuando los volúmenes de fruta fluctúan en el mercado. Además, los contribuyentes pueden realizar un seguimiento de los cambios en precios al por menor de frutas y que decisiones pueden afectar la disponibilidad de los consumidores.

Infocado proporciona acceso a información de flujo oportuno de cultivos de aguacate, esta es esencial para garantizar la eficiencia de la cadena de suministro. Se estima que en el futuro Infocado seguirá creciendo para incluir la información relativa al comportamiento de compra del consumidor, tales como mejorar la penetración de los consumidores, la frecuencia y tiempo estimado de compra. El objetivo de este informe es vincular los datos de las frutas de cuánto se está suministrando, donde está finalizando la fruta, como es comprada y por quien es comprada. Los beneficiarios de Infocado es que se podrá utilizar esta información para saber lo que está ocurriendo con la oferta y la interacción de la oferta y la demanda de los consumidores.

**Key words:** avocado Infocado wholesale forecast dispatch seasonal

## **Notation: NA**

### Introduction

The Infocado system has been developed by Avocados Australia to meet an identified need: improving the efficiency of avocado production and marketing systems. This is achieved by collecting more meaningful and timely data to allow the industry to make better informed decisions. The collection of seasonal forecast data, actual volume throughput, weekly forecast throughput and wholesale receivables and sales data on a national basis assists with this process and is particularly beneficial to participating packhouses and wholesalers and consequently the growers supplying these businesses.

The Infocado system is an internet based program. Currently, Infocado has four modules:

- **Seasonal forecast module:** In this module packhouses and grower-packers contribute expected monthly dispatch volumes for a fifteen month period on a monthly basis. Reports are sent to all contributors on a quarterly basis to update growers, packers and wholesalers about what volumes are expected on the market in the coming months and where those volumes are destined to be sent. This gives recipients the opportunity to alter their harvest timings or where they intended to send their fruit.
- **Weekly forecast module:** This module collects data on expected dispatches by packhouses and grower packers for the next four one-week periods.
- **Dispatch module:** Data on actual dispatches is entered weekly by individual packhouses and grower-packers. Consolidated data from NZ exporters is also entered.
- **Wholesale module:** Weekly opening stock, receivables, sales and waste data is entered by participating wholesale businesses in major wholesale markets across Australia.

In all modules the data is collated and the aggregated reports are made available only to participating businesses. The data supplied by individual businesses is not identifiable in the aggregated results. There is no cost for participating in this service, but access is limited to those businesses that are members of Avocados Australia and accept the terms and conditions of use.

The Weekly Forecast Module, Dispatch Module and Wholesale Module feed into a report which is sent weekly to all contributors. This information helps the recipients to understand what is expected to happen in the market place for the coming weeks and make any changes to their operational plans as they see fit.

Obviously the results are only as good as the data submitted by the participating businesses hence Avocados Australia is keen to ensure that as many eligible packhouses, grower-packers and wholesalers as possible support the initiative on a consistent basis. Presently, over 85% of industry production is captured in the system. The remaining volumes are factored into the reports through a careful estimation process thus ensuring that all facts and figures presented to industry represent 100% of production.

The key objective for industry in relation to this initiative is to provide marketers, packhouses and growers with meaningful and timely information to assist with management and marketing decisions. To make the system more valuable to contributors and more comprehensive, an incremental approach was taken to expand the program as stakeholders develop a thirst for more information or more functionality.

It has also been important to provide set of conditions of use to ensure those that participate are rewarded and to ensure there is appropriate support to ensure uptake, ongoing participation and address any issues or concerns.

The reports are supplemented where possible with information that might assist businesses with management and/or marketing decisions. For example, a report on the average weekly retail avocado prices for Hass and Shepard is also sent to all participants with the weekly Infocado Report. The Retail Price Surveys program provides essential, timely data to the avocado industry about what is happening in the market place, particularly whether market forces are working effectively to clear fruit

in the market. The data also serves to illustrate to industry, the link between volumes in the market, what growers are being paid and what consumers are paying.

The Infocado program has the ability to interrogate and to pull out specific subsets of data from specific time frames and regions and this has proven to be an invaluable tool for industry, allowing the data to be used in a wide range of situations.

Below are some examples of the types of data which can be pulled from the system:

**Table 1: Industry Dispatches by Destination State and Count Size: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

Industry Dispatches By Destination State and Count Size: 2nd July - 8th July 2011 (Wk 27)															
Dest. State	5.5kg									Trays - Total	Bulk	P/PK	Proc	Other	5.5Kg Eqv
	<16	16	18	20	22	23	25	28	28+	5.5Kg Eqv	10Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	Total
EXP		40						2,594	2,402	5,036	416				5,792
NSW	201	3,044	3,646	13,066	1,928	13,384	11,431	5,113	499	52,312	13,500	780			76,999
QLD	207	1,551	1,490	5,323	917	7,854	11,636	2,080	952	32,010	3,843	12,291	10,000	10,640	44,985
SA / NT			353	1,625		830	2,926	1,619		7,353	576	812			8,548
TAS							1,440			1,440	448				2,255
VIC	208	4,881	10,257	16,596	1,502	7,812	3,352	1,672	1,062	47,342	10,334	786			66,274
WA			281	883	320	835	3,556	57		5,932	797	126			7,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>9,516</b>	<b>16,027</b>	<b>37,493</b>	<b>4,667</b>	<b>30,715</b>	<b>34,341</b>	<b>13,135</b>	<b>4,915</b>	<b>151,425</b>	<b>29,914</b>	<b>14,795</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,640</b>	<b>212,257</b>

Figure 1: Throughput of Australia and New Zealand Avocados by Destination State as of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

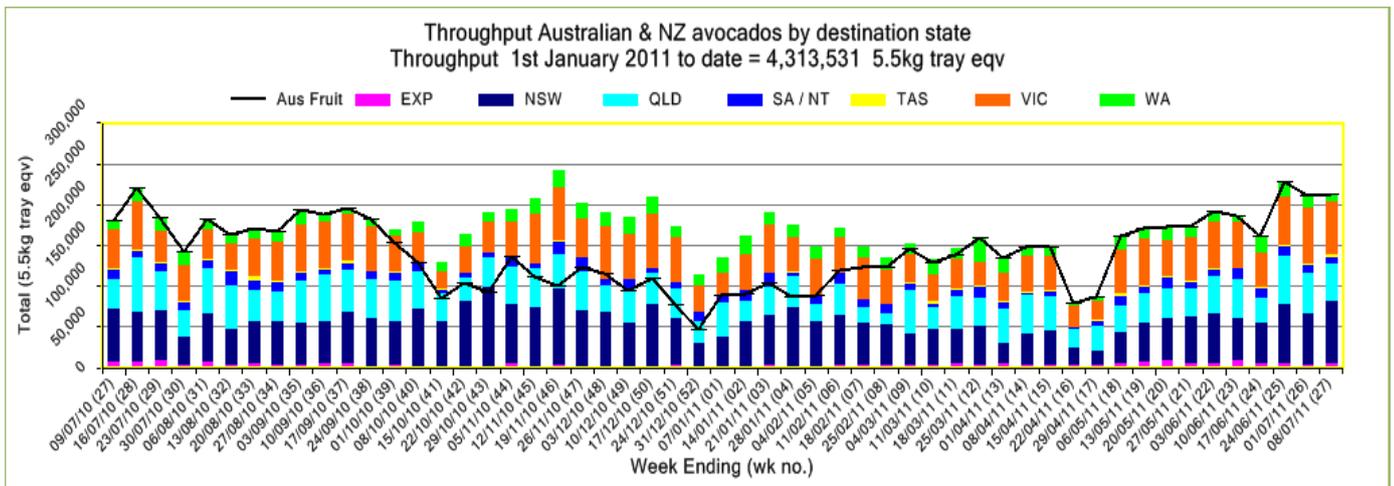


Figure 2: Dispatch vs Weekly Forecast – all varieties as of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

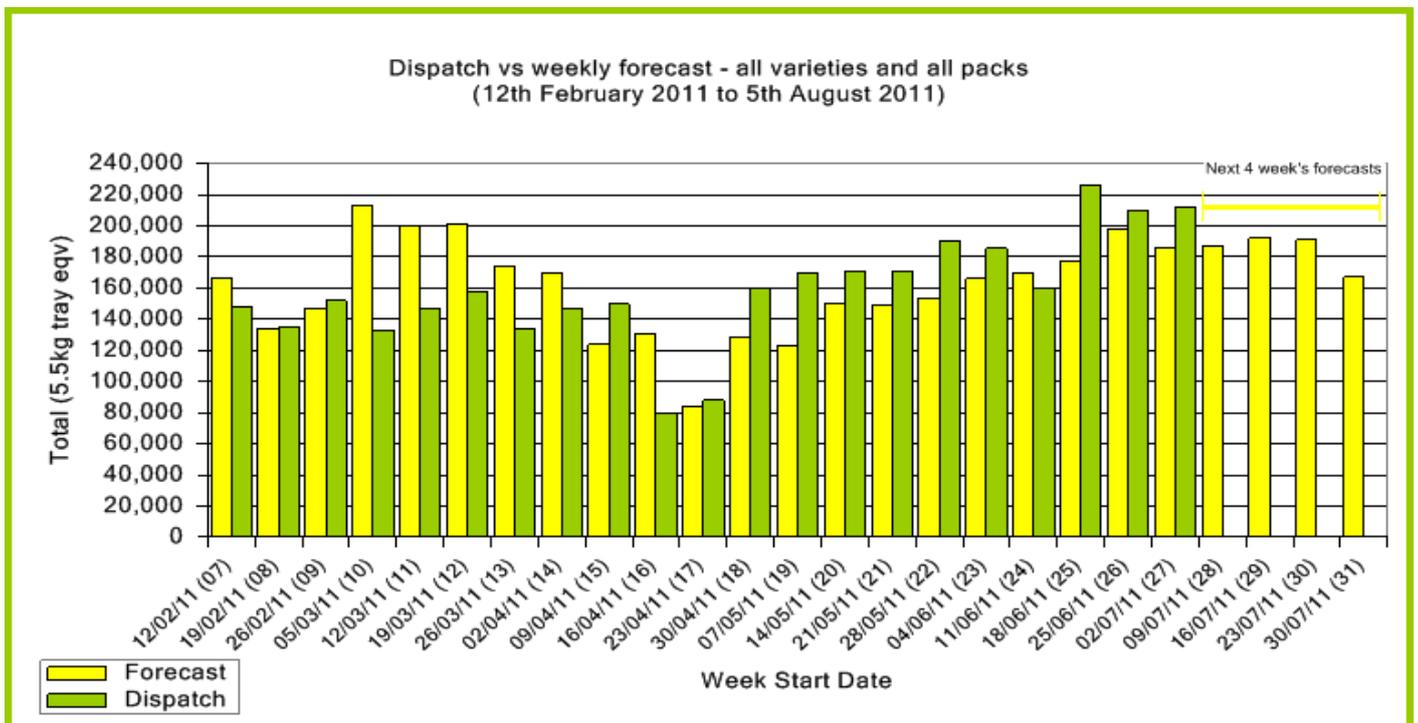


Table 2: Weekly Forecast Data for July 2011

Forecast Data (Week 27 - 31)						
Variety	Trays - Total	Bulk	P/Pk	Proc	Other	All - Total
	5.5Kg Eqv	10Kg	Kg	Kg	Kg	5.5Kg Eqv
<b>Week 27 - begin 02/07/2011</b>						
Bacon		165				300
Fuerte	430	233				854
Hass	150,501	12,176	6,000	9,000	8,500	176,911
Pinkerton	150	8				165
Reed	2,182					2,182
Sharwil	800	100				982
Wurtz	4,000	500			300	4,964
<b>Week Total</b>	<b>158,063</b>	<b>13,182</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>8,800</b>	<b>186,357</b>
<b>Week 28 - begin 09/07/2011</b>						
Bacon		65				118
Fuerte	400	498				1,305
Hass	145,451	12,296	9,000	6,000	8,500	172,079
Pinkerton	100	5				109
Reed	8,727					8,727
Sharwil	700	90				864
Wurtz	3,600	150			1,000	4,055
<b>Week Total</b>	<b>158,978</b>	<b>13,104</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>187,257</b>
<b>Week 29 - begin 16/07/2011</b>						
Fuerte		296				538
Hass	156,177	11,870	9,000	6,000	8,500	182,031
Pinkerton	50					50
Reed	5,091					5,091
Sharwil	600	140				855
Wurtz	3,400	100			1,000	3,764
<b>Week Total</b>	<b>165,318</b>	<b>12,406</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>192,328</b>
<b>Week 30 - begin 23/07/2011</b>						
Fuerte		296				538
Hass	157,479	11,630	9,000	6,000	8,500	182,896
Pinkerton	20					20
Reed	5,091					5,091
Sharwil	500	70				627
Wurtz	1,300	100			1,000	1,664
<b>Week Total</b>	<b>164,390</b>	<b>12,096</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>190,837</b>
<b>Week 31 - begin 30/07/2011</b>						
Fuerte		296				538
Hass	143,659	8,830				159,714
Reed	5,091					5,091
Sharwil	300	50				391
Wurtz	1,000	200				1,364
<b>Week Total</b>	<b>150,050</b>	<b>9,376</b>				<b>167,097</b>

Figure 3: Percentage Dispatched by Region as of 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

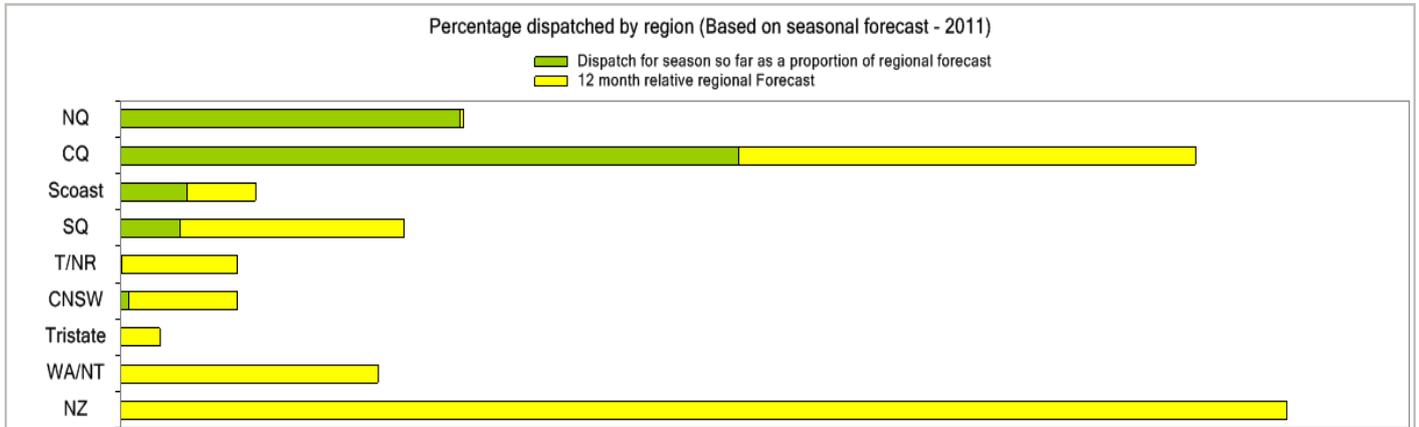


Figure 4: Weekly National Sales 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

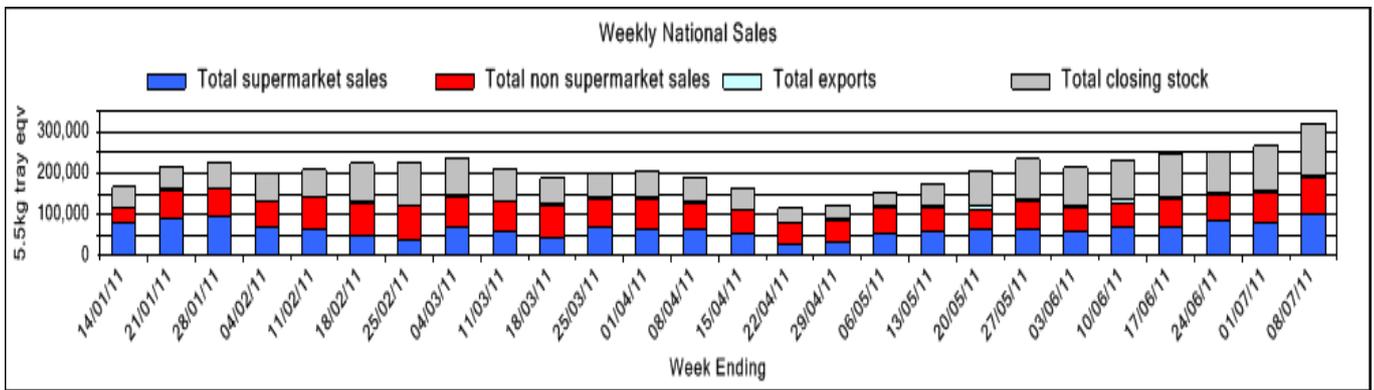


Table 3: Australian Avocado Dispatches July 2010 – June 2011

Australian Avocado Dispatches Jul 10 to Jun 11 (5.5 kg eqv trays)													
	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	May-11	Jun-11	12 Mth Total
Hass	1,084,985	753,852	756,443	669,374	577,072	526,686	431,751	392,249	179,153	153,707	739,144	843,109	7,107,525
Shepard	-	-	-	-	793	-	8,277	144,215	510,122	459,312	18,164	490	1,141,373
Other	42,216	82,699	185,946	37,226	18,018	11,648	23,010	9,452	25,128	53,954	33,556	52,927	575,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,127,201</b>	<b>836,551</b>	<b>942,389</b>	<b>706,600</b>	<b>595,883</b>	<b>538,334</b>	<b>463,038</b>	<b>545,916</b>	<b>714,403</b>	<b>666,973</b>	<b>790,864</b>	<b>896,526</b>	<b>8,824,678</b>

Table 4: New Zealand Avocado Exports

New Zealand Avocado Exports—Forecast v Import Statistics (5.5kg eqv trays) August 2010-April 2011											
Export Dest'n	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total to date	
<b>NZ Export to Australia Forecast</b>			230,344	362,695	372,318	347,433	254,873	27,608	4,731	<b>1,600,002</b>	
<b>Australia</b>			274,613	379,440	436,064	298,642	155,646	21,335	5,931	1,571,671	
<b>USA</b>											
<b>Japan</b>			12,095	45,836	32,328					90,259	
<b>Total</b>			<b>286,708</b>	<b>425,276</b>	<b>468,392</b>	<b>298,642</b>	<b>155,646</b>	<b>21,335</b>		<b>1,661,930</b>	

Figure 5: Dispatches and Forecasts for Avocados by Variety (based off the April 2011 Quarterly Report)

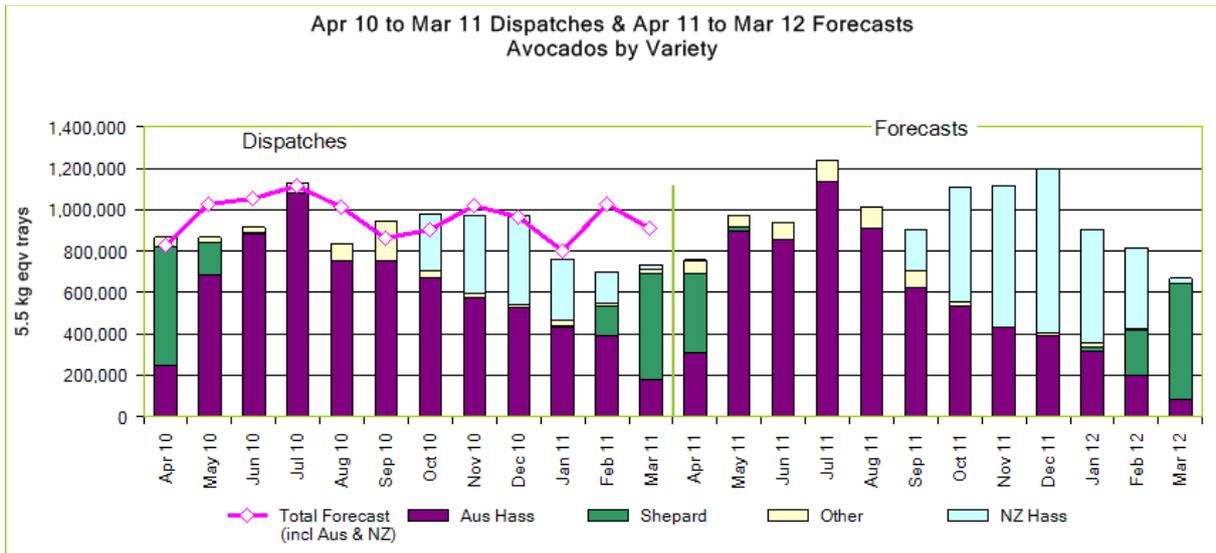
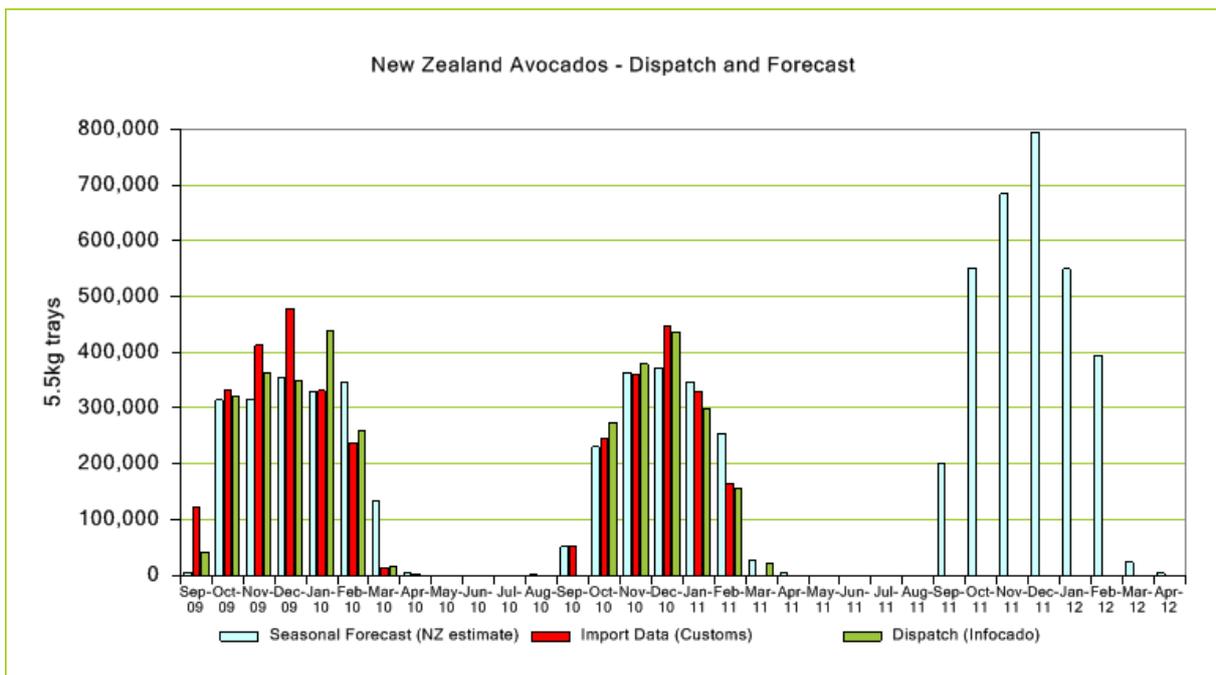


Figure 6: New Zealand Avocados – Dispatch and Forecast (based off April 2011 Quarterly Report)



Conclusion and recommendations

Infocado provides access to timely avocado crop flow information which is integral in ensuring supply chain efficiency. It is anticipated that in the future Infocado will continue to grow to include information relating to consumer purchasing behaviour such as shopper penetration, purchase frequency and spend per occasion. The aim of this reporting is to link the data relating to how much fruit is being supplied, to the data relating to where that fruit is ending up, how it is being purchased, and by whom. Recipients of Infocado supply will be able to use this information to track what is happening with supply and the interaction of supply with consumer demand.

Access to this data and the ability to interrogate and to pull out specific subsets of data from specific time frames and regions has proven to be an invaluable tool for industry. As a testament how useful this type of system can be, the Australian onion, citrus and macadamia nut industries have adapted the program to their needs and are collecting their own industry information to increase their supply chain transparency. The New Zealand avocado industry also uses a similar program.

The Australian avocado industry is experiencing a large growth phase in production. From 2008 to the end of 2011, production has been on track to increase by 17% to almost 47 000 tonnes. Given this increase, monitoring forecasted dispatches has proven to be an excellent tool for the industry as a whole by ensuring informed decisions can be made regarding marketing and research and development expenditure. Individual businesses along the supply chain also benefit greatly by being able to monitor market forces and supplies of fruit in the market.

By linking Infocado and data gathered through the Retail Price Surveys program, Avocados Australia is laying a strong foundation upon which to build an industry leading supply chain information network.

### **Acknowledgments**

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### **References**

NA