

Picking Hass Avocados without Pedicel

J.S. Köhne and S. Kremer-Köhne

Merensky Technological Services, P O Box 14, Duivelskloof, 0835, RSA

Presently, it is common practice to cut the pedicel off each avocado fruit with secateurs in a rather time consuming effort. The aim of this trial was to evaluate the effect of picking Hass fruit without pedicels on picking speed and the occurrence of post-harvest pathological disorders (e.g. stem-end rot).

In 1993 and 1994, Hass fruit were picked with and without pedicel. In 1993, fruit were stored at 5°C for four weeks. In 1994, fruit were exported to Paris on vessel 907 (temperature regime 5,5/4,5/3,5°C). After cold storage, fruit were cut open and inspected for pathological disorders.

Picking Hass without pedicel increased the speed of picking substantially (W. Seele, personal communication). Upon ripening no pathological disorders were observed (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1	
Hass fruit picked and stored (4 weeks in experimental cold storage) in August 1993	
<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Pathological problems</i>
Pedicel	None
No Pedicel	None

Table 2	
Hass fruit picked and exported to Paris in June 1994 (4 weeks commercial cold storage)	
<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Pathological problems</i>
Pedicel	None
No Pedicel	None

By picking Hass fruit without pedicel, picking is speeded up considerably, resulting in increased profitability. As no increase in pathological disorders was found in fruit picked without pedicel, semi-commercial consignments of Hass picked that way can be considered for the 1995 export season.

To date, no tests with cultivars other than Hass, regarding picking without pedicel, have been undertaken by the authors. Other cultivars may well be more susceptible to post-harvest pathological disorders when picked without pedicel.