

How innovation and technology are being used to develop new avocado groves in South Africa

Guy Witney, PhD
Independent Agricultural Consultant
George, South Africa

Abstract:

In recent years the South African avocado industry has been rapidly expanding into cool late-season production areas which has allowed shipping local fruit year-round.

Propagation and growing technologies, as well as new varieties developed over the last few decades, have largely allowed this expansion. The practical implications of moving into area previous not known for avocado production are discussed.

Resume:

Currently an independent consultant working in the South African avocado industry based in the Western Cape.

Represent Westfalia Fruit Marketing, Western and Eastern Cape for the Technical Team; advising growers on production, maturity and harvesting matters.

Have developed an 80,000 tree per year avocado nursery in the Western Cape, producing and growing out clonal avocado trees for local grower developments.

Project coordinator for a 200 hectare (500 acre) development in Great Brak River, South Africa.

Helped establish the first avocado-dedicated packhouse in George, Western Cape, South Africa.

Former positions include:

Research and Development Manager, Sun Pacific, Bakersfield

Director of Industry Affairs, California Avocado Commission, Irvine

State-wide Citrus and Subtropical Fruit Specialist for UC Cooperative Extension, UCR

Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties

Area Extension Agent Washington State University Cooperative Extension Wenatchee, and

Okanogan County CE Director