

FOREWORD

Within less than three decades, the South African avocado industry has developed from a minor role player exporting less than 5,000 tons in 1974, to a major international player exporting more than 50,000 tons in 1998. During the 1998 season South Africa was Europe's biggest external supplier of avocados, supplying approximately 29% of all avocados consumed. Total production in South Africa exceeded 100,000 tons for the first time during 1998.

SAAGA would like to dedicate the 1999 yearbook to those researchers who have served the avocado industry with distinction and dedication during this period and have made a major contribution to the continued growth and development of the industry. Research done on *Phytophthora* control through trunk injections with phosphorous acid, rootstocks, and improved cultural practices was a major breakthrough. This was supported by research on temperature control and the development of effective cold chain protocols resulting in improved post-harvest management for top quality fruit in Europe.

In order to remain competitive on the international market, the South African industry needs to address the following issues:

- Alleviation of alternate bearing to ensure a reliable and regular supply to the markets
- Increasing productivity to remain competitive.
- Gaining access to new markets through meeting of phytosanitary and other regulatory requirements.

These are the challenges facing our researchers.

Research priorities need to be determined on a democratic basis and low priority projects must be eliminated. I therefore urge growers and researchers to become involved. Your involvement and support will determine the destiny of the South African avocado industry.

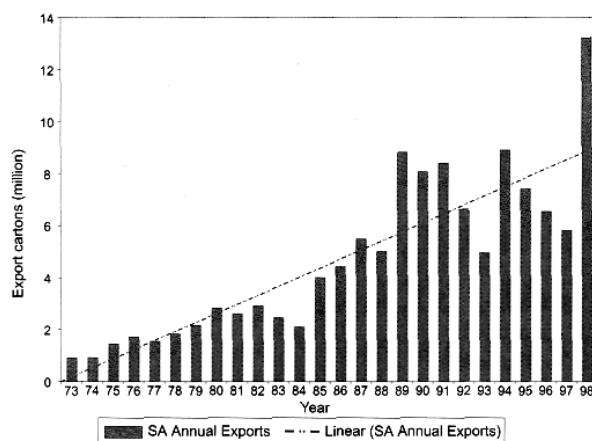


Figure 1. SA Avocado Industry Exports 1973 - 1998

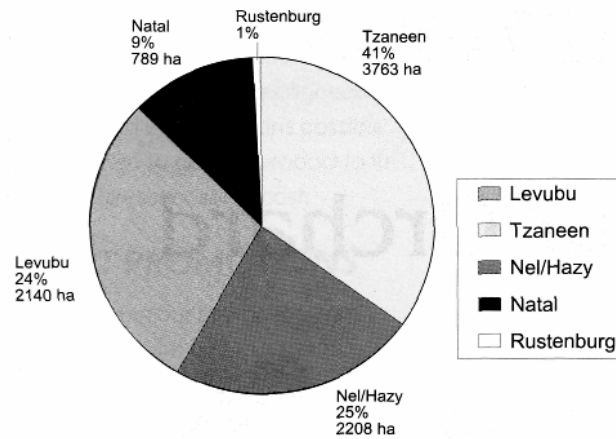


Figure 2. SA Avocado Industry - Plantings per Region - 1991 Census

Chris Keavy

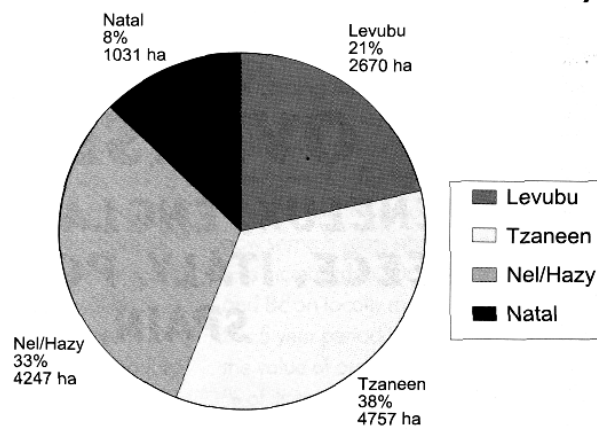


Figure 3. Tree Census 1998/99 - Planted area per region

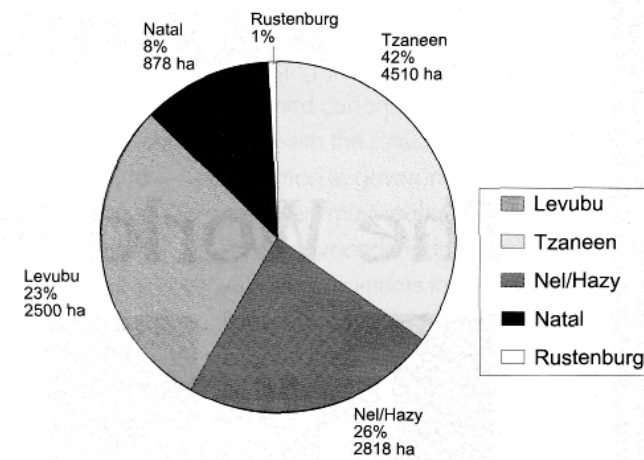


Figure 4. SA Avocado Industry - Plantings per Region - 1995 Census