

## **Introduction to the Section**

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To provide a complete and accurate picture of the worldwide avocado market, the World Avocado Congress assembled six experts from each of the major avocado producing and exporting countries. My associates for this task are as follows: Mr. Man Shoham, Israel; Mr. Carlos Illsley, Mexico; Mr. Luis Sanchez, Chile; Mr. Julian Diaz Robledo, Spain; Mr. Jan Toerien, South Africa, and Mark Affleck, United States. Each panel member was asked to address a number of topics related to the avocado industry in his country. The areas to be covered included: (i) an overview of production, with information on volume, varieties grown and the seasonality of the crop; (ii) details on the ways in which each country's crops are marketed, including the percentages used domestically and exported, for foodservice and for retail, and how much is sold fresh and how much is processed; (iii) specific marketing efforts, including export programs in place at both the consumer and trade levels, and such key issues as transportation; and (iv) retail innovations in their country, such as packaging, point-of-sale materials and techniques to enhance the shelf life or merchandising of the fruit.

The issues addressed by each expert are significant to the avocado industry as a whole. It is important to keep in mind that, despite any international differences, we share the common goal of enhancing the value of the worldwide avocado crop. The reports of each expert follows.

After reading the papers in this section, each of us will have a greater understanding of the issues confronting all of the countries producing and marketing avocados in the vast worldwide marketplace. It is hoped that we will take what we have learned and seek to work toward the goal of enhancing the value of this market for our common good.