

## COUNTRY REPORT - NEW ZEALAND

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The New Zealand avocado industry is well established and is the third largest fresh fruit horticultural product group. The industry has a strong focus on fresh fruit exports and has historically exported 60-65% of the national crop. The balance of the crop is sold on the New Zealand domestic market or is processed for cold pressed oil. There are more than 1,100 growers registered with the NZ Avocado Growers Association (AGA) with approximately 4,000 hectares planted. Less than 1,600 ha are more than 6 years old. The average avocado farm is 3.6 ha, but individual orchard size ranges from less than 0.5 ha to more than 50 ha.

The only commercial cultivar is Hass (97%) with very small numbers of Zutano, Bacon and Reed planted mainly as pollenizers. The industry is based on seedling root stocks with Zutano being the most popular root stock. There are some Hass plantings on seedling Reed and seedling Bacon. Clonal root stocks are becoming more popular as nurseries produce increasing numbers of Hass on Duke 7. Production is limited to the North Island with almost 70% of plantings in the Bay of Plenty region. The other regions of commercial importance are Northland and Auckland. The vast majority of the national crop is packed in 26 packing houses with the 7 largest packing houses packing half the national crop.

The New Zealand crop has increased from less than 4,400 tons in 1993/4 to more than 14,000 tons in 2002/3. The crop is expected to increase to over 40,000 tons by 2012. The major exports markets are Australia and the United States of America (USA). Australia has been the most important export market and continues to be the largest export market consuming almost 70% of New Zealand exports in the 2002/3 season. The USA has increased in importance over the past 6 years. Smaller quantities of fruit are exported to Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. Boutique quantities of fruit are exported to the South Pacific Islands. The main harvest season is from mid-September to early March.

The NZ AGA is committed to growing the NZ domestic market by building demand for avocados. Per capita consumption has increased from less than 250 g in the early 1990's to 1.58 kg in the 2002/3 year. The industry goal is to build demand to more than 3 kg per person. The development of the NZ market is built around fruit quality, food safety, health and avocado food options in the NZ lifestyle. Television advertising promoting avocados as a mainstream food and using the Heart Foundation "pick the tick" logo are the core of the promotional programme. There are associated investments in point of sale material, ripeness guides and food safety programmes.

The New Zealand avocado industry has developed good international relationships with Australian, United States and South African avocado grower bodies. The relationship with Australian growers is particularly close with mutual exchanges and cooperation in the fields of information and technical exchange. There is regular programmed high-level political and executive contact. Where appropriate there is joint funding of research. The two industries share a joint conference every four years.