

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER EXPERIENCES WITH AVOCADO GROWERS, IN URUAPAN, MICHOACAN, MEXICO

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Although in the Michoacan state, Mexico, there are 80.000 has of avocado orchards, with a production of 820.224 tons (85.05 % of the country), the average production is 10 ton/ha, with a potential increase between 18 to 30 ton/ha. Production represents 40%, in terms of added value, of the avocado agroalimentary chain. The factors that affect production are various and from different origins, but one of the most important is the lack of application of proper technologies. Consequently, it is necessary to bring close to the growers, adequate technologies for their environmental and socioeconomic conditions.

Hence, during 2002 and 2003 were developed technology transfer activities for avocado producers in the Uruapan region, Michoacan. Those were evaluated through a questionnaire, using a simple random sampling of 113 of the total 256 farmers who attended 13 events (2 technology exchange tours, 3 field exhibitions, 3 instruction courses to producers, 2 main conferences, 1 instruction course to orchard administrators, and 2 specific conferences). Ninety five per cent of them appreciated as important the technologies covered (fertigation, pest and disease control, post-harvest, pruning, nutrition, pollination, appropriate harvest practices, efficient machinery use, among some others); 92% affirmed that the topic covered could be applied to their orchard conditions. Regarding the cost of the technologies, only 21% considered them as low and economically accessible, whereas 64% considered them in medium cost and difficulty access and 15% estimated a high economic cost. The more interesting topics to the growers for future technology transfer events are in order of importance: pruning, fertilization, marketing, avocado organic management, compost management, pest and disease control, nutrition, machinery management and biological control.