

FRUIT OF THE FORTUNE IN TAIWAN

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SUMMARY

Introduction the present situation of avocado production and consumption in Taiwan; a comparison of some production environments in California vs Taiwan. Recognizing the characteristics of avocado fruit – unconventional fruit requires unconventional way to deal with. Necessity and struggling in road to industrialization. Perspectives of the future.

Key Words: Fruit of fortune, Taiwan

Logotype of the Second World Congress of Avocado designates “the shape of the thing to come”. It is floating in my mind, and forever I am afraid. The lovely large avocado family have been so impressive and substantial, Carol and Bob Lamb especially. More appropriately, I call it fruit of fortune. The Chinese characters 幸福果 once appeared in California Avocado Quaterly (page 8. No. 26. April 1993) if one has noticed. More realistically, a million thanks to the generous couple Gwen and Bob Bergh who did appear in Taiwan for a while(Oct. 30-Nov. 7, 1995) helping us drawing that thing closer to us more essentially in the episode. To mention a few.

Introduction of avocado plants of Florida origin from Hawaii dated back to early part of last century was recorded. But none of the original tree is now in existence. These varieties were mainly maintained in Chiayi Experiment Station in southern Taiwan. Since then succeeding plants were distributed to growers for personal trial from time to time. Until recent decade, additional introduction from California took place in this period and some experiments started. In general no formal trial of noticeable scale have been conducted.

Present situation: The status of avocado growing in Taiwan can only be considered as” semi-progressive” situation. In other words, there are commercial groves planted to certain varieties as compared to backyard seedlings or criollos in Guatemala. Cultural method is rather primitive. Graftage and sometimes air-layering are employed. No large nursery found. Phytophthora losses

were not uncommon. Phosphitic injection for tree salvage has been employed. Probably less than 10 prominent varieties are from seedling of West Indian race or West Indian x Guatemalan hybrids originated from Florida sources. The main maturity season is late summer and fall. Some late varieties will last until late winter, Hall and Choqall (Hall x Choquette) dominating. Extremely late or early varieties are rare.

Acreage and producing area: At present, the main avocado producing areas are located in southern Taiwan say Chiayi and Tainan Hsien (county). The total acreage 200 hectares and is increasing noticeably.

Marketing: Avocado is consumed locally mainly in the form of milkshake which is most popular in south cast Asia. In late winter when supply fell short and prices went high, some importation from Vietnam or Indonesia might take place. Fruits from these sources came in boxes containing mixed fruit of different “varieties” probably picked from backyard trees. Occasionally people would worry about the market. To my opinion, there is no problem. Since the gigantic market of Shanghai is just close by. Once extensional education is succeeded, supply will soon come short for sure. Comparison of production environments in California vs. Taiwan: It is of interest to mention the good example of California avocado industry built on such adverse conditions namely shortage of water, land, labor and with frost hazards and yet the most successful one. Why? The most important factor—man. After struggling for a century the leading model of avocado industry has come out.

Take a look at China. Boundless land in frost-free area of south China, (Including Taiwan of course, which is one of the provinces) ; ample precipitation, labor plenty, skilled and unskilled. If the problem of man factor is resolved. There is no reason an industry will not succeed in the long run. Thus, it is quite clear the “man factor” is waited to be duely solved. The first and simpliest reason is the complete ignorance of the people the existence of such a “thing”. To educate, informing what the “thing” is basically important. This is the challenge, this is our task. That it is a gifted high nutritive fruit is out of question. Indeed, it is a valuable food to be exact, delicately palatable; meeting the requirements of modern health concept. The high class oil widely used by cometician for health and beauty of the fair sex, a high class fruit of attractable appearance with long shelf life demanding high prices, thus an excellent commodity. Growers prefer it to citrus simply because it just grow easily with less pest problems. Great capacity and potential for future demand and contribution. Just a few definition to mention what the thing or fruit of fortune is like.

The more one gets acquainted with the thing the easier to deal with the whole matter. Characteristics of the fruit needed to be recognized. Unconventional fruit requires unconventional way to deal with.

All these years, after continuing care, study, close observation and consultation, I realize that industrialization of the thing- fruit of fortune is badly needed and to work upon in the part of the world. Patience had been taken for long year of the paper work, legislation of the “Chinese Avocado Association” was finally substantiated three years ago , functioning as the locomotive to start with. The whole train of research, cultural, educational and extensional, organization, and marketing work following.

There are two targets to be aimed at:

1. Make the thing available as one of the staple food.
2. To be able to produce fruit in boxes as a commodity.

Perspective of the future is bright with confidence, Evidently the aforementioned condition of our environment for avocado production is undoubtedly perfect. "Man factor" again, I repeat, is of utmost importance on way to success. Dealing with the thing we have a lot to learn from our brothers who are not old at all- 5th World Congress.

Our motto

To your fortune

To our fortune (you and me)

To fortune of China

To fortune of the world.