

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANOPY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA**

J. Leonardi

Avocados Australia. PO Box 663, Stones Corner, Queensland 4120, Australia  
j.leonardi@avocado.org.au Tel: 61 7 3391 2344 Fax: 61 7 3391 2388.

Canopy management is one of the major production issues confronting the Australian avocado industry. Cost effective means of tree size control to optimise light interception and penetration, maximise and maintain fruit quality and yield, and improve efficiency of harvesting and spraying operations are essential.

Avocado growers have adopted various strategies to manage tree size including limb removal; mechanical and selective pruning; stag-horning; tree thinning and removal; cincturing and plant growth regulator application. An analysis of several strategies was undertaken in the major avocado producing regions across Australia. At each study site, information on tree age, planting density and row orientation, the timing of flowering, vegetative flushing and harvesting was collected. The suitability of each canopy management system in terms of timing and cost of operations and its impact on productivity was determined.

In addition the effect of plant growth regulators, such as naphthalene acetic acid (NAA) and triazoles (uniconazole and paclobutrazol) for regrowth control and prohexadione-calcium (Regalis<sup>®</sup>) to reduce shoot growth and improve yield and fruit quality were also investigated.