

## NEW ZEALAND AVOCADO PRODUCTION, MARKETS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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The New Zealand avocado industry has grown from 946 hectares in 1989 to have a total estate area of 5,688 hectares. Orchards are located in the Far North 6% and Whangarei 21% and the Bay of Plenty 67%, primarily in temperate coastal regions with sandy or volcanic soils. During the 2006 season, growers produced a total of 22,970 tonnes of fruit, making avocados New Zealand's third largest fresh fruit industry. Yields in excess of 30 tons ha<sup>-1</sup> are commonly achieved in mature orchards. The National Average Yield (including young orchards) for the past decade has been 6.03 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>, with a maximum of 8.86 tons ha<sup>-1</sup>, during the 2001 season. New Zealand's avocado exports began in the late 1970's and by 1989 was shipping 671 tonnes. In 2006 the industry exported 13,000 tonnes in 2006, to global markets include Australia, Japan, USA, and SE Asia. The Avocado Industry Council's export strategy is based primarily on the Hass cultivar with enforceable export grade standards. Sophisticated post harvest handling systems are controlled by the industry through supporting governmental regulatory legislation. Green skin cultivars Reed and Fuerte supply an active domestic market which is also accommodates small volumes of Australian Hass. A small processing industry produces avocado oil using a unique cold-press technology which is exported to markets in over 20 countries. New Zealand has warm temperate climate (colder wet winters and cool spring, temperate summer) which disrupts flowering and crop set, requiring skilled management to deliver even cropping cycles, and high producing orchards.

