

COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTION CONVERSION OF CONVENTIONAL TO ORGANIC AVOCADO FROM MICHOACAN, 2004-2006

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Over the last decade, organic agriculture has become increasingly important around the world, with the planted area increasing 100% in the last five years. Avocados are one of the agricultural products with greater commercial importance in Mexico and more than 90% of the national production comes from the State of Michoacan. Part of the organic avocado production in Michoacan is mainly destined for export to Japan, the United States and the European Union.

The purposes of this research were: 1) to determine the factors of competitiveness of organic avocado growers and 2) to identify the factors for the conversion from conventional to organic avocado production. On-field work was carried out applying 47 surveys to organic and conventional avocado producers from the State of Michoacan between January and September 2006. The results show that 55% of organic avocado producers are highly competitive and that production conversion from conventional to organic avocado is viable; however, strategies supporting the producers for at least three years are necessary; even more in training producers on the techniques of organic agriculture.