

II. Semitech #3  
D. News letters



# UPDATE

RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF CALIFORNIA AVOCADO GROWERS — JANUARY 2003

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## WHAT'S NEW?

### THE RIPE MACHINE

from Steve Barnard



We have talked in the past about Mission's focus on developing regional ripe centers across the country.

I'm proud to say that we now have four Mission ripe centers in full operation and

another one under construction in Atlanta.

Our results to date have been staggering. Even on the East Coast, where avocados are not as well known as in the west, the percentage of growth has been quite phenomenal. We are seeing growth rates in the 50% to 300% range!

The nice aspect about our ripe program is the fact that price is no longer the variable. Retailers are now on a waiting list to start the program and price is a minimal concern. Availability, commitment, support and quality are the issues, which is one of the reasons why we have been able to increase value with added volume.

For Mission this new demand has increased the pressure of attracting new growers. This past year, we grew our market share by 5%. That wasn't enough. With our ripe centers established and consumer confidence building, the demand for ripe avocados is exploding.

What I am asking our existing grower base to do is help Mission attract new growers. If any of you have neighbors, friends or associates that are in the avocado business, or are entering the industry, please give us

### Mission Advertising Hits Hard with Ripe Campaign

Ripe Centers and Ripening Expertise is the Message

**Gotta be ripe!**

Let Your Customers Eat 'Em Tonight!

Recent statistics show that ripe avocados outsell nonripes almost 3 to 1. By taking advantage of Mission's strategic Ripening Centers you can count on moving more avocados. Give us a call to set up a winning ripe program for you... and your customers!

**Mission Avocados**

805-981-3655 • 800-549-3420 • [www.missionpro.com](http://www.missionpro.com)

**MISSION RIPE 4225**

Mission ads, running in numerous produce industry publications are all promoting Mission's Ripe Centers and forward warehouses. Produce buyers for large retailers are being informed that ripe programs will increase sales of avocados and make availability to their

stores much more convenient. The ads also caution readers to watch out for ripening imposters who claim to have the same capabilities as Mission. Reaction to the advertising has been very positive as more and more retailers are committing to Mission Ripe Programs.

### NEWS UPDATE

#### MEXICAN FRUIT FLY QUARANTINE

In early December 2002, the California Department of Food and Agriculture in conjunction with the USDA established a 117 square mile quarantine zone in northern San Diego County. Since then, the state has started a series of aerial applications of the organic pesticide, Spinosad. Growers in the area can check the latest information on the

a referral. Let them experience the outstanding service and expert advice that Mission offers. They can become a part of the team that enjoys the highest and most consistent returns in the avocado industry.

applications by calling 1-800-491-1899. Growers within the zone must complete all quarantine compliance and bait treatment agreements with CDFA and are prohibited from moving any fruit out of the quarantine zone prior to receiving CDFA approval.

The Mexican fruit fly is native to southern and central Mexico. The fly attacks over 40 different kinds of fruits, including citrus and avocados. Damage occurs when the female fly lays eggs in the fruit making it unfit for human consumption.

CDFA personnel at the Mexican Fruit Fly Project field office can be reached at 1-760-749-5160.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT [www.missionpro.com](http://www.missionpro.com) OR CALL US AT 800 882 6659

WHAT'S NEW WITH

# Our Growers

JANUARY 2003



## California Regional Crop Reports

Always feel free to contact your Mission Field Representative. He has many resources and is there to help you out.

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**  
from Mike Nunez 805 488 3575

Growers had a good year in 2002 experiencing an average of 12,000 lbs. per acre. The crop for 2003 looks very similar; the trees look very healthy and fruit size is ahead of last year. Early size picking will be encouraged as the quarantine zone will limit the supply of early fruit. Since we will see southern fruit in the market later and in greater volume, we should increase our northern volume earlier in the season. This will allow a consistent flow of fruit to the market.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**  
from Mike Nunez 805 488 3575

The fruit set for this year was affected by the cool weather of spring and summer. Lower San Luis Obispo County did have some hot spots and this increased the set for 2003. Fruit sizes are ahead of last year and that means growers will want to consider pruning. The fruit that will be pruned off will have a better market value because of size. Crop size is up overall, especially in the Riverside area. They are up approximately 30% from last year which will extend their picking season.

**VENTURA COUNTY**  
from Chris Dryden 805 488 3575

This past season set new records in average field prices and total yield for all of Ventura County. With the unusual lack of seasonal rainfall fruit had a hard time sizing. Conversely, I had many groves that showed none of the traditional late season drop. Add to that some exceptional late fruit quality and it made for an ending finale that not even Andrew Lloyd Weber could compose. Looking ahead at 2003, the entire county shows a very nice but uneven set. Once again the alternate-bearing Hass avocado variety has flip-flopped its set. This is pretty much the norm and not the exception. Luckily, there are still many groves throughout the county, both coastal and inland, that are showing outstanding numbers. Also of note is the larger than normal fruit sizes on trees at this early part of the season. All this, with little contribution from Mother Nature in the form of rainfall.

**TEMECULA AREA/RIVERSIDE COUNTY**  
from Albert Munoz 909 695 4636

The avocado crop for the Temecula/De Luz area is looking to be an average crop for this season. The area has not completely recovered from tree and bloom damage sustained from the harsh winter of last year. The outlook for the Temecula hill "east side" is looking good-to-above average. The "west side" is looking to be light-to-medium. Overall, the crop is spotty. The De Luz area has a more consistent crop on the trees with some areas very heavy. Look for an attempt to harvest a light volume of size in early January. The main reasons are better fruit sizing than last year, the need to generate cash flow and a concern of revenue loss due to windfalls. The reality will be the market indicators and demand on the new crop. The normal increase in harvest volume will take place as we move into spring.

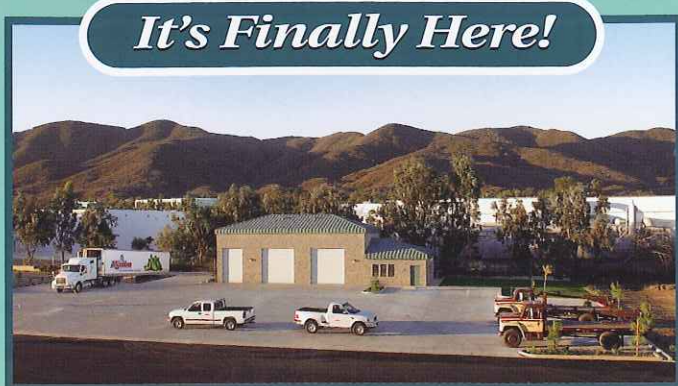
**SAN DIEGO COUNTY**  
from Scott Scarborough 760 749 8236

Rain may be the only saving grace of the early 2002-2003 avocado season for the majority of San Diego County Growers. Due to the Mexican Fruit Fly, the largest mandatory fruit quarantine in the history of San Diego County and the State is currently taking place. Combine this with a heavy windfall and other cultural hurdles, growers are facing an extremely challenging year. It is vital this season to be informed of quarantine developments and marketing news to make the best choices in harvesting your crops.



**Mike Powell New Transportation Manager**  
We're pleased to announce that Mike Powell has been appointed to a new position at Mission. Mike is a 20-year employee, working most of those years in the Field Department where he also handled most of the trucking responsibilities.

### It's Finally Here!



## Temecula Facility Ready to Open

It's been a long wait, but we're excited to unveil our new field and fruit storage facility in Temecula. While Mission has been an active marketer in the southern growing areas since our inception, we have historically worked out of rented facilities and storage yards. With the construction of the new facility in Temecula, we now have a central office for our field staff working in the southern district, and a storage facility for growers' fruit prior to being transported to our packing facility in Oxnard. We're looking forward to showing off our new facility. Please look for an announcement of our grand opening and by all means, call your Mission Field Rep for a personal tour of the new operation.

## Professor Avocado's Advisory



### FOLIAR FERTILIZATION

from Carol Lovatt, UC Riverside

For the Hass avocado in California, fruit set is the most critical stage of fruit development from a grower's point of view. It is during this period that the greatest gains in fruit retention can be made. Events during this period also impact fruit size and quality. Avocado flowering and fruit set, which are periods of high nutrient demand, occur when soil temperatures are low. Low soil temperature reduces root metabolic activity and the transfer of nutrients from the ground into the tree. In addition, low soil moisture

compromises the capacity of the trees to meet high nutrient demands at other times of the year.

Foliar fertilization can meet the tree's demand for nutrients at times and under soil conditions when soil-applied fertilizers would be ineffective. For example, alkaline pH, calcareous soils affect micronutrient uptake. In foliar fertilization, the nutrient must be taken up by the leaves or other target organs, and be phloem mobile. Foliar fertilization with nutrients is considered to be 4 to 30 times more efficient than soil fertilization depending on the nutrient and the soil in which the crop is growing. Furthermore, replacing soil-applied fertilizer with foliar fertilization reduces the potential for polluting groundwater. To maximize uptake, fertilizers are applied to the foliage of avocado trees when the spring flush leaves are two-thirds fully expanded. Leaves at this stage of development provide adequate surface area for efficient nutrient uptake. As well, micronutrients can be applied at this time to combat existing deficiencies.

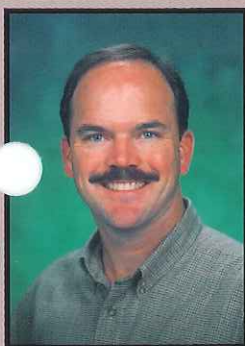
Leaves are not the only organs that can be targeted for foliar fertilization - flowers respond as well. Results with foliar fertilizers are improved when the role of a specific nutrient in the physiology of the tree is known and the nutrient is applied at the correct time. When applied at times of high nutrient demand, foliar fertilizers can stimulate a specific metabolic process in the tree. This approach has proven successful in increasing yield.

Boron or urea-N as a foliar spray at the "cauliflower stage" of inflorescence development increased yield in years in which the climate during the bloom period was less than optimal for good fruit set. At this cauliflower stage, foliar fertilization is more effective than soil application. Results of studies provided evidence that specific nutrients applied to the canopy can efficiently meet tree nutrient demand and can stimulate specific physiological processes resulting in increased yield, fruit size and quality. The treatments are relatively cheap considering their potential benefit. Caution - neither of these treatments should be used in a high Boron orchard.

For additional information on foliar fertilization, please contact your PCA or fertilizer company.



## MARKET NEWS



### Global Avocado Status

from Jim Donovan

What a Fall we had! This past September we finally experienced the potential oversupply situation we have talked about for the last several years. Once again illustrating the need for better communication between the producing countries. Chilean fruit came in heavier and earlier than ever before. We should expect for this to be the norm in the years to come.

Based upon Chile's projections, we will see strong weekly volumes arriving through the end of January. An average of 6-7 million pounds per week is expected. We've seen larger weekly numbers in both November and December, decreasing in volume in January and February.

Mexico is the other important factor during this period. Because of tight harvest controls by growers, we expect to see about 2-2.5 million pounds per week through early April. I say tight because presently there are about 40,000 acres certified for the U.S. program. These growers will only harvest about 10-20% of their certified fruit. Mexico has a target volume this season of about 65-70 million pounds for the US program. Unlike Chile, Mexico has strong domestic consumption and will always analyze the returns in the U.S. market versus the domestic market. If for some reason the U.S. market gets too low, we would expect Mexico to pull back a bit on its volume.

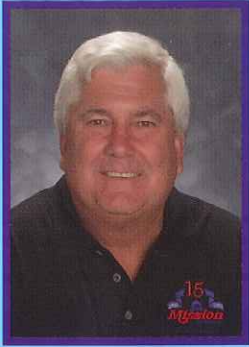
With California looking at its third large (or perhaps normal) crop in a row, the key to survival is increased consumption. Programs like the HAPO and Country-of-Origin promotions will help. The tremendous momentum we experience during spring and summer needs to be pulled through fall and winter. With coordinated promotion efforts, this can be achieved.

## Mission & Cal Poly Venture

Mission Produce is planting a new 50 acre commercial avocado orchard with Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The orchard, planted on University ground, will provide students with first-hand experience in real-world avocado production operations while also generating proceeds for the School of Agriculture. Cal Poly began working with Mission Produce on the project over one year ago. As a leader and innovator in the marketing, distribution and value-added operations, Mission was a natural selection for Cal Poly's "Learn by Doing" philosophy. The orchard is being developed using the latest orchard management practices and state-of-the-art irrigation systems and will be a host for many classes and seminars at Cal Poly - for both the students and for avocado growers in the region.

# Sales & Marketing

Sales staffers, Bob Collier, Dave Fausset, Tony Worthington, Monica Ramos and Janis Rodriguez perform the vendor-managed programs that ensure customer satisfaction.



from Ross Wileman

## People Make the Difference

With technology constantly changing the landscape of how we do business, it still comes down to people making the difference.

Over the last few years consolidation in retail and food service has changed the relationship between buyer and seller. Shippers are now required to offer much more than just a product. We're asked to be a solutions provider. Solutions for just-in-time delivery, value-added products, ripe programs, inventory management and long-range pricing strategy are only a few of the demands on our sales staff. The days of the 1 or 2 salesmen companies are long gone.

At Mission we have a full-time sales staff, headed by Sales Manager Ron Araiza, to meet the ever-increasing demands of these new giants.

Dave Austin, our Merchandiser in the field, is constantly traveling across the country to perform business reviews, develop new accounts and determine what our customers need to increase avocado sales.

Bill Smith and Mike Powell are directly involved in controlling our forward distribution, ripe centers and transportation requirements to ensure a constant flow of product across the country.

Mission's Marketing Communications Director, Bill Tarleton, designs and produces all of our advertising, literature, trade show materials, presentations, website and even this newsletter you are now reading.

Our warehouses and ripe centers in Oxnard, Denver, New Jersey and Chicago are all operated by Mission employees, guaranteeing consistency in our programs.

Needless to say, Mission has the finest sales and support staff in the avocado industry. In order to maintain our position as the leader in this industry we depend on people like these everyday.

Without these dedicated employees the value of your fruit would not be where it is today.

If you ever get the chance, please drop by our Sales office in Oxnard and meet the dedicated employees who love their work here at Mission Produce.



Mission Produce Inc.

P.O. Box 5267 • Oxnard, California 93031-5267

## BULLETIN BOARD

### California Avocado Commission Board Meeting Schedule

January 16	Board Meetings are held at CAC in Santa Ana 1251 East Dyer Road • 714-558-6761 <b>ALL GROWERS ARE WELCOME!</b>	June 19
March 20		August 21
May 15		September 18

California Avocado Society [www.west.net/~lsrose/cas/](http://www.west.net/~lsrose/cas/)  
Web Sites of Interest  
University of California Riverside [www.ucavo.ucr.edu](http://www.ucavo.ucr.edu)  
California Avocado Commission [www.avocado.org](http://www.avocado.org)  
USDA Market Report [www.ams.usda.gov/fv/mncs/termfrui.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/mncs/termfrui.htm)