

# Benefits from the Levy System

SPOTLIGHT > AVOCADO

## Avocado quality improvement



Avocados are a highly perishable product and susceptible to damage. Improving avocado quality at retail level is a major strategic objective for the industry. In 2006, detailed sensory research was undertaken to quantify consumer's preferences and tolerances of internal defects. This research established, amongst other things, that consumers will tolerate up to 10% internal defects with higher levels of damage adversely impacting future purchasing decisions.

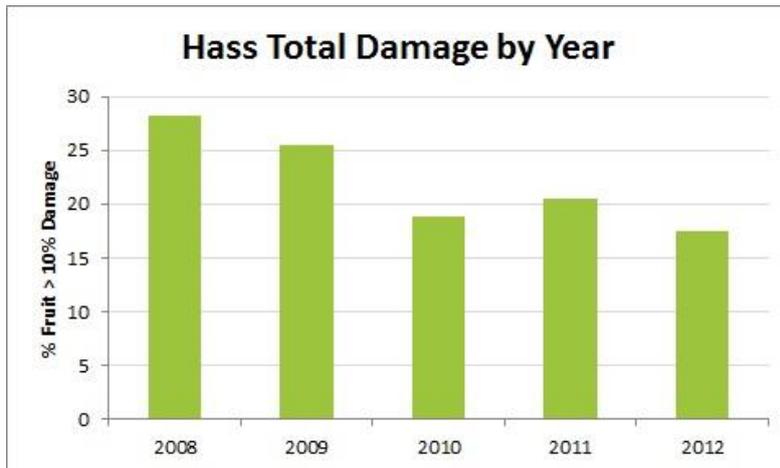
A suite of R&D and extension projects have been implemented since 2006 to address the issues affecting avocado quality:

- Education materials developed and disseminated (hard copy and on-line) for each sector of the supply chain – growers, packers, transporters, wholesalers, ripeners, retailers
- Weekly and quarterly forecasting and dispatch reporting to help industry to achieve more consistent crop flow through the supply chain across the year
- National hands-on retailer training
- Extension program to facilitate adoption of best practice for growers, packers, transporters, ripeners, wholesalers.
- Detailed ripening guidelines developed for ripeners
- Research to improve field disease management
- Research to identify and minimise causes of fruit bruising.

A monitoring program was also established to monitor changes in fruit quality at retail level over time. Fruit is sampled from 64 stores across 4 capital cities every month and assessed against key quality criteria. This data has provided insights into the main quality defects (rots and bruising) and has helped to direct future research.

The extensive data set provides hard evidence that the initiatives undertaken through the levy program to improve avocado quality at retail level are having a positive impact. The percentage of Hass avocados at retail level with unacceptable levels of damage decreased by 38% from 2008 to 2012. This improvement in quality is helping to drive increased consumer demand and returns to

levy payers. Per capita consumption of avocados has increased 70% in the past ten years and returns to growers have also increased over this time.



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