



conference



JUNE 2016

Learn and share

The AVOCO conference on June 25 at Waipuna Hotel and Conference Centre in Auckland is an opportunity for growers to gather under one roof and learn more from our technical and marketing experts as well as special guest speakers from overseas.

The full line up of speakers has been finalised and we encourage you to schedule the conference in your calendar. Registration forms and information on how to book your accommodation at Waipuna will be distributed in the next few days.

In the meantime, we can confirm this year's conference features three avocado industry leaders from Australia as well as the US.

Simon Newett has been honoured for his technical contribution to Australia's industry and his two presentations are sure to be a hit with AVOCO growers. Biotechnologist Prof Neena Mitter will share her latest avocado research from the University of Queensland while Prof Carol Lovatt from the US will draw on her considerable knowledge of Hass avocado crops to discuss alternate bearing and foliar fertilisation to increase both yield and fruit size.

TECHNICAL SPEAKERS



Simon Newett

SIMON NEWETT

Simon has 35 years experience in horticulture, 11 as horticulturist and manager with a corporate producer of macadamia nuts and 24 as a horticultural extension

officer with the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

In the past 24 years, he has led a number of projects aimed at assisting commercial producers of avocados, pineapples and passionfruit. The avocado projects have included the production of a number of information and software packages for the avocado industry including the AVOMAN avocado orchard management software, the AVOINFO avocado reference database, the Agrilink Avocado Information Kit, the Avocado Problem Solver Field Guide and the Growing section of the Australian avocado on-line Best Practice Resource.

He conducts regular regional study group field days around Australia and has led several avocado grower study tours to South Africa, Spain, Israel, Mexico, Chile, Peru and New Zealand. He co-authored a chapter in the 1st edition of "The Avocado - Botany Production and Uses" published by CABI and in 2015, received an Order of Merit from Avocados Australia Ltd for his contribution to the Australian avocado industry.

At the AVOCO conference, Simon will share results from an observational study of the 2015 flowering season in Australia.

Save the date: June 25

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During the season, a number of data loggers were established on Australian orchards in areas affected by irregular bearing. Growers and technical staff concurrently made observations on flowering, pollinators and fruitset at these sites.

Simon will also lead a discussion on irrigation. Avocado growers and researchers are beginning to realise just how important the maintenance of optimum soil moisture is for avocados, and as such, the irrigation practices of five of the best avocado irrigators in Australia will be shared with growers.



Prof Neena Mitter

PROF NEENA MITTER

Associate Professor Neena Mitter of the University of Queensland is one of Australia's leading biotechnologists, having been involved in molecular biology and biotechnology in Australia and India for more than 20 years.

Her research has featured in more than 60 publications and she has won prestigious awards like the Women in Technology Queensland Biotechnologist Award, Queensland International Fellowship and the Young Scientist Award by the Prime Minister of India.

The group led by her at the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, focuses on developing RNA silencing based novel and innovative approaches towards management of pests and diseases across plant and animal science.

She recently received the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges Innovation Award to develop 'BioClay'- a non-GM and non-toxic spray for crop protection. Avocado research has been a strong focus for her team over the last 10 years, ranging from clonal propagation to genomics to disease resistance.

Good quality disease resistant rootstocks are integral to increased productivity. Speaking at the AVOCO conference, Neena will discuss innovative tissue culture based approaches to clonally propagate avocado trees in a timely and cost-effective manner, as well as novel disease resistance strategies.



Prof Carol Lovatt

PROF CAROL LOVATT

Until last year, Prof Lovatt was the Professor of Plant Physiology in the Department of Botany and Plant Sciences at the University of California, Riverside.

She retired in July after serving 35 years at the university. She spent a lot of that time conducting field research to find solutions to production problems on land to sustain California's various commodity-based industries, including avocado.

The goal of all Prof Lovatt's research was to determine the mechanisms regulating flowering, fruit set and fruit development of tree fruit and nut crops. Having secured this information, she led teams who worked to develop field strategies, including strategies for the proper timing of foliar-applied fertilizers and plant growth regulators to increase both production and grower income from the land.

Joining AVOCO at the conference, she will give two talks: "Alternate Bearing in 'Hass' Avocado" and, "Use of Foliar Fertilization to Increase Hass Avocado Yield and Fruit Size".



Dr David Pattemore

DR DAVID PATTEMORE

Dr David Pattemore leads Plant and Food Research's Pollination and Apiculture team, with a diverse portfolio of research projects covering apiculture, alternative

pollinators (bumble bees, native bees and flies), floral biology and the pollination of fruit, nut and vegetable seed crops. David is particularly interested in how the interaction between flowers and insect behaviour affects pollination and in the use of radio telemetry for studying insect behaviour.

He leads a government-funded programme to develop alternative strategies for crop pollination, as well as Plant & Food Research's internal programme on improving bee health and honey production. He has been at Plant & Food Research for the last five years since completing his PhD at Princeton University.

At the AVOCO conference, he'll present a summary of what's understood about pollination of Hass avocados in New Zealand so far.



Dr Marisa Till

DR MARISA TILL

Marisa completed her PhD at the University of Waikato before heading to Bristol in the UK to conduct postdoctoral research focussed on enzymes involved in antibiotic production and antibiotic resistance.

Marisa joined the AIC as the R&D manager in February 2016. Since then, she has been actively involved in the current research programme as well as getting new projects up and running.

Like everyone else, she is very excited for the future of the avocado industry in New Zealand and how growers and industry can work together to maximise the AIC's R&D objectives to increase both productivity and consistency.

She looks forward to joining AVOCO at their conference to share some of the current AIC research.

MARKETING SPEAKERS

RUSSELL DELROY

A grower from Western Australia, Russell will present a summary of production and marketing trends in Western Australia.

You'll also hear from AVOCO's directors and the AVOCO marketing team. They will reveal their export marketing plans for 2016-17 – a season that's shaping up to be a record breaker for the New Zealand avocado industry.

We encourage you to attend this information-packed event.

FLASHBACK

Growers and those closely involved in the avocado industry enjoyed the inaugural AVOCO conference in 2014.

