

# Fruit Quality

See section Nutrition on page 17.



In order to maintain our position as a premium product in the market, we need to continually improve the quality and post-arrival performance of exported avocados.

Defined areas of improvement:

- Shelf life (ability of the fruit to withstand extended transit times).
- Consistency of post-arrival performance.
- Reduction in green fruit disorders (lenticel damage, fuzzy patches, discrete patches, external rots).
- Reduction in ripe fruit disorders (diffuse flesh/grey pulp, stem-end rots, body rots).

To improve the quality of New Zealand avocados, it has been identified that AVOCO needs to work both individually and collaboratively across all areas of the supply chain to review and address the elements influencing fruit quality.



Figure 24: Avocado with fuzzy patches



Figure 25: Avocado with stem-end rot and diffuse flesh

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## TREE HEALTH

- Treat your trees annually with low pressure phosphonate injections to maintain root health.
- Maintain a layer of coarse mulch from the dripline to the trunk of your trees (5-10 cm deep).
- Ensure there is adequate drainage for water.
- If using irrigation, schedule according to monitored soil moisture status. Ensure adequate drying periods between irrigation events.
- Control the six-spotted mite population on your orchard to maintain canopy health.
- Take annual leaf samples to assess any deficiencies and fertilise according to nutrient levels and crop load.

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## CANOPY MANAGEMENT

- Remove deadwood and mummified fruit from the canopy.
- Prune the canopy annually to a density score of less than 60. A density score of 100 is where you cannot see through the canopy – a density score of 60 is where the canopy covers approximately 60% of your view of a tree.

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## FUNGICIDE

- Apply a programme of 8 or more copper sprays on each crop.

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## NUTRITION

- Ensure calcium is available to your trees during the early fruit growth period.
- Know and keep a record of how many units of each macronutrient (N,P,K) you are applying to your orchard each season.
- Units of nutrients applied must be done in relation to the estimated crop load as well as the leaf and soil analyses results.
- Do not apply greater than 160 units of N/ha/year.

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## HARVEST

- Follow the AVOCO Harvest Guidelines, including;
  - Do not irrigate in the 48 hours prior to picking.
  - Do not harvest fruit in the rain or after more than 5 mm in the past 24 hours.
  - If there has been more than 50 mm of rainfall in the past 48 hours, determine whether the fruit and orchard floor is dry and conduct a roll test prior to harvesting the orchard.
  - Sterilise clippers at least at every break, and bags/bins daily.
  - Do not pick with dropped bags on elevated working platforms.
  - Ensure bins are in the deepest shade possible.
  - Minimise fruit jostling and drops at all points of harvest and during transport.