



HAB Publishes User-Friendly Quality Manual Online

The Hass Avocado Board (HAB) is dedicated to expanding demand for avocados in the United States and making it America's most popular fruit. In support of this mission, HAB provides the global avocado industry with supply and market data, conducts nutrition research, educates health professionals and collaborates with industry stakeholders to drive consumption of avocados in the U.S.

To maximize returns for stakeholders and ensure avocados supplied to the consumer are of acceptable quality, HAB produced the *Avocado Quality Manual: A Guide to Best Practices*. The manual is designed around each step in the supply chain, with recommended handling protocols for each step in the process as well as holistic quality management system principles that take into account prior and successive steps and allow operators to flag deficiencies within the supply chain. Importantly, the manual provides supply chain operators with handling protocols specific to the fruit's origin, maturity level, destination and intended sales format.

To make it easier for industry stakeholders to access this critical information, HAB has published a new *Avocado Quality Manual* webpage (HassAvocadoBoard.com/avocado-quality-manual/) with a layout based on the supply chain process. The webpage features a downloadable PDF version of the complete 61-page manual, as well as PDF versions of individual sections of the manual, each dedicated to best practices for a specific distribution chain step. In this manner, stakeholders can easily access and/or print specific portions of the manual without having to page through the entire document.

Highlights from the individual sections of the manual are as follows:

- **Packing Houses — California:** Provides best practices for harvesting the fruit based on the varied climactic conditions across the state, recommended picking

practices, ideal bin structures, determining the maturity of fruit, assessing dry matter to determine optimal packing and delivery logistics, pack line protocol, the importance of proper fruit cooling, storage, ventilation, cleaning and loading of transport trucks and quality management administration

- **Packing Houses — Outside California:** Examines the physiological differences of fruit from Mexico, Chile and Peru, and how the shipping times and conditions of the fruit from each country affect packing house procedures
- **Transport:** Focuses on transportation of the fruit within the U.S., with particular emphasis on the importance of maintaining the correct temperature within the truck's storage area, limiting transport of avocados with other product except for short distances, and avoiding the transport of avocados with ethylene-producing produce
- **Distribution Centers:** Provides guidance concerning off loading fruit, checking fruit temperature, cold storage room protocols, sanitation and record keeping
- **Re-packers and Fruit Ripeners:** Details the five stages of avocado ripeness and provides specific best practices for ripened fruit and unripened re-packed fruit
- **Retail Sales (Green and Ripened Fruit):** Covers recommended ordering and inventory control practices, storage of fruit, displays, and staff and consumer education on proper handling of the fruit throughout the retail process
- **Common Fruit Defects —** Details how to properly check fruit softness, visually evaluate fruit and provides a detailed listing of external and internal defects complete with photos

HAB's *Avocado Quality Manual* is designed to supplement packing house operations and food safety protocols, highlighting supply chain issues of particular importance to maintain the quality of avocados from field to fork in an easy-to-understand manner. With the launch of this new webpage, HAB hopes more industry stakeholders will gain access to critical information that will ensure our fruit maintains the highest quality at all points across the supply chain. 🥑