The U.S. & Mexico Avocado Trade

Background Information

Since the beginning of the 1990s there has been an ongoing debate surrounding the U.S. and Mexico avocado trade. When explorers first started conducting research on the fruit in Mexico and Central America they had discovered that some fruit being exported to the United States may have been infested with species of seed weevils that have been unknown to arise in the United States. This caused the USDA (the United States Department of Agriculture) to quarantine avocados exported from Mexico to prevent the spread of pesticides. This quarantine went into effect on February 27, 1914. It not only guaranteed the prevention of the spread of pesticides but at the same time it made way for the California avocado industry to cultivate and expand without the threat of outside competition. This dispute has continued well into the twenty-first century.

Things Every Consumer Should Know...

1. Mexico is the largest producer of avocados, supplying over one-third of the world’s total production and over 40% of the world’s exports.
2. The United States has two concerns with the importation of Mexican avocados: the first is pesticides, the second concern is the competition of low labor costs in Mexico and its impact on the California Market.
3. Between 1975 and 1977 the USDA conducted field surveys to search for pesticides in Sinaloa, Mexico. No Pests were found.
4. The United States was going to reopen avocado importation but the California Avocado Commission (CAC) lobbied against the approval. The ban was not lifted.
5. In July of 1994 the U.S. began allowing Mexico to import avocados to the U.S. under strict provisions. They could only come from Michoacán, Mexico and could only be shipped between November and February into the northeastern part of the U.S.
6. In 1996 the CAC revealed data to the USDA claiming that pest infestation in Mexico was getting worse. The USDA delayed the removal of Mexican imported avocados into the U.S. for a minimum of one year.
7. On February 5, 1997 the USDA released a final rule allowing Mexico to import avocados into nineteen states only.

Five Things you can do...

1. Visit and Support Mexicado International at www.mexicado.com
2. Support the Mexican Avocado Import Program.
4. Visit and Support Avocados From Mexico at www.avocadosfrommexico.com/wherecanibuy.html
5. Educate others on the U.S. & Mexico Avocado Trade.

How you can learn more...

2. Visit www.nafatmex.org/Feb07.pdf
3. Read “Rent Seeking In U.S.-Mexico Avocado Trade” By Russell L. Lamb
4. Read “The Avocado War” By Damon Darlin

Information Sources:


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