

Agriculture and Husbandry

Avocado, Calavo

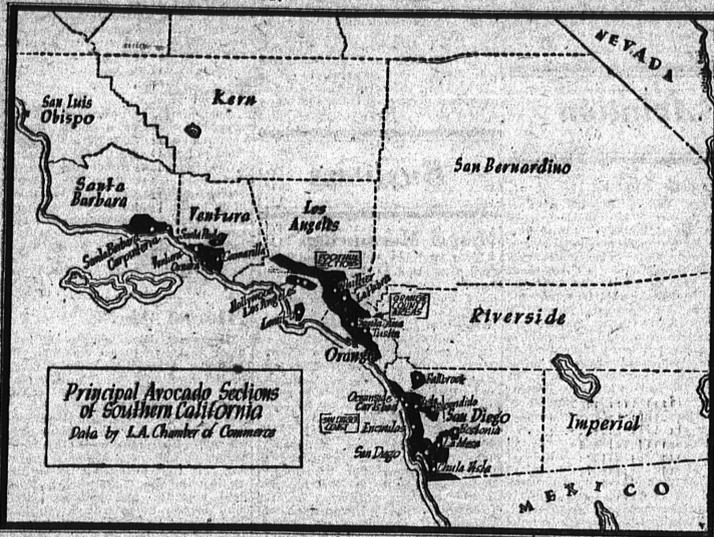
Among all the fruit industries of California, the newest is avocado growing. And though it is still a youth in the ranks of agricultural industries the avocado is making one of the most rapid developments of any subtropical orchard fruit grown in the State. Avocado raising has developed so quickly that statisticians have been at loss to determine exactly the total acreage of trees planted. It is estimated, however, that there are probably between 5000 and 6000 acres growing in Southern California, most of which are in Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange counties. (See Map.)

A brief survey of avocado development: In 1924, a total of 147,915 pounds was handled by the Calavo Growers of California, a cooperative marketing and shipping association. In 1924-25 the fruit handled was 193,800; in 1925-26, 151,630; in 1926-27, 955,575 pounds; in 1927-28, 486,930 pounds. For 1928-29 the estimated crop for the year is 1,687,500 pounds.

The considerable increase in the unit of fruit shipped during 1928-29 over the year 1926-27 and the estimated crop for this year, can be attributed to weather conditions, think experts.

Like the tomato which was once called "Love Fruit," the avocado, often termed "alligator pear," has experienced rapid growth into its food qualities became known to variety-seeking housewives. The avocado is a new fruit, but only horticulturally and commercially speaking. Historically it is as ancient as the Aztecs who attributed to it marvelous life-sustaining powers, who left a pictorial record of it in their writings. But to the civilized world it was unknown until 1526 when one Hernandez, Oviedo of Spain, while in Panama, saw it used as a staple food, tasted it himself, wrote enthusiastically to his sovereign, Charles V. and praised it highly. From this insignificant beginning the avocado travelled eastward and westward, so far reaches of the Atlantic and the Pacific, to India. And in 1871, to Southern California it came, to take permanent residence.

When one R. B. Ord brought his three avocado trees to Santa Barbara Island, Mexico, he planted them as a curiosity, and he planted them in a warm, frostless place. And from 1871 until 1930 the avocado continued to be just a curiosity. But one day, by chance, after the avocado had been scattered thinly over many districts of the coastal region of



Southern California, the United States Department of Agriculture became interested in the curious, oily fruit. Result: They found avocados had immense commercial possibilities, but that the species then being grown was not well enough suited to local soil, could not well enough resist frost. Thus they began extensive investigations in Mexico and Guatemala. Soon private individuals became interested, and in 1915 avocado-minded folk united, formed the California Avocado Association, went to work to establish avocado culture on a substantial basis, to form a market for the fruit, in all to make it a commercial success.

The agricultural world, after the association had been formed, knew avocado growing was ceasing to be just a venture, for thousands of acres of adaptable territory were being planted with rapidly, the new fruit was being widely advertised, many a market was exploited. But with all the enthusiasm, growers picked their land carefully, more carefully than orange and lemon growers, for the avocado—over the most resistant variety—is extremely sensitive to frost. Not all locations are suitable, even among those recommended, according to experts. Growers found by experiment that land selected not only frost, wind and humidity consideration but depth and character of the soil, availability of water, other necessities.

Most commonly planted in California, and recommended most highly for commercial production is an intermediate form of Mexican and Guatemala avocado varieties called the Fuerte. This type of avocado contains 30 per cent of oil, is high in vitamin content, a good grower, producer, shipper and is of excellent flavor and quality.

Established as a profitable industry, avocado raisers were presented with serious marketing difficulties. While the avocado association was placing a superior brand of fruit on the market, other states, countries (Florida, Cuba) were dumping poor quality stuff on the markets, and the consumer could not tell which he was buying. Therefore, the California Avocado Association began to brand its fruit as distinctive from all others with the name Calavo—a combination of the first three letters of the words "California" and "Avocado." The Calavo now stands for the choicest avocado fruit produced in California and differentiates California avocados from all others.

Known from then on as the Calavo Growers of California, this co-operative organization began a national advertising campaign, told the story of the avocado in magazines and newspapers all over the country. New markets opened and perfected distribution methods supplied a growing demand in carload lots. Last year (1928-29) a tremendous crop of six times greater than the previous year called upon the Calavo Growers to market approximately two million pounds of avocados.

Expensive Bugs

Orange County farmers last year permitted plant pests no opportunity to ravage crops; to destroy ripening nuts, fruits. They spent more than a million dollars for fumigation, spraying, tree doctoring, insectary operation, similar enterprises.

Horticultural Commissioner A. A. Brock's report, filed last week with the Board of Supervisors, revealed the total cost of pest control to have been \$1,431,512.28; including expenses of the commissioner's office, of Anaheim's insectary.

Year's activity: Approximately 618,617 pounds of gas were used to fumigate 2,051,543 trees. A total of 1,947,552 citrus trees, 1,613 deciduous trees, 31,740 walnut trees were sprayed. Dusted were 280,367 citrus trees, 53,227 walnut trees.

Accomplishments of the Anaheim insectary: 23,682,440 cryptolemus ladybirds were propagated, liberated in more than 5,000 groves to eliminate the mealybug. More than 14,000,000 other parasites were produced, also liberated for pest control.

Cow Money

Once upon a time when a cow contracted tuberculosis she was a total loss to her owner because the State immediately condemned and killed her. Therefore, joyful ejaculations were uttered by many a dairyman a few months ago when the State made effective the bovine tuberculosis indemnification law which said that owners of condemned cows would be reimbursed by the government. (News Review, Sept. 16-22.)

Not so joyful, however, were the remarks of Attorney General U. S. Webb when he advised the government against disbursement of any money under the law until its legality could be tested. Not to be beaten, dairymen prepared to test the constitutionality of the new statute.

A tubercular cow was condemned, appraised as to value, slaughtered. Then a claim was presented to State Controller Ray L. Riley by A. R. Patrick, the cow's owner.

Last week, as expected, Riley refused payment on the claim, which amounted to \$42.50, thereby challenging the legality of the bovine law, at the same time raising the pertinent question as to whether California would have to spend from \$12,000,000 to \$20,000,000 in appropriations for disbursing owners of tubercular cows.

Said Riley: "At the time of the committee hearing on the measure, Attorney General Webb advised the Legislative Committee he would instruct this office to refuse any claim presented in accordance with the new law and the proposed appropriation. As the legislation apparently commits the State to an expenditure of from \$12,000,000 to \$20,000,000, there should be a determination of the constitutionality of the Bovine Tuberculosis Appropriation, particularly as it would seem to violate the gift section of the constitution. I therefore refuse to draw a warrant in payment of this claim."

In all probability, dairymen will now file suit in order to complete the test for constitutionality.

Crop Indices

From the State Crop Reporting Service, Southern California farmers last week received pertinent information regarding crop conditions, production, learned that weather conditions throughout the State had been mostly favorable for vegetables during the past fortnight. They learned that:

Fall lettuce in Imperial Valley suffered somewhat due to continued warm weather. Late planting in the San Fernando district of Southern California, and San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys in the north have increased the State's total for

lettuce which will show up mainly in December production. Lettuce in most districts is reported in excellent condition, shows prospect of a fair yield. In the southern counties, Los Angeles has a total

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