

Aloha and Happy New Year Hawaii Avocado Association Members from the Board!

We have two letters concerning industry issues affecting not only avocado growers but also all members of the agricultural community: **crop theft** and **little fire ant**. Thanks for these submissions HAA President John App and Michael Kiyoshi Adachi, Hawaii Ant Lab Kona. Reporting Ag theft, even small amounts, is important to get proper attention and resources from the police and the prosecutor's office. Little Fire Ant is spreading in the Kona area, so reporting and treatment are crucial for effective control. Talk to your neighbors and try to emphasize just how devastating this ant can be to all of us, pets included!

Two other issues on the minds of growers this season are:

1. The spread of scab, *Sphaceloma perseae*
2. A new insect pest, Avocado Lace Bug, *Pseudacysta perseae*, currently found on Oahu.

Treatment for scab is spraying copper fungicides, which are reasonably effective when applied at the right time. However, copper can build up in soils and cause problems with micro biota. Some products leave a blue residue on fruit. Who wants a blue avocado? Dr. Lisa Keith, USDA Ag. Research Service in Hilo and our local agent Andrea Kawabata, UH Extension, are doing trials on a "new product" *Thymeguard* and so maybe some good news there soon. This product is certified organic.

Avocado Lace Bug reduces overall vigor of the tree causing premature leaf drop. If you find any insect you're not sure about take a sample to the Extension office and have it identified. Take a look at the attached brochures, and you can view this information on line.

If you aren't familiar with Andrea Kawabata's web site, andreak@hawaii.edu, give it a look. It's useful, timely and friendly.

The effort to add some new varieties to the export list continues. This could greatly extend the shipping season. Malama is looking good in this regard.

Finally, a reminder for those exporting to the mainland: please give a heads up to the Ag inspectors before harvesting at Kailua.kona.ppq@usda.gov and continue monitoring fruit fly traps through the completion of harvest.

Wishing you all success in the New Year,

Douglas Bong, Board Member

lizonly2@hotmail.com

P.S. The HAA Membership Form is attached. We look forward to receiving your 2020 renewal.

And we are always looking for new members, strength in numbers.

January 20, 2020

Avocado Theft

Last season, our farm sustained 8 incidences (that we know of) of Avocado theft. Our fences were cut and over 1000 pounds of Avocados were stolen. We called the police for 6 of the thefts and police reports were made. My workers took one photo of a suspect and we submitted it to the County Prosecuting Attorney. They identified the thief as a known felon, but since he was not caught in the act with stolen avocados, they could not charge him.

We sustained the loss of the Avocados, cut fences, and many tree branches broken when the thieves pulled them down to grab fruit. It is impossible for us to install trail cameras as our property is on a road with hundreds of cars daily passing daily, multiple locations to cut the fences and enter, and, of course, pigs and turkeys causing cameras to record non-theft incidences.

But as difficult as it is, it is important, if you sustain a theft, to call the police and document the incidence. The more the authorities are alerted to agricultural theft, the more they will have to provide services to attempt to stop theft.

One such service comes from the County Prosecutor's office, which has one inspector who visits stores, farmer's markets, and road-side fruit stands to determine if the fruit they sell has the proper origination paperwork. Each of us farmers should provide our buyers with the Hawaii County Form DL-22 which documents the origin of agricultural products. The link to this online is www.HawaiiCounty.gov, then type in DL-22 in the search box, scroll down to Agricultural Development, then scroll down to Information for Producers, and select DL-22 Certificate of Ownership/Movement of Agricultural Commodities. You can print that form and complete it for each of your buyers.

It is important that each of us protects our buyers as the Prosecutor's office has the authority to confiscate agricultural products that do not have evidence of an originating farmer. It protects each of us in the long run, even though it is more paperwork for you and me. Hopefully, this will cause legitimate buyers to think twice before buying undocumented fruit and slow down theft.

Several months ago, Safeway was selling common Avocados erroneously labeled as Sharwils. Safeway did nothing until an article in the West Hawaii Today newspaper showed photos of the mislabeled avocados. Mislabeled fruit confuses consumers and devalues the efforts of farmers who work hard to cultivate specific varieties of fruit that have higher market values than other kinds.

If you know of places that accept stolen fruit, you may wish to contact the County Prosecutor's Inspector, Shane Muramaru at 808-961-0466 and ask him to investigate.

Let's all work together to protect our valuable agricultural assets.

John App

President

Hawaii Avocado Association

Aloha Avo Growers!

My name is Michael Kiyoshi Adachi and I am the new Little Fire Ant Extension Agent here in west Hawaii. A key focus of my position is to promote education and awareness of the threat we face in the form of **Little Fire Ants (LFA)**. LFA are widespread through the east side of Hawaii Island, and their numbers are on the increase here on the west side.

Here are just a few of the many harmful effects of LFA infestation:

- These ants pack a painful sting that can leave long lasting irritable welts.
- Their stings have also been known to cause blindness in pets.
- Harvest time can be most unpleasant from constantly being stung during the process.
- Their own "farming" of Homopteran insects (aphids, scale, mealy bug, etc.) can lead to major crop damage. LFA will protect and spread these insects, as they harvest the honeydew secretions the Homoptera produce.

LFA are NOT mound builders. They will nest in just about anything that can provide cover. It could be on the ground, in building and farming materials, rock walls or shrubs, or even up in trees! This leads to easy and frequent transport of LFA by humans.

It is strongly recommended that we start to survey our properties at least twice a year.

Survey steps are simple:

1. Place a THIN smear of peanut butter on chopsticks or popsicle sticks and place the sticks in areas of concern.
2. Collect your sticks after about 30-45 minutes. Place in a sealable bag and freeze the samples overnight.
3. Submit your samples.

Submit your samples by dropping them off or mailing to this address:

Kiyoshi Adachi

Hawaii Ant Lab Kona

c/o CTAHR Extension Office

79-7381 Mamalahoa Hwy

Kealahou, HI 96750

An ounce of prevention can be worth pounds of cure in this situation.

Feel free to keep in touch with any questions or concerns.

Mahalo,

Michael Kiyoshi Adachi

Extension Agent

University of Hawaii

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