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*Special Communication from the Mexican Avocado Export Association  
July 23, 2008*



APEAM would like to keep you updated on the recent limited voluntary avocado recall. We hope that by providing you with vital information we can help you in educating your customers on the following:

- The industry's commitment to food safety
- The excellent traceability system that was able to trace back the location of the specific grove in just one hour
- The details that narrow the scope of this issue and details about our continued efforts to find out the true facts about the recall.

Here's the latest:

Yesterday's big news in the media focused on a national recall for jalapeño peppers. David Acheson, FDA's associate commissioner for foods, said that a jalapeño pepper in Agricola Zaragosa, a McAllen, Texas based produce company, tested positive for Salmonella Saint Paul. Acheson said other product samples and environmental samples taken from the Texas facility had tested negative.

Meanwhile, Steve Solomon, deputy director of FDA's office of regional operations, said jalapeños, serrano peppers and avocados recalled July 17, by Hidalgo, Texas-based Grande Produce because of salmonella contamination, were not part of the Saint Paul outbreak. Solomon said those products had tested positive for a different strain of salmonella. In our investigation, we have found that the testing on avocados from the recalled HUE number was only conducted in North Carolina. Mexican avocados in the Grande Produce facility did not test positive for salmonella.

APEAM is aware that many importers are being questioned by customers regarding the recent recall. Below are answers to some of the frequently asked questions.

**Q: How much fruit was harvested, packed and shipped from that orchard in the last 30 days?**

A: 222 metric tons or 489,346 pounds from June 24th to June 30th time in which the orchard finished picking. We'd like to stress that the production of this orchard represents just .001 percent of all of the fruit sent to the U.S. market during the 2007-08 season.

**Q: Who packed the fruit and is that packer still exporting fruit?**

A: The fruit involved in the recall was packed by Frutas Finas de Tancítaro. This packer is still packing and exporting fruit.

**Q: Is the grower still picking?**

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A: No, the grower is done picking all the fruit from that orchard.

**Q: Is the orchard Food Safety Certified?**

A: Yes, it implements Good Agricultural Practices. It is also certified by SENASICA (Mexico's National Service for Food Safety, Plant Health and Quality).

**Q: Is the packer still packing?**

A: Yes. The voluntary recall was just contained to one lot of avocados (HUE 08160090889) from Frutas Finas Tancitaro located in a Grande Produce warehouse in southern Texas.

**Q: What is APEAM currently investigating in Mexico?**

A: APEAM is working with the federal government and SENASICA is currently involved in investigating the orchard as well as the packing house.

In addition, please note the following:

- APEAM is collaborating with HAB and MHAIA in making sure that there is one voice during this critical time for the industry. We have been collaborating behind the scenes for the benefit of the industry and will announce results of our investigations as they become available.
- APEAM has spoken with Texas health officials who have reinforced that the scope of the issue in Texas is limited to the HUE codes recalled in North Carolina.
- Both APEAM and HAB are monitoring the trade and consumer media. Our analysis indicates that the news on the Texas and North Carolina pepper and avocado recall has been primarily isolated to media outlets in North Carolina and Texas.
- We have been paying close attention to the recent announcement by the FDA regarding the success in finding the jalapeños connected with the salmonella Saintpaul outbreak and will adapt our strategies as needed.

While we know that there have been many challenges for all of us during this crisis, a positive outcome is the fact that APEAM was able to validate our sophisticated traceability system and within hours was able to pinpoint the distributor in North Carolina, the distributor and importer in Texas, the packing house in Mexico and the orchard from where the fruit reported in North Carolina came from. The industry exhibited this expertise without a doubt, especially when comparing our system to the recent references made in the media regarding the "black box of peppers with salmonella and no label" and the lack of traceability success in the recent tomato recall.

We'd like to thank you for your understanding and support. We will continue to update you as new information surfaces.

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Contact:

Francisco Luna Cendejas  
APEAM Managing Director  
011 52 452 503 3000 ext. 118  
[direccion@apeamac.com](mailto:direccion@apeamac.com)

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