

US AVOCADO GROWERS AND CONSUMERS HAVE BEEN ROPE-A-DOPED



Background of the California Avocado Industry

In the early 1990's, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) decided to make substantial investments in avocado nutritional research, which essentially revealed the avocado to be a *super food* high in vitamins and antioxidants. Strict import restrictions were in place, prohibiting foreign avocados from entering the U.S. market, due to the significant risk of introducing serious exotic pests from abroad. At that time, California farms provided 100% of the avocado supply nationwide.

Shifting Production and Its Consequences

During this same period, globalists came into power. A transition of manufacturing and food production was promoted from within the United States to foreign countries. This was largely driven by global decision-makers seeking lower labor costs, reduced environmental oversight, and fewer safety regulations. These shifts prioritized immediate economic gains but overlooked the long-term implications for national sovereignty and food security. As a result, critical resources came under the control of foreign-owned companies and governments, raising concerns about the essential supply chains for the United States.

Lifting Import Restrictions-Exotic Pest Risks and USDA Inspections

Around the mid-1990s, pressure was placed on the United States to lift the ban on foreign avocados, particularly from Mexico. The introduction of foreign avocados into the US was predicated on the argument that the danger posed by exotic pests was overstated, and that USDA phytosanitary inspections would be capable of keeping such threats in check. In response to pest risks, the USDA maintained that phytosanitary inspections would be robust enough to protect domestic avocado crops. This assurance was critical in shaping the legislative foundation concerning the safety of avocado imports.

Creation and Promises of the Hass Avocado Board

To further address domestic industry concerns, the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) was established. The Board was presented as a safeguard, its primary mandate being to oversee and preserve the interest of US domestic avocado industry and its growers. The

creation of this Board was an integral element of the strategy for a balanced avocado import and export trade policy.

Examining Trade Policy Fallacies

Fallacy #1: Reliability of USDA Inspections for Exotic Pest Prevention

Prior to allowing foreign avocado imports, California avocado farms had not encountered exotic pests such as the Persea mite or avocado thrip which are indigenous to Mexico. The introduction of these pests onto US farms demonstrates the difficulties in reliably detecting or eliminating microscopic exotic threats. Infestations by these organisms can severely impact crop production, quality, and often necessitate costly control measures. The belief that the present process of USDA inspections can effectively protect domestic avocado farms from the threat of exotic pest infestations has been disproven.

Fallacy #2: Exotic Pest Risks in Foreign Countries

Can claims that the threat from exotic pests originating in foreign countries is minimal or exaggerated be supported by evidence? No. A common procedure for USDA inspections involves randomly cutting open avocados from vast shipments. However, given the sheer volume—now hundreds of millions of pounds annually—it is highly impractical to use this technique without validation of the sampling process from grove to border truckload. This approach highlights that protection from current inspection protocol is unrealistic.

Figure 1



Infested fruit in Mexico packing facilities. From January 1, 2024 to October 16, 2024, USDA reported 0 pest finds in Mexico packing facilities. From October 17, 2024 to March 11, 2025, USDA reported 155 pest finds in Mexico packing facilities. USDA identified 141 as *Macrobrachyus aguacatae* (avocado stem weevil); 3 *Conotrachelus perseae* (avocado seed weevil); 1 Tortricidae (leafroller moth); 1 Blastobasidae (moth); 9 *Eupelmus* (wasp)

Fallacy #3: HAB's Function in Safeguarding Domestic Interests

The original legislative intent for HAB was to serve as a domestic safeguard for US avocado producers by managing a fair and balanced approach between imports and exports. Reality has diverged significantly from these original assurances. Mexican avocado imports into the U.S. have surpassed **2 billion pounds annually**. Despite this influx, USDA statistics reveal that U.S. avocado exports to Mexico remain at zero (-0-). This stark imbalance calls into question the HAB's effectiveness as a protective mechanism for domestic growers.

[Fallacy #4: No Environmental Consequences due to U.S. Avocado Trade Policy](#)

CAC data confirms California's avocado-producing acreage has diminished by approximately 40,000 acres, representing a drop of nearly 50%, since the introduction of foreign avocado imports into the US market. The Mexican industry's growth in capacity has been at enormous environmental cost: the 2023 CRI reports documents that around 70,000 acres of ancestral forests in Mexico have been lost due to planting illegal avocado farms, which contravenes official Mexican government policy, USMCA agreements on sustainable agriculture practices, and human rights violation. These illegal actions occurred despite supposed oversight by USDA inspectors.

[Fallacy #5: Mexican Organized Crime Cartels are not involved.](#)

Substantial evidence from former Mexican governmental officials along with several investigative reports and eyewitness accounts that Mexican Cartels deeply embedded in the Mexican avocado industry using it to launder profits from narcotics trafficked into the US. This further undermines the integrity and security of the US avocado supply chain. (See our more in-depth discussion of this blended criminal-economy ecosystem on our website <https://americanavocados.org>).

[Impact of Trade Policy on the U.S. Avocado Industry](#)

All these converging factors—*reduction in domestic production and food security, pest risks, environmental degradation, trade imbalances, and cartel influence*—have fundamentally altered the landscape of the U.S. avocado trade policy. It is imperative for U.S. policy changes to prevent further losses of the 2,000+ US avocado farms.

[Policy Recommendations](#)

Given the significant issues identified—from domestic production decline to environmental harm, trade imbalances, and the influence of organized crime—it is essential that decisive action be taken. The US will need to initiate new Congressional agricultural hearings with consideration given to reinstating the previous U.S. embargo on foreign avocado imports until this trade issues are effectively resolved.

More detailed recommendations concerning are available for review on our website <https://americanavocados.org> and will be subjects in subsequent newsletters.

Keep in touch!