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US avo sales hold steady for 5 de Mayo



Consumer demand for Mexican Hass holds up well for the celebration but foodservice sales take a hit

Coronavirus failed to put a damper on this year's Cinco de Mayo festival in the US, where guacamole, tequila and other Mexican foods and drinks are an integral part of the celebrations.

Around 50,000 tonnes of Mexican avocados were sent to the US this year ahead of the festivities, according to the Association of Producers and Exporter Packers of Avocado of Mexico (APEAM).

President Gabriel Villaseñor said sales began 15 days earlier, and "despite the Covid-19 pandemic, they were similar to previous years, they neither fell nor grew".

Cinco de Mayo is the second

most important date for Mexican avocado sales in the US, after the Super Bowl.

The festival celebrates Mexico's victory against the French in the Battle of Puebla on 5 May, 1862.

Mexico's avocado industry has moved swiftly to implement safety measures to protect its workforce against the virus.

"We established sanitation protocols, including the use of chlorinated water mats, face masks and a series of recommendations made by the World Health Organization (WHO) to take care of our people, who are part of the essential activities of the country," Villaseñor said.

He noted that US sales had started to fall off during the last weeks of March due to closing of restaurants and fast food outlets.

"When the restaurants closed, they stopped asking for a product that we call class 2, which is avocado with good quality but with some cosmetic problem," he said.

APEAM estimates that avocado exports will reach 950,000 tonnes in 2020, an increase of 5 per cent on the previous season.