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By Tom Joyce

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Eosta backs Kenyan avocados

The Dutch organics specialist highlights the benefits to Kenyan smallholders and local communities of sourcing organic avocados from Kenya



Organic avocados on European shelves were once sourced virtually exclusively from South America. However, leading Dutch distributor Eosta has helped to effect a shift toward Africa, importing large volumes of organic Hass from 20,000 smallholders in Kenya.

According to Neville Mchina, Eosta's product manager for avocados, climatic differences between Latin America and Africa mean that the latter's avocados tend to be rounder.

"While Mexican avocados are shaped like Conference pears, the Afocado is more like an Anjou pear," he said. "But they are equally nutty, creamy, and delicious."

Eosta's avocados are grown near the capital, Nairobi, an area typically blessed with abundant rainfall, but currently suffering from East Africa's drought conditions.

According to Mchina, however, avocado trees are quite drought-resistant. In

addition, the lack of water may produce smaller fruit sizes, but it also makes them nuttier and creamier.

He also revealed how the growth of exports had improved the lives of small-scale farmers in Kenya.

"Many of the growers used to grow food for themselves and for the local market," he said. "Now that they can sell some of their produce at a premium price, their income has increased tenfold. What's even better is that they do it organically, sustainably, and some even in an agroforestry setting. You can really see the difference when you visit them. They are building better housing for themselves, setting up schools, and improving roads. They have taken charge of their new situation, and that is a great achievement."

Eosta's Nature & More '1 Cent For The Future' campaign has also helped to improve access to medical care in the community.

"[The campaign] pays for trained nurses to visit the ill in remote areas who lack access to clinics," said Mchina. "For every kilogram of avocados sold, 1 cent goes to the project. In the course of a year, this amounts to a nice sum – and a lot of sick people receiving help. As a consumer you can really choose the type of world you want to live in by choosing where you spend your money."

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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