

*Update: Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Mexico (APEAM) advisor Ramon Paz has given us his view on the issue, as well as the proposed import tax on Mexican goods. [Click here to read more.](#)*

An agricultural head from the Mexican state of Jalisco has reportedly blamed the recent blockage of an avocado shipment entering the U.S. on delays in allowing potato imports from north of the border.



**[Around 120 metric tons \(MT\) of avocados from Jalisco were blocked from entering the United States](#)**, and the Jalisco Avocado Growers and Exporters Association (Apeajal) opted to re-direct the fruit to Canada.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) gave the green light to avocado imports from all Mexican regions in May last year.

The Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Mexico (APEAM) earlier told *Fresh Fruit Portal* that fruit should have crossed the border on Jan. 18, following the signing of a new Work Plan agreed upon between the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food SAGARPA and the USDA.

"This new Work Plan already includes Jalisco. However, at the last-minute a contingency came up that prevented the USDA and SAGARPA from signing this document, and therefore the trucks from Jalisco couldn't cross," the statement said.

But Minister of Rural Development for the Mexican state of Jalisco (SEDER), Héctor Padilla, reportedly alleged U.S. authorities had not allowed the fruit to pass as a retaliatory measure.

"SAGARPA would not ensure the entry of potatoes from the United States into Mexico, and as a consequence, the North Americans said: Well then the avocados can't enter

either," Padilla told *El Economista*.

He reportedly said Mexican potato growers were responsible for the delay, but expected Mexican President Peña Nieto to step in and allow access to U.S. potato imports.

He predicted it would only be a matter of days before both sides returned to the negotiating table and the avocados were allowed through.

In a statement given to *Fresh Fruit Portal*, U.S. National Potato Council CEO John Keeling said while the sector was interested in regaining Mexican potato market access, he could not comment on the specifics of the Jalisco avocado situation.

"We are very interested in reopening the market in Mexico to U.S. potatoes," Keeling said.

"More than a year ago the market opened but was quickly closed based on lawsuits initiated by potato interests in Mexico.

"Those lawsuits are currently being litigated in Mexico and the preliminary results of those suits has been favorable to ultimately restoring market access for US potatoes."

He said the U.S. potato industry had taken a scientific and phytosanitary mitigation-based approach to gaining access for potatoes to Mexico, with the measures necessary to safeguard Mexican agriculture.

"The measures agreed to by APHIS and SAGARPA provided that assurance," he said.

"We have only been involved in the discussions about potatoes so I have no information to allow me to comment on avocado trade between the US and Mexico.

"But I do know that APHIS has always insisted on each commodity being considered individually and based on the particular phytosanitary characteristics of that commodity."

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