

Mexico's second-largest production state will this year play host to the V Latin American Avocado Congress, an event that takes place every four years.



It will be held over Sept. 4-7 in Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco, addressing topics including new technology and varieties, crop management, phytosanitary issues, fertilization, irrigation and post harvest.

It will also look at the booming avocado industries in countries such as Peru and Colombia.

"For us it is an honor to be able to celebrate this great event in Jalisco. This is the first time it will be held in our state," Jalisco Avocado Producers and Exporters' Association president Ignacio Gómez said.

He noted it was the second time being held in the country, with the state of Michoacan having played host in 2001.

"We are very pleased and pleasantly surprised by the great response that we have had from Central and South American countries," he said.

"So far we have more than 250 people registered, mainly from Peru, Costa Rica, Chile, the Dominican Republic, California, South Africa and Spain."

While Michoacan is the leading production state with around 140,000 hectares, Jalisco takes second place with 23,000 hectares, but the latter has a higher per-hectare output.

"The production conditions on Jalisco involve more incorporated technology, higher density plantings and higher productivity. I think these points have positioned Jalisco at that forefront," Gómez said.

"We have about twice the productivity compared to Michoacan, so in terms of volume, I estimate that in the medium term we will be achieving similar figures."

He added the number of packhouses in the state had grown from two in 2000 to 16 today.

"The growth in Jalisco has been mainly due to the reconversion of crops, where avocado are now grown in areas previously used for maize, sugar cane and even livestock," he said.

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