

As Mexican avocado exporters break a record in the second week of the crucial run-up to the U.S. Super Bowl, an industry body has sought to allay fears that fuel availability issues could impact shipments.

There were widely circulated reports last week that a fuel shortage in some Mexican states, including Michoacan - the only state allowed to export avocados to the U.S. - could result in lower volumes shipped north of the border during most important sales period of the year for Mexican growers.

A total of 120,000 metric tons (MT) are forecast to be shipped to the U.S. in the lead-up to the Super Bowl on Feb. 3. The period typically represents 10-12% of Mexico's annual avocado sales.

In a Wednesday statement, the Association of Producers, Exporters and Packers of Avocados from Mexico (APEAM) said while there have been some impacts on industry operations, export activities should be unaffected.

"So far, amid the fuel shortage, the only impacts have been on local operations", including the transportation of farmworkers and USDA officials, it said.

"This situation continues to worry growers and packers due to the possibility of a general shortage of fuel that could affect the 35 avocado-producing municipalities of Michoacan.

However, it added: "We are confident that exports of avocado will continue to flow the same as last week."

Last week saw record harvests and exports of 38,296MT and 32,609MT, respectively. Around 1,300 trucks are expected to depart Michoacan carrying avocados on a weekly basis, equivalent to one leaving every six minutes, APEAM said.

This week around 216 trucks are expected to leave for the U.S. every day.