

Sound Solutions

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
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Advisor(s): Angela J. Shelley

Topic: The Cost of Food Trends: Do Healthy Diets Sustain a Healthy Planet?

Audience: Hass Avocados Board – Board of Directors

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #12: Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns.

SDG #15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Executive Summary

Over the past 10 years, social media has evolved from being a “sharing” platform into an “influencing” platform. Food trends are part of that influence and most recently, we have seen a higher interest in keto, vegan, and other lifestyle diets. Avocados are a staple across healthy meal trends, with millions of people posting with #Avocado across social media apps. What used to be a product consumed by a small segment of Americans has grown into a \$9B industry. Hass Avocado Board’s (HAB) main goal is to make avocados America’s most popular fruit. Given the increased interest in avocados, we urge HAB to consider how our consumption of avocados for personal health may be affecting the physical and economic health of others. Increased popularity and demand are leading to deforestation, water scarcity, and even violence in the countries they are exported from. Avocados are currently a low regulated industry, which leads to people and natural resources being exploited. Cartels are battling for control of farmland and charge protection fees which hurt local communities through extortion.

Social media-driven interest in these super foods has not brought awareness to sustainable consumption practices. We recommend HAB execute a multi-tiered approach to build awareness of these issues among end consumers and influence sustainable industry practices through partnerships. These include but are not limited to: 1) launching a marketing campaign to build awareness of sustainable avocado consumption, 2) promoting farmer-focused solutions such as education on transparent supply chains, and 3) partnering with conservation agencies to improve water efficiency and reduce deforestation. With these improvements, HAB will achieve its goal of making avocados America’s most popular fruit while still improving the sustainability of avocados.