

# Promotions Encourage Sales of California Avocados

Long before the California avocado harvest begins each year, the California Avocado Commission meets with targeted retailers and foodservice operators to convince them to carry California avocados in season.

Throughout the 2014 season, CAC also met regularly with these accounts to create customer-specific programs that promoted consumer purchases of the fruit. Retail programs such as feature ads and display contests encouraged inventory turns and customer loyalty. Foodservice promotions stimulated new menu applications and out-of-home consumption of California avocados. Promotions in both distribution channels helped educate consumers about where the avocados they buy originate and increased California avocado brand awareness.

## RETAIL PROMOTIONS

Retail programs support retailers committed to carrying California fruit during the season and reinforce CAC's overall consumer communication.



### Retail Ads

Feature ads draw shoppers into the chains' stores to purchase the advertised items. For California avocados, obtaining feature ads identifying the California origin of the fruit ensures that the retailer will stock California avocados in support of the ad. CAC provides retailers the resources to call out the fruit origin in-ad via the Hand Grown in California logo or other California-grown identification.

This summer California avocado grower Chuck Bandy was featured in Albertsons' ads. The ads announced that California avocados were available in Albertsons stores and encouraged shoppers to purchase avocados cultivated by California growers.



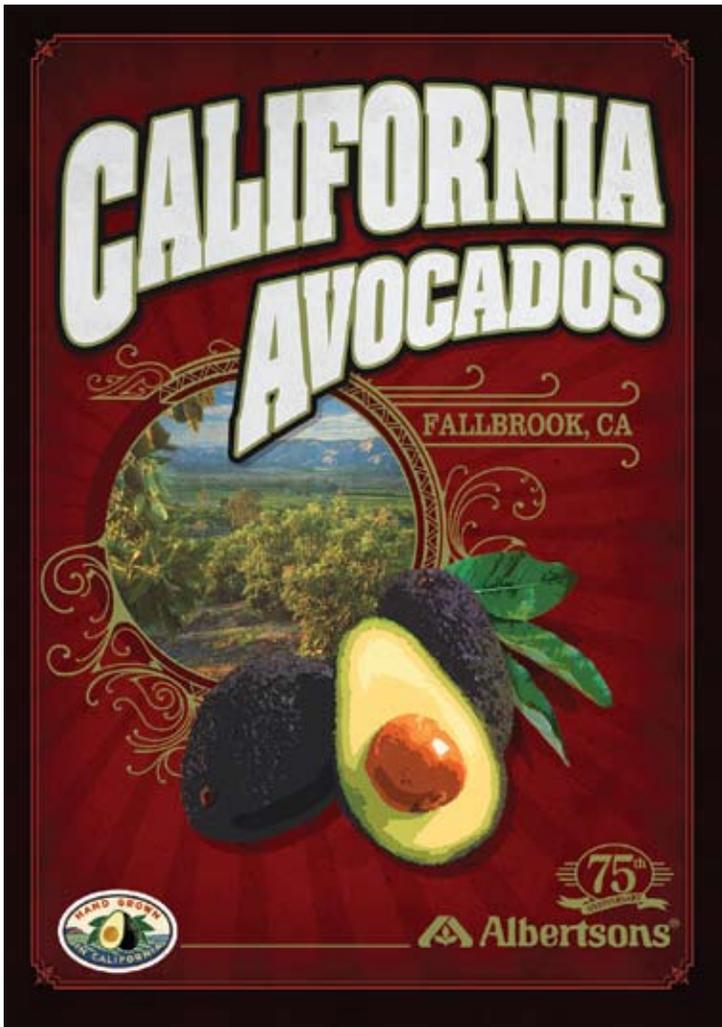
CAC developed custom California avocado signage for the Ralphs' Labor Day promotion.

### Retail Displays and POS

Retail merchandising such as displays and point-of-sale (POS) materials are effective tools for drawing attention to California avocados in stores. This year to date CAC has provided 1,896 display bins to retailers who stock California avocados, along with myriad POS materials.

Some retailers prefer to use their own POS and display materials. This season California avocados were included in the 75th anniversary celebration for the Southern California Albertsons division. Two hundred Albertsons stores showcased California avocado banners in their produce departments and kept them up through Labor Day.

Sales and display contests are an excellent way for the



### Retail Support

CAC retail support this season included participation in Bristol Farms cooking schools and digital coupons with Ralphs. Consumers can download digital coupons via the internet, and this is one of the fastest growing methods for chain retailers to communicate value opportunities to their shoppers. 🥑



Example of a digital coupon supporting California avocados.

retailer to add value to the grower's returns by accentuating origin of the fruit, and doing so in a manner that excites both consumers as well as store personnel. Some of these contests allow the Commission to reward and educate the in-store produce personnel who are the contact point with consumers.

An example is the Fresh California Avocado Guacamole Sales Contest conducted with Albertsons Southwest (Phoenix). Over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, this Albertsons division promoted California avocados utilizing CAC's display bins. Additionally they ran an in-store Fresh Made Guacamole Sales Contest using California avocados. The produce manager in each of the seven districts with the highest sales increases and the top performing district's Operations Specialist all won cash prizes.

To encourage retailers to keep California avocados in their stores through Labor Day, the Commission set up sales contests with multiple accounts, including Lucky Supermarkets, Northwest Grocers, Save Mart Supermarkets and Smiths. (See also the 4<sup>th</sup> of July article on page 7 for information on the Gelson's sales contest.)



Grace Marie Johnston of Bristol Farms demonstrated California avocado handling and recipes at their cooking school events.



Large California avocado display in St. Louis.

### Non-core Market Retail Events

Most of CAC's efforts in non-core markets are driven by special or holiday-timed in-store events. These can be valuable in that they provide the opportunity to accentuate California avocado origin. The Food Emporium, with stores located in New York and Connecticut, supported California avocados through advertising and customer POS for 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Additional programs with Dierbergs, H.E.B., Hy-Vee, Publix and Schnucks featured premium California avocados in the Midwest, Southeast and Texas throughout the California season.



## FOODSERVICE CHAIN PROMOTIONS

CAC's foodservice chain promotion program combines the customer's unique brand positioning and culinary offerings with the versatility and allure of California avocados. The CAC team attends select foodservice events such as the International Corporate Chefs Association (ICCA) Summit, attended by the top 200 U.S. chain restaurants, to demonstrate to targeted chains the value of adding fresh California avocados to their menus.



### Spring Fast Casual Chain Promotions

Springtime promotions with El Pollo Loco and Habit Burger helped kick off California avocado season. From April 16 through May 30, El Pollo Loco (a regional chain with 400 units in California, Arizona, Texas, Nevada and Utah) ran an avocado salad promotion supported with several in-restaurant merchandising pieces, and a free standing insert (FSI) promoting the avocado salad. The chain prominently featured the Hand Grown in California logo on all promotional materials. Habit Burger, recently rated the best burger chain in the United States by The Huffington Post, had a Limited Time Offer (LTO) featuring California avocados from April 30 through June 10. The 94 Habit Burger locations in California, Arizona and Utah featured the Santa Barbara-style Charburger — a double burger served with fresh California avocado on grilled sourdough bread.

Another highlight of this season's California avocado chain promotions was Denny's, a national chain with more than 1,500 units. From April through June Denny's dedi-

*The Signature Chicken Salad promotion at El Pollo Loco featuring an Avocado Mango Salad, Mexican Cobb Salad and Taco Salad ran from late April through May, 2014.*



*Denny's California locations promoted "Avocados Fresh From the California Grove" with their Avocado Bacon Omelette.*

cated a full panel of their menu to dishes that featured avocados. In June the chain sent out an eBlast to fans focusing only on avocado menu items, and supported the program with a stanchion poster in the restaurants. Also in June, 412 California Denny's brought back their popular Bacon Avocado Omelette, Avocado Santa Fe Skillet and Avocado BLT. In-restaurant support included table tents with the Hand Grown in California logo.

### **Summer Sandwich Promotions**

Consumers love to add avocado to sandwiches, and CAC has been very successful developing promotions with fast casual sandwich chains. In the month of July, more than 1,500 Subway stores in the greater Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Bakersfield areas supported the chain's national avocado promotion with a local FSI mail drop promoting the Turkey & Bacon Avocado sandwich. POS materials also were branded with the Hand Grown in California logo.

Across the nation from July 7 – August 10, the Dallas-based "superior sandwich" chain Which Wich encouraged diners to add fresh California avocados to their sandwiches with eye-catching, appetizing photos of California avocados and the Hand Grown in California logo on counter cards, table tents and in the chain's website banner ads. They also communicated to their Facebook fans with a post featuring California avocados.

The San Jose-based 250-unit sandwich chain Togo's featured California avocados in menu items with in-store merchandising and consumer advertising from July 15 through August 10. To broaden the reach of the promotion, fresh California avocados were mentioned in the chain's Facebook advertising, on the Togo's app and in email blasts directed at sandwich club members. On July 24, the chain celebrated California avocados and its classic #24 Turkey & Avocado Sandwich with a free #24 sandwich giveaway.

### **East-Coast Chain Promotions**

The Commission developed a host of other California avocado-branded foodservice promotions this year, including campaigns with some up-and-coming east-coast chains such as California Tortilla and Just Fresh, who committed to using California avocados during the program. Other promotions included Baja Fresh, La Salsa and Shari's, among others.

In addition to encouraging out-of-home consumption of California avocados, partnering with foodservice chains provides additional exposure of California avocados through menus, merchandising tools, social media and coupon advertising. Peak California avocado season is an opportune time to feature avocado-centric menu items that also inspire consumers to try new recipes at home. 🥑