

CAC's 45th Exhibition at PMA Fresh Summit a Success

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) played a prominent role in the 2016 Produce Marketing Association (PMA) Fresh Summit, which was held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, from October 14 – 16. The nation's largest produce and floral convention had record attendance for an East Coast Fresh Summit, with nearly 21,000 retailers, suppliers and growers from 65 countries visiting 1,200 booths and exhibits. CAC showcased the California by Nature campaign and new corporate logo on a unique two-story booth.

This was the 45th anniversary of CAC being an exhibitor at Fresh Summit. CAC has a long history of supporting PMA. California avocado innovator and Commission founding president and CEO Ralph Pinkerton served as PMA chair in 1973, and CAC Vice President Marketing Jan DeLyser had that honor in 2012-13. Many CAC staff members have volunteered on PMA committees throughout the years.

At Fresh Summit, the Commission team met with representatives from Albertsons, Costco, Harmon's, Kroger, Mollie Stone's, New Season's, Raley's, Sam's, Sprouts, Stater Bros., Tops, Wakefern and others. Retailers, Supermarket Registered Dietitians (SRDs), suppliers, growers, industry stakeholders, trade press and vendors visited the CAC booth to learn more about plans and crop information for 2017, including seasonal availability. Avocado supply was a popular topic of conversation due to the Mexican avocado grower strike and the disrupted supply of the fruit that was occurring at the time. Retailers noted their concern about not being able to fill their displays and carry out planned promotions.

CAC showcased creative California avocado recipes with tasty samples for invited booth visitors, including personalized *California Avocado Guacamole*, *California Avocado Spring Rolls*, *California Avocado and Veggie Breakfast Casserole* and a California yogurt parfait. Visitors were very engaged with CAC's booth graphics, which featured the



Bruce Taylor left, who won the award last year, presented Jan DeLyser with the 2016 Robert L. Carey Leadership Award. Also shown are Cathy Burns and Bryan Silbermann of PMA.

"California by Nature" campaign and artwork by Michael Schwab.

A highlight of PMA Fresh Summit occurred when Jan DeLyser was presented with PMA's Robert L. Carey Leadership Award. The award was established in 2012 to honor former PMA president Robert L. Carey, who led PMA from 1958 to 1996. The PMA annual award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and an exceptional commitment to PMA and the produce industry. Honorees are selected by a five-person panel of judges. DeLyser was honored for her 30 years of work on behalf of the industry, including having served as PMA chair, chair of the Produce for Better Health Foundation Board of Trustees, chair of the Fresh Produce and Floral Council and for leadership with the Center for Growing Talent by PMA. Bruce Taylor, founder and CEO of Taylor Farms and last year's award winner, presented the award to



Representatives from Save Mart/Lucky/Food Maxx met with CAC staff in the second-floor conference room of the CAC booth.

DeLyster and recognized her “collaborative spirit with the ability to listen and drive consensus.” A video of the award presentation is available at <http://www.pma.com/content/press-releases/2016/2016-robert-l-carey-leadership-award> and includes a tribute from her family.

Another high point of CAC’s PMA Fresh Summit experience was its sponsorship of the Produce for Better Health Supermarket Registered Dietitians program. SRDs continue to serve as powerful influencers of consumer behavior, developing retail health and nutrition programs, communicating via social media, as well as providing shoppers with recipes and nutritional information. During the Fresh Summit program, the Commission showcased new and interesting California avocado usage ideas for SRDs to share with their customers.



Some of the CAC booth team in front of the new booth graphics. From left, Zac Benedict, April Aymami, Angela Fraser, David Cruz, Connie Stukenberg and Carolyn Becker.



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Um...California Dreamin' Avocado Bar?! Yes, please!! Thx @CA_Avocados!! ❤️ #FreshSummit #avocadolove



Festival Foods SRD tweet at Fresh Summit included California avocados.

On Friday evening, the Commission created an interactive experience for SRDs at the reception-style dinner. SRDs participated in CAC’s California Dreamin’ Avocado Bar social media contest by selecting from a variety of toppings and creating personalized California avocado halves. They then posted photos of their creations on their social media accounts and tagged California avocados for a chance to win a gift card.

SRDs and one blogger from Big Y Foods, Coborn’s, Dierbergs Markets, Giant Foods/Martin’s Food Markets, HAC Retail, Harmons Grocery, Jewel Osco, Kroger, Loblaws, Meijer, Niemann Foods, Redner’s Markets, ShopRite and Skogen’s Festival Foods — which combined represent nearly 7,000 retail stores — participated in the SRD program. On Saturday, CAC hosted small groups of these SRDs for 20-minute sessions in the Commission booth with Los Angeles-based Registered Dietitian Matt Ruscigno — educator, media spokesperson and athlete. Matt prepared his *Spicy California Avocado Hummus* for SRDs, gave a live demo concerning how to select and prepare a California avocado and spoke about the benefits of a plant-based diet, and the nutrition and culinary benefits of California avocados. CAC representatives provided the SRDs with information about the California avocado industry and retail support available during the season. 🥑