



CAC Board members Jessica Hunter and Bryce Bannatyne spoke with local and backyard growers and provided Commission information about growing practices at AvoFest.

## Meeting California Avocado Fans Face-to-Face

California avocado festivals are ripe with opportunity. The events provide California avocado growers, handlers and the California Avocado Commission (CAC) with the opportunity to connect one-on-one with fans — answering their questions about the growing practices and providing them with new recipe ideas they can try at home. And it all takes place in a festive atmosphere featuring unique California avocado dishes, California avocado-branded giveaways and other entertainment for attendees.

As an event sponsor, the Commission is granted premier placement of signage at the venues and the California Avocado

brand logo figures prominently in the festivals' print, digital and social media posts and promotions.

California avocado fans are always eager to visit the green-canopied Commission tent where CAC Board members and staff join avocado handlers and growers to answer questions and distribute information and promotional items such as bumper stickers, avocado cutters, and recipe booklets. This year's volunteers included Bryce Bannatyne, Robb Bertels, Art Bliss, John Burr, Jessica Hunter, Leo McGuire, Bradley and Emily Miles, Ryan Rochefort, Trish and Rick Shade and Charley Wolk.

To celebrate the start of the California avocado season, the



Consumers who visited CAC's tent could use the California avocados' Snapchat filter to share California avocados' branded images.

Commission joined nearly 100,000 celebrants at the Fallbrook Avocado Festival on April 17. In September, the Commission sponsored a sold-out *Taste of the Grove* event at the Packing Shed on the evening before the Morro Bay Avocado and Margarita Street Festival. The intimate evening included an all-inclusive farm-to-table pairing with California avocado-themed dishes showcasing local produce and crafted by area chefs. Sheryl Salazar, assistant produce sales manager for Albertsons/Vons, was a guest of the Commission that evening. She then joined Commission staff, California avocado growers and nearly 12,000 attendees at the Morro Bay Festival.

To close out the festival series in October, the Commission sponsored the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual California Avocado Festival (affectionately known as AvoFest) in Carpinteria. This event, which



Connie Stukenberg introducing California avocado grower Emily Miles to Sheryl Salazar (Albertsons/Vons) at the *Taste of the Grove* event in Morro Bay.

drew more than 100,000 fans, is recognized as one of the largest free festivals in California. The event featured more than 75 live musical acts on four stages, had countless stands filled with avocado merchandise and was home to huge vats of fresh California avocado guacamole made by Carpinteria High School cheerleaders. Those interested in learning more about California avocado history and care visited the on-site agriculture tent.

In total, the Commission and its team of volunteers joined more than 200,000 California avocado fans to celebrate California avocados, explore new usage ideas and create demand for the locally grown fruit. 🥑



The California Avocado Commission tent, located at the entrance to the AvoFest in Carpinteria, was very popular with attendees. Board member Art Bliss volunteered to help at the event.