



CAC Hosts Government Regulatory Tour

By Ken Melban

Vice President of Industry Affairs

In late April, the California Avocado Commission and the California Citrus Quality Council partnered to host a field tour for 30 federal and state regulatory officials. Participants spent four days learning about California avocado and citrus production, the issues we face and the goals we are pursuing.

Achieving many of these “goals” requires support from the agencies involved, and the tour allowed Commission representatives to communicate with key decision-makers in a field setting. Participants included representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service, California Department of Pesticide Regulation and California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Issues discussed included the Commission’s efforts towards Emergency Section 18 Registrations for polyphagous shot hole borer/*Fusarium* dieback materials and expanding trade access for California avocados into China. In both in-



CAC Chairman Doug O'Hara and his wife Betty answer questions

stances, agency officials are directly involved in the necessary processes. Their understanding and strong grasp of the issues will provide us with the best opportunities for positive, timely results.

The learning went both ways, as Commission Board member Rick Shade commented, "All the folks I spoke with expressed a genuine interest in what we do. They were attentive and asked great questions, and also gave good insight into their jobs. I believe that everyone walked away with a stronger sense of all of us being on the same team."

Another benefit of the tour was the "cross-pollination" that occurred among the different agency officials as they were given an opportunity to step outside of their normal work environment and interact with representatives from other agencies. In many instances these participants had previously communicated with the other agency counterparts, but had never met in person. The tour provided an opportunity to bridge these gaps.

The Commission will continue interacting with the necessary agency personnel on the above mentioned efforts along with countless others that will require involvement with both federal and state agencies. It is important that



CAC board member John Lamb (center) talks with attendees

their knowledge of our issues and overall industry practices is at a high level to, as best as possible, ensure the interests of California avocado growers are adequately represented. 🥑



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