

# CAC Grower Website Improved

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In the past, websites were little more than digital brochures filled with perennial content that was rarely updated. Today, websites are interactive portals that share up-to-the-minute relevant and important content with their audiences. To keep those audiences engaged, content is shared in a variety of formats — blog posts, news feeds, videos, photos and integrated social media posts — and is updated frequently.

Since the launch of the redesigned California Avocado Commission grower website in June 2013, the Commission has utilized Google Analytics to monitor use of the website and determine not only which information growers are most interested in, but to improve the overall user experience when interacting with its rich and deep content base.

Based on knowledge gained from the website's analytics, a series of website upgrades were developed during the summer and made "live" on the grower website October 22, 2014.

Following is a summary of the most recent updates.

## **Streamlining the Home Page**

The "real estate" on the homepage is very valuable — analytics reveal the majority of site visitors begin their visit here. In order to make the most of this space, visual elements at the top of the page were reduced or eliminated and a "feature box" was added. The content of the feature box will be changed as often as needed in order to highlight issues of the greatest importance to growers. Currently, the feature box provides a direct link to the most recent PSHB updates.

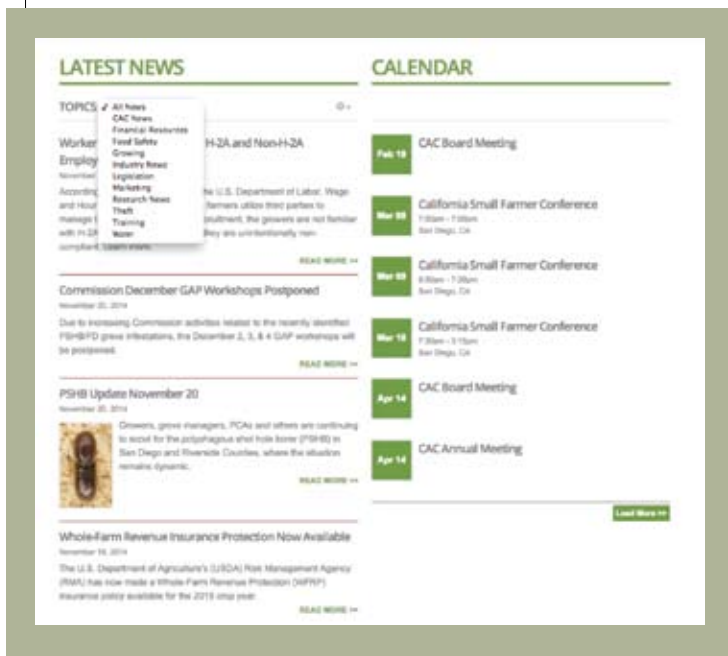
Because the Commission posts articles to the grower



website on a near-daily basis, an article's lifespan on the homepage news feed became too short — newer articles would quickly replace day-old articles. In order to increase the lifespan of the news and streamline access to the wide range of articles being published, the homepage news feed

now features a default “All News” feed and a pull-down menu that allows visitors to select a specific news feed based on their interests. This allows viewers to see the top articles in 11 categories, significantly increasing a site visitor’s access to the news. Visitors can easily load more articles in a category by simply clicking on the “Load More” button at the bottom of the news feed.

Seminars, training sessions and other industry events are critical to growers and generate a large amount of traffic to the Calendar portion of the website (according to analytic data the Calendar page is the most popular subpage listed under the Commission page). To make the calendar more accessible, a calendar dashboard was added to the homepage, providing instant access to events and allowing users to click on specific event calendars of the most interest to them.



Finally, to improve the flow of traffic from the homepage to the Commission page and Publications page, the Commission contact information was moved to the top of the homepage and both “Commission” and “Publications” were added to the main navigational menu. Visual callouts for *From the Grove* and the *GreenSheet* also were added.

## GreenSheet

Analytics revealed that individual GreenSheet articles are the second most popular starting-point for site visitors. However, upon completing a GreenSheet article readers would visit the homepage, go back to a category landing page or simply leave the website — indicative of a navigational road block. In order to ensure readers could easily navigate from one GreenSheet article to another, a GreenSheet table-of-contents sidebar now appears for every GreenSheet article.

## Improved Accessibility to News and Resources

While industry news is important to growers, individuals have specific preferences concerning when and how they receive the news. To accommodate these preferences, the Commission allows growers to determine when they receive the news. They can visit the grower website where new content is posted on a near-daily basis, or they can opt to receive news every two weeks in the consolidated GreenSheet.

In an effort to improve accessibility to the news articles beyond the homepage, specific newsfeeds have been placed on category landing pages. On the Growing Avocados landing page two newsfeeds now exist. The “Growing News” features timely growing news, such as PSHB updates, the availability of new resources or weather advisory articles. The “Cultural Management” feed consists of longer-term cultural management articles, such as irrigation best practices or preparing groves for the winter.

Analytics indicated that specific web pages were popular with growers — those who read about growing avocados are interested in the weather, learning opportunities and GAP certification. For that reason, the right-hand sidebar of the Growing Avocados page now provides instant accessibility to the weather outlook, GAP materials and a list of upcoming seminars.

Other landing page improvements are as follows.

- The latest industry news is now featured on the Industry landing page (formerly the “Selling” page), with a sidebar link to the most recent market statistics.
- A CAC news feed is now the centerpiece of the Commission landing page. Upcoming CAC meetings and the President’s Message are easily accessible in the right-hand navigation.
- The Seminars landing page has been simplified, listing only upcoming seminars and related industry events (such as the World Avocado Congress). Separate pages have been created to house seminar archives and video seminars.

Finally, the Commission launched a You-Might-Also-Like feature. Each time a site visitor scrolls to the end of a news article, a suggestion box appears recommending other articles that may be of interest to the reader.

The Commission recognizes that the avocado industry is continuously evolving, thus it is critical growers are easily able to stay abreast of the latest news and cultural management issues. CaliforniaAvocadoGrowers.com is an invaluable tool for the real-time distribution of that knowledge to our growers. As such, the Commission will continuously monitor its usage to ensure the site and its content help growers improve productivity and profitability. 🥑