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Calendar

For a listing of industry events and dates for the coming year, please visit:

<http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/calendar>

GAP Workshops - Postponed Until Further Notice (Please see the article below for more information)

The GAP Workshops that were scheduled for December 2-4 have been postponed until further notice.

PSHB Informational Meetings

December 16-17

December 16

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Location: California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., Escondido, CA 92025

December 17

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Location: Museum of Ventura County, 100 E. Main Street, Ventura, CA 93001

Commission December GAP Workshops Postponed

Due to increasing Commission activities related to the recently identified PSHB/FD grove infestations, **the December 2, 3, & 4 GAP workshops will be postponed.** The coordination by Commission staff of research and industry outreach and education on this serious threat remains our top priority. Ongoing efforts include multiple research projects, collaboration with international researchers, trapping and monitoring for the early detection of PSHB, and education on grove sanitation measures. We will continue to provide updates on this dynamic situation as new information becomes available.

CAC to Host PSHB Meetings for Growers

In order to keep California avocado growers abreast of the latest developments concerning the polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB), the California Avocado Commission (CAC) will host two informational meetings. Simultaneous Spanish language translation will be available at both meetings.

Topics will include:

- PSHB research updates
- PSHB control measures
- Overview of the PSHB/fusarium dieback pest complex
- Infestation signs
- Information concerning CAC's PSHB initiatives

The meetings will take place as follows:

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

California Center for the Arts, Escondido

340 N. Escondido Blvd

Escondido, CA 92025

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Museum of Ventura County

100 E. Main Street

Ventura, CA 93001

PSHB Update

Growers, grove managers, PCAs and others are continuing to scout for the polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB) in San Diego and Riverside Counties, where the situation remains dynamic. On the "good news" side of the ledger, several groves that were thought to have PSHB have been confirmed negative. The symptoms in these groves, while similar to those manifested by PSHB, were caused by another pest, *Xyleborus saxesenii*, a common, secondary ambrosia beetle that typically attacks stressed and dying plants. *Xyleborus saxesenii* usually colonizes on the canker tissues caused by *Botryosphaeria*. Look for beetles 2.0 – 2.4 mm long, smaller entry holes than those of PSHB, reddish frass, reddish sap, wet discoloration and dead tissue around the entry hole and beneath the bark. Photos of *Xyleborus saxesenii* and the damage it causes can be found in the slideshow at the end of this article.

Another positive development is the commencement of pesticide trials last week by UC-Riverside researchers working for the Commission. The goal is to identify a material that is efficacious at suppressing PSHB populations. At the moment, early detection of PSHB and grove sanitation measures are the only strategies available for addressing an infestation. One aspect of the chemical trial work is focused on securing a material that can be applied to trees once damaged or infested branches are removed. The Commission is working with UC researchers on grove sanitation protocols, which will be amended as treatment materials become available for use on avocado trees either on an emergency basis or via full registration.

Trap deployment is also underway in an effort to monitor the distribution of PSHB. About 100 traps will be set in various locations in the southern growing region where growers have consented to monitor. Traps will be routinely visited and captured (dead) beetle specimens will be taken to Dr. Akif Eskalen's laboratory for identification. There has been much speculation about whether the quercivol lure would attract PSHB into an uninfested grove if traps are placed there for monitoring. While there may not be a definitive answer on this subject, David Wakarchuk, president of Synergy Semiochemicals (that produces the lure) has said, "We get this kind of question often and it is a very difficult measurement (the effective distance of the lure) to make. We know from bark beetle 'spill over' observations that about 50 meters away from a lure is about the maximum. Beetle lures are nothing like moth lures, which may have an effective radius of 1000 meters or more." Quercivol is a semiochemical consisting of a volatile compound, which differs significantly from pheromone-based lures. At the end of the day, the choice as to whether to place a PSHB trap in a grove will be entirely voluntary, and the growers' own choice to make.

Over the next few weeks, traps are also scheduled to be deployed in southern Ventura County as well, for the purpose of early detection. The Commission is also anticipating having a meeting in Ventura County in mid-December, where growers can interact with researchers working on PSHB.

Although the winter months are expected to extend the time needed by PSHB to complete one generation of its lifecycle, successful overwintering is thought to be highly likely. For this reason, it remains of paramount importance to limit the movement of infested material, such as tree limbs, chipped wood, downed branches, and firewood. Please do your part in spreading word about containment of infested material by speaking with your non-grower neighbors, and stay tuned for the next PSHB alert from the Commission.

Program Seeks Avocado Growers to Help Curb Declining Bee Population

In 2012-13, 31.3 percent of honey bees across the nation perished over the winter — a staggering number that can have serious effects on the success of American agriculture. According to beekeepers, the leading cause for these bee colony losses is starvation. In order to curb the decline of the bee population, the U.S. Bee Buffer Project, a Pollinator Partnership (P2) initiative, is seeking 300 farmers, ranchers and foresters in California to set aside small plots of land as bee buffer zones — areas that will be critical to colony survival. Applications are due December 3, 2014.

The Project is targeting California's high-value crops that require extensive pollination:

- Almonds – annual state crop value 4,347,200,000 (U.S. dollars)
- Berries – annual state crop value 2,121,574,000 (U.S. dollars)
- Avocados – annual state crop value 386,449,000 (U.S. dollars)

The bee buffer zones help to offset losses for the bee industry while improving the health of crops and orchards within four miles. The bee buffer consists of a strip of land alongside the grove that allows bees to forage in the zone and pollinate adjacent crops. Just one acre of pollinator-friendly plants can impact 33 acres of farmland.

Growers who participate in the program must dedicate and maintain .25 to 3 acres of a bee buffer zone for three years and be willing to provide annual feedback on the bee buffer performance. Beekeepers may occasionally ask to visit the bee buffer zone to monitor progress.

The U.S. Bee Buffer Project offers qualified participants:

- Leadership participation in a nation-wide effort to support honey bees
- The potential to enrich soil, reduce an invasive plant species and enhance wildlife habitat

- Free bee forage kits including seeds and planting information
- Supplemental pollination of all flowering plants

The timeline for participation is as follows. Submit an application by December 3, 2014. Growers will be notified by December 15, 2014 concerning their acceptance. Seed kits will be shipped in mid-December and should be planted before January 2015.

For more information, review the U.S. Bee Buffer Frequently Asked Questions. To review the eligibility requirements and complete a participant application, visit <http://beebuffer.com>. Questions may be addressed to Mary Byrne at 415-362-1137 or mb@pollinator.org.

Worker Compliance for Both H-2A and Non-H-2A Employees

With rising labor shortages, some California avocado growers are relying on H-2A temporary foreign workers to assist in their groves and sometimes utilize third party organizations to recruit and contract H-2A workers.

According to a representative from the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, sometimes when farmers utilize third parties to manage the H-2A paperwork and recruitment, the growers are not familiar with H-2A regulations and may find they are unintentionally non-compliant. While H-2A contracts are very specific about issues such as pay rate, hours worked, housing, transportation, and cooking facilities, growers are ultimately responsible for ensuring the contract is enforced so as to remain compliant.

During recent compliance checks in agricultural, for both H-2A and non-H2A workers, the following violations were most commonly noted:

- Farmers must be diligent about posting requirements for both H-2A and non-H-2A workers. Also, in some cases non-H-2A workers may be entitled to the same wages, work hours, housing, etc. listed in the H-2A contract, if the non-H-2A worker is doing the same type of work as the H-2A worker. For example, if H-2A workers are provided with housing, non-H-2A workers must be offered the same.
- Workers must receive the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) minimum wage, even when paid a piece rate. To determine the rate paid when paying a piece rate, take the worker's weekly earnings and divided by the total hours worked that week.
- Vehicles used to transport workers must meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. For example, bald tires, cracked windshields, insufficient seatbelts or damaged/missing rearview mirrors are all OSHA violations.
- If housing is specified in the contract, farmers must provide adequate sleeping quarters, showers, electricity and either cooking facilities or meals, according to the H-2A contracts.
- Farmers must pay transportation costs for H-2A workers from the location where the workers were recruited. Thus, if the workers are recruited in Mexico, transportation costs must be provided from that same location to the place of work.

The Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division encourages California avocado growers to contact the local office with any questions or challenges. "Educational outreach is very important to us. We would like growers to be compliant. It's our job to answer growers' questions. They can call us at any time. We would like to give them the information they need to remain compliant," according to Ms. Salazar from the San Diego Office. The San Diego office number is: 619.557.5170.

The [U.S. Department of Labor website](#) is also a great resource, specifically the [H-2A web page](#). The website also offers an [e-laws webpage](#) that allows growers to type in a question and receive a response from the appropriate person.

Whole-Farm Revenue Insurance Protection Now Available

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) has now made a Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) insurance policy available for the 2015 crop year. The new policy allows producers to insure 50 to 85 percent of their whole farm revenue and assists in making crop insurance more affordable. The plan is available to any farm with up to \$8.5 million in insured revenue. The policy allows growers to insure a variety of crops and is designed for "highly diverse farms that are growing a wide range of commodities, and for farms selling commodities to wholesale markets. The WFRP policy was specifically developed for farms that tend to sell to direct, local or regional, and farm-identity preserved markets and grow specialty crops and animals and animal products."

Because diversification helps lower the risk of revenue loss, the level of diversification on the farm does impact a few WFRP items.

- Qualification for 80 and 85 percent coverage requires a minimum of three commodities.
- Farms that have a commodity that is insurable under Revenue Protection, Revenue Protection with the Harvest Price Exclusion, or the Actual Revenue History plan of insurance must have a minimum of two commodities on the farm in order to qualify.
- Farms with two or more commodities will receive a premium rate discount based on the amount of diversification and will also receive a whole-farm subsidy resulting in less premium cost to the producer.

WFRP protects against the loss of farm revenue that growers expect to earn from:

- Commodities produced during the insurance period, whether they are sold or not.
- Commodities bought for resale during the insurance period.
- All commodities on the farm except timber, forest, and forest products, as well as animals for sport, show, or pets.
- Replant coverage:
 - For annual crops, except those covered by another policy.
 - Equal to the cost of replanting up to a maximum of 20 percent of the expected revenue.
 - When 20 percent or 20 acres need to be replanted.

According to the WFRP FAQ document, to be eligible, growers must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or resident
- Be eligible to receive Federal benefits
- File either a Schedule F tax form or other farm tax form that can be converted to a Substitute Schedule F
- Have five consecutive years of farm tax history
- Produce at least 50 percent of your agricultural commodities in counties where WFRP is available and the balance in neighboring counties

- Have no more than \$8.5 million in insured revenue
- Have no more than 50 percent of total revenue from commodities purchased for resale
- Have ‘buy-up’ coverage levels on any Federal crop insurance plans you choose with the WFRP insurance plan
- Meet the diversification requirements of the policy by having two or more commodities if a commodity you are raising has revenue protection or actual revenue history insurance available
- Meet the diversification requirements of the policy by having two or more commodities if there are potatoes on the farm.

The new policy will also provide a whole-farm premium subsidy to farms with two or more commodities as long as minimum diversification requirements are met. A table outlining the subsidy percentages for WFRP is available in the [WFRP Fact Sheet](#).

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection can be purchased in conjunction with individual crop policies as long as those policies are at a buy-up coverage level. If growers purchase WFRP with another policy, the WFRP premium is reduced. However, growers do not qualify for WFRP if they have other Federal crop insurance policies at catastrophic coverage levels.

The WFRP insurance period is based on a grower’s tax year. If the grower is a calendar year filer, the insurance period is January 1 through December 31. If the grower is a fiscal year filer the insurance year will be the same as the grower’s fiscal tax year.

The whole farm policy is available in the following California counties — Butte, Fresno, Kern, Mendocino, Monterey, Riverside, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Sonoma, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo. A map of the [Whole-Farm Revenue Protection Pilot Area](#) is available online.

The federal crop insurance is sold via private insurance agents. A list of RMA agent’s also can be found [online](#).

For more information [email John Shea](#) or visit the following resources:

- [WFRP Fact Sheet](#)
- [WFRP PowerPoint](#)
- [WFRP FAQs](#)
- [WFRP website](#)

Whole Foods Market® Launches Responsibly Grown Produce Rating System

To help its shoppers make informed choices, Whole Foods launched its Responsibly Grown initiative on October 15, 2014. According to [Whole Foods](#), the initiative is a “tiered produce rating system that assesses growing practices that impact human health and the environment.” Fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers will be labeled “good,” “better” or “best” depending on the growers’ efforts to protect human health, air, soil and water.

The goals of the program include:

- Rewarding farmers who work hard to protect the environment and human health
- Prohibiting the use of the most harmful chemicals while measuring and reducing use of the rest
- Providing shoppers with an at-a-glance rating of sustainable farming practices

The Responsibly Grown ratings measure the following sustainability factors:

- Soil health
- Reduction in air pollution, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
- Waste reduction
- Farmworker welfare
- Water conservation and biodiversity
- Pest management
- GMO transparency
- Prohibition of biosolids

To assist growers whose produce is destined for sale at Whole Foods, the retail chain has created a series of [Responsibly Grown web pages](#). The web pages:

- Outline the [requirements](#) for a good, better or best rating
- Address [challenges](#) faced by growers and the goals of the program
- Clarify the [criteria](#) measured

CAC's Marketing Manager Attends PMA Management Conference

Angela Fraser, CAC marketing manager, attended the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) Foundation High Performance Management Conference (HPMC) from September 9 – 11, 2014 in Chicago, Illinois. The three-day conference, entitled “Optimizing the Impact of Mid-Level Leaders,” was designed to improve attendees’ on-the-job performance and promote trade connectivity. Fraser participated in educational sessions and small group exercises that examined macro industry trends, food safety and technology and strategic business leadership action plans. Fraser participated in hands-on produce industry simulations that presented her with business challenges and allowed her to test her leadership skills in a risk-free environment. These added skills will help her serve the needs of California avocado growers more effectively.

Jan DeLyser, CAC vice president of marketing, served as a keynote speaker at the opening session of the HPMC conference as well.



HPMC attendees at the three-day PMA leadership management conference.

SRDs Given In-depth Look at Versatility and Usage of California Avocados at Fresh Summit

As consumers increasingly turn to their retailer for nutrition education, Supermarket Registered Dietitians (SRDs) continue to be critical consumer-facing marketing tools for supermarkets. In a recent study among 1,500 food retailers and wholesalers, 85 percent employ dietitians at the corporate level, half employ dietitians on a regional level and 33 percent of all stores have an on-site dietitian who aids shoppers seeking the best foods to drop weight, battle diseases, avoid allergic reactions, or improve their eating habits and lifestyle.

To engage this growing sector of the food industry, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) launched a yearlong SRD/Retail Communications Program at the Produce for Better Health (PBH) Annual Conference in mid-March. Throughout the year, CAC partnered with SRDs at key nationwide accounts who supported California avocados with in-store demos, media appearances, community health and wellness events and cooking classes.

The yearlong initiative came full circle at the PBH SRDs at Fresh Summit event. Twenty-four SRDs from 14 states, plus one from Canada, attended the event representing more than 7,600 stores from across the nation and Canada. To kick off the event, Jan DeLyser, CAC vice president of marketing, provided an overview of CAC's new label initiative during her Opening Session presentation. As a platinum sponsor of the event, CAC provided SRDs with a branded shoulder bag including the California Fresh Snacking Nutrition Fact Sheet, CAC's California Avocado journal, a CAC Twitter Contest card and a California Fresh Snacking recipe booklet.

Throughout the Fresh Summit, SRDs were encouraged to enter CAC's "Tweet to Win" social media contest. Fifty percent of the SRD attendees participated in the three-phase contest, sharing multiple California avocado Tweets and photos with their consumer audiences.

The Commission also hosted four 20-minute booth meetings with small groups of SRDs, providing CAC staff with the opportunity to communicate key messages as well as brainstorm ideas to promote California avocados at the store level. DeLyser began each meeting with an overview of CAC's marketing support programs, materials and resources. Registered Dietitian Katie Ferraro then conducted a recipe demonstration and Q&A session. In support of CAC's Fresh Snacking initiatives, SRDs also were provided with a video of Katie preparing *California Avocado Cucumber Cups* and a demo guide to accompany the video.

The event ended with a private tour of the Rancho Mission Viejo avocado grove followed by a multi-course avocado-centric dinner highlighting the versatility of California avocados.

Through the sponsorship of the Fresh Summit SRD event, the Commission was able to garner powerful endorsements from this trusted audience.



California avocado cookies were just one dish served to SRDs at an avocado-centric dinner designed to demonstrate the versatility of the fruit.

CaliforniaAvocado.com Reports Highest Web Traffic Since Launch

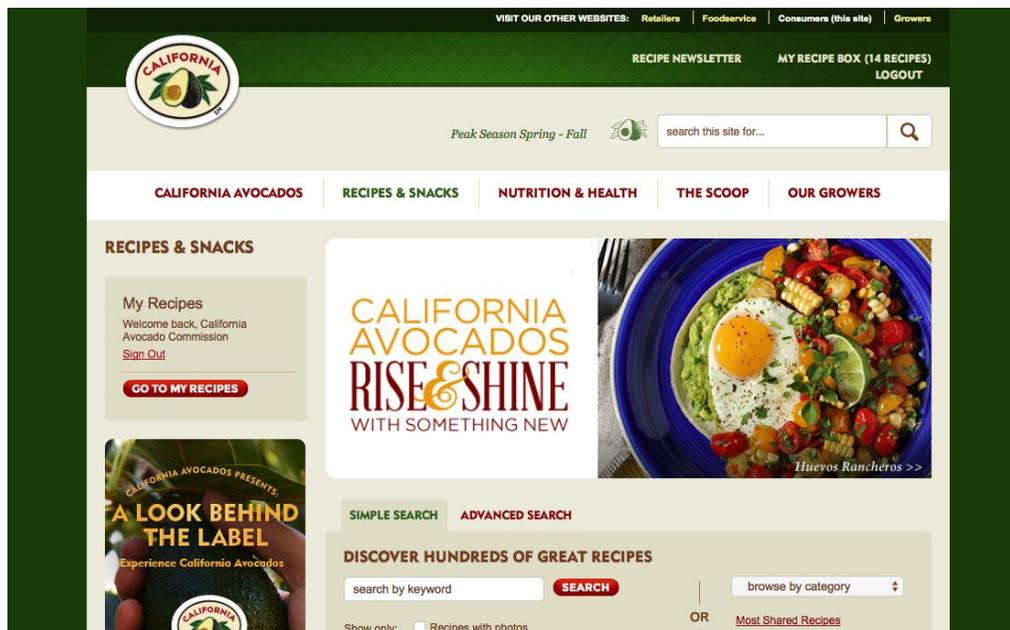
It has been a good year for the California Avocado Commission's (CAC) consumer website CaliforniaAvocado.com — fiscal year 2013-14 web analytics demonstrate the website leads competitive and other produce company benchmarks in website traffic during the California avocado season. During fiscal year 2013-14, the website:

- Recorded the most visits (1,519,210) since the site's launch; the previous record of 1,474,058 was set in 2012
- Demonstrated an increase in visits by more than 100,000 since 2013
- Had the most visits ever per month (240,000) in July 2014; the previous high was 162,000
- Received the most organic visits ever (unpaid visitors from search engines) in August 2014 with more than 145,000 visits

A number of the Commission's online marketing initiatives — designed to ensure California avocado messaging is in front of the consumer during the California avocado season to drive awareness and sales — are credited for the increase in web traffic. Aggressive Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts improved the website's search query ranking. When consumers make avocado-related search queries (on sites such as Google) the CaliforniaAvocado.com site consistently ranks first or within the first few listings. As a result, more consumers are visiting the CaliforniaAvocado.com website without the need for paid advertising, although advertising for targeted keywords still drives a notable amount of traffic.

The launch of *The Scoop*, CAC's consumer-facing blog, has also played a role in increasing web traffic. The blog provides consumers with fresh, relevant content that reinforces the Commission's premium messaging. The blog posts, which contain strategic keywords and themes, also play a role in improving SEO rankings.

As competition to provide avocado information online grows, the Commission will continue to improve the website to meet the needs of CAC's strategies as well as targeted consumers.



A screenshot of the 2013-14 recipes section depicting enticing breakfast recipe ideas.

California Market Trends

To view all market trend graphs, including “Weekly Volume Summary,” “Weekly Avocado Prices” and “U.S. Avocado Supply,” please visit: <http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/industry/market-statistics>.

California Avocado Commission Weekly Volume Summary (pounds)			
	Week Ending 11/30/2014	Season-to-Date (since 11/1/14)	2014 Year to Date
Hass	0	0	291,872,721
Lamb	0	0	8,062,333
Other (Greens)	20,340	30,835	2,362,666
California Total	20,340	30,835	302,297,720
Florida	818,840	4,761,680	62,663,865
Chile	314,118	2,167,012	87,001,499
Mexico	30,278,673	122,911,751	1,240,178,279
Other (Imports)	1,300,000	3,640,000	168,568,132
Import Total	31,892,791	128,718,763	1,495,747,910
USA Total	32,731,971	133,511,278	1,860,709,495
Source(s):	California = CAC (AMRIC)		
	Florida = Florida Avocado Admin Committee		
	Chile = Comite de Paltas, Chile		
	Mexico = APEAM		
	Other Imports = HAB and USDA AMS website		

California Avocado Society Weekly Newslines* Avocado Prices 11/24/2014

	FOB Price	Field Price	Retail Price	Last Year FOB
California Hass	(25# carton)	(per pound)	(per each)	(25# carton)
#2's				
32's-36's				
40's	Insufficient			
48's	Volume			
60's	to Quote			
70's				
84's				
Mexican Hass				
All Sizes	15.00-29.00	N/A	2/0.99-1.99	15.00-34.00
Chilean Hass				
All Sizes	15.00-30.00	N/A	5/5.99	16.00-34.00
Peruvian Hass				
All Sizes	N/A	N/A		

*To subscribe to the Weekly Newslines, please contact California Avocado Society at (951) 225-9102 or www.californiaavocadosociety.org.

Weather: 30-Day Outlook For California's Coastal & Valley Areas

Synopsis... Our view is close to the NOAA CPC solution due to the presence of a strengthening *El Niño*, however, we still differ from NOAA/CPC guidance in the 8-14 day period as we vote for drier than normal conditions in southern California and Arizona even if central California happens to be wetter than normal. Mild conditions will continue thanks to the SST Anomaly (SSTA) pattern in the eastern north Pacific.

In the Near-Term – November 25 to December 12... Expect warm, dry days to occur on the 26th and 27th. A front with rain should occur on December 1, then conditions will be dry and cold, with frosts in the valleys, on the 2nd and 3rd. Watch for Santa Ana winds from the 3rd to the 6th, followed by freezes on the mornings of the 7th to the 9th but with warm, dry days.

Summary – December 13 to 27... We expect the warmer than normal sea surface temperatures to continue near southern Baja and along the coast thru central California. Low latitude westerlies will continue from the about 170W to near 135W 33-39N. Troughs and lows will tend to develop along this storm track and then weaken east of 130W. Rains will weaken as they push into Oregon-Washington. *El Niño* continues to slowly develop, and our Fox Outlook Map shows a southern branch of the westerlies trying to develop into southern California during this period.

In the avocado growing areas, there may be rain around December 13 and chances for showery frontal passages from the 15th to the 21st. Around the holidays it currently looks to be dry with a possible Santa Ana or offshore flow pattern with warm days but frosty nights in the valleys. Frost is normal for December, so it should be expected in the colder valley areas with about normal frequency of occurrence. Still, the warm sea surface and higher moisture amounts generally in the airmass will have an effect to minimize the freeze events.

Seasonal Outlook/*El Niño* Update – December 28 to March 15... The latest guidance from the CFS2 model and Scripps ECPC indicate that *El Niño* will continue to slowly develop and reach a maximum in February. CFS2 guidance continues support for above normal rainfall in January and February and near normal in March. In northern and central California, we expect heavy rains in January and February. February may be the wettest presumably from subtropical rains (atmospheric river events). Above normal rainfall may also extend into southern California in February and to some extent also in January. This suggests that wet conditions may occur briefly in

the middle of January, the last week of the month, and continue on into February. We expect rains to diminish quickly after the first week of March.

In the avocado regions, the dry and warm conditions we saw in November are also expected around the holidays. This will be one of those years in which most of the winter's rainfall will occur in January and February.

CFS guidance suggests that heaviest rains will tend to focus into central and northcentral California during January and all of California in February. It appears that March will turn dry and mild quickly after rains around the 8th to the 14th.

...Alan Fox, Fox Weather LLC...