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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>

PSHB Informational Meetings

December 17

December 17

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

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

CAC to Host PSHB Meetings for Growers This Week

Commission-led activity related to the polyphagous shot hole borer continues at a high level. Last week, the Commission brought bark beetle specialist Dr. Tom Atkinson, who is affiliated with the University of Texas, Austin, to California for a first-hand look at PSHB in California avocado groves. In addition to the grove visits, Dr. Atkinson interacted with the research team at the University of California, including Dr. Joseph Morse, Dr. Richard Stouthamer, Dr. Frank Byrne, and Dr. Tim Paine, as well as Jim Bethke and Dr. Dustin Meador at the Center for Applied Horticultural Research (CAHR) in Vista, CA. Discussions centered on field trials to assess the efficacy of various chemicals and experiments already underway at CAHR's quarantine facility in San Diego County, which was expediently modified to accommodate the PSHB research.

This week, PSHB grower outreach town hall meetings are planned as follows:

- **Tuesday, December 16th, California Center for the Arts, 340 N Escondido Blvd, Escondido, 10 - 11:30 am**
- **Wednesday, December 17th, Museum of Ventura County, 100 E Main Street, Ventura, 9 - 11:00 am**

Researchers will provide an overview of the basic biology of PSHB and fusarium dieback; how to detect symptoms in the field; PSHB activity (number of likely generations, timing, and flight temperatures); the use of traps in monitoring and map of current known infestations; protocols for cleaning of equipment to minimize spread; update on initial curative chemical control research; planned research on possible prophylactic fungicide injections; and research on utilization of chipping and/or phosphine treatments for removed infested plant material.

Also present during the grower sessions in Escondido and Ventura County will be Dr. Jorge Macias of Synergy Semiochemicals, Canada. Dr. Macias is a notable Forest Entomologist/Chemical Ecologist with ambrosia beetle expertise. The Commission is bringing Dr. Macias to California to further inform our trap deployment efforts and, again, to interact with the established research team at UCR. Dr. Atkinson will return to California this week as well, and both will be available to answer questions at the grower meetings.

Trap deployment continues in San Diego County. To date, approximately 40 traps have been placed and are being serviced regularly. Traps and lures have been ordered for deployment in Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties, with the assistance of resident UCCE Farm Advisors Dr. Ben Faber and Mary Bianchi. The northern traps will serve, within limits, as an early detection mechanism.

The Commission's avocado acreage at the Pine Tree Ranch in Santa Paula, CA is also being pressed into service. Next week, Dr. Akif Eskalen will visit the Commission's leased acreage to survey trees suitable for PSHB research. Trees will ultimately be injected with various fungicide and insecticide treatments and tree cuttings will be made. Cut wood will be moved to the CAHR's Vista quarantine facility where beetles and fungus will be introduced to the plant material to gauge treatment effectiveness. Selected trees at Pine Tree Ranch will also be used for fruit residue testing over a prolonged period of time, an essential step in the collection of data needed to support material registration with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Replications of this work will also be performed using trees at UCR's Ag Ops in Riverside, CA.

Lastly, later this week the Commission will be facilitating a discussion among interested handlers regarding a protocol to reduce the risk of spreading PSHB once the harvest season gets underway. The idea is to achieve consensus on measures needed to keep PSHB from spreading, where possible, between infested areas and those commercial avocado groves presently free of the pest/disease complex.

Growers are strongly encouraged to attend the meetings scheduled for December 16-17, 2014 to learn more about how to monitor for shot hole borers, tell the difference between PSHB and other pests, and to ask questions of the experts.

United Water Conservation District Upgrade Could Lead to Rise in Grower Pump Charges

According to an article in the [Ventura County Star](#), renovations to the United Water Conservation District's key facilities could lead to increases in growers' per acre-foot pump charges. At the end of October, a special meeting was held in Lake Piru to discuss the status of the current infrastructure and the costs of possible renovations.

Lake Piru dam renovations to update the 1950s structure and meet new environmental requirements are expected to cost about \$250 million to \$400 million. Michael Solomon, United's general manager, calculated that financing this project could bring a grower's average acre-foot pump charges cost to approximately \$110.

Other possible renovations include more than \$100 million for the Santa Felicia Dam and an unknown dollar amount to maintain an endangered steelhead trout habitat in Lower Piru Creek. Removal of invasive quagga mussels from Lake Piru marina could lead to \$100,000 to \$500,000 in annual maintenance costs.

Solomon noted that none of the projects would bring new water, but the work needs to be done because besides being required for environmental compliance the "current system is the key to the economy of the county. If you don't do it, the economy will suffer."

Avocado Production Class

New California avocado growers, or those interested in learning more about avocado production best practices, are encouraged to register for a new course entitled, "Avocado Production for New Growers." Dr. Gary Bender, UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Farm Advisor Emeritus, will serve as the lead instructor. The course consists of six weekly classes, as well as Ag Waiver Water School Training and a field trip to the UCCE High Density Trial Grove and a commercial avocado grove located in Valley Center, CA.

The fee for the course is \$105.00 per person, and includes Dr. Bender's *Avocado Production in California* (books 1 and 2), and the ANR Publication *Propagating Avocados*.

Below is a list of topics for each of the classes:

- January 28 — Introduction to Agriculture in San Diego County, History of Avocado Production in California
- February 4 — Botany, Flowering, Varieties, Harvest Dates, Rootstocks
- February 11 — Irrigation Systems, Irrigation Scheduling, Salinity Management
- February 18 — Fertilization, Organic Production
- February 25 — Insect and Mite Control, Disease Control
- March 4 — Ag Waiver Water School Training (Dr. Loretta Bates)
- Mar 11 — Canopy Management, Tree Spacing, Frost Management
- March 21 — 1:00 pm, field trip to High Density Trial grove and a commercial grove, Valley Center CA

The course begins January 28, 2015 with sessions running from 2:00 - 4:00 pm at the San Diego County Farm Bureau, 1670 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido, CA 92027.

[Online registration](#) is available now. A flyer for the course is available [here](#).

For more information, contact Quang Tong for at qtong@ucanr.edu or 858-534-0947.

CAC Introduces Innovative Menu Options to Restaurant Chain Culinarians

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) met with R&D/Product Innovation Executives and Executive Chefs at the inaugural Global Culinary Innovators Association (GCIA) Combine held November 8 – 12 in Seattle, Washington. The event provided the CAC marketing team with the opportunity to showcase innovative fresh California avocado menu items to key chain culinarians and menu decision-makers for the 201-400 ranked restaurant chains in the nation.

To highlight the versatility and beneficial value of having fresh California avocados on the menu, a variety of avocado-centric dishes were served at breakfast, lunch, snack breaks and receptions throughout the conference. Those items included:

- *Spicy Shrimp and California Avocado in Lettuce Wraps and Avocado Lumpia*
- *Fresh Avocados on breakfast omelet bar and Avocado Crab Cake Crudo*
- *Fried Shiitake Mushrooms with Asian Avocado Sriracha Aioli, California Avocado Infused Hummus, Crispy Chicken & Waffle Salad with California Avocados, California Avocado & King Salmon Bite*

- Fresh Avocados on the Tater Tot Waffle station at breakfast

As a result, the Commission made seven *new* contacts and confirmed numerous returning California avocado menu items on current partner menus.



Desmond Fannon (Sodexo/Jazzman's Café) and Chuck Ballard (Which Wich) enjoy the Spicy Shrimp and California Avocado in Lettuce Wrap.

CAC Garner the Attention of Foodservice Trade Editors in Preparation for the 2015 Season

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) is preparing for 2015 by connecting with key foodservice communicators and influencers in order to ensure positive and enthusiastic press coverage of California avocados throughout the upcoming season. The 2014 International Foodservice Editorial Council (IFEC) Conference, held November 3 – 8, 2014 in Dallas, Texas, provided the first pre-2015 opportunity for the Commission to engage with this audience of key editorial contacts.

To generate interest in California avocados prior to the conference, the Commission teamed with Dole Packaged Foods, LLC, the National Mango Board and the California Strawberry Commission to deliver fruit-forward flatbreads to more than 50 foodservice trade editors in Chicago, New York, Raleigh and Cleveland. Editors from *Plate*, *QSR*, *FSR*, *Nation's Restaurant News* and *Convenience Store Products* enjoyed *California Avocado Flatbread with Bacon-Garlic Cream Sauce* and sent personal thank you notes to the Commission's Foodservice Team. As Connie Gentry, *FSR*, noted, "Delicious! The entire office is enjoying this treat. Please share our appreciation with all the folks who were responsible."

To demonstrate the versatility of premium California avocados at the conference, Kent Rathbun, one of CAC's artisan chefs, prepared *Crispy Tempura California Avocado with Yuzu-Spicy Tofu Cream* for approximately 175 attendees at the IFEC's Chef Showcase. The Commission also co-sponsored a dinner at Stephan Pyles' Stampede 66 for editors from *Flavor & the Menu*, *Restaurant Business*, *National Culinary Review*, *Produce Business*, *Restaurant Hospitality*, *School Nutrition*, *Nation's Restaurant News*, *Convenience Store Products* and *Food Fanatics*. Marketing Managers from Which Wich Sandwiches were also on the Stampede 66 guest list.

During the conference the CAC team demonstrated its industry leadership and expertise by sharing research and insights with editors of the leading trade publications. The team also met with 13 editors to plan feature placements for 2015.



Artisan chef Kent Rathbun represented California avocados at the IFEC Chef Showcase.

Commission's Online Marketing Exceeds Expectations Across the Board

Engaging with consumers increasingly takes place online — via websites and social media channels. As such, digital platforms provide the California Avocado Commission (CAC) with the opportunity to share premium brand messaging and create awareness around the availability of California avocados while establishing the Commission as the trusted resource for all online avocado information. Better yet, California avocado fans share the Commission's tweets, blog and Facebook posts with their friends and families, extending the reach of CAC's messaging.

Data from fiscal year 2013-14 indicate the Commission's online marketing initiatives have been very successful, with most online goals reached or exceeded during this time frame. Below is a sampling of the past year's most notable successes.

- The February 17 President's Day Facebook post featuring California avocados in a unique *Red, White, Blue and Green Salsa* was the most popular post of the year, garnering 4,196 likes
- Consumer engagement with the Commission's Facebook page increased this year as fans commented on the many ways to enjoy California avocados; a July 22 post prompting fans to share what they would do with a dozen fresh California avocados set a record with 588 comments
- The average number of impressions for each Facebook post exceeded 21,000
- More than 300 Facebook posts this year generated 6.3 million consumer impressions
- Twitter engagement was exceptional this year and helped CAC exceed its goal of reaching 8,500 followers; California avocados now have more than 9,800 Twitter followers
- The newly launched *The Scoop* blog greatly exceeded expectations with more than 15,000 unique visits per month (the goal was 2,000 unique visits per month)
- Consumers showed their enthusiasm for fresh California avocado snacks with more than 50,000 unique visits to the snacking website

These successes have helped the Commission plan its 2014-15 online marketing program, including a number of exciting new consumer engagement initiatives.



California Avocado Commission

February 17 · 🌐

Happy President's Day! Celebrate with this delicious California Avocado Red, White, and Blueberry Salsa.

Get the recipe -> <http://bit.ly/1gzw4mn>



This President's Day post was the most popular of the year with 4,196 likes.

CAC's Blogger Program Wins Prestigious PRism Award

The California Avocado Commission's (CAC) comprehensive blogger program was recognized by respected public relations experts at the Public Relations Society of America Los Angeles chapter's 50th Annual PRism awards dinner. At the event, CAC's PR firm, Golin, received the PRism award for the development and management of the Commission's blogger program. The "California Avocados: Not All Avocados are Created Equal" campaign was recognized in the Digital Public Relations Tactics – Blogger/Influencer Outreach category for its integrated online communications and ability to build brand awareness, share information and influence audiences via social and digital media platforms. The campaign faced notable competition, including a campaign by Toyota.

The Commission partners with some of the most respected and influential food and nutrition bloggers, who develop creative California avocado recipes that highlight the versatility of the fruit, as well as informative posts about the nutritional benefits of California Avocados. These bloggers share their imaginative avocado creations on their blogs, with their followers on social media channels — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram — and provide guest posts for CAC's blog, "The Scoop".

The Commission also reached out to respected food and nutrition bloggers at special events, such as the [FitBloggin' 14 Conference](#), and hosted avocado grove tours and dinners that provided bloggers with a behind-the-scenes look at California avocados.

The PRism award called attention to the Commission's leadership role in providing engaging and informative content to consumers via an integrated blogger outreach program.



California Avocado Commission Blogger/Influence Outreach Campaign PRism Award.

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 12/14/2014	Season-to-Date (since 11/1/14)	2014 Year to Date
Hass	11,835	11,835	291,884,556
Lamb	0	0	8,062,333
Other (Greens)	18,600	58,614	2,360,926
California Total	30,435	70,450	302,307,815
Florida	1,128,105	7,025,150	65,243,860
Chile	634,576	3,253,247	88,225,275
Mexico	32,003,204	186,879,700	1,305,832,300
Other (Imports)	1,930,000	10,950,000	171,658,132
Import Total	34,567,780	201,082,947	1,565,715,707
USA Total	35,726,320	208,178,547	1,933,267,382
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 Newsline* Avocado Prices 12/15/2014

	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 Volume to Quote			
48's				
60's				
70's				
84's				
Mexican Hass				
All Sizes	14.00-29.00	N/A	2/0.99-1.99	13.00-31.00
Chilean Hass				
All Sizes	16.00-31.00	N/A	5/5.79	13.00-31.00
Peruvian Hass				
All Sizes	N/A	N/A		

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

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

Synopsis... The sea surface temperature anomaly pattern supports troughing out at 135-138W to the west of central and southern California. Support continues to develop for a southern branch of the westerlies into southern California and Arizona, so the wet pattern continues to elongate west from Texas to southeast Arizona. After about January 7, we expect a zone of above normal rainfall to develop along 32-36N from the Pacific into southcentral and southern California with near normal rainfall in northern California. *El Niño* is exerting more support to enhance the southern branch of the westerlies.

Currently we are entering the dry portion of the MJO cycle. On about January 3 to 5, we should start the slide into the wet portion of the cycle. At that time we should see the beginning of the series of troughs that push into southern California and bring another period of rains, possibly heavy ones, for about a week. Conditions will continue mild, for the most part, thanks to the warm sea surface temperatures near the coast of California.

In the Near-Term - Southern California Avocado Area – Dec. 18 to Jan. 1... Small rains or showers may occur on the 20th and 21st, with a possible shower in the foothill areas on the 24th. Moderate to strong Santa Anas are possible on the 22nd-23rd, the 25th-26th, the 28th to the 30th, and offshore breezes on the 31st and 1st of January. Watch for freezes and wetbulb freezes prior to start of Santa Ana winds and for a day or two after the Santa Anas end due to residual dry air aloft.

Summary – January 2 to 16, 2015... Warmer than normal sea surface temperatures near the coast and out to the west about 500 miles will continue to keep California warmer than normal through December. *El Niño* will assist in giving the storm track enough energy to push eastward and bring more consistent rains into central and southern California as a whole. Our Fox Outlook Map shows a southern branch of the westerlies trying to develop into central and southern California during this period. Sometime during the second or third week of January, we expect to see the mid-season dry spell that normally occurs in January. It could persist as long as 14 days. Watch for freezes to occur during the middle of January. Despite the warm days -- into the 70's -- nights will tend to get into the 30's, or perhaps 27-30 degrees in the colder locations, with low wetbulb temperatures.

For the avocado growing areas, a rainy period should develop from January 5 to 12, followed by Santa Anas. Freezes will tend to associate with the non-windy periods just before and just following Santa Anas. In general, the warm sea surface and generally warmer airmasses that will drift eastward from the Pacific will tend to minimize freeze events.

Seasonal Outlook/*El Niño* Update – January 17 to March 31... 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 to support above normal rainfall in February and near normal rainfall in January and March. If March has above normal rainfall in the first week to 10 days, then below normal rainfall later in the month is suggested by CFS2 guidance. For the most part, we expect mild conditions with below normal frost and freeze occurrences in the avocado belt during this period.

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