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CAC Launches Sustainability Webpage

The term sustainability has become prevalent over the last few years, with catchphrases like “Go Green” and “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” At the core, sustainability is focused on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

As the dialogue surrounding sustainability — and specifically, attention to sustainability practices in farming — has increased, the California Avocado Commission has worked to identify our industry’s sustainability practices. In doing so, our industry will be better prepared to respond to increasing inquiries from buyers (retailers and foodservice operators) concerning California’s sustainability practices such as child labor use, fertilizer application, greenhouse gas emissions, and labor rights, to name a few. CAC led studies to identify the hundreds of laws California avocado growers must comply with in areas such as worker health, wages, safety, and environmental protections. In early 2020, CAC also conducted two sustainability listening sessions with growers.

Ultimately, based on these efforts, we determined it was time to begin to tell the California avocado industry’s sustainability story. To showcase California avocado growers’ sustainability practices CAC has launched a webpage (californiaavocado.com/avocado101/california-avocado-sustainability/) on CAC’s consumer website, CaliforniaAvocado.com. The “California Avocado



cado Sustainability” page, which can be located under the “Avocado 101” tab, provides website visitors information about the four pillars of California avocado sustainability: 1) Environmentally Friendly Farming; 2) Worker Well-Being; 3) Healthy Communities; and 4) Economic Viability.

How do we define sustainability in California avocado production? Well, we believe a sustainable California avocado production industry uses environmentally friendly farming practices, ensures worker well-being, contributes to healthy communities, and maintains economic viability.

We know California avocado growers are good stewards of the land and contributing members of their communities. The webpage explains that California avocado growers:

- Farm in compliance with robust federal and state requirements
- Follow Good Agricultural Practices and the Food Safety Modernization Act
- Do not use tilling in California avocado production
- Help generate healthy soils

through regenerative agriculture practices

In the worker well-being section, the Commission highlights several California laws and regulations that set the state apart both from other states and other countries, showcasing that workers in the California avocado industry are treated well. The healthy communities section features both the environmental benefits of having avocado groves in a community as well as the contributions of California growers who participate in making their communities better.

Economic viability also is a key part of sustainability. Clearly, if California avocado growers can’t survive financially then the business cannot be sustained. This pillar of the sustainability initiative shines a spotlight on the economic value of the California avocado industry and encourages purchasers to support their communities and choose locally grown produce when available.

One of the best ways to communicate sustainability information and make it more relatable to key purchasers is by sharing California avocado grower stories. We encourage you to take a look at the sustainability webpages, and if you have a story you would be willing to share about your environmentally friendly growing practices, the well-being of your employees or your involvement in your community, please send me an email at kmelban@avocado.org. 🥑