

# Commission Hosts Regulatory Tours

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**T**he number of regulations California farmers comply with is daunting. As your advocate, the California Avocado Commission pursues opportunities to provide state and federal agencies with an overview of growers' good stewardship practices as regulations affecting California avocado growers are considered. The Commission believes that by telling our story concerning how avocados are sustainably grown in California and how farmland is stewarded by those who work it, we can effectively educate policymakers, consumers, and other stakeholders about our farming practices.

In May the Commission hosted two separate regulatory grove tours. First, the Commission partnered with the California Citrus Quality Council in hosting a tour of California avocado and citrus production areas in Ventura County. Attendees included senior staff from the Environmental Protection Agency, United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service and Foreign Agriculture Service along with the California Department of Agriculture.

Next, we joined with the Crop Protection Action Coalition for Trade — a coalition of U.S. farmer organizations committed to truth and transparency about American farming practices — to host an avocado grove tour in Escondido. Participants included the same agencies mentioned previously, along



with other state and national commodity representatives. The discussion focused on current integrated pest management practices and the challenges farmers face as input costs and import volumes increase.

By hosting agency staff in an avocado grove, the Commission has an opportunity to help legislative decision makers better understand production agriculture and the challenges farmers face. Almost all participants for both tours had never been to an avocado grove. Getting them out of their Washington, D.C. and Sacramento offices helps them develop a meaningful understanding of how farmers make decisions in areas like utilization of crop protection materials, efficient water use and ensuring the health and safety of employees.

As stated previously, much of the discussion focused on rising farming costs coupled with increasing import volumes. A double whammy. Agency staff were told as costs go up, and competition stiffens, the cost of regulatory compliance is increasing too.

The Commission's goal with these regulatory tours is to establish and/or improve relations with officials tasked with creating and enforcing regulations impacting California avocado farming. While there are no guarantees these relationships will prove helpful in the future, hopefully if an issue comes up affecting avocados, they will consider, "How will this impact California avocado farmers and is it necessary?" 🥑

