



Rick Shade

A Year Like No Other

Spring has sprung, fall has fell, summer is here and we're picking and spraying like hell. While no two years are ever the same in farming, there are usually similarities among the years. But this year? I don't believe I have ever seen the like. With the lead times for writing articles, the California avocado season may very well be winding down by the time you read this column.

If the season winds down early, what ever are we going to do? A lot of things come to mind for me. If your orchards look anything like the orchards I see regularly, there sure seems to be a big crop coming in 2018. Let's make sure that we give our trees and the upcoming crop the best possible care that we can. Since we will be done harvesting early, let's take care of some of those tasks on the ranch that we never seem to be able to get to. If you need extra labor, bring in the crews that harvest your avocados. If we keep those hard-working folks busy in the off-season, they are far more likely to be available when we need them to pick in the on-season. Also, if we put them to work making improvements on the ranch, they are likely to start taking pride in the properties where they pick. If people take pride in a property where they work, it is a winning situation for everybody.

But what about the California Avocado Commission? The work of the Commission continues year round. The marketing staff works tirelessly to keep our avocados front and center in the minds of the buyers. Our staff continues to run the programs marketing our fruit for this year, working on budgets, creating new programs and ad campaigns for next year, and continuing to come up with great new ways to use our California avocados. The Industry Affairs staff continues working with us growers, dealing with our concerns and getting updated information out to us in the field. They continue to work with legislators and their legislative staffs to protect and advance the interests of the California avocado grower. Our Production Research staff continues to oversee the projects that will help us become more productive in the future, and get that information out to growers so we can use it.

Speaking of production research, that tireless, devoted group of our fellow growers, led by Leo McGuire, continues to work with the research professionals who study our crop. The recent crisis caused by the shot hole borer appears to have calmed down. The Production Research Committee is now ready to take on some new issues important to avocado growers. The Committee is planning



on tightening the focus of the program to really hone in on current issues that are important to growers in the field. If you have problems in your orchard that you do not seem to be able to solve, contact Leo or Dr. Tim Spann at the Commission. It is possible your issue could become a new topic for a research project done by the Commission.

The devoted, hard work of all of us together: the farmer, the harvester, the handler, the marketer, the researcher and our Commission staff, all lead me to the following quote by E.H. Derby: "A fertile soil alone does not carry agriculture to perfection."

Have a great summer and start planning now for 2018! 🥑