

Chairman's Report



Doug O'Hara

Before I begin my column, I would like to express my gratitude to the Board for placing their trust in me by electing me as Chairman for the coming year. I believe the Chairman of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) position is very important and is sometimes the “face” of the industry. I have done, and will continue to do, my best for the growers and the industry as a whole and appreciate everyone’s confidence in me.

Now, on to business! I must admit, this is my favorite time of year – because the holidays also mark the start of a new California avocado season! One of the best things about a new season is that the past season is “in the books” and you can start fresh. Although I analyze the past season based on what I could have done better, I try to focus on the positive things to come. I realize there are many factors – water, pests and increased imports – that will challenge us, but they are mostly out of my control. There are several things I am looking forward to in the coming year that I think will benefit all California avocado growers.

Some of the biggest changes we will see this upcoming year will come from CAC’s new advertising agency. We all felt it was time to look toward the future and possibly shake things up a bit. The Board was lucky enough to see some of the agency’s preliminary work and it is outstanding. This is a top-notch agency and I commend Tom Bellamore, Jan DeLyster and staff for dedicating many hours choosing the perfect match for our industry. The rollout for the new campaign will be sometime in January — so we can look forward to some exciting stuff!

What good is advertising if we don’t have crop to support it? Luckily we have enough fruit to keep the marketing team busy most of the year. CAC’s crop volume used for budget purposes is 360 million pounds, but word on the street is that it could be higher. This is great for the California grower because a longer season means we will have supplies for our retailers during most of the holidays. We have made it through some of the tougher months, so I am hoping for a mild winter and early demand for California avocados.

Jan and the marketing team have talked with many retailers and the majority of them have indicated interest in California avocados. I have met with many retailers at different venues as well and can tell you many of them can’t wait for our season to begin. Because of the size of our crop and the early size of our fruit, I believe there will be early demand. This will allow growers to pick a little earlier than normal, remove some stress from the tree and help reduce the alternate bearing cycle.

As with every growing season, you never know what is in store for you. I think CAC’s years of marketing and California branding has prepared us for a great season and more to come. By adjusting the message and increasing communication with the retailers and packers, CAC has helped increase demand for California avocados and we should all look forward to a prosperous year. 🥑



Board of Directors

District 1

Member/Jerome Stehly-**Vice Chair**
Alternate/Alex Gonzalez

Member/Carol Steed
Alternate/Vacant Seat

District 2

Member/Leo McGuire
Alternate/Cristina Leon

Member/Kellen Newhouse
Alternate/Ohannes Karaoghlianian

District 3

Member/Doug O'Hara-**Chairman**
Alternate/Mario Martinez

Member/Ed McFadden
Alternate/Bryce Bannatyne Jr.

District 4

Member/Art Bliss-**Treasurer**
Alternate/Jason Cole

Member/John Lamb
Alternate/Robert Grether

District 5

Member/Rick Shade
Alternate/Vacant Seat

Member/Jim Swoboda-**Secretary**
Alternate/Vacant Seat

Handlers

Member/Wayne Brydon
Alternate/Jessica Hunter

Member/Egidio “Gene” Carbone
Alternate/Robb Bertels

Member/Steve Taft
Alternate/Donny Lucy

Member/Gary Caloroso
Alternate/Vacant Seat

Public Member

Leesa Eichberger

To contact a CAC representative, please visit:
CaliforniaAvocadoGrowers.com/Commission/your-representatives