

# California Avocados Online, A Year in Review and a Look Forward



**SAVE THE DATES**  
for our Season Opening Celebration Events:

<b>Jerome Stehly</b> Monday, April 16, 12pm-1pm	<b>Emily Schiller, RD</b> Wednesday, April 18, 12pm-1pm	<b>Chef Trey Foshee</b> Friday, April 20, 10am-11am
		
Meet Jerome Stehly, a California Avocado grower from Valley Center, CA.	Learn why and how California Avocados can be part of your healthful diet with facts from Registered Dietitian Emily Schiller.	Wow your taste buds—and your guests—with recipes and culinary tips from executive chef and partner at George's in La Jolla.



The California Avocado Commission's online initiatives play an important role in reaching CAC's target consumer with relevant and awareness-building messaging throughout the day on a variety of different platforms. Online initiatives work closely with efforts made in consumer advertising, public relations, foodservice, and retail outlets to ensure that cohesive programs and messaging, designed to increase demand and highlight the premium value of California avocados, are aligned.

## Website

CaliforniaAvocado.com serves as the information and content hub for CAC, a face and voice for California avocados that is available for consumer questions and viewing 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Having a constant presence allows the target audience to become familiar with California avocado messaging and branding on a regular basis.

In 2012, website visitors increased more than 50 percent over the prior year resulting in more people being exposed to information about California avocados, their lifecycle, nutrition, recipes and grower information than ever before.

The most popular content on CaliforniaAvocado.com is the nutrition section, followed by "Grow Your Own Tree" and recipes. Based on these results, the nutrition and recipes sections will be refreshed in 2013 to make the content even easier for visitors to find and share, increasing consumer engagement and interest to an even greater extent.

## Mobile Website

In today's society there is a huge shift toward using smartphones in order to view content online. According to vari-

ous studies, 51 percent of millennial smartphone users (born 1983 or after) look up recipes on the phones while grocery shopping, 25 percent gather product information while in the grocery store and 61 percent use their mobile device to compare product prices while grocery shopping. CAC consumers are in-line with this trend, as there was more than a 100 percent increase in mobile website traffic from just a year ago.

Understanding that California avocado consumers use multiple devices like smartphones, tablets and computers, CAC developed a strategy to bring California avocado messaging directly to the user in the most digestible format for the 2012 4<sup>th</sup> of July campaign. CAC built a special 4<sup>th</sup> of July website in a new format called responsive design, which

automatically recognizes and adapts to the viewer's device. Tailoring the content and delivering exciting summer recipes helped spur a 20 percent increase in mobile site visits compared to the month prior (June 2012), and a 72 percent increase in visits compared to a year prior (July 2011). All trends indicate that this mobile shift is continuing and CAC will be developing mobile-specific content in 2013 to keep California avocado communication at the forefront of consumer engagement.

### Social Media

CAC's social media channels "personalize" California avocados and provide the opportunity to go beyond messaging to engagement, giving consumers direct access to other

CAC's Online Channels:	URL ("uniform resource locator", also known as "web address");	Purpose:
Website	CaliforniaAvocado.com	Allows consumers to engage and receive information on an ongoing basis. CAC is always available online.
Mobile website	m.CaliforniaAvocado.com	Gives a growing mobile market the information they need where and when they want it, in a convenient viewing format.
Social media	Facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados Pinterest.com/CA_Avocados Twitter.com/CA_Avocados YouTube/CaliforniaAvocados Instagram.com/CA_Avocados	To deliver real-time California avocado information and usage ideas. Social media provides a forum for consumers to engage with California avocados on a more personal basis.
Email	Recipe Newsletter	Emails are delivered to consumers on at least a monthly basis to remain top of mind and provide popular content.

California avocado enthusiasts and California avocado experts. Content is continually shared by CAC throughout the day and consumers can ask questions and get quick responses (generally within a couple of hours). The ability to engage personally and receive direct responses from CAC representatives creates an even stronger connection with users and California avocados. Ongoing messaging ensures California avocados are top of mind when the 150,000+ Facebook fans and 5,000 Twitter followers are grocery shopping.

CAC celebrated the start of the 2012 season with a campaign on Facebook to let new and existing fans know it was time to look for and request California avocados. This week-long celebration included three, one-hour, live chats on the Facebook page with various avocado experts including a California grower (Jerome Stehly), chef (Trey Foshee) and registered dietitian (Emily Schiller of Golin Harris, CAC's public relations agency). The overall campaign, as well as the chats, encouraged fans to start the conversation about California avocados through questions, highlight seasonality and specifically ask for them at their local retail locations. A similar activity is planned for April 2013 with a new lineup of guests to build demand and awareness for the upcoming crop.

To help send traffic to CAC's website and encourage new recipe/usage ideas with California avocados, CAC launched an account on the fast-growing social network Pinterest. On Pinterest, users "pin" or "repin" images that they like, including California avocado recipes, to virtual pin boards. Since each image "pinned" from CaliforniaAvocado.com retains its link back to CaliforniaAvocado.com, Pinterest has become a strong traffic driver to the website – within the top five sources along with Google and Facebook – and activities to create awareness of California avocados on the network will continue throughout 2013.

### **Recipe Emails**

Email is an important way to stay connected with consumers on a monthly basis, allowing for CAC to remain at the forefront of consumers' minds. CAC's 180,000+ email subscribers receive information about season timing; so they know when to look for California avocados, seasonal recipes, usage tips and campaign promotions. Recent research conducted amongst CAC's email subscribers revealed that our subscribers would like to receive recipe emails more often, so CAC will be sending one to three emails each month during the season in 2013.

### **Seasonal Campaigns**

During the season, a series of holiday-focused campaigns, coinciding with other advertising and marketing channels, are launched across the online channels in the form of microsites (or dedicated sections of the website), social media contests and themed emails to encourage California avo-

cado consumption during peak availability.

Two of the major campaigns this past season included the Cinco de Mayo and American Summer Holidays campaigns. Cinco de Mayo is a classic avocado consumption occasion that occurs as California avocado volume is increasing. CAC leverages it to encourage consumers to opt for hand-grown California avocados through a microsite that includes party tips, special recipes and in 2012 featured renowned chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger and their two special Cinco de Mayo-themed recipes.

Additionally, the microsite promoted a sweepstakes that took place on Facebook. The campaign exceeded expectations prompting 5,000 visitors to the dedicated microsite who spent an average of 5.5 minutes on the website and drove almost 5,000 sweepstakes entries via CAC's Facebook Page. Cinco de Mayo plans for 2013 are already nearing implementation stage, with refreshed recipes – including new recipes from chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger – party tips and a sweepstakes expected to launch in early to mid-April.

The American Summer Holidays campaign in 2012 introduced the 4th of July as the premier occasion for California avocados. In conjunction with a television and print ad campaign, CAC launched a microsite dedicated to the holiday with new recipes, entertainment tips, a recipe brochure and more. Additionally, the campaign aimed to increase consumer recipes in the CAC online database through a recipe contest on Facebook. The campaign garnered 50 new consumer-developed recipes, nearly 20,000 microsite visits with 55,000 page views over the life of the contest, indicating that this content is valued by visitors. CAC's 2013 initiatives will build on this success, providing users on the website and on Facebook with the opportunity to submit their prize-winning recipes to extend the reach of the contest and interest amongst California avocado fans looking for the latest and greatest recipes.

CAC's web, mobile and social media programs are able to creatively integrate with, and amplify, the potential of traditional media. By bringing California avocado recipes, nutrition information and tips to online users, the message that California avocados deliver premium quality is delivered on a far more personal level than was available 10 years ago. The online efforts continue to reach customers on their time and at their leisure, offering quality information created by CAC and its partners, and shared by trusted peers.

In 2012 the online activities drove – and continue to drive – demand for California avocados by facilitating emotional engagements, encouraging the sharing of key messaging by providing the content and opportunities for fans to do so, and introducing 4th of July as the premier summertime eating occasion for California avocados. 🥑