

## Winter –

This past November your new Board of Commissioners was seated following the state-wide election. The first action of the Board was to elect a new Executive Committee (EC). I am happy to report that the strong EC from last year was re-elected for another 12-month term. We have a great team and I am proud to serve our industry with my colleagues on the CAC Board and the EC. Your EC continues to be Doug O'Hara as vice chair, Carol Steed as secretary and John Lamb serving as treasurer. These growers bring a wide range of sophisticated experience and knowledge of growing, marketing, finance and what I like to call "muddy-boots farming" to the EC. We are all volunteer growers who have a huge stake in the successful marketing of our California avocado crop by our Commission.

Following the election, the new Chair traditionally has the opportunity to say a few words. I like public speaking about as much as a visit to the dentist, but there were a few points that I felt needed to be made. These were my comments to start the new Board year:

*There are several reasons why I agreed to serve this Commission for another term as chair and I thought I might share those with you.*

*First - this Board is the most positive, cohesive and forward looking that I have seen in the years that I have watched and then served as an alternate and member. I truly believe that together we can do great things for our California avocado industry.*

*Second – I believe that we have the best team in the history of CAC in our current staff. They are a pleasure to work with and support. Our President Tom Bellamore leads a talented, world-class team doing CAC work for our industry.*

*Third - We are living in a unique time for our industry. I believe that future generations of farmers will look back at our time now as being the golden age of California avocados. Consumption is growing quickly both at home and throughout the world. Huge new markets are just beginning to be tapped. Consumption looks like it will outpace production worldwide for the foreseeable future. We are in the right place at the right time. I've been a farmer all my life and I cannot think of a better crop or place to farm than what I am doing now working with California avocados.*

*That does not mean that we are without problems. The wolf is always at the door, whether it is in the form of water, pest, disease or other troubles that we cannot even imagine. Part of our job here is to be vigilant and work together to solve these problems for our industry.*

**So - LET'S GET TO WORK!**

This is the time of year when CAC staff is "setting the table" for our industry. By the time you and I begin picking, Tom Bellamore and his staff are far down the path working to make our season successful. The CAC staff and your Board are also working to prepare for our season in other ways. We are actively communicating with the other players in our industry through participation on the



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Hass Avocado Board. Chairs of the marketing organizations from Chile, Mexico, Peru and the CAC sit as ex-officio members of the HAB. Your Commissioners Charlie Wolk, Carol Steed and I represent California at regular meetings of the Hass Avocado Strategy Group. This international group meets to discuss ways to enhance the U.S. Hass market. Prior to the PMA Fresh Summit in New Orleans, we met to discuss industry issues. Communication is vital in the marketing of our fruit. All players in the U.S. market have made adjustments to better organize movement of higher quality fruit into our market. As Commissioner Wolk often says, "What is good for our market floats everyone's boat a little higher." Communication on an international level is key for maximizing our market and returns back to us growers.

Winter is a scary time for California avocados growers. We start with Santa Ana winds and extreme fire danger, then transition to the opposite extreme of frost. As I write this we are preparing for our first brush with winter cold. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will be part way through a gentle and wet winter. We could all use some leaching from pure winter rains during the next few months to push what, so far, is very good sizing of our fruit. 🥑