

Supporting California Growers in Challenging Times



Jeff Oberman

Today's market conditions are not acceptable. There was consensus at the Commission's June Board meeting that nobody, including Board members, stakeholders nor staff are pleased with current pricing and the increasing challenges from current and future offshore imports.

Rising production cost and difficult market conditions remain constant and the headwinds I mentioned in earlier columns are now at gale force. That said, the Commission is working hard to explore where we can help the California grower and seize opportunities where we can make a difference.

During the recent Commission Annual Meetings, we presented new strategies to support the viability of the California avocado grower. These included advocacy and marketing programs that directly tie back to our mission "to maximize grower returns by enhancing premium brand positioning for California avocados and improving grower sustainability." Each objective will have metrics that measure our success and identify areas in need of improvement. (You can see a report on our series of Annual Meetings on pages 10-12 in this issue.)

As I write this column, the 2023 season is approximately 50% complete and we need to ensure the remaining crop is marketed effectively. We will

continue to drive our promotional efforts with retail, food-service and wholesale customers until the last avocado is harvested. In addition to traditional point-of-sale and direct-to-consumer marketing efforts, we are looking at historical trends, promotional opportunities, new retail partners and providing increased data resources on pricing and point of sale strategies to help customers (buyers) succeed and ultimately deliver good returns to the grower.

There is a lot of fruit left to sell this season and some report, a good crop in the coming year. We have a motivated Leadership Team, organizational structure, and resources at the ready to provide value.

Like efforts promoting this year's crop, on the advocacy front we are providing swift action when opportunities present themselves. Recently, growers in Districts 1 and 2 approached the Commission for support during the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission's (LAFCO) June Board Meetings. In less than a week, Commission staff, with support from CAC Board representatives, were able to develop comments to present at the hearing. Vice President of Industry Affairs



and Operations Ken Melban testified at the LAFCO hearing and sent a letter to LAFCO articulating the view of CAC and its grower members.

This water legislative advocacy example represents how the Commission can spring into action quickly when alerted of a challenge. We want to hear from you, as we are now in the planning stages for the 2023-2024 Season. Representatives on the Board have provided support for 'top-line' priorities within Marketing, Industry Affairs, Production and Outreach and we are now getting to work developing strategies to achieve these goals.

California Growers, let's work together and deliver the Commission's vision: "To be recognized as the most-desired avocado in the world by fostering a vibrant industry." 🥑