

By Jason Cole  
Chairman of the Board



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## Standing Together Is How We Succeed

In my dozen years as a California Avocado Commission Board member, I have spoken with countless growers about their production practices (both what works and what does not), the ebb and flow of global avocado supplies, the pressure of rising production costs, the increasing unpredictability of the weather, keeping up with regulatory changes — the varied minutiae of what keeps us up at night. During those conversations, I addressed them as both a California avocado grower and a Board member — as their peer and their advocate.

I learned countless lessons from the growers I have spoken with, and I truly hope they gained a little something by having a conversation with me. And if I were to boil down a dozen years of conversations into one takeaway, for me there is no lesson more important than this: every single grower faces challenges unique to their grove and their personal circumstances, but it is only if we act *together* — as an industry — that we can advance our cause, our profitability and our productivity.

One single voice isn't going to turn the tide — but our voices united under the umbrella of the Commission's fierce advocacy *can*. Granted, the change may come slower than you or I like — but advocating on our behalf is a complicated process that often involves



legislative members, persons on local boards and industry decision makers who must also answer to their constituents. Change requires conversation and it requires an entity — the Commission — who is willing to fight on our behalf every single day. The issues we are facing — whether it's reestablishing USDA inspections in Mexico, identifying the next invasive pest/disease threat, or securing fair agricultural water pricing — are complex. As growers, we don't have the time, experience or knowledge to untangle this level of complexity. *But CAC does.*

This industry is on the cusp of even greater potential and at the same time we are facing unprecedented pressures. Understandably, many growers

are nervous. But I say this to you as both a grower and a soon-to-be former CAC Board member — now, more than ever, we need CAC to fight on our behalf.

Just as importantly, we need more grower voices at the table to respectfully share ideas and to help define what CAC should focus on. So, advocate for our industry by joining the conversation. Speak with the directors in your district. Attend grower meetings. Share your ideas. Listen to the voices of others. And — just as importantly — grow the highest quality fruit you can. Your tireless work in the grove is what truly differentiates our fruit from the rest of the world — don't ever underestimate how important that is. 🥑