

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION
GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
June 27, 2011**

A meeting of the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Committee of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) was held on Monday, June 27, 2011 in the Calavo Conference Room in Santa Paul, California, with the following people present:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Bauwens, Chair
Mike Browne
Reuben Hofshi
Link Leavens
Dan Pinkerton

CAC STAFF PRESENT:

April Aymami
Tom Bellamore
Ken Melban

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ben Drake

GUESTS PRESENT:

Lily Cline
Gary Gunther
Ed McFadden
Ed Page, CDFA
David Ross
Steve Thomas, CDFA

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Scott Bauwens, GAP Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and a quorum was established. Chairman Bauwens welcomed Steve Thomas and Ed Page from California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and thanked them for their attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 10, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

REVIEW CAC's GAP MANUAL & CDFA/USDA AUDIT PROCESS

Chairman Bauwens asked Steven Thomas and Ed Page to provide comments on the current draft of the CAC GAP Manual. They indicated that overall it seems the manual is going in the right direction and will marry-up well with a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection program. There was some discussion that possibly some of the content was too specific and wasn't necessary as measured against the USDA standards. Page said that whatever is in the CAC GAP Manual is what CDFA/USDA inspectors would audit for, and encouraged the Committee to only include items that are required under the USDA audit standards. The consensus of the Committee was to remove any unnecessary information that would require growers to document and/or speak to standards that were beyond the scope of the USDA standards.

Mike Browne suggested separating out the Good Harvesting Practices (GHP) section from the GAP Manual to create a stand-alone GHP manual, and the Committee agreed.

Thomas did state that the current water testing requirement of only once a year would not fulfill the USDA requirements, which currently stand at three times per year. This led to a lengthy discussion about the possibility of getting approval from USDA to reduce the water

testing standards specific to avocados to once a year. Committee members expressed concern of the three times per year requirement and the potential costs to growers with private reservoirs. It was suggested that since there have been no food-safety issues associated with fresh avocados that CAC could make the case for a reduction in the water testing frequency requirements. Thomas felt petitioning USDA for a reduction in water testing standards on avocados would most likely be unsuccessful since the USDA standards are national in scope and for all commodities, but indicated he would do some inquiring and let CAC staff know. Thomas said he believes the only possible way this could happen is if scientific data is provided that would support the reduction to once a year, providing the justification for USDA to make the exception.

A possible option was presented by CDFA of CAC developing our own checklist that growers would be audited against (as opposed to the USDA GAP checklist). There was uncertainty as to whether this would then be considered "USDA certified", and Thomas and Page agreed to explore that question and communicate back with CAC staff.

Windfall fruit was discussed, and it was explained by Page that since CDFA has a code for windfall fruit that would supersede any requirement for it to be included in the GHP manual.

GROWER OUTREACH

Tom Bellamore reminded the Committee that CAC has applied for Specialty Crop Block Grant funds specifically for grower outreach on the GAP manual and implementation. He said CAC has cleared the first review and expects a decision by late July or early August. Thomas added that CDFA would be willing to participate in grower outreach and assist CAC if requested.

NEXT STEPS

1. CAC staff will work with CDFA staff to determine the likelihood of receiving USDA approval for a reduction in the water testing frequency requirements from 3 times per year to annually.
2. CAC staff will contact Trevor Suslow (UC Davis), to determine if any data exists that provides a scientific basis for only conducting water quality tests yearly.
3. CAC staff will incorporate suggested changes from the Committee meeting to the GAP manual and distribute electronically to the Committee for further review.
4. CAC staff will follow-up with CDFA on the option of developing a CAC checklist.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, Chairman Bauwens adjourned the GAP Committee meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Melban, Director, Issues Management