

2025 California Avocado Season Exudes Good Vibes

The California avocado season got off to a very fast start in January and February, slogged through March because of rain, but kicked off April with increased shipments, all while both growers and handlers were getting top dollar for the fruit. And the handler community appears confident that the situation will continue throughout the season.

Speaking to *From the Grove* on the first day of April, Patrick Lucy, president of Del Rey Avocado Company, said “prices are really good,” adding that he expects California growers will have a very good season with strong pricing throughout the year. However, he did add that the \$60-\$70 per carton FOB market that has been prevalent for the early fruit will most likely decline a bit as volume increases over the next several months and shipments from Peru and Colombia enter the U.S. marketplace.

He expects that the weekly shipments from California will begin topping 10 million pounds by mid-April and will remain solid for many months. Del Rey expects to have good volume through September. However, Lucy added that if the market stays at its current hot level, or even close to it, more northern growers who typically have good volume in August and September will be enticed to harvest that fruit earlier than usual.

Lucy said the strong demand is the result of many factors including less volume than expected and a strong

anticipation that Mexico will see its volume drop to a less than usual level, especially after the Cinco de Mayo pull.

“And the California crop is not as big as we expected when we first saw what was on the trees,” he said. “People were initially talking of a 400-million-pound crop. Lack of rain in January and February and then the wind and fire events we had – the wind more than the fires – have reduced the tonnage.”

CAC has officially estimated the crop at 375 million pounds. “Our field team sees it as a little bit less than that,” said Lucy.

He did add the caveat that after last year’s stellar performance by young trees, which saw California produce 75% more fruit than initial estimates, it would be foolish to assume any estimate is right on. But Lucy added that there were reasons for last year’s mis-estimate and those factors have been taken into account when predicting the size of this year’s crop.

The Del Rey executive noted another very positive aspect of the 2025 California crop is its size curve. “The size curve out of Mexico the last two years has been smaller,” he said, opining that the prolonged drought in the Mexico growing regions has taken its toll.

That has caused many retailers to adjust their size specifications down a notch from 48s to 60s or from 60s to 70s, which ultimately moves more pieces of fruit.

California, on the other hand, has good size fruit at the peak sizes that

retailers typically prefer, which also adds to the popularity of avocados from the Golden State during the spring/summer months.

Lucy prefaced all of his remarks noting that the following day the Trump Administration was expected to make a major announcement on tariffs. He said it is the uncertainty of any tariff and how long it will or won’t last that causes issues in the marketplace. He said some retailers like to plan six to nine months out to attain marketing dollars.

“It makes it very difficult to plan,” Lucy said. “Some retailers are asking for a normal price and one that includes the tariff. Others are asking for a tariff price and said they will adjust downward from that.”

He did note that California growers will not leave money on the table if tariffs on fruit from Mexico cause the FOB price to increase 25%. “They are not going to take less for their fruit,” he said.

Of course, he also said a 25% increase on the current high price will make it very difficult to market that fruit at an attractive retail price. On the other hand, Lucy said avocados are one of the top three or five sellers for virtually every produce department in the United States. Retailers will make adjustments to make sure they are carrying the consumer favorite at a sellable price. “Maybe they will drop another size down to make it work,” he said.

Lucy added that a tariff price could be moderated by retailers at least



somewhat by increasing their supplies of Colombian and Peruvian fruit, both of which tend to sell for less than California or Mexico fruit.

Peter Shore, vice president of production management for Calavo Growers Inc., also noted that the tariff threat in early April was causing some consternation in the marketplace. “It makes it difficult to plan but we have been giving prices for Cinco de Mayo promotions,” he said on March 31. “Everyone knows they will have to be adjusted if a tariff is imposed. We are just going to have to wait.”

Putting that issue aside, Shore said it is shaping up to be a very good year for California growers. “The fruit is top quality and it is coming off the tree nicely at 26-27% dry matter. We had good movement in March, though it was down for about two weeks because of the rain. We are expecting very good volume in April. We should reach 10 million pounds the second week of April and it will climb from there,”

he said, adding that weeks of 16 million pounds and more will be possible through June and into July.

Shore expects prices to hold because of the decline in volume from Mexico, but he added that demand is keeping up even with good volume. He reported that during the last week of March, Mexico’s volume to the U.S. market jumped to 62 million pounds, and prices remained in the \$60 to \$70 FOB range. “We are seeing strong demand even at these high prices.”

Though the tariff situation and high prices might pause normal avocado movement around Cinco de Mayo, Shore is quite optimistic. “Cinco de Mayo falls on a Monday this year, which means there should be an entire week-end of celebrations.”

The holiday, which is celebrated robustly in the United States, has been associated with huge avocado sales for many years.

Contacted earlier in March, Mission Produce Senior Director of Sales

Galen Johnson was equally optimistic about a great California season. “California season is off to an early start,” he said. “This year, we expect the California season to last through the summer with strong harvests peaking around June.”

He added that the market is ready for California avocados, and the industry expects excellent marketing conditions for the season. “Supply and demand are in sync, quality is looking good, and the current size curve suggests a lot of opportunities for small and medium fruit.”

On a global level, Johnson said demand for avocados continues to grow, which bodes well for the industry in general. “The European market is hot on our radar as global avocado demand increases,” he said. “Last year, Europe accounted for more than a third of global avocado imports, and those imports keep growing.” 🥑