

To Pick, or Not to Pick

That certainly is a critical question as a California avocado grower. It is a decision that is unique to every grove because every grower has a different goal and a different way of getting there.

And it's a decision complicated by the realities at hand. For example, this year we were prepared for a big crop from Mexico — but they are currently behind in harvesting and running a smaller size curve than anticipated. And California growers have a robust crop that should come in at around 400 million pounds and a very strong early season price for bigger fruit — but our fruit set late so we, too, are about 4-6 weeks behind...maybe? Meanwhile some retailers have switched their programs to marketing smaller fruit. And then you add in the variability of weather and its potential impact on the rest of the season. Which is to say — all of this puts growers between a rock and a hard place as they consider whether they chase price and size pick larger fruit; strip it where they can; or wait it out, let the fruit size and bank on the gain in pounds per acre outweighing any potential downward price pressure. There probably isn't one "right" strategy here and maybe the best one is a combination of all three options, making the call on a block-by-block basis.

Ultimately, harvest timing is a personal decision based on the size of your operation, the fruit on your trees, your relationship with your farm and field managers, your experience and your knowledge of your grove's history (how

your fruit typically sizes and when, for example). There is no one-size-fits-all strategy that can help a grower make a final call on harvest timing. But there are a few questions you can ask yourself that will help you determine what decision makes the most sense for your operation based on your goals, the status of your grove and the history of your trees.

- Does your operation have enough size (acreage and pounds) to cushion any mistakes?
- Will your harvest timing negatively impact the quality of your fruit and undermine the premium nature of our brand?
- Do you have a solid relationship with a packing house and manager that you trust and whose insights you can rely on?
- What do you see when you walk your groves?
- What do the long-term weather forecasts look like?
- How does your pruning plan play into the picture?
- Have you factored in whether it's a low rain year and its effect on holding and sizing fruit?



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Industry	Research	Advocacy	Publications	Commission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Market Statistics > Industry Statistical Data > Maturity Release Dates > Pounds and Dollars By Variety > Packers and Handlers > Acreage Inventory Summaries 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Crop Statistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Crop Projections Current Crop Estimates Crop Estimation Instructions Crop Estimate Form How Avocado Crop Estimating Works 		

As you consider your next steps, I encourage you to visit the CAC grower website. The "Industry" tab provides a variety of data that can help growers make informed harvesting decisions. And, finally, I encourage growers to complete the upcoming pre-season and mid-season crop surveys CAC will be distributing. It's important our growers walk their groves and provide this crucial data. After all, the more accurate the data, the better CAC and our marketing teams can propose and revise their next steps to showcase our premium California avocados. 🥑