

# Chairman's Report

**O**n behalf of all California avocado growers, I was thrilled to learn that there was overwhelming support for the continuation of the California Avocado Commission in the recent referendum. Of the growers who cast ballots, 75% voted in favor of continuation, affirming their confidence that this organization will productively support our industry for another five years. Support for the continuation of CAC has been exceptionally high in each referendum since its inception. As I related in the last issue, my confidence in CAC is built on four pillars: the staff, the marketing, the board and the growers. Others may identify a different set of reasons to support the preservation of the organization, but it is clear to me that the confidence most growers have in CAC has been developed over time and remains strong today. Nonetheless, I am mindful of the growers who voted against continuation in the referendum and the 9% of the state's total crop they produce. I won't be chairman when the next state-mandated referendum is held in 2026, but for the balance of my tenure I will work to better understand what drives dissatisfaction among some growers and strive to cultivate confidence among all growers.

Over the past few months, leading up to the referendum, I received numerous compelling emails regarding the effectiveness of the work CAC does to support our industry. Some were from growers I know well, and others were from growers I have never met, but in all cases, they were from growers willing to sign their name to statements of support, observations of

opportunity, or constructive criticism. Everyone working for CAC—members of the staff, marketers on contract, directors on the board—is striving for this organization to excel so that our industry will flourish. We have thick skins and open minds, but we also have limited time and finite resources, so it is critical that feedback be productive and sent through appropriate channels. Our governance structure is built on district representatives who expect to hear from their growers and in turn are expected to lead with the growers' best interests in mind.

I am relieved we are finally on a rapid path out of the pandemic and back to normalcy. However, I am disappointed it won't come quite soon enough to permit CAC to hold annual meetings again this spring, but I hope by this summer or fall we will be able to see you all in person again. I can't capture the magic of this year's marketing campaign or the professionalism of the staff in this report, but I will give you my brief synopsis of how CAC will operate this year:

We are going to continue to spend your assessment dollars effectively and use our time efficiently. We are going to continue to target key accounts and hone our messaging to appeal to *Premium Californians*. We are going to continue to measure the efficiency of our advertising and strive to better measure the effectiveness of our investment. We are not going to ignore data and go with our gut, nor are we going to discount the critical role handlers play in our industry. We are going to continue to collaborate with retailers and res-



*Rob Grether*

taurants to create programs that reach consumers at point-of-purchase, and we are going to continue to coordinate promotions with handlers so that ads run when fruit ships.

We are going to continue our advocacy work with regulators to keep water costs from climbing and labor availability from shrinking. We are not going to pursue trade injury claims at significant expense with a low probability of success, nor are we going to support every piece of protectionist legislation without first weighing the ramifications of an endorsement. We are not going to sacrifice long-term returns and hard-earned brand loyalty for short-term savings or a quick bump in demand. We also are going to focus on developing a robust program to help growers improve on-farm practices to drive higher productivity and profitability. Finally, we are going to humbly acknowledge that we are only temporary stewards of this organization, and one measure of our success as an organization this year will be the support from growers for the continuation of CAC in multiple referenda to come. 🍷

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Grether'.