



AGENDA

California Avocado Commission Marketing Committee Meeting

Meeting Information

Date: August 11, 2026

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: Hybrid Meeting

Physical Meeting Location:

**UC ANR South Coast Field Station
Main Building 103, Conference Room
7601 Irvine Blvd.
Irvine, CA, 92618**

Web/Teleconference URL:

<https://californiaavocado.zoom.us/j/88921594438?pwd=FxYLCGx97jbOW4T1HVvwEsfqaEMAXn.1>

Conference Call Number: (669) 444-9171

Meeting ID: 889 2159 4438

Passcode: 772443

Meeting materials will be posted online at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at:

<https://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/industry-calendar>

Committee Member Attendance

Committee members, please contact Zac Benedict at zbenedict@avocado.org to confirm attendance no later than Friday, August 7, 2026.

Time	Item
1:00 p.m.	1. Call to Order a. Roll Call/Quorum b. Introductions
	2. Opportunity for Public Comment Persons may address the Committee on subjects within the jurisdiction of the Commission.
	3. Approval of Marketing Committee minutes of May 13, 2026
	4. Crop Update
	5. 2026-27 CAC Business Plan
	6. Marketing Update a. Marketing Program Highlights

Time	Item
3:00 p.m.	7. Adjourn Meeting

Disclosures

All meetings of the Commission are open to the public and subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. All agenda items are subject to discussion and possible action.

For information or a request regarding disability-related modification or accommodation for the meeting, please contact Zac Benedict at 949-341-1955 via email at zbenedict@avocado.org. Such requests should be made at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

This meeting schedule notice and agenda is available on the internet at <https://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/meeting-agendas-minutes> and <http://it.cdffa.ca.gov/igov/postings/detail.aspx?type=Notices>.

Contact Zac Benedict at 949-341-1955 or via email at zbenedict@avocado.org if you have any questions.

Summary Definition of Conflict of Interest

Committee members are responsible to determine whether they have a conflict of interest.

A member has a conflict of interest in a decision of the Committee if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material effect, financial or otherwise, on the member or an immediate family member that is distinguishable from its effect on all persons subject to the Committee's jurisdiction.

No Committee member shall make, or participate in making, any decision in which they know or should know they have a conflict of interest.

No Committee member shall, in any way, use their position to influence any decision in which they know or should know they have a conflict of interest.



COMMITTEE ACTION

ITEM 3: **Consider approval of Marketing Committee meeting minutes of May 13, 2026**

SUMMARY:

The minutes of the Marketing Committee meeting of May 13, 2026 are attached for the Committee's review and approval.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- Not applicable

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- Adopt minutes as presented
- Amend minutes
- Take no action

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve minutes as presented

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- Minutes of the Marketing Committee meeting of May 13, 2026

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION
MARKETING COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 13, 2026**

A meeting of the California Avocado Commission (CAC) Marketing Committee was held on May 13, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. with the following people present:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug O'Hara, *Chair*
Stephen Sheldon
Jessica Hunter
LeighAnne Neary, *Alternate*
Rachael Laenen, *CAC Chair Ex-officio*

STAFF PRESENT

April Aymami
Ken Melban
Zac Benedict
Alya Hijazi
Lori Small
Stacia Kierulff

GUESTS PRESENT

Danny Klittich
John Berns
Basil Gray
Jacqueline S.
Ohannes Onnig
Karaoghlianian

OFFICIALLY PRESENT

Carolyn Becker, *CL Marketing LLC*
David Anderson, *Anderson Food Sales & Marketing*
Emiliano Escobedo, *Hass Avocado Board*

Item #1 Call to Order

Roll Call – Item 1.a.

Doug O'Hara, CAC Marketing Committee chair, called the meeting to order 9:02 a.m. and established a quorum.

Introductions – Item 1.b.

No introductions were made.

Item # 2 Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item # 3 Approval of Marketing Committee minutes of March 19, 2026

Mr. O'Hara asked for a motion to approve the Marketing Committee meeting minutes of March 19, 2026 as included in the meeting materials.

Motion:

The Marketing Committee approves the March 19, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

(Sheldon/Hunter) MSC Unanimous

MOTION 26-5-13-1

The March 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes are included in the May 2026 Marketing Committee Packet and are attached to the permanent copy of these Minutes and identified as EXHIBIT A, Item 3.

Item # 4 Crop Update

April Aymami, CAC director of industry affairs and operations, notified the committee that California growers have caught up with pre-season projections at 14 million pounds per week and said that the mid-season update should be ready by the end of the month.

Stephen Sheldon said that packing houses have smaller sizes than previously expected, and Jessica Hunter added that demand is strong for 48s over the 60s that are being provided. She also said that growers in the south are waiting to pick, so there should be a steady supply until the end of July.

Item # 5 2026-27 Planning Discussion

Carolyn Becker and David Anderson, CAC retail marketing directors, presented on volume movement from other countries of origin and on promotions with retailers. Ms. Becker expressed retailer support during the Cinco de Mayo promotional period and said that July program planning is underway. Mr. Anderson commented that some retailers are not opening to buying fruits from specific countries of origin, however others need to move volume.

Mr. Sheldon added that retailers don't seem to be responding currently to summertime import bids, but LeighAnne Neary said that Peru has yet to come in with their pricing, particularly eyeing the Northeast. She stated that Peru's quality has improved over the past 10 years and that the country will come in with late-season availability for Western retailers with large fruit.

Ms. Becker reaffirmed that the heaviest promotions are running through June, and Mr. Anderson expressed that growers should stay communicative on their crop, so handlers are prepared going into the summer.

Ken Melban, CAC president, then presented on CAC's plan to provide a more succinct Business Plan format for discussion at the June Board meeting. Mr. Sheldon said he likes the current move to invest more in retail, with Ms. Neary agreeing. However, Mr. Melban stated that CAC cannot maintain its current activities unless the assessment rate increases. Ms. Aymami wanted committee direction on this idea for the June Board meeting, and Mr. O'Hara stated that the committee is aligned with CAC's current direction in order to secure and maintain commitments with retailers.

Item # 6 The Avocado Conference 2026

Following the committee's request for Emiliano Escobedo, Hass Avocado Board executive director, to present again on the October 2026 Avocado Conference, Mr. Escobedo stated that the event is looking to host specific buyers, have a panel of retail and foodservice operators, and provide reports on marketing programs and countries of origin. Mr. Melban said that CAC needs to be there to speak with target retailers.

Mr. O'Hara asked for a motion to sponsor the event.

Motion:

***The Marketing Committee recommends that CAC sponsor the Avocado Conference.
(No first/No second)***

Mr. Sheldon questioned the effectiveness and timing of the event and stated that there are too many trade shows already. Mr. Escobedo said that CAC is the only organization that represents a country of origin that has not committed yet.

Mr. O'Hara asked for a motion to sponsor the event.

Motion:

***The Marketing Committee recommends that CAC sponsor the Avocado Conference.
(Sheldon/Hunter) MSC Unanimous***

MOTION 26-5-13-2

ADJOURN MEETING

Mr. O'Hara adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alya Hijazi, CAC Marketing Coordinator

EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO THE PERMANENT COPY OF THESE MINUTES

Exhibit A May 2026 Marketing Committee Packet

Exhibit B May 13, 2026 Marketing Committee Meeting AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary



CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION

AB 2720 Roll Call Vote Tally Summary

To be attached to the Meeting Minutes

Meeting Name: <i>Marketing Committee Meeting</i>	Meeting Location: <i>Hybrid Meeting In-person (Irvine) Online (Zoom)</i>	Meeting Date: <i>May 13, 2026</i>
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Attendees Who Voted	<u>MOTION 26-5-13-1</u>	<u>MOTION 26-5-13-2</u>
Doug O'Hara	Yea	Yea
Stephen Sheldon	Yea	Yea
Jessica Hunter	Yea	Yea
LeighAnne Neary	Yea	Yea
Outcome	Unanimous	Unanimous



COMMITTEE INFORMATION

ITEM 5: 2026-27 CAC Business Plan

SUMMARY:

At its June 2026 meeting the CAC Board approved an updated Business Plan format that clearly articulates the activities of the Commission and provides flexibility in utilizing resources for marketing and non-marketing functions based on current conditions. Included in the updated Business Plan also is a new, streamlined budget format which has been used for development of the draft 2026-27 CAC Budget.

Attached is the draft 2026-27 CAC Business Plan for Committee review and discussion.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

- The draft budget is based on a crop size of 400 million pounds and an assessment rate of 1.5 cents per pound, generating \$14.285 million in revenue (including \$500,000 from Other revenue sources). The proposed budget of \$15.558 million allocates 70% to Marketing and 30% to Non-Marketing programs and draws down reserves by \$1.273 to \$5.5 million.

COMMITTEE OPTIONS:

- Discussion item only

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Not applicable

EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS:

- Draft 2026-27 CAC Business Plan

2026-27 BUSINESS PLAN
Presented for Board Approval
MONTH DAY, 2026

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Mission

To maximize California Avocado grower returns and enhance premium positioning through strategic marketing, advocacy and research.

Vision

To be a thriving California Avocado industry renowned for premium avocados.

Brand Positioning/Promise

Fresh to market California Avocados are locally and responsibly grown by farmers who nurture the land every step of the way.

2026-27 PLAN OVERVIEW

California Avocado growers face many challenges including increased competition from foreign fruit. In response, the California Avocado Commission refined its approach in early 2026 to increase retailer-focused marketing, including a greater percentage of the marketing budget, while continuing brand and trade marketing, industry affairs and research.

The 2026-27 plan aims to build on 2026 efforts to support distribution of the crop with existing and new trade customers (retail and foodservice, if strategically aligned), while maintaining perceived value and preference for California Avocados, to ultimately achieve a premium average F.O.B. price per pound.

The Commission's business plan includes advocating for and engaging with the industry, as well as supporting growers through research and outreach. The Commission will continue to cultivate organizational excellence and demonstrate effective use of resources.

MARKETING

Objectives

- Achieve a premium average price per pound that meets or exceeds the four-year historical F.O.B. price differential between California Avocados and imports
- Build and sustain trade commitments that support California Avocado volume, timing and market priorities
- Maintain or increase preference and perceived value with targeted consumers

Strategies

- Utilize data and strategic insights to shape trade and consumer targeting and programs
- Develop trade and brand communications that differentiate California Avocados and create demand leading up to and throughout the season
- Create collaborative trade programs that reach avocado shoppers and patrons

Marketing Budget Summary	2025-26	% of Total Budget	2026-27	% of Total Budget
Retail	\$4,898,300	34.34%	\$5,695,000	36.60%
Brand	\$3,089,700	21.66%	\$3,750,000	24.10%
Foodservice	\$650,000	4.56%	-	0.00%
Flex	-	0.00%	\$650,000	4.18%
Marketing Support	\$905,000	5.66%	\$905,000	5.82%
TOTAL MARKETING	\$9,445,000	66.21%	\$11,000,000	

Retail

Build California Avocados' retail accessibility through a mix of retail partnerships, customized promotions and other tactics. Key tactics may include:

- Retail partnerships, promotions and merchandising
- Retail advertising (creative, media planning and buying, digital content, in-person events, administration, strategy and planning)
- Retail trade advertising and public relations (creative, media planning and buying, strategy, planning and reporting)
- Retail trade memberships and activations (associations, trade shows/industry events)
- Retail data and analysis

Brand

The Commission will implement an integrated brand marketing program focused on maintaining California Avocado preference and perceived value among our bullseye target audience (super-heavy avocado consumers within the Western region). Key tactics may include:

- Advertising (creative, media planning and buying)
- Public relations (earned and paid outreach, monitoring, influencer partnerships)
- Digital (website, email, social media)
- Administration, strategy, planning and reporting

Flex

Provide funding for strategic retail, brand and opportunistic foodservice initiatives that advance Commission priorities and respond to emerging opportunities. Key tactics may include:

- Incremental retail partnerships and promotions
- Brand advertising and promotions
- Foodservice partnerships and promotions
- Promotional support
- Related strategy and reporting

Marketing Support

Support includes marketing administration and tactics that cross multiple channels, including:

- Stakeholder communications (*GreenSheet, From the Grove*)
- Export program
- Industry memberships
- Personnel

INDUSTRY AFFAIRS

Objective

- Strengthen the California Avocado industry's ability to compete in the US market

Strategies

- Establish and leverage relationships with governmental agency personnel, elected officials and other agricultural organizations
- Provide information on domestic and global avocado market forces
- Deliver a comprehensive communications and outreach program

Industry Affairs Budget Summary	2025-26	% of Total Budget	2026-27	% of Total Budget
Issues Management	\$712,000	4.99%	\$859,500	5.52%
Industry Statistics and Information	\$123,000	0.86%	\$126,000	0.81%
Grower Communications and Outreach	\$346,075	2.43%	\$379,500	2.44%
TOTAL INDUSTRY AFFAIRS	\$1,181,075	8.28%	\$1,365,000	8.77%

Issues Management

Anticipate issues and prioritize resources in industry advocacy. Areas include:

- Regulatory, legislative and trade
- Water, technical and sustainability initiatives
- Research program coordination
- Industry coalition participation

Industry statistics and information

Disseminate industry crop and market data to aid in understanding domestic and global avocado supply, including:

- California inventory and shipment reporting
- California crop estimating and acreage surveys
- Global supply and production estimates

Grower Communications and Outreach

Utilize a variety of communication and outreach vehicles to inform the industry, including:

- Publications — *From the Grove* (magazine) and *GreenSheet* (newsletter/SMS messaging)
- Website — CaliforniaAvocadoGrowers.com
- Meetings, Seminars and Workshops — Annual meetings and district meetings
- Demonstration Grove — Pine Tree Ranch

RESEARCH

Objective

- Maximize California Avocado farm production of safe, high-quality fruit

Strategies

- Conduct research focused on practical solutions to grower-defined priorities
- Provide California Avocado growers the tools necessary for optimum productivity
- Educate California Avocado growers and industry stakeholders about research outcomes

Research Budget Summary	2025-26 Budget	% of Total Budget	Continuing Projects	2026-27 New Projects	Total 2026-27 Budget	% of Total Budget
Pest and Disease	\$706,223	4.95%	\$538,570	TBD	\$538,570	3.46%
Cultural Practices	\$361,555	2.53%	\$148,564	TBD	\$148,564	0.95%
Industry Research Support	\$32,500	0.23%	-	-	-	0%
TOTAL RESEARCH	\$886,163	7.71%	\$687,134	\$TotalTBD	\$687,134	4.42%

Pest and Disease

Monitor pest and disease threats — both foreign and domestic — to California avocado production and ensure growers have the resources necessary to manage existing pests and diseases. Projects may include:

- Foreign pest surveys
- Pesticide resistance monitoring
- Control of avocado branch canker
- Monitor Phytophthora root rot populations for changes in fungicide efficacy
- Recording and enhancing pollinator activity in avocado groves

Cultural Practices

Provide growers with the tools and information necessary to grow avocados in California. Projects may include:

- Understanding the effects of artificial pollination
- Soil salinity effects on avocado orchards
- Developing a weather station network to guide growers' irrigation decisions
- Improving irrigation management tools
- Monitor avocado rootstock responses to Phytophthora root rot

OPERATIONS

Objectives

- Ensure the Commission has the proper leadership, organizational structure and resources necessary to carry out its mission
- Uphold organizational compliance with governance requirements

Strategies

- Align financial resources with objectives and maintain a balanced budget
- Foster a culture of excellence among staff, board members and agencies
- Utilize appropriate professionals for financial audits, elections and legal affairs

Operations Budget Summary	2025-26	% of Total Budget	2026-27	% of Total Budget
Operations	\$511,646	3.59%	\$436,500	2.81%
Governance and Legal	\$525,500	3.68%	\$505,500	3.25%
Meeting and Commissioner Expenses	\$218,000	1.53%	\$218,000	1.40%
Personnel	\$1,073,683	7.53%	\$1,146,450	7.37%
TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$2,328,829	16.33%	\$2,306,450	14.82%

Operations

Continual optimization of business tactics including:

- Administrative, corporate insurance and travel expenses
- Accounting and information technology systems
- Banking, fixed assets and depreciation
- Training, recruitment and temporary staffing

Governance and Legal

Support the governance requirements of the Commission, which may include:

- Elections and referendum/redistricting (when required)
- Annual financial audits and CDFA/USDA compliance reviews
- Professional and legal services associated with Commission operations

Meeting and Commissioner Expenses

Meetings to conduct the regular business of the Commission, along with associated travel expenses, and Board designated contributions and sponsorships, including:

- Board and committee meetings
- Travel expenses (Board and committee members)
- District designated industry contributions
- Industry sponsorships (HAB BOLD program)

Personnel

Professional compensation and benefits including:

- Salaries
- Health benefits
- Retirement benefits