



The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

February 14, 2022

Re: Inspection of Imported Avocados

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The California Avocado Commission represents the more than 3,000 California avocado growers located in central and southern California. This letter is on their behalf.

As you may imagine, the widespread media reports this past weekend regarding the apparent suspension of USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) inspection activities related to the importation of avocados from Mexico into the United States generated a few questions and concerns among our growers. We thought it appropriate to follow-up directly with you regarding their central concern.

From the outset, please understand that California avocado growers have no interest in disrupting the supply of avocados from Mexico. We appreciate that there is a strong demand for avocados in the United States, and the role that avocado imports, including fruit from Mexico, play in helping to meet that demand. Instead, the focus of California avocado growers is on assuring continued phytosanitary protection from potential injurious plant pests and diseases on fruit from any country.

Our growers know the importance that the Department places on providing the necessary program protections to ensure quarantine security. Inspection of imported fruit has been one of the cornerstones of the Department's quarantine program. Our growers would like you to reaffirm that resolving the current situation with Mexico will include not only assuring the safety and security of the Department's inspectors, but also the continued commitment to maintaining the appropriate phytosanitary security for our domestic industry. Maintaining the integrity of the program is important for all concerned.

Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Bellamore
President

Kenneth J. Melban
Vice President Industry Affairs