

As the cost of fertilizer and diesel lead all of our farming costs higher, I am so grateful the avocado pricing has been strong and remarkably stable this year. Through May, the average price per pound for California fruit approached \$1.75. AMRIC prices in June and the supply forecast for July suggest the average price for the season will very likely climb higher from there. The nominal average price per pound has never been this high. After adjusting for inflation, \$1.75 would be the third highest average price in 10 years and the fifth highest average price in 25 years.

I appreciate that not all growers will be impacted by this strong pricing equally. Growers with heavy crops should realize healthy profits, while growers with light crops won't have sufficient revenue to feel reprieve from higher cultural costs. We may never find the key to fully modulating the alternate-bearing tendency of this tree and we certainly won't reign in Mother Nature's indiscriminate freeze, heat and wind events, but we work with what we have and harvest when the size-structure, field quotes and mitigated risk seem optimal.

This year, we collectively got right to it and haven't slowed down. In May, the AMRIC handlers forecast the total California crop to be 286 million pounds. Historically, crops around this size have been approximately 63%

picked by the Fourth of July. Over the past four years, on average the crop was 67% picked by this point. This year, based on the May crop estimate, we have already picked approximately 80% of the total crop. Certainly, no two seasons are alike, but this season has been exceptionally strong, stable *and* early.

The crop estimate will be further refined by mid-July based on another survey of the AMRIC handlers, but it is clear that California will wind down much earlier than planned. California Avocado Commission Vice President of Marketing Jan DeLyser and her team have already made some adjustments to the marketing plan and are ready to do more as necessary. For example, some consumer media originally slated for August has been shifted forward to July and some late summer foodservice and retail promotions have been canceled altogether. We are highly focused on effectively and efficiently marketing your fruit but also saving money wherever we can.

In the Spring issue, I reported the Succession Task Force was nearing the end of the process to bring forth a recommendation to the Board and that CAC would soon likely have a new President. In May, the Board did interview and extend an offer to a candidate with an exceptional resume and highly relevant experience, but in the end, we were unable to agree on terms of employment. Also in May, with gratitude



Rob Grether

for his many years in the saddle at CAC, the Board accepted Tom Bellamore's letter of resignation. I wish him well and many more long rides in retirement on the open range of Colorado.

For the time being, CAC does not have a President, but we are certainly not leaderless. The Board has full confidence in the CAC team to execute our business plan, support our growers and maintain our high standing with customers and consumers through this interim period. The Executive Committee also will be meeting more frequently to support management and monitor the overall administration of the Commission. The Succession Task Force also is back to work with the recruiters from Boyden and remains highly committed to identifying CAC's next President.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and these high prices—well, the high avocado prices, anyway. 🍷

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Grether'. The signature is fluid and cursive.