

Produce Industry Icon Jan DeLyser to Retire

California Avocado Commission actively seeking new vice president of marketing

Produce industry maven Jan DeLyser announced her plan to retire from the California Avocado Commission after 24 years of service to the organization. The tentative timing for her retirement is mid-February 2023.

“Jan DeLyser is an icon in the produce industry and has been instrumental in the development of the avocado category and the premium California avocado brand,” said Jeff Oberman, president of CAC. “No doubt Jan’s family would have loved for her to retire a bit earlier; instead her commitment to California avocados, the growers and supporting the Commission through its recent leadership transition has been invaluable and appreciated.”

Jan DeLyser’s spent her entire 47-year career in the produce industry. Prior to working for the Commission, Jan held a number of positions in the produce industry, working with The Packer newspaper, the Fresh Produce Council (now Fresh Produce & Floral Council), Sun World International and Westlake Produce Inc. She joined CAC in 1998 as Merchandising Director for the Southwest Region. In 2000 she was promoted to Vice President Merchandising and to Vice President Marketing in 2003.

“As a director of the California Avocado Commission, I have had the pleasure of working closely with Jan and witnessing firsthand her exceptional leadership, creativity, and unrivaled understanding of the produce industry,” shared Rob Grether, chairman. He continued, “it is as a California avocado grower that I am most grateful to Jan for her tireless efforts over the past 24 years to not only increase demand for our state’s avocados, but to also lay the foundation for sustainable demand for years to come.”

Jan’s career was filled with mentorship and leadership. She was chairperson of the Produce Marketing Association and served on the Board of Directors of the United Fresh Produce Association (now merged as the International Fresh Produce Association). She currently serves on the IFPA’s DEI committee, represents the Commission on the Buy California Marketing Agreement as a board member and is a member of the Brighter Bites Los Angeles committee. A former chair of the Produce for Better Health Foundation and the Fresh Pro-

duce & Floral Council, Jan was appointed to the California State Polytechnic University Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture Dean’s Advisory Council in May 2021. Awards and accolades have followed from her years of marketing excellence and contributions to the industry. Honors she received include:

- 2016 Robert L. Carey Leadership Award at PMA’s Fresh Summit in Orlando, FL

- 2013 Award of Honor from the California Avocado Society

- 2011 Produce Marketer of the Year by The Packer

- 2007 Women in Produce Award of Excellence by UFPA

- 2003 Southern California Produce Achievement Award by the Fresh Produce Council

- Recognized by Progressive Grocer Magazine in 2007 and 2013 as one of the Top Women in Grocery

- During her tenure at CAC as vice president marketing, the Commission received a Marketing Excellence Award from Produce Business magazine for 11 consecutive years

“California avocados have been a significant part of my life for nearly a quarter of a century, and my entire adulthood has revolved around the produce world that I love,” said California Avocado Commission Vice President Marketing Jan DeLyser. “Now I’m looking forward to new experiences, more time with family and staying in touch with colleagues who have become dear friends.”

The Commission is actively seeking a vice president of marketing to serve after DeLyser’s retirement and advised that interested qualified individuals should send a cover letter and resumé to careers@avocado.org. 🥑

