



Behind the scenes at a photo shoot of RDN and other CAC recipes: food stylist Kim Kissling adjusts a California avocado recipe about to be photographed by Noel Barnhurst, with CAC's Angela Fraser.

CAC Nutrition Programs Feature Registered Dietitian Nutritionists

Consumers rank Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) as one of the most trusted sources for information on which foods to eat and which to avoid. According to the *2018 Food and Health Survey Report* by Food Insight, 65 percent of younger adults trust a registered dietitian. This feeling is even stronger among older Americans (ages 65+) at 76 percent. This trust is why for years the California Avocado Commission (CAC) has worked with RDNs who serve as experts and advocates for California avocados. Their nutrition expertise and communication skills, coupled with their passion for California avocados, both educate consumers about avocado nutrition and provide differentiation of the California avocado brand.

In 2019, with a reduced crop size and smaller budget, CAC's marketing programs have been adjusted and are focused to maximize value. The RDN program has been scaled back to two California-based RDNs with a strong following of local fans: Manuel Villacorta, MS, RDN, and Liz Shaw, MS, RDN,

CLT. These brand advocates will encourage avocado consumption as well as preference for California avocados over other origins. They will develop content that is easy to share with consumers on social media and digital channels, make appearances on television and host live events. Shaw and Villacorta both have a large cadre of fans who follow them, so their own outreach expands the reach of CAC communications.

This year, the RDNs developed four California avocado recipes that tap into consumer culinary trends and nutrition concerns: *Mashed Cauliflower with California Avocado*, *California Avocado Loaded Sweet Potatoes*, *Wild Rice Pilaf with California Avocado* and *California-Style Stuffed Bell Peppers*. The recipes have been tested and analyzed for nutrition information and then photographed. These recipes will be included in content that will be placed on CAC's website, blog, throughout various consumer channels and shared with retail dietitians during California avocado season.

As spokespersons for California avocados, Shaw and Vil-

lacorta will contribute to CAC's blog, produce four videos, post on social media and add their avocado nutrition expertise throughout the season. The season opening content is themed "Cook Like a Californian." It includes information about how to choose and use California avocados, how to ripen them and how to prepare the *Wild Rice Pilaf with California Avocado* recipe. Later in the season, they will show how California avocados fit in with "plant-forward eating" as well as vegan and vegetarian diets, which are topics of high consumer interest. Avocado nutrition facts will be included in all of their outreach.

Another tool the RDNs contribute to is called *The Superfood Spotlight*. These California avocado nutrition information sheets are printed and distributed to retail dietitians to share with their clients, and are available on CaliforniaAvocado.com. California avocados are a heart-healthy superfood. In fact, avocados, along with blueberries, beets and exotic berries, like açai and golden berries, rank in the top superfoods that consumers will favor as the healthiest in 2019, according to a survey of more than 1,300 RDNs conducted by Pollack Communications and *Today's Dietitian*. 🥑



Wild Rice Pilaf with California Avocado, created by RDN Manuel Villacorta.



California Avocado Cilantro Coulis, created by RDN Liz Shaw.

Liz Shaw, MS, RDN, CLT is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Certified Personal Trainer in San Diego. She serves as a nutrition expert for many national publications, such as *Shape*, *Women's Health*, *Men's Health*, *Muscle and Performance*, *Fit Pregnancy*, *Parents*, and others. Liz also serves as a brand spokesperson via speaking engagements, appearances on television segments and through her strong social media presence. Her personal blogs include *Shaw's Simple Swaps* and *Bumps to Baby*.

Manuel Villacorta, MS, RDN is a nationally recognized, award-winning Registered Dietitian Nutritionist with more than 18 years of experience. He is the author of four health/nutrition books. A national media spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics from 2010-2013, he also is a health blog contributor for *The Huffington Post*. Manuel, a resident of San Francisco, is the owner of MV Nutrition and is the recipient of five "Best Bay Area Nutritionist" awards from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, ABC7 News, and Citysearch.