

California Avocado Growers & Commission Staff Earn Industry Awards

This year, the California Avocado Commission's marketing team and five California avocado growers earned three prestigious industry awards. Each award celebrated different achievements — individual career accomplishments, marketing excellence and building demand for Hass avocados through service to the Hass Avocado Board — and secured positive recognition and media coverage for the Commission and California avocado growers.

On June 30, Zac Benedict, CAC's online marketing director, was added to *Produce Business* magazine's 40 Under Forty list spotlighting an international pool of rising entrepreneurs and leaders who have shaped the produce industry and are paving the way for the future. The magazine noted, "this year's winners illustrate the strength and depth of the industry's talent — and each one has demonstrated leadership growth and keen insight into building our industry." Each of the winners was given the opportunity to discuss their accomplishments, as well as their goals and aspirations, with the magazine. Zac joins the Commission's April Aymami and Dave Cruz in being named to the publication's 40 Under Forty list. The press coverage garnered by this award is substantial. *Produce Business* magazine's print circulation, pass-along and online distribution generates more than 64,000 impressions.

Zac has progressed swiftly into a highly respected and seasoned produce marketer since he started with the Commission as a marketing intern in 2005. In his current role, Zac leads CAC's digital communications, including social campaigns, digital advertising, CaliforniaAvocado.com, and various custom communications in cooperation with targeted consumers. He also created the Commission's blog. He plays a critical role in blogger advocate communications and consumer responses, and during the pandemic his insights into the mood of the Commission's targeted audience helped guide the tone and cadence of communications.

Throughout his career, Zac has earned numerous professional achievements. He was named as one of Produce Marketing Association's Emerging Leaders in 2012 and as a PMA High-Performance Manager in 2016. He also served as a



Zac Benedict, named to Produce Business Magazine's 40 Under Forty list, in a California avocado grove.

contributor to the Know a Farmer Panel in 2012 and for the Social Media Marketing World events in 2014 and 2015.

In August, the Commission earned its 11th consecutive Marketing Excellence Award from *Produce Business* magazine. This year, the Commission was honored for its 2021 California Avocados Road Trip Videos marketing program. With more Americans taking road trip vacations, the Commission partnered with Chef Oliver English and filmed him preparing unique California avocado recipes with iconic California locations as a picturesque backdrop. The videos showcased the versatility of the fruit in a series of easy-to-prepare recipes while celebrating the pleasures of California's hit-the-road lifestyle. A summary of the award-winning campaign can be viewed at: <https://www.producebusiness.com/full-speed-ahead/>.



Hass Avocado Board “Making It Happen” award recipient Jan DeLyser with Bob Lucy of Del Rey Avocados and Steve Barnard of Mission Produce at the HAB 20th anniversary celebration in San Juan Capistrano.

In late September, the Hass Avocado Board commemorated its 20th anniversary by celebrating key individuals who played critical roles in establishing, building and helping to grow HAB programs, strategies and direction. Nominees — who were chosen by their peers — included board, committee and special sub-committee members as well as staff and those associated with CAC and other boards representing imported avocados. Five California growers who served on the HAB Board of Directors were among the “Making It Happen” honorees, including Charley Wolk, Bob Schaar, Jamie Johnson, Sal Dominguez and Scott Bauwens. Recognition of past CAC Board chair and current Board alternate Charley Wolk drew positive attention to his role in helping to establish HAB and acknowledged the role the Commission has played in ensuring avocado importers contribute to category marketing and building demand for increased supplies of avocados in the U.S.

Jan DeLyser, CAC vice president marketing, also received HAB’s “Making it Happen” Recognition Award in appreciation of the role she played in establishing HAB’s marketing program. When HAB was first established, the Commission managed all activities of the association.

After joining the Commission in

1998 as merchandising director for the Southwest region, Jan’s role expanded quickly to include leadership of the Commission’s marketing department and programs. She was named vice president merchandising in 2000 and by 2003 had assumed her current position. Throughout her tenure, Jan has remained active in industry leadership, having served as chairperson for the Produce Marketing Association (now the International Fresh Produce Association), the Produce for Better Health Foundation and the Fresh Produce and Floral Council. She has served on the Board of Directors of the United Fresh Produce Association, is a member of the Brighter Bites Los Angeles committee and the International Fresh Produce Association’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee. She also represents the Commission on the California State Polytechnic University Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture Dean’s Advisory Council and the Buy California Marketing Agreement board. Her previous awards include the PMA’s Fresh Summit 2016 Robert L. Carey Leadership Award, the California Avocado Society’s 2013 Award of Honor, *The Packer* 2011 Produce Marketer of the Year award, the UFPA 2007 Women in Produce Award of Excellence and the Fresh Produce & Floral Council’s

2003 Southern California Produce Achievement Award. *Progressive Grocer* magazine recognized her as one of the Top Women in Grocery in both 2007 and 2013.

Ultimately, recognition of California avocado growers and Commission staff garners positive media coverage before a targeted industry audience that reflects positively on the California Avocados brand, the Commission and our growers. 🥑

California Avocado Commission

PROMOTION

“California Avocado Road Trip Videos”

STRATEGY

California road trips always have been popular. The California Avocado Commission partnered with chef Oliver English to take California avocados on the road to film recipes consumers can cook while traveling. In each video, the chef demonstrated the easy-to-prepare recipe.

The videos ran on Channel Factory, The Food Network, POPSUGAR, Spotify and The Kitchn. Videos also ran on Hulu on National Avocado Day. CAC also reached the target audience on its TikTok channel, which launched in April 2022. The commission worked with popular TikTok influencer Kelz (5.8 million followers) to “duet” and react to the “Redwoods” video.

RESULTS

- This series yielded 954,000 video views, 17,100 engagements (likes, comments, shares) and 3.9 million impressions on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.
- On YouTube, these videos yielded an additional 2,100 organic views.
- The Redwoods Video, posted on the new California avocado TikTok channel, yielded 1,000 organic views and 375 engagements. When posted on TikTok influencer Kelz’s channel, this video generated 100,600 views, 12,530 engagements and yielded more than 5 million potential impressions.
- The three videos yielded more than 15M impressions and 14M views since July 2021.
- The videos also have yielded 144,000 impressions and 143,000 views on The Kitchn since March 2022.

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The Commission’s marketing team secured an 11th consecutive Marketing Excellence Award for its California Avocados Road Trip Videos. Reprint courtesy of *Produce Business* magazine.