

California Avocado Merchandise Shop Now Online



The Avocado State-ment “Dad” Hat is currently one of the top-performing products in the merchandise shop.

Fans of California avocados have a wide variety of reasons for loving the Golden State fruit. And now, thanks to the California Avocado Commission’s new online California avocado merchandise shop, they have a variety of ways to share their love of the fruit.

Launched on September 8, the California avocado merchandise shop includes, for example, sweatshirts and beach towels designed with “the best avocados have California in them” campaign creative, socks bedecked with the fruit, and California avocado-branded hats and stickers. This e-commerce platform provides the Commission with a new way to leverage brand advocates, influencers and fans who don — or use — the branded merchandise and often, in turn, share photos on social media of their favorite California avocado items.

Shop.CaliforniaAvocado.com was launched using Shopify, a subscription software service that creates e-commerce websites with a shopping cart solution and an easy-to-use management system for order processing, shipments and product management. Shopify easily integrates with popular social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, making it easier to run, monitor and adapt social campaigns. Sales generated by the e-commerce site will be used to maintain and fund the site beyond its introductory year.

Cognizant of the pandemic, wildfires and current social and political climate, the Commission paused its broader social media initiatives in fiscal year 2019-20 and focused its merchandise shop promotions on carefully selected platforms that would protect the brand’s image. Initially the e-commerce site was directly promoted only on CAC’s website homepage, in the CAC consumer email newsletter and on Pinterest. Through October, CAC successfully delivered 180,964 emails supporting the shop with an open rate of 15%, meeting e-commerce industry standards. Pinterest pins generated 5,236 engagements and 467,152 impressions.

Advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter started in mid-November. In addition, the Commission partnered with POPSUGAR on a Holiday Gift Guide custom-content piece in December to encourage California avocado fans to stock up on California avocado-themed gifts for the holidays.

The Commission also launched an influencer campaign on Instagram — a channel that showcases striking photography and is favored by CAC’s targeted Premium Californian consumers. In early October, 27 targeted influencers were sent a selection of California avocado merchandise. The influencers then demonstrated to their Instagram followers how they live the California lifestyle by showcasing their new California avocado gear with eye-catching snapshots. They encouraged



California avocados are always in style, especially when wearing the Dreamin' Hoodie or State Flag Tee!

their followers to embrace the California lifestyle and visit the California avocado merchandise shop. The influencers' posts generated 135,485 engagements along with an average engagement rate of 11%, well above the standard 1-2% benchmark.

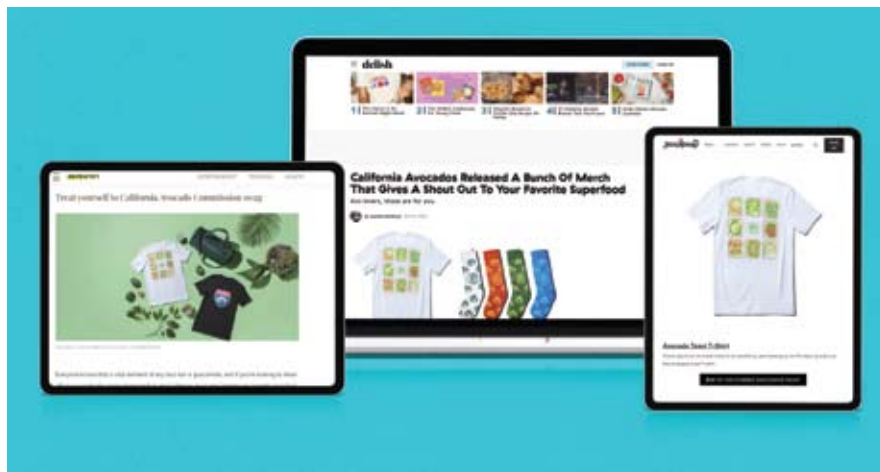
To drive awareness, buzz and traffic to the new shop, the Commission's public relations team issued a press release and conducted media outreach to both local and national consumer publications. Media members who expressed interest in the merchandise received a California avocado gift package. The California-inspired collection secured coverage in various lifestyle media outlets, including *Delish*, *Real Simple*, *Distractify*, *Scary Mommy* and the *Orange County Business Journal*. The public relations blitz garnered more than 45 million earned impressions.

In keeping with the fruit's homegrown (and American-made) value, all the California avocado merchandise items are made in the United States. To date, the top performing items are the Avocado State-ment Dad Hat, Avocado Forever Socks and the Avocado Toast T-shirt. Merchandise will be

refreshed next season based on sales data, emerging cultural trends and new items that align with advertising campaign creative. Additionally, CAC will team up with a new crop of influencers to showcase and promote the new merchandise across social channels. When this happens, it promotes both the merchandise and the California Avocados brand.

The Commission's merchandising shop sales target is eventually to achieve an average of at least 300 monthly orders with an average of 1.25 items per order. Through October the shop generated about \$8,000 in revenue with an average of 1.87 items per order.

Ultimately, the goal of the program is to generate broader awareness of and preference for California avocados, spur consumer loyalty and increase the fruit's perceived value by offering fans American-made, quality California avocado-branded products. The increased brand visibility provided by these products will ensure California avocados remain top of mind all year long. Growers can check out the site at shop.californiaavocado.com, @CA_Avocados on Instagram and the California Avocado Commission Facebook page. 🥑



Since the launch of the merchandise shop on September 8, the site and products have generated multiple positive press mentions.