

## Time for a Change

The time has come to write the column that some have been dreading, some eagerly anticipating, and most will read with measured indifference: my last column as chairman of the California Avocado Commission (CAC). I am eligible to run for one more term as the District 5 representative and sit for one more year as chair, but it is time to step away.

I have several good reasons for stepping aside. The first is my wife, Trish. During our years together, she has sat by as patiently as she is able while I have coached youth sports teams, been active with Farm Bureau, CAPCA (California Association of Pest Control Advisors) and the Commission. I promised her travel and adventure when we married and I owe it to her to do those things while we still can. Sitting in a board meeting can hardly be considered high adventure.

I also have three adult sons and one grandson. Each one of those young men deserve more of my time than they currently get; it is time to make more time for them. My grandson is three-and-a-half years old and has only seen me a handful of times. I am the only living grandfather he has so I am really feeling obligated to do double duty for him.

Lastly, I have tried to bring aboard the next generation of leaders and have met with some real success. The new leaders have a solid grip on social media and new types of promotion that

are more or less foreign to my gray old head, but so vital to our goals for California Avocados. I would not be true to my goals if I brought in the new leaders and then stood as a roadblock to their success and innovation.

I have been asked why I have spent nearly two decades involved with the Commission. There are a few reasons. First, I was raised to volunteer and be active in the community, and being active with CAC was a great way to be actively immersed in the avocado community. Second was a lesson from my college days well learned. On the first day of class in Fruit Science 101 at Cal Poly Pomona, Professor Lloyd Newell took roll, looked out at the class, pointed around the room at us, and bellowed, "If you can't sell it, don't grow it!" Those were words I took to heart and serving on the Commission has allowed me to do my part in promoting what I grow. I also must point out that California avocado growers and the CAC staff are some of the greatest people around, and being with everyone in the group has been a thoroughly enriching experience.

We have just finished the initial round of crop estimating meetings for the 2019 crop. One thing is abundantly clear: we are looking at a very small crop in 2019, and possibly 2020, due to weather related factors. A side effect of small crops is lack of work for our experienced and dedicated harvesters. If we don't keep them busy, they will drift off



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to other crops or new trades. Now is the time to seriously consider some of those jobs on the ranch you've been putting off. Those pruning projects? The time to do those is now when there will be minimal fruit loss. Use your labor contractors and harvesters to get the jobs done and keep labor around for when our crops return to normal size.

As a multi-generational California farmer, I have known since childhood that rain and rainfall totals were life and death topics. Listening to the near reverential tones in which rain was discussed around the dinner table taught me that rain had more going for it than just water. Since this magazine will be landing on peoples' desks in the early fall, there is no doubt in my mind that my fellow farmers will be starting to cast their eyes skyward wondering when the first storms will hit and what they will bring. For those looking for rain comes the first closing quote from Walt Whitman, "And who art thou? Said I to the soft-falling shower, which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated: I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain".

Rainfall is poetry to this farmer to be sure. The second quote, which I cannot resist, is from the immortal Bugs Bunny, "That's All Folks!" 🥰