

Cautious Optimism as We Wait for Fruit

As I write this, it is Memorial Day weekend and in the last 24 hours we have had rain, a high of 63 and a low of 41. Our bloom has been very strong this year due to the wonderful winter rains; however, it is certainly extended with the cool spring and late rains. This is a time of cautious optimism for most growers as we wait impatiently for the fruit for next year's crop to set.

We have always felt the fruit set was best when low temperatures are above 50 degrees. So 41 degrees is ridiculous. No wonder all the BBs are just sitting in their jackets waiting for some warmer weather. Leaf expansion is happening incredibly fast this year, hopefully covering next year's crop.

At the last California Avocado Commission (CAC) Board of Directors meeting it was proposed, and passed, that a budget amendment was necessary to extend the marketing and media budget by \$300,000 through mid-August. The marketing committee feels there may be late-season fruit from the north to support this. As much of our media buy today is in digital format, we can easily extend or curtail our programs depending on the fruit flow from the fields. Through the end of April, sizing has been well ahead of last year with a shift of 4-5 percent moving up a size. Average returns for conventional fruit also are up nearly \$12 per lug.

If you have never done so, I would

encourage you to look at the marketing dashboard on the CAC grower website. Your board sees this at every meeting. The dashboard covers not only industry statistics, but also where the marketing spending is going. Jan DeLyser and her

Marketing Dashboard

www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/marketing/marketing-dashboard

team dive very deep in promoting your avocados, and feature the following information on the dashboard: outdoor advertising, social media, consumer advertising, registered dietitians, blogger advocates, retail promotions, trade advertising, foodservice chain promotions, public relations, chef ideation, foodservice events, digital and print advertising.

The production research committee has been looking into proposals on several fronts; the most interesting to me is the potential for registration of Orondis®. This is a new class of fungicide that effectively eradicates *Phytophthora* propagules from the soil for at least a year. It is applied via the irrigation system. It has been registered for citrus but has been held up at the California Department of Pesticide Regulation due to a recent court case. The committee is going to try to pursue a Section 18 registration for the short term. If this



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product works as advertised, it could be a game changer for many of us that have fought root rot for generations.

Transparency is a major buzzword these days. I sincerely believe that the California Avocado Commission is as transparent as possible. All meetings are subject to the Brown Act and, accordingly, must be noticed 10 days in advance. All board and committee meetings are open to the public unless the topic has the potential for litigation or involves employees. All agendas and minutes from all board and committee meetings are posted on the website. All business plans, financial statements and check registers can be viewed by anyone at any time. All roll call votes are in the minutes so you can see exactly how your commissioner voted on items of particular interest to you. The finance committee reviews all disbursements, and if there is a question, CAC's Director of Finance Monica Arnett can pull up all supporting documentation in an instant.

You won't have to file a Freedom of Information Act request to get backup for CAC expenditures; all you have to do is look at the grower website or simply ask. We will be happy to provide you with the non-redacted information that is available. 🥑