



Ventura County growers and commission staff meet with Congresswoman Brownley in Fillmore

Commission Hosts Congresswoman Julia Brownley

By Ken Melban
Director, Issues Management

Recently California Avocado Commission representatives met with freshman Congresswoman Julia Brownley to discuss potential federal legislation that has a direct impact on California's agricultural industry.

The meeting, near Fillmore, lasted for more than an hour and provided Brownley, whose 26th District includes most of Ventura County, an opportunity to hear directly from avocado farmers. Following the meeting, Brownley participated in a tour of Rancho Simpatica, conducted by CAC Chairman Ed McFadden, allowing her to get up close and personal with an avocado grove. "I believe it was the first time Congresswoman Brownley had been in an avocado

grove, and I'm sure it was the first time she'd ever used a picking pole," joked McFadden. "She seemed genuinely interested in California avocado farming, the issues we face, and hearing our concerns."

A total of 12 growers attended including CAC officers, Vice Chairman Doug O'Hara and Treasurer John Lamb.

One of the key discussions was on the issue of immigration reform, and the importance of passing legislation that addresses the needs of the farming community. Brownley was told any legislative fix must allow for a flexible, market-oriented program that includes an opportunity for agricultural guest workers. Brownley said she supports immigration reform and pledged to work within the House of



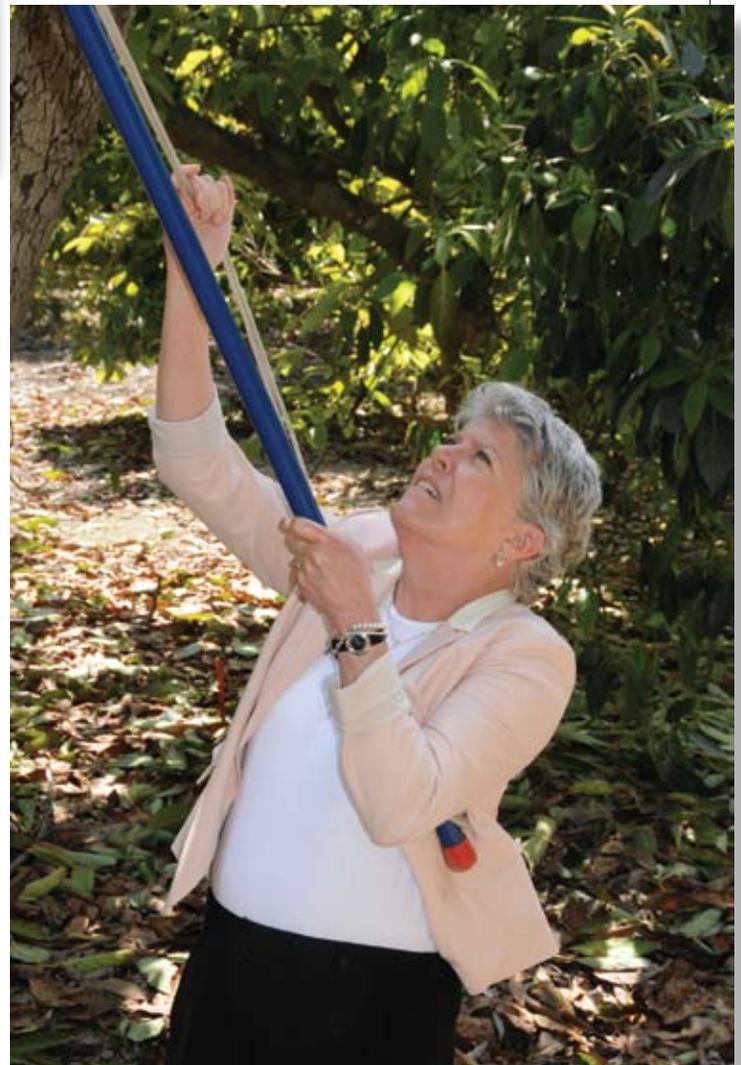
CAC's Ken Melban presented Rep. Brownley with a basket of avocados while they toured the grove.

Representatives to ensure elements important to agriculture are maintained in any proposed legislation.

Growers also explained to Brownley the threat from invasive pests to farming, and how critical it is for the authorization of Farm Bill funding. She suggested efforts are underway in both the House and the Senate to approve the Farm Bill, and that funding for specialty crops looks strong, which will help to maintain funding for pest detection, eradication and exclusion activities.

Brownley, elected in November, 2012 to the 113th Congress, was sworn in on January 3, 2013. New congressional districts were established prior to the November 2012 election, and much of the new 26th District was previously part of the 24th District, which had been represented by Elton Gallegly who retired. Prior to being elected to Congress, Brownley had served three consecutive terms (2006-2012) in the California State Assembly representing the 41st District.

The commission will continue to educate elected officials about the needs of California's avocado growers. 🥑



Congresswoman Brownley picking avocados