

Regional Trade Shows Provide Unique Venues for Retailer Education

California Avocado Commission participation in select trade shows provides cost-effective outreach to regional and independent retailers

The California Avocado Commission merchandising staff educates retailers about the competitive advantages of stocking and promoting California avocados in season. They do so via in-person meetings with key retailers as well as participation in trade shows and other events. Regional trade shows provide CAC with excellent venues to engage with local retailers and reach many independent retailers – some of whom do not attend the annual national produce shows. Regional expos also provide an opportunity to educate produce managers and other store-level personnel in a cost-effective manner.

Most of the regional trade shows that CAC participates in occur before and during the California avocado season, allowing staff to demonstrate CAC merchandising aids such as display bins, recipe booklets and point-of-sale materials that can help the retailers promote California avocados. At many of these shows CAC uses a “pop-up” booth with graphics that call attention to premium California avocados. The merchandising team talks to retailers about the California avocado fresh-to-market advantage, handling and merchandising best practices, and fuels the fire for California avocado-branded retail ads and displays through ad and display contests.



These expos provide CAC with an excellent opportunity for networking and relationship building. The Fresh Produce and Floral Council (FPFC) is a regional association dedicated to creating business opportunities for the industry, including luncheons, golf tournaments, family-friendly events and one-day trade shows. Based in Southern California, the FPFC also holds events in Northern California and its member companies hail from all over the country. FPFC has an expo in Northern California in April and in Southern California in June.



*Carissa Mace,
President of the FPFC*

In recent years, CAC has attended the FPFC shows and sponsored activities while also meeting with retailers on the show floor. In the north, CAC Retail Merchandising Director (RMD) Dave Howald and other CAC staff have met with headquarters personnel from Food 4 Less, Grocery Outlet, Mollie Stone's, Nugget, Rally's, SaveMart, Safeway Corporate, and more. In the south CAC RMD Connie Stukenberg and other CAC staff have networked with retailers including Albertsons, Gelson's, Ralph's, Stater Bros., Vons and Southern California independents.

In 2014 CAC will expand its presence by having a booth



Wednesday April 3, 2013
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Traditional Summer Holidays (Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father's Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day) are the perfect time to promote the All-American Avocado—California Avocados. Retail volume grew +95% and retail dollars grew +67% from 2007 during the 4th of July holiday.

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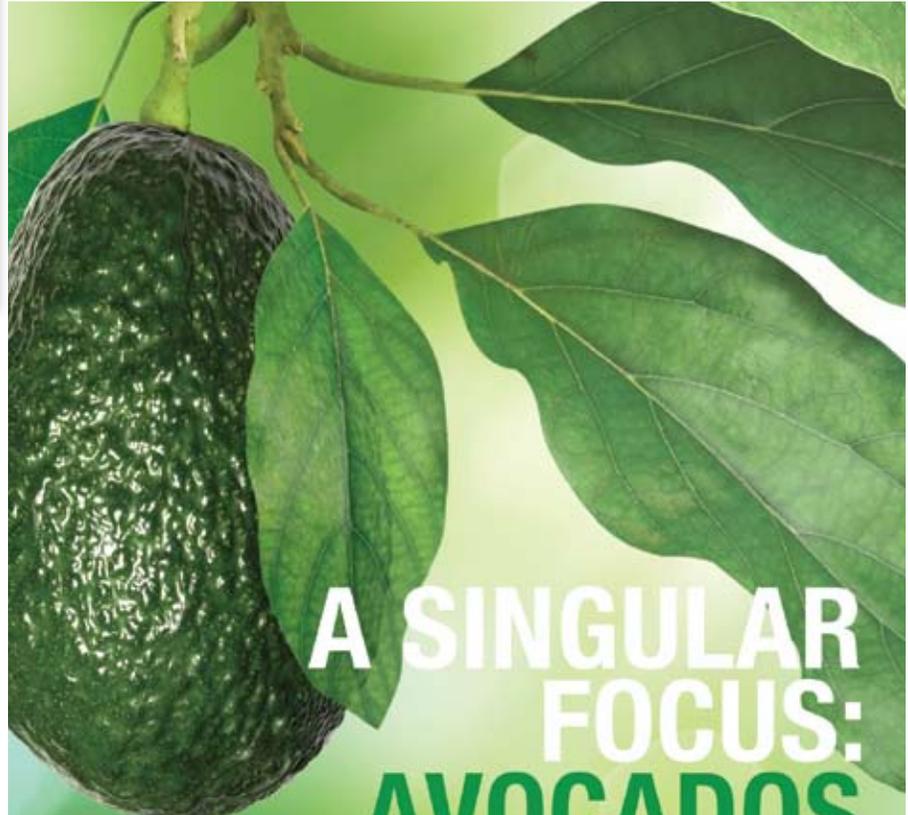
at both FPFC expos.

“The FPFC Expos are the only regional produce and floral industry trade shows in California, and are designed to be compact, allowing attendees to meet with all of the exhibitors in a single day,” said Carissa Mace, president of FPFC. “That compactness is crucial to the success of the events, because it allows retail and foodservice personnel from every level to spend the day meeting with vendors, seeing new products and learning about upcoming promotions.”

Regional trade shows in outer markets help CAC reach retailers whose shopper demographics are a good fit for California avocados. CAC generally sponsors a high profile activity and staff members network with the attendees. RMD Cece Krumrine engages with retailers at the New England Produce Council Expo held in the Boston area. In 2013 CAC sponsored the parking for the event, which allowed for an opportunity to provide information about CAC’s 4th of July promotion. Krumrine attends the New York Produce Show as well. In the center of the country CAC representatives network with retailers at the Midwest Produce Expo, which was inaugurated in Chicago in August 2012.

The Commission also participates in

targeted grocery wholesaler and retailer shows. In February 2013, CAC exhibited at the National Grocers’ Association show in Las Vegas. CAC’s booth was part of the Produce Marketing Association’s “Produce Pavilion”. Independent retailers from across the country attended the three-day show, which included educational sessions as well as the exhibit booths. CAC’s Jan Delyser was a speaker at the event, and shared with the retailers how country of origin point-of-sale materials and on-package identification encourage sales of California avocados.



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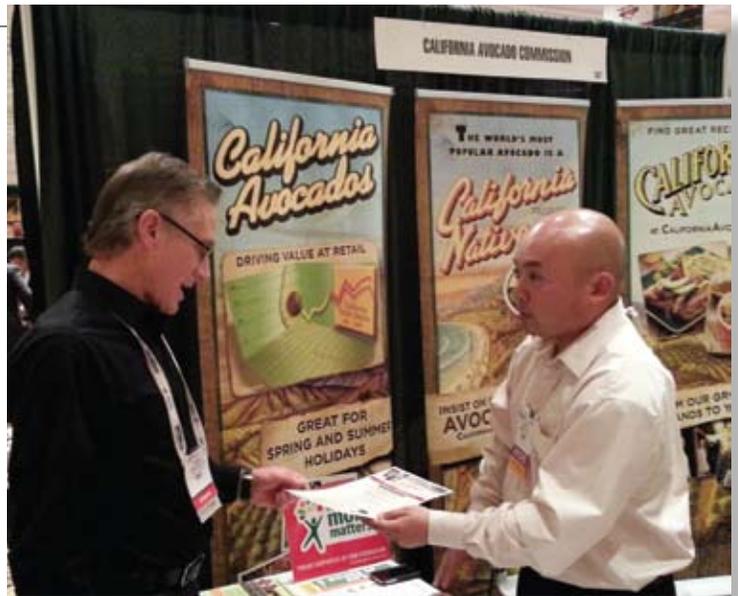


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The Unified Grocers show, which was held in Long Beach this past June, attracts many independent retailers from the West Coast, including El Super, Mollie Stone's and Vallarta Supermarkets. CAC Marketing Development Manager Dave Cruz educated retailers about California avocado merchandising best practices and marketing programs, including demonstrations of bins and other materials available in Spanish.

Retailers' own shows offer another opportunity for CAC staff to meet with store-level produce managers and encourage them to build the best displays of California avocados. H.E.B.'s show and Kroger's show in Houston were highlights in 2013.

Regional trade shows are valuable tools in CAC's marketing toolbox. They provide a cost-effective means to engage with many produce decision makers in a cost-effective manner. The shows allow CAC to reach many independent retailers and store-level personnel that the Commission would otherwise not have the manpower or time to meet individually. Participation in targeted regional trade shows



Pop-up booth used by CAC at regional trade shows

helps CAC spread its marketing messages while also showing support for local retailers and the produce community. 🥑

