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CAC Hosts Regulatory Officials On Grove Tour

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) partnered with the California Citrus Quality Council (CCQC) in April to host a four-day tour of avocado and citrus production areas. Representatives included staff from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), along with the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR). A total of 33 agency personnel participated in the tour. Government agency representatives included attorneys, environmental scientists, regulatory and public affairs specialists, biologists and agency directors.

The first morning of the tour began with pre-briefing presentations. Dr. Tim Spann, CAC research program director, and April Aymami, CAC industry affairs director, joined me as we presented information on the state of the California avocado industry. Topics discussed included the importance of crop protection materials, and challenges like labor and water shortages along with the threat of invasive pests. Many of the attendees, in their professional roles, have direct input on decisions that affect agriculture. The tour provided a great opportunity to establish and/or improve relations with officials who



are tasked with creating and enforcing regulations that impact farming.

John Lamb, CAC chairman, and his brother Bert Lamb opened their farm, Camlam Farms in Camarillo, for an avocado grove tour and dinner. “We were pleased to have the tour stop at our farm so we could interact with the officials,” said Chairman Lamb. “This is a great opportunity to show these agency staff members what farming is all about and how hard we work to protect the environment.”

Many CAC board members and other industry representatives joined the group, which provided a great opportunity for meaningful interaction between the growers and agency per-

sonnel. Some of the agency representatives had never visited a commercial agriculture enterprise, let alone an avocado grove. By touring agricultural production operations, agency staff have a much better understanding of what is involved with farming — including the many challenges farmers face.

This tour provided attendees with a much different perspective than found in their Washington, D.C. and Sacramento offices. Hopefully, when they are involved in future policy and regulatory decisions that impact agriculture, they will draw from the insights they gained during the Commission's production agriculture tour. 🥑