

# Marketing Communication Alignment Critical in a Tight Crop Year

**A**lignment between growers, handlers and the California Avocado Commission (CAC) marketing team has always been a key factor in achieving positive grower returns. In a light volume year, such alignment is critical to: ensure an orderly flow of California avocado supply, encourage optimal market conditions, maintain customer relations, boost consumer interest, and maximize the harvest window and grower returns.

With a smaller 2019 California avocado crop on the horizon, the Commission had to make tough decisions about which marketing programs to keep, which to add and which to let go in order to optimize marketing expenditures and impact. The Commission's marketing team began pre-season planning by conducting in-depth sales data and research analyses to identify which customers and consumers to target and then set about building the California avocado story.

Working within a necessarily tight budget due to the smaller crop, the Commission developed a marketing support plan focused on California markets using outdoor, audio, digital (including Hulu TV) and social media platforms. Customized retail programs will be developed with participating customers, along with plans for menu ideation sessions and marketing support for targeted foodservice chains.

The Marketing Program Book highlights recent research indicating that Super Avocado Shoppers (the 25 percent of consumers who purchase 75 percent of U.S. avocados) are most aware of California avocados and tend to rate the California fruit higher than fruit from other origins on key attributes. It also showcases CAC's advertising and retail marketing program and support materials (such as recipe booklets and bins) and features a section illustrating how the Commis-

sion's foodservice marketing benefits retailers.

Information exchange between CAC and AMRIC handlers, coupled with communication between handlers and growers, is critical to ensure an orderly supply flow and to encourage optimal market conditions. Once pre-season crop forecasts were complete, the Commission engaged in a series of conference calls with AMRIC avocado handlers to review the California avocado harvest forecast by month and week, and gather insights from the handlers. It was confirmed that 2019 California avocado distribution would be focused within the Golden State and to select out-of-state customers, including



*The Marketing Program Book showcases the benefits of carrying California avocados, the Commission's retail program and information about key sales opportunities such as the American Summer Holidays.*

## AVOCADO SHOPPERS LOVE CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS

- 68% say it is important the avocados they buy are grown in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>
- 76% try to buy produce that is locally grown, when possible<sup>2</sup>
- Rate CALIFORNIA highest for freshest, best tasting and most premium quality avocados<sup>3</sup>



Source: California Avocado Tracking Study 2017, western region. <sup>1</sup> Percent who say it is very or somewhat important. <sup>2</sup> Percent who agree strongly or somewhat. <sup>3</sup> Among avocado shoppers aware of two or more growing areas.

*The Marketing Program Book helps communicate shoppers' preference for California avocados.*

limited high-value export opportunities. This strategy is designed to ensure California avocado marketing support aligns with where the fruit is distributed. Accurate market information provides growers the flexibility to harvest at the optimum times for their own situation and encourages targeted customers to make a timely supply transition to the California origin.

The Commission and AMRIC handlers discussed targeted retail and foodservice accounts, sharing information from the Marketing Program Book along with foodservice plans. In some cases, handlers suggested adding an account that might improve grower value. In other cases, they suggested not targeting specific accounts whose volume or size requirements might be difficult to meet

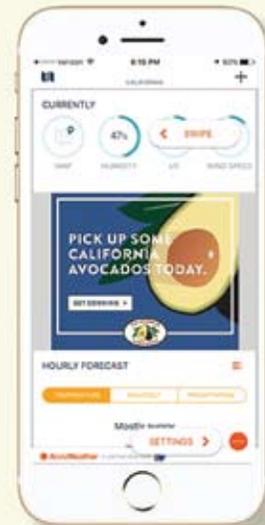
handlers, the Commission and customers should minimize some of the challenges presented by a short crop. 🥑

this year. These in-depth webcasts with the handler teams supplying CAC's targeted accounts helped to align marketing program planning, timing and communication.

The Commission's Retail Marketing Directors (RMDs) have begun meeting with targeted accounts to determine appropriate timing for their transition to California avocados. The RMDs share CAC's Marketing Program Book during the meetings, presenting the Commission's marketing program and initiating promotion agreements for the 2019 season.

This pre-season alignment between growers,

## GEO-TARGETING DRIVES CONSUMERS TO YOUR STORES



*By showcasing the Commission's geo-targeting tools, CAC can demonstrate the power of customized promotions that help consumers locate retailers and foodservice operators who carry their favorite California fruit in season.*