

Please join me in extending a warm welcome to the California Avocado Commission's new president, Jeff Oberman. I am absolutely thrilled that Jeff has joined our team. He is exceptionally well-qualified and will be a great fit in our organization and a great leader for our industry. Jeff has a deep knowledge of the fresh produce industry and has a keen sense of the challenges we face and opportunities we have as California avocado growers. He understands the complexity and unpredictability of our business. Jeff appreciates that our farming costs are up while our yields are variable and always vulnerable. He also understands what it takes to move a perishable product through the supply chain and that value must be created for avocado buyers and avocado consumers alike. But he also appreciates the role CAC can play, working with growers to drive higher yields and working with customers to drive higher demand. No doubt, it will take time for him to get his arms fully around our industry and the organization, but he is excited to learn and ready to lead. To learn more about Jeff's background, please see Tim Linden's profile on page 6.

Jeff started on October 10, just short of a year after Tom Bellamore

announced his retirement to the CAC Board of Directors. We knew it would take time to recruit a new president, but we certainly hadn't planned on it taking a year! In the end, I believe we found the right person, so the wait and effort were worth it, but I want to thank the growers, the staff and everyone in the industry for their patience throughout this process. Additionally, I want to thank the board and especially the Search Task Force for the many, many hours they put into this search. All in, the current and past directors on the Search Task Force interviewed 15 highly capable candidates and interviewed many of them multiple times through progressive rounds. These directors and past directors were dedicated to this effort, and I cannot thank them enough.

And finally, I want to express my gratitude to Ken Melban for stepping up to lead CAC during this transition. Through the summer and fall, Ken worked diligently to keep the operation running smoothly. Ken and the CAC team did an excellent job during this period, both managing the normal, predictable responsibilities of the business and responding to unplanned changes and unforeseen challenges. During this time period, Ken and the team identified opportunities



*Rob Grether*

for greater administrative efficiency, which should be sustainable well into the future. Additionally, once Jeff was identified as our next president, the CAC team wasted no time helping him get set up logistically so that he could hit the ground running. And there is no time to waste as the next month is going to be a busy one for the CAC team. At our October board meeting, we will set the assessment rate and budget for next year, and at the end of the month, much of the CAC team will head to Orlando for the IFPA Global Fresh Produce Show (formally known as the PMA Fresh Summit). In November, a new board of directors will be seated, the marketing team will be busy developing next year's program, and the team will start the annual financial audit. There is a lot to do, but we are in good hands with a new leader on board and strong leadership throughout the organization! 🍌

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Grether'. The signature is fluid and cursive.