

Commission's Connie Stukenberg Takes the Helm at the FPFC

California Avocado Commission (CAC) Retail Marketing Director Connie Stukenberg was installed as chair of the Fresh Produce and Floral Council (FPFC) at the organization's annual installation and dinner dance on January 28, 2017, in Dana Point, California.

More than 525 people attended the event, including many retailers and other industry members. Past chair Martin Quebec passed the gavel to Stukenberg, who presented the members of the FPFC apprentice program and encouraged industry involvement.

The California avocado industry also benefitted from FPFC networking opportunities at the February 23, 2017, FPFC membership luncheon in Northern California, where California avocado grower Ed McFadden participated on a panel of growers representing many different crops, including flowers, tree fruit and avocados. This activity helped promote the value of California avocados as the season started to get underway.

The FPFC provides members with opportunities to build productive relationships, access timely market information, enhance their business skills and pool their efforts to promote and advance the industry. Retailers currently serving with CAC's Stukenberg on the FPFC Board of Directors include Albertson's-Vons-Pavilions, Food 4 Less, Gelson's, Northgate Markets, Raley's and Stater Bros.

Stukenberg continues a long tradition of Commission associates who have supported the FPFC in a variety of roles, starting with one of its founding fathers, Ralph Pinkerton, along with Avi Crane, Robert Verloop and Dave Howald. CAC Vice President Marketing Jan DeLyser worked at the Council from 1979 to 1993, and in 1999 served as FPFC chair. The chair guides and counsels the FPFC president, acts as council spokesperson in conjunction with the president, presides at



Stukenberg takes the podium as FPFC Chair.

The FPFC Mission

The Fresh Produce & Floral Council is a dynamic community of professionals across all sectors of the fresh produce and floral industry who do business in California and the western region.



Raley's Greg Corrigan with DeLyser and Stukenberg.

meetings and provides overall leadership for the board, keeping the focus on the FPFC mission, goals and priorities.

“Participation in, and leadership of, the FPFC provides the Commission with opportunities to work with and build personal relationships with retailers outside of day-to-day business operations,” said DeLyser. “It also helps with leadership development and advances industry networking.”

Stukenberg has been involved with the FPFC for more than 25 years, including three terms on the Board of Directors, and in 2012 was awarded the organization’s Norman H. “Buz” Bolstad Produce Award for dedication to volunteer service and outstanding contributions to the produce industry. She spent two years on the FPFC executive committee before being elected to chair the organization.

Her produce career began more than 35 years ago, implementing fresh juice programs in stores with juice extractors during the early era of fresh juices merchandised in produce.

In 1987, she leveraged that experience to co-found Citrus Connection, a wholesale fresh juice distribution company, and built it up until it was acquired by California Day Fresh Foods, a Chiquita Brands subsidiary that later renamed the company Naked Juice. Stukenberg stayed on with Naked Juice as national sales manager. While working full-time and raising three daughters, she earned her B.S. in Business Administration and Management.

In 2000, Stukenberg joined CAC as the retail marketing director, where she managed retail marketing and merchandising programs. Almost 10 years later she independently started CS Sales and Marketing for Results, where she continued her affiliation with the Commission along with consulting for other companies within the produce industry. In 2014, she rejoined CAC staff full time as retail marketing director, assuming responsibility for CAC’s core markets of Northern California, Southern California and Arizona, along with some corporate accounts. 🍌



Gelson's John Fujii with Stukenberg.