

California Avocado Month Tops 100 Million Impressions



Image courtesy of California Tortilla

Public Relations Activities

In recognition of June as California Avocado Month, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) coordinated with key California-based chefs and influential bloggers to inspire consumers' use of California avocados during peak season.

On June 4, CAC hosted a media dinner at Curtis Stone's Maude Restaurant in Beverly Hills, which celebrates one ingredient per month on its menu. June was (of course) California avocados, and CAC brought in traditional media and food bloggers to experience the innovative and delicious menu. The 10-course meal featured dishes that utilized California avocados and other seasonal ingredients in cre-

ative and innovative ways, including pickled avocados with radicchio, tomato, radish and kohlrabi; avocado powder with rib eye, sweet corn and bone marrow; and for dessert, avocado leaves with chocolate and blackberries.

CAC also coordinated with Artisan Chef partners to raise awareness of California Avocado Month. In San Diego, chef Trey Foshee of George's at the Cove created exclusive new California avocado sandwich recipes that were featured in press outreach. These new recipes, including the *Achiote Grilled Fish Sandwich with California Avocado* and *Roasted Pineapple-Jalapeño Spread* and the *Chipotle, Lettuce, Tomato and California Avocado Sandwich*, were made available to consumers on CAC's website. Foshee also created and promoted California avocado taco specials throughout June in his restaurant.

Throughout June, Jessica Koslow (SQIRL, Los Angeles) highlighted a mackerel toast with pickled mulberries and a California avocado crema (as seen opposite, on page 15); Ivy Stark (Dos Caminos, NYC) developed a California avocado 'light' guacamole that was added to the Dos Caminos Healthy Options menu; Eric Tanaka (Cantina Lena, Seattle) devised a California avocado summer guacamole; and Mike Fagnoni (Hawks Restaurant, Sacramento) made a delicious California avocado summer salad.



CAC's Jan Delyser with the staff of Maude Restaurant in Beverly Hills

The Commission leveraged its wide network of blogger ambassadors, and also worked with an additional group of influencers throughout the month, to inspire posts about California Avocado Month. Each contact received fresh, beautiful California avocados that inspired a wide range of dishes, such as an Avocado BLT (Family Spice), Grilled Bread with California Avocado Bruschetta (Petit Foodie) and spicy Grilled Pineapple and Jalapeño Guacamole (My Man's Belly). This outreach resulted in more than 40 blog and social media posts and 300,000 impressions to date.

CAC's California Avocado Month activities built on prior success and helped to promote the peak of California avocado season while creating excitement and anticipation for California avocados. This year, California Avocado Month activities resulted in more than 100 million impressions.



California Avocado Mackerel Toast special at SQIRL restaurant in Silver Lake, California

Retail Communications Programs

CAC's tiered account approach to targeting retail accounts resulted in promotional activity throughout California Avocado Month encouraging consumers to increase their consumption of fresh California avocados.

Customized communications programs were developed and implemented at top tier retailers including Bristol Farms, Gelson's, Mollie Stone's and King Soopers. From social media campaigns to traditional media such as television interview segments, newspaper articles and in-store demos, CAC and this select group of retailers worked together to promote California avocados during June.

Directly engaging with consumers, building brand presence and ultimately selling more California avocados was the goal of a customized program with Bristol Farms. CAC worked with the retailer's social media team to host grower information, nutrition messages, preparation and usage tips, recipes, two featured grower profiles (Del Rey Avocados and Rancho Vasquez Organic Avocados) and photos on a dedicated California avocado page on Bristol Farms'

website in support of a two-week in-store promotion.

Another social media campaign featured a month of tweets about interesting usage ideas, nutrition tips and recipes on Gelson's Twitter site. The retailer also posted several articles on their website including one about hand-grown California avocados from Rancho Rodoro and featuring a virtual tour of the groves in a video. A third social media campaign was coordinated with Mollie Stone's that included tips and recipes on their Twitter, Facebook and Instagram sites all month long.

Extending to traditional media and in-store activities, Colorado's Channel 2 news featured a segment about California Avocado Month with King Sooper's dietitian who shared tips for using California avocados at breakfast time, in smoothies and salad dressing. She also demonstrated the proper way to cut, nick and peel a California avocado for the morning show's viewers. In all 146 King Soopers' store pharmacies,

avocados were the "Dietitian Tip of the Week" and were promoted with easels featuring a CAC-provided photo of grilled avocado from June 12-17. Supermarket dietitians conducted "grilled fruit" cooking classes that featured California avocados. Grilled California avocados also were served at a re-grand opening event where CAC's "Superfood Spotlight: 16 Surprising Ways to Add California Avocados in Your Day" and California avocado cutters were given away to attendees.

Promoting the fruit via customized programs at key top tier retailers during California Avocado Month netted wide exposure. The three customized social media programs reached more than 15,000 Facebook fans and 8,000 Twitter and Instagram followers. An audience of more than 15,400 tuned in to *Colorado's Best* on Channel 2 for the television segment featuring California avocados.

All of the Commission's California Avocado Month activities benefit California avocado growers by creating awareness of California avocado seasonality and building consumer excitement and anticipation for premium California avocados. 🥑

