

By Terry Splane
Vice President of Marketing



Terry Splane

Embracing a Bright Future in 2024: Strategic Shifts to Drive Success

The California Avocado Commission marketing team has been hard at work adjusting our game plan and resources to elevate efficiency, effectiveness and overall success in 2024. Due to economic conditions and budget cuts, we left no stone unturned as we strived to optimize our investment strategy and drive successful results. The two primary areas of change for next year center around how we think about trade investment and a new marketing campaign.

Elevated focus on trade customers

To achieve our reduced financial investment goals, the team assessed all areas of the business. There are reductions in virtually all activities and initiatives including consumer advertising, website development, content creation, etc. The one area we were conscientious about not reducing was direct investment into our customer base...typically referred to as “trade investment”. However, not all trade investment is created equal. It was necessary to redefine trade investment into two buckets: trade customer support and industry support.

Trade customer support is defined as investment that has a direct impact on those accounts who directly market and sell California avocados to consumers. Activities include supporting their marketing efforts with in-store promotions, social and digital advertis-

ing, sampling, menu mention and promotions.

Industry support is defined as investment in communicating seasonal availability and the value of California avocados to our trade customers. Activities include trade advertising, public relations, events and trade sponsorships.

The industry support portion of our budget was severely reduced. Our thought process was that our loyal trade customers are aware of California avocado seasonal timing and value to their business. Due to the lower crop volume expected this season, it's not necessary to pull new customers into the brand. In addition, we have CAC representatives and AMRIC handlers fully engaged in ongoing communications with these customers. This allows us to reduce our spending without losing connectivity and engagement with those customers who are critical supporters of our brand.

Trade customer support was untouched by budget cuts and actually was elevated in several areas. So, when it comes to customer awareness of California avocado availability and value, we won't skip a beat. With these financial adjustments, almost 60% of the total annual budget is now invested into trade overall, with approximately 85% of that being deployed against building our trade customers' business.

New marketing campaign supporting the 2024 California avocado season

After three years with the advertising campaign creative, “The best avocados have California in them”, it's time for a refresh. The purpose of the refresh is to reignite the California Avocados brand with ownable, relevant and meaningful content. Over time consumers become “fatigued” with the same advertising look and feel, so they lose interest, minimizing their overall engagement and the effectiveness of the marketing campaign.

We're in the middle of this critical body of work, so I have nothing visual to unveil. We'll save that for the next *From the Grove* edition, so be sure to check it out when it arrives!

What I can share is how we're approaching the new campaign and what you can expect to see.

Campaign Mandatories:

- Pulling from my last *From the Grove* article, we will be maniacally focused on the messaging that truly differentiates California avocados from the rest of the category. That messaging includes premium quality and preference, locally grown, now in season and sustainability.

Continued on page 11

is not done, however. CAC continues to engage with USDA to remove the listing of GEM and Lamb-Hass avocados as host crops.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board got our attention as well last year with its proposed limitations for discharges from irrigated agricultural lands, which would impact avocado growers and many other farmers in the region.

Coordinating with the Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business, and other likeminded groups, CAC stepped up and supported the collective, common-sense message in defense of our avocado growers. The highlights included a laundry list of bureaucratic overreach driven in part by little, if any, understanding of agriculture and farming practices.

The following are a few examples of what we are fighting:

The total maximum daily load (TMDL) of additives to the soil for farming purposes will be imposed on a given area outlined on a map rather

than specific properties already subject to existing TMDL limits. This arbitrary approach to decision making surely accommodates regulators but creates real risk of victimizing our growers.

Requires farmers to install best management practices even if such practices are deemed unnecessary or infeasible by technical experts and does not make allowance for the time needed to comply.

Our avocado growers are as unique as the land they farm with hill-sides, intersecting roads and valleys that often require specialized farming practices. There is little recognition of this operational diversity as the Regional Board and staff look to adopt and enforce inflexible rules — in effect applying a one-size-fits-all framework. This must be avoided if possible.

There it is—a sample of challenges we faced in 2023, some of which will carry over to 2024 even as other issues surface and require our attention. Stay tuned. 🥑

EXECUTIVE NOTES

By Terry Splane

Continued from page 9

- We're getting back to our roots, literally. Or to be more exact – your roots. -Building on the locally grown message, California growers and groves will take on a prominent role in California avocado communications.
- And speaking of California, the state's iconic shaped outline will have unmistakable visibility in much of the new creative. This simple state visual is powerful in its presence, and a picture is worth a thousand words.
- We will continue to focus on Now

in Season messaging. Our objective will be to turn this statement from a fact into a sense of urgency and excitement for consumers to get to their retailer or restaurant and buy these amazing California avocados, NOW!

There's plenty more to tell, but I'll stop there. I'd rather show you in the next edition, so be on the lookout. Suffice it to say, we're extremely energized to launch all this newness beginning in a few short months. And we can't wait for you to see it too! 🥑



Board of Directors

District 1

Member/Jessica Hunter
Member/Robert Jackson
Alternate/Jaime Serrato

District 2

Member/John Cornell
Member/Victor Araiza
Alternate/Ohannes Karaoghlanian

District 3

Member/ Maureen Cottingham-**Treasurer**
Member/Robert Grether
Alternate/John Berns

District 4

Member/Rachael Laenen-**Vice Chair**
Member/Jason Cole-**Chair**
Alternate/Hayden McIntyre

District 5

Member/Will Carleton
Member/Daryn Miller-**Secretary**
Alternate/James Johnson

Handlers

Member/Peter Shore
Member/Vacant Seat
Alternate/Vacant Seat

Public Member

Member/Quinn Cotter
Alternate/Maddie Cook

To contact a CAC representative, please visit:
CaliforniaAvocadoGrowers.com/Commission/your-representatives