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Calendar

For a listing of industry events and dates for the coming year, please visit:

<http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/industry-calendar>

FSMA Produce Safety Training — Oxnard (English session)

The Farm Employers Labor Service is offering a full-day training session that meets the required U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety training for growers. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

January 17

January 17

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Courtyard Marriott, 600 East Esplanade, Oxnard, CA

Produce Safety Alliance Training for Avocado Growers and Related Industry Members

To help avocado growers and related industry members comply with the mandatory Produce Safety Alliance training, CAC, in partnership with California avocado handlers, has scheduled two Produce Safety Alliance trainings exclusively for California avocado growers for a very modest fee of \$35 (fee includes refreshments, lunch, training materials, and the official training certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials). Registration required. See article below and [more information available here.](#)

February 5 & 7

February 5

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Pala Mesa Resort, 2001 Old Hwy. 395, Fallbrook, CA

February 7

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Museum of Ventura County at 100 E. Main Street, Ventura, CA

FSMA Produce Safety Training — Fallbrook (English session)

The Farm Employers Labor Service is offering a full-day training session that meets the required U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety training for growers. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

February 21

February 21

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Pala Mesa Resort, 2001 Old Hwy. 395, Fallbrook, CA

CAC Board Meeting

February 21

February 21

Time: TBA

Location: CAC Board Room, 12 Mauchly, STE L, Irvine, CA

FSMA Produce Safety Training — Escondido (English session)

The Farm Employers Labor Service is offering a full-day training session that meets the required U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Produce Safety training for growers. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

February 22

February 22

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: San Diego CFB, 420 S. Broadway, Escondido, CA

CAC and Packers to Host Produce Safety Alliance Trainings – REGISTRATION REQUIRED

The second deadline for growers under the Food Safety Modernization Act's (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule is January 26, 2019. Accordingly, any farming operation with more than \$250,000 in average annual produce sales during the previous three-year period **must be ready to demonstrate compliance** (all deadlines are listed below). A major compliance requirement of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule is outlined in § 112.22(c) that states: 'At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration. Growers or farm representatives must go through a one-time 8-hour Produce Safety Alliance training or equivalent.

The California Avocado Commission (CAC) has provided information on upcoming Produce Safety Alliance trainings, but these trainings have in many instances sold out very quickly and/or are costly. To help avocado growers and related industry members comply with the mandatory Produce Safety Alliance training, CAC, in partnership with California avocado handlers*, has scheduled two Produce Safety Alliance trainings exclusively for California avocado growers for a very modest fee of \$35 (fee includes refreshments, lunch, training materials, and the official training certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials).

The following two avocado industry Produce Safety Alliance trainings have been scheduled:

- **February 5, 2019** from 8:00am to 5:00pm at the Pala Mesa Resort, 2001 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. [Online registration is available here.](#)
- **February 7, 2019** from 8:00am to 5:00pm at the Museum of Ventura County at 100 E. Main Street in Ventura, CA 93001. [Online registration is available here.](#)

A major portion of the cost for this training is being underwritten by CAC and California avocado packers*. As such, this is exclusive to California avocado producers, California avocado grove managers, and California avocado packing representatives.

It's important to note that the training follows the person — if a designated food safety employee who receives the training leaves your company, another employee will need to be trained. Even if your business is under the \$500,000

threshold, you will still be required to complete this one-time training within the next two years. **CAC encourages you to sign up now and get the training requirement done as soon as possible. Seating is limited.**

Produce Safety Rule deadlines for all producers:

- January 26, 2020 deadline for very small businesses — more than \$25,000 but no more than \$250,000 in average annual produce sales during the previous three-year period
- January 26, 2019 deadline for small businesses — more than \$250,000 but no more than \$500,000 in average annual produce sales during the previous three-year period
- January 26, 2018 deadline for all other farms

*CAC would like to thank the following packers for their generous contributions in support of these Produce Safety Alliance trainings: Calavo, Del Rey, Eco Farms, Giumarra, Henry Avocado, Index Fresh, McDaniel Fruit, Mission, West Pak, Westfalia.

House and Senate Approve the Farm Bill

On December 12, both the House and Senate voted to approve a Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. The bill will now go to the President for his signature.

The California Avocado Commission (Commission) worked with congressional members to stress the importance of the Farm Bill funding to the California avocado industry and highlighted critical programs. The Farm Bill provides important resources in areas like specialty crop research, invasive pest detection and exclusion efforts, and foreign promotional funding, just to name a few. For example, the Commission received funding for 2018 through the Foreign Agriculture Service's (FAS) Market Access Program (MAP) for promotional efforts in Japan and is pursuing additional MAP funding for Asia in 2019. These funds are made available through the Farm Bill.

The bill includes a number of [victories](#) for the fresh produce industry.

- Continued funding of Specialty Crop Grants — \$425 million of funding will be provided for state block grants over the next five years and now includes multi-state grant proposals
- New resources (\$125 million) for specialty crop research
- Increased access to fresh produce in federal nutrition programs
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was made permanent
- Added incentives for healthier eating such as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) and the Produce Prescription Program
- Maintains the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for students
- Strengthened pest and disease programs — provides the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with \$75 million annually and approves a new "USDA survey on pesticide for use in risk assessments"
- Improved USDA trade programs with \$200 million for the Market Access Program and \$9 million for the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program
- Requires USDA to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles to stymie trade opportunities

Grower Response Needed for San Diego County Crop Report

San Diego County avocado growers are encouraged to complete the 2018 Crop Report Questionnaire they received in the mail in December 2018. The survey covers crops grown, yield and gross value. Responses remain confidential and are used solely to compile relevant statistics for the Crop Report published by the San Diego County Agricultural Commissioner's office.

Data from the report helps San Diego County identify the region's top 10 crops, new and emerging crop trends, overall value of agriculture in the county and a statewide ranking in production of similar crops. This data also is used to:

- Determine the county's rank as an agricultural producer in California and across the nation
- Help elected officials make policy decisions
- Educate the public about the importance of agriculture to the local economy and environment
- Determine financial assistance in the event of disasters
- Help lending institutions and government agencies make farm loan decisions

The deadline to submit the survey is February 28, 2019. If you did not receive a questionnaire in the mail, growers can [download a copy](#) or send an email to Porfirio.Mancillas@sdcounty.ca.gov. Completed questionnaires can be faxed to 858.467.9697, emailed to Porfirio.Mancillas@sdcounty.ca.gov or mailed to Agriculture, Weights and Measures, 9325 Hazard Way, San Diego, CA, 92123.

Ground Squirrel Control in Avocado Groves

According to the UC Integrated Pest Management [website](#), avocados are particularly vulnerable to California ground squirrels and although squirrels hibernate in cold winters they tend to be active year-round in avocado growing regions. Besides eating the fruit, the squirrels can cause damage to groves by girdling trunks, eating twigs and leaves, burrowing around roots and gnawing on sprinkler heads and irrigation lines.

While ground squirrels look similar to tree squirrels, the easiest way to identify the ground squirrel is by noting where they flee. If the squirrel retreats to a burrow, it is a ground squirrel.

The burrows, which can damage roots and cause damage to equipment, are usually within two to three feet of the ground surface. In general, squirrels are most active during the daytime, but during the hottest times of the year, adults tend to rest in their burrows.

In order to control squirrels, it's important to understand their behavior. Primarily herbivorous, they tend to eat greenery in the winter and spring, and eat seeds in the summer and fall. They tend to forage in the later afternoon or early evening when it is not as hot outside. In summer and fall, it is best to bait with treated grain. If growers plan to use fumigation, they should do so in spring or when soil moisture is high as this helps contain the gas within the burrow system. Trapping is also considered a control option if populations are low to moderate. Box traps and tunnel traps are recommended and should be placed on the ground near burrows and baited with almonds, walnuts, oats, barley or melon rinds. Ground squirrels are not repelled by chemical or physical means.

It is worth noting that squirrels can carry bubonic plague, which can be transmitted to humans and other animals. If growers find large numbers of dead squirrels in their groves, they should notify a public health official and not handle the squirrels themselves.

UC Davis Study Indicates CAC 2013-17 Marketing Had a Significant Positive Impact

On November 13, Dr. Richard Sexton presented findings from the recently completed study, “Economic Impacts of the California Avocado Commission’s (CAC) Advertising and Promotion Program: 2013 – 2017” to the CAC Board. The independent evaluation was commissioned by CAC to provide third-party verification concerning the effectiveness of CAC’s marketing investment and the use of grower funds to benefit the California avocado industry.

The study examined CAC marketing activity, sales, pricing and consumption from 2013 – 2017 utilizing data from the Commission, the Hass Avocado Board (HAB), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other sources. The UC Davis economists, Dr. Sexton, Tina L. Saitone and Charlotte Ambrozek, evaluated the impact of CAC’s marketing on consumption and pricing, as well as the pricing impact on volume.

The UC Davis models overwhelmingly demonstrated that at the 99 percent confidence level the CAC advertising and promotions impact per capita consumption. Avocado per capita consumption in the U.S. grew from 1.6 pounds in the 1990s, to 7.1 pounds in 2014 – 16, which is a 344 percent increase. In comparison, the overall growth of the fruit category during this time period was recorded at 9 percent. It was noted that even with this huge growth in per capita consumption, there is still room for demand growth. While the study determined that markets in the west are the most developed (Phoenix/Tucson demonstrated the highest level of development), markets in the east are the least developed and may provide an opportunity for growth.

The study also examined market share in light of increased avocado imports and noted that despite the huge growth of import volume, California avocado growers experienced a slight increase in prices. California’s market share from 2015 – 17 was about 13 percent, with Mexico at 79 percent, thus California avocados are now and will be in the foreseeable future a niche/specialty product.

In light of its market percentage, Mexico now has sufficient revenues to promote nationally in any major national media. Dr. Sexton noted it is a good thing that CAC’s marketing season runs counter to Mexico’s peak season. According to the data, CAC marketers have been able to achieve on a dollar-per-dollar basis a comparable impact as that of Avocados from Mexico. Dr. Sexton also pointed out that some holidays, particularly during the summer, result in sales spikes and that many other holidays could be further developed.

Ultimately, the study determined that CAC promotions had a highly statistically significant positive impact on retail consumption of fresh avocados in (CAC’s) target markets during the review period, and that promotions funded by the Commission through HAB continue to pay off handsomely in terms of yielding benefit-cost ratios well in excess of 1.0.



Dr. Sexton shared findings from the CAC-commissioned study indicating that CAC promotions have had a significant impact on consumption during the past five years.

California Market Trends

To view all market trend graphs, including “Weekly Volume Summary,” “Weekly Avocado Prices” and “U.S. Avocado Supply,” please visit: <http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/industry/market-statistics>.

California Avocado Commission Weekly Volume Summary (Pounds)

	Week Ending 12/09/2018	Season-to-Date (since 11/01/2018)	2018 Year to Date
Hass	8,591	8,591	311,669,522
Lamb	0	0	11,093,082
Other (Greens)	5,887	129,722	1,859,051
California Total	14,478	138,313	324,621,655
Florida	729,960	3,936,020	22,814,535
Chile	3,544,642	15,166,484	48,769,620
Mexico	51,464,513	232,305,354	1,868,273,343
Peru	0	0	177,764,347
Other (Imports)	1,550,000	7,550,000	34,810,000
Import Total	56,559,155	255,021,838	2,129,617,310
USA Total	57,303,593	259,096,171	2,477,053,500

Sources:

California = CAC (AMRIC)

Florida = Florida Avocado Admin Committee

Chile = Comité de Paltas, Chile

Mexico = APEAM

Peru = ProHass

Other Imports = USDA AMS website

California Avocado Society Weekly Newslines* Avocado Prices – December 13, 2018

	Organic #1	Conventional #1	Conventional #1
California Hass	(Field Price Per Lb)	(Field Price Per Lb)	(Carton Price)
#32's			
36's			
40's			
48's	Insufficient Volume to Quote		
60's			
70's			
84's			

*To subscribe to the Weekly Newslines, please contact the California Avocado Society at (949) 940-8869 or www.CaliforniaAvocadoSociety.org.

Weather: 30-Day Outlook For California's Coastal & Valley Areas

Summary- Blocking upper high pressure will be in the central and E Gulf of Alaska. This will continue to force the westerlies into California, sometimes in the north half of California, and sometimes in the South.

Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) off the coast of southern California and off the west coast of Baja Mexico continue warmer than normal for the most part. However, the current pattern continues with a lack of energy. The reason for the lack of energy is the lack of a well-defined temperature anomaly difference across the central and eastern N Pacific. *EI*

Niño itself is not that robust so the end-result is a sort of lazy pattern, with the focus of rain shifting between N and S halves of California, sensitive to changes in the MJO cycle.

The end-result, as far as precipitation is concerned, is near normal rainfall for the remainder of December, higher than usual snow levels, but below normal precipitation for a good part of January for California.

An increase in the strength and the circulation in *El Niño* is currently predicted from December through February of this year (2018) and early next year (2019). The increase in the *El Niño* activity again in February may enhance rainfall again in late winter (February 2019), in this possibly inconsistent start-stop-start pattern for rains.

Snow pack across the SierraNV has increased with the moderate to locally heavy snow already observed. There are a few good storms that appear to increase the snowpack a bit in December, but the question is one of consistency...can the above normal snow occurrences continue to occur. We were below normal for the Fall season but with the cooler trough pattern and wetter active storms moving into the region we are expecting a good increase to the snow pack over the next few weeks.

Troughs will increase in occurrence, but due to above normal sea surface temperature (warm SSTAs) off to the west of California, higher snow levels are suggested, and lack of cold events that usually occur during this time of year.

The MJO cycle is currently weak across the eastern Pacific with still waning intensity which will bring weaker storms at times and especially late in the month into the start of the new year.

In the Near Term – Dec 15-31...Salinas Valley-San Luis Obispo Co... Above normal rain the first 10 days of December will give way to a more normal rainfall pattern the second half of the month. Fast-moving fronts and troughs will slide through quickly with the storms being a bit anemic at times with less moisture. This will bring lighter rain through the region. A weaker system will bring some rain though most will be light late on the 14th. Another fast-moving system will bring more light rain on the 16th through the 17th. Dry and warmer as a ridge builds from the 18th through the 22nd. The ridge breaks down with a weak system brushing to the north with some rain on the 23rd and 24th with a better rain around the 25th and 26th. A final storm will bring light rain only on the 29th and 30th. A ridge builds again around New Year's with dry and warmer than normal conditions through the first week of January.

...S Calif Avocado Area, San Luis Obispo Co to San Diego Co... A slightly wetter than normal pattern will continue though rainfall won't be as impressive as the first half of the month. Some subtropical connection at times but with an inactive MJO moisture amounts will be reduced with more anemic storms expected. Still some decent rain at times with some upper lows developing bringing rain through southern California. An upper low will develop off a trough with some rain on the 16th and 17th. Better rain will be across northern areas from LA to the NW. Another upper low will bring better rain and wet conditions at times from the 24th through the 26th. A weaker storm will bring some clouds but only light rain on the 29th through the 30th is possible. A ridge builds with dry and warmer conditions expected for New Year's through the first week of January. Occasional Santa Ana wind events are likely. A moderate Santa Ana from the 12th through the 13th with a stronger Santa Ana from the 17th through the 19th.

Summary – Jan 1-15... In the southern California avocado growing areas, from San Luis Obispo south, it will be turning much drier as the storm track pulls to the north with a building ridge moving into the region through the first half of January. Little or no chance of rain is expected. Temperatures will be much warmer than normal due to the high pressure ridge expected over the region. Any precipitation with weak storms sliding north over the ridge is unlikely but will be light at most. Most areas will stay dry. Upper lows are not expected as the ridge and inactive MJO shuts down the moisture connection from the tropics.

Seasonal Outlook / *El Niño* Update... Jan 15 – March 15... Not much will be in sync for January with an inactive MJO through the middle of January and a relatively weak *El Niño* will continue through about the 20th of January. The end of January will see some strengthening of the MJO as it starts to increase into the positive or active phase around the first of

January. Also, a stronger *El Niño* is predicted with phasing not quite in sync but becoming more organized from the 20th through the start of February. Some rainfall with weakening high pressure and a weaker ridge will bring rain into northern Cal, especially by the first of February. The month of February will be much wetter as the MJO peaks in the active phase between the 15th and 25th with a stronger *El Niño* expected. This will bring more connections from the tropics and subtropics with better rain through all of California. Some upper lows at times will bring rain even into southern California with a wetter than normal pattern across most of the state. Still wet the last week of February with March starting wetter than normal with active and wet storms at times moving through most of California. The MJO wanes from an active to an inactive phase after the 10th of March with less subtropical connections and drier and weaker storms and more near normal precipitation from the 10th through the 20th of March.

For southern California, January will most likely end dry with high pressure dominating the region. The ridge and high pressure pattern will weaken through the middle of February with the MJO and a stronger *El Niño* bringing a better moisture connection and decent rain at times through southern California from the 15th through the 25th. Still, some decent rains occur late in February through the middle of March are supported by the SSTA's and overall pattern. Rains decrease and become inconsistent, with weaker troughs after the middle of March as the MJO moves back into an inactive phase.

...Alan Fox, Fox Weather LLC...