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CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION RESPONDS TO UNPRECEDENTED SITUATION

IRVINE, Calif. (April 6, 2020) – As the ripples of the coronavirus situation spread, the California Avocado Commission (CAC) is responding with rapid changes in their marketing plans, grower communications and office operations.

“The Commission has been extensively reevaluating each CAC activity in light of societal shifts and sensitivities and adjusting our activities as we strive to move forward in support of this year’s California avocado crop with the right messages, tone and method of delivery,” said California Avocado Commission President, Tom Bellamore. “Likewise, the obvious importance of retail sales and the constraints on the foodservice industry are driving daily decisions about how we allocate resources and support our valued customers.”

Bellamore advised that CAC’s top priority is safety throughout the supply chain and the California avocado industry is continuing the safe growing, harvesting and packing procedures already in place before the virus. Commission staff has been tele-working since March 17. The Commission has multiple channels to communicate with California avocado growers and industry stakeholders, including publications and its grower website. CAC created a new coronavirus resource page on that site to help growers and stakeholders find key government and industry guidance in one convenient location.

“Major changes, such as “safer at home” orders have caused CAC to critically examine where and how consumers are spending their time, how they are feeling about things and what resources we might provide as a brand,” said Jan DeLyser, California Avocado Commission vice president marketing.



With consumers having to stay in their homes, the Commission shifted much of its outdoor advertising buy to streaming video and digital communication, maintaining its objectives to reach targeted consumers where they are. Several consumer and trade events that CAC had as part of marketing plans this year have been canceled. Digital programs with influential bloggers who contribute to CAC’s blog, The Scoop, and to their own channels continue. The Commission also is proceeding with

digital chef programs and recipe communications, as well as marketing via custom content providers.

While their media plan is being adjusted, the new advertising creative, “The best avocados have California in them”, will continue.

“Positivity and healthy food, like avocados, are among what consumers need most right now. Given the timing and the fact that the new advertising campaign had launched, we decided to stay with it,” said DeLyser. “Enjoying healthy produce like fresh California avocados is a simple pleasure we can savor while we’re home.”

CAC may push some marketing activity to later in California avocado season, and other programs are in development to replace canceled events. The Commission added COVID-19 information to CaliforniaAvocado.com, including social content featuring helpful tips on care and handling as well as recipes to make at home. They also increased communication to consumers about avocado washing instructions. Overall, with the fluid situation its marketing team is remaining flexible to adjust as needed.

Retailers reported that there was very strong pull from shoppers for early and mid-March, and despite retail pull being offset somewhat by the foodservice dine-in cessation, California avocado growers harvested nearly 46.7 million pounds this season through March 22. This compares to 5.1 million pounds for the same time last year. Some of this increase is due to a larger crop in 2020, but much is due to strong early-season demand. With consumers stocking up and panic-buying in March, there have been some expectations of softer retail traffic late in the month and into early April, leading many growers to temporarily slow down on harvesting. Unlike some produce items, mature avocados can remain safely on their trees, providing some harvesting flexibility. Meanwhile, welcome rains have continued in California avocado growing areas, which bodes well for sizing and quality leading into late spring and summer.

About the California Avocado Commission

Created in 1978, the California Avocado Commission strives to enhance the premium positioning of California avocados through advertising, promotion and public relations, and engages in related industry activities. California avocados are cultivated with uncompromising dedication to quality and freshness, by more than 3,500 growers in the Golden State. The California Avocado Commission serves as the official information source for California avocados and the California avocado industry. Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com, or join us on [Facebook](https://Facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados) at Facebook.com/CaliforniaAvocados and [@CA_Avocados](https://Twitter) on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram for updates.

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