



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)  
September 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes  
750 East Main Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Peter Changala, Grower – Chairman  
Mark Fallini, Handler  
Dana Thomas, Handler  
Stewart Lockwood, Handler  
Bryce Bannatyne, Alternate Grower

**CDFA REPRESENTATIVES**

Steve Patton  
Marcee Yount  
Stacey Hughes  
Sam Santander

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Will Carleton

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

Tim Spann, CA Avocado Commission  
Wayne Brydon, Del Rey Avocado  
Gerardo Huerta, Del Rey Avocado  
Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission  
Ken Melban, CA Avocado Commission  
David Green, CA Avocado Commission  
April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission  
Tom Bellamore, CA Avocado Commission  
David Cruz, CA Avocado Commission

**ITEM 1: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS**

The Committee was called to order at 11:05 a.m. by Mr. Peter Changala, Chairperson. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made. Stewart Lockwood was introduced as a new member and Bryce Bannatyne was introduced as a new alternate member.

**ITEM 2: ELECTIONS OF NEW OFFICERS**

Mr. Changala asked the committee for nominations for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

**MOTION:** Mr. Dana Thomas nominated Mr. Peter Changala as Chair and Mr. Mark Fallini as Vice-Chairperson. Mr. Bryce Bannatyne seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Mr. Peter Changala was elected Chairperson and Mr. Mark Fallini was elected as Vice-Chairperson.

### **ITEM 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments

### **ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF MARCH 14, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Changala asked for a motion to approve the March 14, 2017 Meeting Minutes.

**MOTION:** Mr. Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the March 14, 2017 Meeting Minutes as submitted. Mr. Fallini seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VANCANCY AND TERMS REPORT**

Ms. Marcee Yount provided the current committee vacancy and terms. Current vacancies include: one handler member; and one alternate handler member. Members terming out on May 30, 2018 are Peter Changala and Will Carleton. Ms. Yount noted that reappointment questionnaires will be emailed at the beginning of April, 2018.

### **ITEM 6: AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM FY 2017/2018 BUDGET APPROVAL**

Ms. Monica Arnett, Director of Finance for the California Avocado Commission, presented the proposed 2017/18 Fiscal Year (FY) Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) budget. The proposed budget was based on a projected crop size of 375 million pounds. The budget is estimated for four full-time employees and four seasonal inspectors.

The committee discussed the financial reserve and agreed that the assessment rate for FY 2017/18 will remain the same as the current year which is 0.20 cents per 100 pounds.

Mr. Sam Santander stated that the count/size requirements implemented in 2016 have not had an impact on carrying out inspections and that overall, the industry had been very cooperative with inspection staff.

Mr. Changala requested a motion to approve the budget with the crop estimate at 375 million and maintaining the assessment rate at 0.20 cents per 100 pounds.

**MOTION:** Mr. Thomas moved to approve the budget based on the crop size and the assessment rates. Mr. Fallini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 7: AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM UPDATE**

Mr. Santander gave the AIP update. He reported that a total of 204,625,488 million pounds of avocados were packed between March 2017 and September 2017. The program performed 6,204 size/count inspections on lugs and 435 size/count inspections on RPC's. 194 noncompliance notices were issued and a total of 10,885 containers were rejected. There were 188 maturity tests conducted, with 1 noncompliance, resulting in 180 pounds of avocados being dumped. The program also conducted 399 informational maturity tests. Maturity tests were also performed on avocados from Mexico, Chile, and Peru to ensure imported avocados meet California maturity requirements.

There was further discussion regarding the increase of maturity tests performed on imported avocados by the AIP and the differences between state and industry maturity standards. Mr. Santander explained that the increase in maturity tests on imported avocados is in effort to ensure California avocado maturity and quality requirements are upheld. He also went on to say that informational maturity tests may be performed on imported avocados for a fee.

### **ITEM 8: NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Thomas brought up some concerns regarding the current maturity release dates for the Gem variety. Commercial production of this variety continues to increase and Mr. Thomas expressed that new protocols to determine maturity requirements that are more standardized, more transparent to the grower community, and test avocados against a set of predetermined criteria may be needed.

Mr. Patton responded that for regulatory changes to be made, the industry must prove why changes are needed, and that consumers will not be harmed. Consumer testing might help determine new standards for maturity. Mr. Thomas also discussed concerns with labeling and assessing the Gem and Hass varieties.

Mr. Patton suggested that this issue be made an agenda item for the next committee meeting. Mr. Patton requested that research be conducted by the committee to aid discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Patton then provided an update on Food Safety Modernization Act compliance dates. The compliance date for large farms is in the end of January 2018. A representative from the FDA has stated that inspections for produce safety rules will not begin until 2019. The States should therefore use 2018 as an educational and outreach year, instead of conducting inspections. CDFA will conduct outreach in Fresno, El Centro, Sacramento, and Salinas to educate the industry on enforcement standards and receive industry feedback.

Mr. Patton also noted that new regulations have been submitted to the OAL, mandating that avocados which fall to the ground during a windfall event shall no longer be harvested or tested. The purpose of this change is to bring California law into compliance with Federal law.

**ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting will be in Irvine on March 27, 2018, at 11:00 a.m.

**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Changala adjourned the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Samuel Santander".

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Samuel Santander, Program Supervisor  
Avocado Inspection Program  
Inspection and Compliance Branch  
Inspection Services