



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)  
December 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes  
Teleconference**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bryce Bannatyne, Grower  
Marc Fallini, Handler  
Stewart Lockwood, Grower  
John Schaap, Handler

**CDFA REPRESENTATIVES**

Steve Patton  
Marcee Yount  
Stacey Hughes  
Sam Santander  
Thomas Osborn

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dana Thomas, Handler

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission  
Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission  
Tom Bellamore, CA Avocado Commission  
John Lamb, CA Avocado Commission  
Peter Shore, CA Avocado Commission  
Jan DeLyser, CA Avocado Commission  
Tim Spann, CA Avocado Commission  
Keith Blanchard, Index Fresh  
Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia, UC Riverside  
Wayne Brydon, Del Rey Avocado  
Bob Lucy, Del Rey Avocado

**ITEM 1: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS**

The Committee was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Steve Patton, Branch Chief of CDFA Inspection and Compliance Branch. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made. The meeting was led by Bryce Bannatyne, Chairperson.

**ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bob Lucy of Del Rey Avocado thanked CDFA for their work pertaining to Gem variety avocados. He went on to thank Dana Thomas for his work in implementing a Price Look-Up (PLU) Code for Gem variety avocados. Bob Lucy stressed the importance of collecting reliable data in the proposed Gem Release Date Research Project, in order to ensure delivery of a quality product to consumers.

**ITEM 3: GEM RELEASE DATES RESEARCH PROJECT BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Bryce Bannatyne expressed concerns regarding the Gem Release Dates Research Project (Project) budget. He requested clarification on the source of Project funding, and whether overhead costs may be lowered.

Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia of the University of California, Riverside responded that the dollar amount quoted is consistent with funding levels for past avocado release date research projects. She proposed eliminating Dr. Salvatore Campisi-Pinto, University of California, Riverside statistician, for year one of the project, delaying statistical analysis of the data until year two. This would deduct \$6,958 from the total project budget.

Bryce Bannatyne proposed allowing growers of Gem variety avocados to bring their fruit to Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) labs for dry matter content testing, with data being forwarded to Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia for analysis. Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia responded that inaccurate sampling methodology risks jeopardizing the validity of research project data and results. Steve Patton stressed the importance of following proper research protocols.

Steve Patton asked Monica Arnett and Tom Bellamore if the current AIP budget could accommodate the expenses associated with the Project. Monica Arnett stated that the 2018/19 Fiscal Year (FY) AIC budget had been approved before the Project was proposed, and that the budget as approved by the Committee does not allocate funding for the cost of the Project. She went on to explain that funding this research project would decrease the end of year fund reserve below one year's worth of operating expenses. Monica Arnett stated that the Committee has discretion to move forward with the Project and decrease the fund reserve if they feel it is appropriate.

A period of discussion ensued, during which time a number of participants emphasized the importance of completing the Project, and establishing a definitive release date for use in future Gem variety avocado harvests. Bob Lucy of Del Rey Avocado, and Keith Blanchard of Index Fresh concurred that the budget and timing of the research project were appropriate.

Bryce Bannatyne requested a Motion to the Secretary, recommending that she accept the Committee's approval of the Project Budget and move forward with the Project for one year.

**MOTION:** Stewart Lockwood moved to recommend, to the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, that she accept the Avocado Inspection Committee's approval of the Gem Release Dates Research Project of \$31,560, and proceed with the Project with a one-year commitment. John Schaap seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Bryce Bannatyne asked if it was possible to amend the provisional release date for the Gem variety avocado during this meeting. Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia stated that the minimum

maturity standard for Gem variety avocados is based upon the dry matter content standards established by prior research, and approved by the Committee. She clarified that minimum maturity standards are not intended to represent optimal fruit maturity. Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia went on to state that avocado release dates based on minimum maturity standards provide greater flexibility on the part of the grower, should the need arise. Steve Patton explained that amendment of provisional release dates for Gem variety avocados is not on the meeting agenda, and thus cannot be voted upon by the Committee at this time.

**ITEM 4: GEM VARIETY UPDATES**

There was no additional discussion on this topic.

**ITEM 5: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

Bryce Bannatyne requested that a discussion pertaining to amending the provisional release date of Gem variety avocados be considered for inclusion on the next meeting agenda.

Bryce Bannatyne also requested a discussion pertaining to clarification of the University of California, Riverside contract with the Westfalia Fruit Group, and potential effects on exporters of Gem variety avocados be considered for inclusion on the next meeting agenda. Steve Patton stated that the Project and minimum maturity standards are distinct from the marketing of Gem variety avocados, and that a vote affecting avocado marketing is outside the scope of the Committee's statutory authority.

The next meeting will be held on March 27, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. in Irvine, at the California Avocado Commission office.

**ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. by Bryce Bannatyne, Chairperson.

Respectfully submitted by:



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Sam Santander, Program Supervisor  
Avocado Inspection Program  
Inspection and Compliance Branch