



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)
September 28, 2015 Meeting Minutes
750 East Main Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Changala, Grower – Chair
Gus Gunderson, Grower
Jim Donovan, Handler
Ohannes Karaoghlanian, Grower Alternate

CDFA REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Patton
Kathie Yniguez
Stacey Hughes
Marcee Yount

MEMBERS ABSENT

Will Carleton, Grower
Dana Thomas, Handler Member
Marc Fallini, Handler Member

INTERESTED PARTIES

Sam Santander, CA Avocado Commission
April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission
Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission
Neil Witt, Cal Flavor Avocado

ITEM 1: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

The Committee was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Mr. Peter Changala, Vice-Chairperson. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made.

ITEM 2: ELECTIONS OF NEW OFFICERS

Mr. Steve Patton opened the floor for nominations for the new Chairperson.

MOTION: Mr. Jim Donovan nominated Peter Changala to be the Chairperson. Mr. Gus Gunderson seconded, the motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions. Mr. Peter Changala was elected to be Chairperson.

MOTION: Mr. Peter Changala nominated Mr. Jim Donovan to be the Vice-Chairperson. Mr. Gus Gunderson seconded, the motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions. Mr. Jim Donovan was elected to be Vice-Chairperson.

ITEM 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no Public Comments

ITEM 4: APPROVAL OF MARCH 23, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

It was noted that Item three of the March meeting minutes read “The total AIC Budget” instead it should read “The total AIP Budget”.

MOTION: Mr. Jim Donovan moved to approve the March 23, 2015 meeting minutes with corrections, Mr. Gus Gunderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VANCANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Ms. Kathie Yniguez provided a handout with the current committee vacancy and terms. Committee members discussed their terms and asked Neil Witt to serve as an Alternate Handler. He has since requested a Prospective Member form.

ITEM 6: AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM FY 2015/16 BUDGET APPROVAL

Ms. Monica Arnett, Finance and Accounting Manager for the California Avocado Commission presented their proposed 2015/16 Fiscal Year (FY) Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) budget. The proposed budget was based on a projected crop size of 375 million pounds, and the hiring of two extra seasonal inspectors. There was some discussion regarding crop size and the possibility of an early start to the season. Ms. Yniguez assured the committee that with two additional seasonal inspectors will be available if harvest begins sooner than projected.

Mr. Peter Changala asked for a motion to approve the 2015/16 FY AIP Budget.

MOTION: Mr. Jim Donovan motioned to approve the 2015/16 FY AIP Budget as submitted, Mr. Gus Gunderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 7: AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Yniguez provided the committee with an update on the season's inspection data. From November 2014 to August 2015 over 271.4 million pounds were packed and certified.

Ms. Yniguez also discussed the programs developing database, and how it will assist with tracking inspection data, and monitoring inspector hours.

Ms. Yniguez reported that the program continues to work closely with personnel from the San Diego County Agricultural Commissioner's office, to ensure that proof of ownership, and avocado certification laws are enforced.

Ms. Yniguez then went on to say that the program continues to work with industry to accommodate fruit arrival times and packing facilities hours of operation.

ITEM 8: REGULATION REVIEW

Mr. Steve Patton discussed the regulation review. The use of reusable plastic containers (RPCs) and the practice of row and place packing, as well as container labeling requirements, were specifically discussed. Mr. Patton also reviewed the Committees past efforts to update the regulations to accommodate current industry packing practices.

Ms. Stacey Hughes provided information that outlined current industry packing practices for standard containers and RPCs. Ms. Hughes included excerpts of applicable regulations sections, current practices that conflict with existing regulations, and options to gain regulatory compliance while meeting industry packing needs.

After much discussion it was decided that a sub-committee should be formed to explore the use of experimental container permits; so that industry can continue to place pack RPC's legally until the regulations can be modified or repealed.

MOTION: Mr. Peter Changala moved to create a Sub-committee with Dana Thomas as Chair, to further explore the regulatory review. Mr. Jim Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 9: NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Neil Witt discussed his concern with California avocados meeting the color requirements of the USDA Florida Avocado Standards. California fruit is shaded by the end of the season and cannot meet the "green" color standard.

Mr. Steve Patton discussed some issues that have been identified regarding avocados being sold under the Avocado Exemption Permit at Certified Farmer's Markets. Ms. Stacey Hughes explained that the Avocado Exemption Permit has been revised to include the statutory requirements regarding the number of containers, the number of permits that can be issued to a person or family, and the labeling requirements of the exempt containers. Ms. Hughes went on to say that a letter will be drafted and sent out to the Industry explaining the permit requirements and revisions.

ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be in Irvine on March 22, 2016, at 11:00 a.m.

ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Peter Changala adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



Kathie Yniguez, F&VQC Supervisor II
Avocado Inspection Program
Inspection and Compliance Branch
Inspection Services