



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)
March 27, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bryce Bannatyne, Grower
Marc Fallini, Handler
Keith Blanchard, Handler
Stewart Lockwood, Grower
Salvador Dominguez, Grower

CDFA REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Patton
Stacey Hughes
Sam Santander

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Schaap, Handler

INTERESTED PARTIES

April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission
Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission
Tom Bellamore, CA Avocado Commission
Ken Melban, CA Avocado Commission
Tim Spann, CA Avocado Commission
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 11:02 a.m. by Bryce Bannatyne, Chair. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made.

ITEM 2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Bannatyne requested clarification regarding the status of a recent avocado recall by the Henry Avocado Corporation. Ken Melban, California Avocado Commission (CAC), stated that the recall was made voluntarily out of an abundance of caution, and no illnesses associated with the recall had been reported. Bob Lucy, Del Rey Avocado, thanked CAC for their excellent guidance and response to the recall.

ITEM 3: REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Monica Arnett requested that CAC be amended to read AIC on page two, paragraph four, of the December 4, 2018 meeting minutes.

Chair Bannatyne requested a motion to approve the September 5, 2018 and December 4, 2018 meeting minutes as amended.

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the September 5, 2018 and December 4, 2018 meeting minutes as amended. Marc Fallini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 4: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Stacey Hughes provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. The Committee currently has one Grower Alternate and one Handler Alternate vacancy. Reappointment of eligible members will take place in May of 2019.

April Aymami reminded the AIC members eligible for reappointment to submit their Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire forms in advance of the May 2019 CAC Board meeting.

ITEM 5: APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED CDFA BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019/20

Samuel Santander presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019/20 proposed budget. Total Personnel Services are \$160,324, and Operating Expenses and Equipment total \$61,267. With a Gas Tax credit of \$2,460, the total projected expenses for the FY 2019/20 are \$219,131.

Hughes explained that an increase in staff salary figures is due to a recent cost of living adjustment.

Chair Bannatyne asked if there are any opportunities to reduce overhead expenses in the proposed budget. Steve Patton, Inspection and Compliance Branch Chief, explained that the expenses outlined in the proposed budget are already as minimal as can be achieved. Patton went on to state that indirect costs, such as Pro Rata and Information Technology, are distributed between all CDFA programs, and that programs do not have the discretion to alter these amounts.

Chair Bannatyne requested a motion to approve the FY 2019/20 Proposed Budget as submitted.

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the FY 2019/20 Proposed Budget as submitted. Salvador Dominguez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 6: PROGRAM UPDATES

Patton gave an update on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). Patton explained that the PSR is now in effect, with inspections and enforcement for large farms beginning in April 2019. Enforcement for small farms will begin in 2020, with enforcement for very small farms beginning in 2021. Patton went on to explain that the intent of the FSMA is preventative, with a goal of enforcement agencies educating stakeholders while they regulate. It is estimated that approximately

25,000 California farms will be subject to PSR requirements, with roughly half of these being small farms. The CDFA Produce Safety Program (PSP) recently distributed a questionnaire to growers, in order to assist the Department in developing an informed decision on inspection prioritization. Patton went on to state that CDFA is coordinating with the United States Food and Drug Administration, as well as the California Department of Public Health, to develop response plans to potential future food safety incidents. PSP staff are also in the process of developing PSR educational materials in various languages, in order to facilitate outreach to ethnic farming communities in California.

ITEM 7: GEM VARIETY RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATE

Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia provided an update on the Gem Variety Research Project. Dr. Arpaia reiterated that the overall goal of the research project is to determine an ideal release date for gem variety avocados. A handout with information pertaining to sampling sites, sampling dates, and average dry weight percentage was distributed to all in attendance. Samples of size 48 and 40 avocados have been collected in Ventura, Riverside, Orange, and San Diego Counties. Dr. Arpaia went on to explain that she anticipates beginning the collection of samples earlier in 2020, and is seeking additional sampling locations, particularly in San Joaquin County. Those in attendance were encouraged to contact Dr. Arpaia regarding suggestions for potential growers of gem variety avocados with whom research staff could collaborate.

ITEM 8: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

Bannatyne requested that a discussion on insect damage to avocados be included on the next meeting agenda. Tim Spann responded that this topic would be more appropriate for discussion at a CAC meeting.

The next meeting will be held on September 17, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at a facility in Santa Paula to be determined.

ITEM 9: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m. by Salvador Dominguez.

Respectfully submitted by:



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