



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)
September 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes
Teleconference**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Marc Fallini
John Schaap – Chair
Keith Blanchard
Stewart Lockwood
Wayne Brydon
Aaruni Thakur

CDFA REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Patton
Stacey Hughes
Sam Santander
Thomas Osborn
Marcee Yount
Bernadette Miller

MEMBERS ABSENT

Bryce Bannatyne – Vice Chair
Salvador Dominguez

INTERESTED PARTIES

Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission
April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission
Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia, UC Riverside
Ken Melban, CA Avocado Commission
Tom Bellamore, CA Avocado Commission

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by John Schaap, Chair. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made.

ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

Roll was called by Thomas Osborn. A quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 4: ELECTIONS

Steve Patton opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood nominated Salvador Dominguez for Chair. John Schaap seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Patton opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood nominated Keith Blanchard for Vice Chair. John Schaap seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 5: REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

i. March 9, 2021

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the March 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. John Schaap seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ii. June 15, 2021

MOTION: John Schaap moved to approve the June 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. Stewart Lockwood seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Aaruni Thakur abstaining.

ITEM 6: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Osborn provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report.

ITEM 7: GEM VARIETY UPDATES

Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia of the University of California, Riverside provided an update on the Gem variety research project. Dr. Arpaia presented the study's year-three results, as of June 1, 2021. Samples had been collected from 12 different collection sites for 2020-2021, grouped into South, North, and San Joaquin Valley regions. Samples were collected of both size 48 and size 40 fruit.

Dr. Arpaia explained that in across all years of sampling, Gem variety avocados in the San Joaquin Valley reached maturity much earlier than those grown in the South or North regions, passing minimum maturity standards in late November. In all regions, the size 48 Gem variety avocados are slightly behind the size 40 fruit in terms of dry matter content on each sampling date. Dr. Arpaia noted that the expected completion date for the project is December 2021.

Dr. Arpaia recommended a separate, earlier release date for Gem variety avocados produced in the San Joaquin Valley, due to the accelerated fruit maturation observed in this region.

Dr. Arpaia asked the Committee for guidance on whether to conduct a separate release date analysis on the north and south data set and the San Joaquin Valley data set and also recommended omitting the size 40 information due to the lack of larger fruit at several of the test sites. Dr. Arpaia cautioned that setting minimum maturity standards that are too high may prove detrimental to the success of a new fruit variety. A period of discussion ensued, pertaining to dry matter maturity standards for different avocado varieties, and the methodology used to establish these standards.

Patton reminded those in attendance that multiple commodities grown in California have release dates that vary based on geographical region. Patton encouraged the Committee to follow the scientific data, and work to ensure that release dates for Gem variety avocados allow for an equitable marketplace for growers in different regions.

Motion: John Schaap moved to recommend that Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia utilize size 48 Gem variety avocados in her statistical research. The motion also recommended that Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia break-out the project data into three subsets: San Joaquin Valley, North and South regions combined, and for all three regions together. Wayne Brydon seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 8: REVIEW OF THE AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM BUDGET

Monica Arnett, Vice President of Finance and Administration for the California Avocado Commission (CAC) presented the CAC Avocado Inspection Program Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 to the Committee. The beginning reserves for FY 2021/22 are \$866,899; total projected revenue is \$752,040; total projected expenses are \$806,463; with projected ending reserves of \$812,476.

MOTION: Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the CAC Avocado Inspection Program Budget as presented. John Schaap seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 9: REGULATORY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Stacey Hughes explained that under current regulations, Gem variety avocados are not currently one of the ten varieties of avocado that are required to be labeled with a variety statement on nonconsumer containers. However, industry could include a variety statement on containers of Gem variety avocados if they choose to do so. There had been discussion during the last meeting of the Regulatory Subcommittee regarding whether to initiate a regulatory change to require a variety statement for Gem avocados. Patton went on to explain that if the AIC does feel it is appropriate to initiate a regulatory change to require a variety statement for Gem avocados, the best practice is for the Committee to put forth a motion indicating their support. CDFA would then work with industry and the AIC to draft language amending the current regulations. A member of industry or an industry group would also need to submit a petition requesting the regulatory change.

Hughes also suggested that the AIC consider codifying the 22.8% dry matter content minimum maturity standards for Gem variety avocados. Hughes explained that while this standard is currently set via a formal directive issued in 2006, given that this standard has become accepted by industry, the best practice at this point would be to codify this minimum maturity standard. Hughes went on to state that a change of nature would not require the regulatory change to undergo the full Administrative Procedures Act process. Rather, if the AIC expresses their support for this regulatory change via a

formal motion, CDFA could codify this maturity standard in regulation via the print and file rulemaking process.

MOTION: John Shaap moved to recommend that the 22.8% minimum maturity standard for Gem variety avocados established in Rick Jensen's 2006 Formal Directive be codified into regulation. Stewart Lockwood seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Hughes noted that she can send additional information resources regarding the process for a regulatory change to require a variety statement for Gem variety avocados. Hughes also suggested that the AIC Regulatory Subcommittee schedule another meeting before the full Committee meets again in March 2022. Chair Blanchard concurred with the need to hold a Subcommittee meeting before the following Spring.

ITEM 10: PROGRAM UPDATES

There were no updates to report.

ITEM 11: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held on March 8th, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

ITEM 12: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m. by Chair Blanchard.

Respectfully submitted by:



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