



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)  
September 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes  
Teleconference**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Salvador Dominguez  
John Schaap – Vice Chair  
Stewart Lockwood – Chair  
Bryce Bannatyne  
Bailey Diioia

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

April Aymami, CA Avocado  
Commission (CAC)

**CDFA REPRESENTATIVES**

Stacey Hughes  
Sam Santander  
Marcee Yount  
Thomas Osborn

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Aaruni Thakur

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Thomas Osborn.

**ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL**

Roll was called, a quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

**ITEM 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Osborn opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

**MOTION:** Salvador Dominguez nominated Stewart Lockwood for Chair. Bryce Bannatyne seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with Stewart Lockwood abstaining.

Osborn opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

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

**ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Bryce Bannatyne brought up concerns of avocados transported from Nayarit, Mexico being sold in the United States. Sam Santander suggested this concern be brought to the Shipping Point Inspection (SPI) Advisory Committee, as avocados fall under Section 8E of the Agricultural Marketing Act and are subject to inspection upon arrival at the border by SPI Program inspection staff.

Vice Chair John Schaap then commented that maturity at the start of the GEM season was inadequate before the scheduled release dates. Schaap asked to review data points of where maturity was during release dates in the San Joaquin Valley Region. Santander responded that a total of 200 informational maturity tests were performed on GEM fruit throughout the season. Fourteen tests were submitted from the San Joaquin Valley Region at various dates beginning December 7, 2022, through February 17, 2023. Six tests of Size 48 showed low maturity with an average dry matter of 20.8%, which is below the minimum maturity standard of 22.8%. It is suspected that weather was the cause as this trend was seen in many commodities throughout the state.

Salvador Dominguez commented that many committee members have expressed their disappointment with how the GEM release dates were placed and that the committee's recommendation was not taken into consideration by the Department. Marcee Yount assured that the committee's recommendation was considered and that release dates were set according to the research conducted by Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia.

The committee requested that GEM release dates be placed as an agenda item at the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 5: REVIEW OF MARCH 7, 2023 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Lockwood asked for a motion to approve the March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented.

**MOTION:** Salvador Dominguez moved to approve the March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Bryce Bannatyne seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

#### **ITEM 6: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT**

Osborn provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. Current vacancies include one Handler Member and one Handler Alternate. Members whose terms expire May 31, 2024, and are eligible for reappointment are John Schaap, Salvador Dominguez, and Aaruni Thakur. Bryce Bannatyne, Grower Member, will be terming out May 31, 2024.

#### **ITEM 7: REVIEW OF THE AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM BUDGET**

April Aymami presented the CAC Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/24. The beginning reserves for FY 2023/24 are \$859,414; total projected revenue is \$563,700; total projected expenses are \$855,825; with projected ending reserves of \$567,289.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair John Schaap moved to approve the FY 2023/24 CAC AIP Budget as presented. Salvador Dominguez seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

**ITEM 8: PROGRAM UPDATES**

Santander provided program updates reporting that the AIP certified 227,727,466 pounds of fruit through August. The AIP executed 5,945 size count tests, in which 55 notices of noncompliance were issued for fruit not meeting minimum size count requirements. The AIP performed 825 informational maturity tests and 133 official maturity tests that were conducted on all varieties except GEM as GEM fruit was not seen in packinghouses. Lastly, 222 exemption permits were expedited for certified farmers' markets.

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

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 12, 2024, and will be held via Zoom from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. GEM release dates will be included as an agenda item.

**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m. by Chair Lockwood.

Respectfully submitted by:

---

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