



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)  
September 10, 2024 Meeting Minutes  
Hybrid Teleconference  
2399 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95833**

**REMOTE MEMBERS**

**PRESENT**

John Schaap – Chair  
Hillary DeCarl  
Aaruni Thakur – Vice Chair  
Jed Harrison

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

April Aymami – California Avocado  
Commission (CAC)  
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles County

**CDFA**

Stacey Hughes  
Sam Santander  
Marcee Yount  
Sarah Cardoni  
Kristi Garcia  
Steve Patton  
Danny Lee  
Thomas Osborn

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Bailey Diiola  
Stewart Lockwood

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Kristi Garcia. Roll was called and a quorum was established.

**ITEM 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Stacey Hughes opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

**MOTION:** Aaruni Thakur nominated John Schaap for Chair. Jed Harrison seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

Hughes opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

**MOTION:** Jed Harrison nominated Aaruni Thakur for Vice Chair. Hillary DeCarl seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 4: REVIEW OF MARCH 12, 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Schaap requested a motion to approve the March 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes with a revision to Item 7 Gem Release Dates. Chair Schaap asked to remove the last sentence of the third paragraph.

**MOTION:** Vice Chair Aaruni Thakur moved to approve the March 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes as amended. Jed Harrison seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT**

Garcia provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. Current vacancies included one Handler Member Alternate and one Grower Member Alternate. Handler Member's Bailey Diioia and Hilary DeCarl are both eligible to serve their second terms, commencing on June 1, 2025. Grower Member Stewart Lockwood will be terming out on May 31, 2025.

### **ITEM 6: REVIEW OF THE AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM BUDGET**

April Aymami presented the CAC Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/25. The beginning reserves for FY 2024/25 were \$836,048; total projected revenue was \$801,200; total projected expenses were \$901,400; with ending reserves totaling \$735,848.

Discussion ensued regarding the FY2024/25 projected revenue, the impact of the recent heatwave on California avocado growers and the 10% estimated fruit loss as a result. AIC members agreed the estimated total crop volume for FY2024/25 should be amended to 350 million pounds and the assessment should remain at the current amount, which is \$0.25 per hundredweight. This amendment would increase the projected FY2024/25 assessment revenue to \$875,000.

**MOTION:** Chair John Schaap moved to approve the FY 2024/25 CAC AIP Budget as amended. Vice Chair Aaruni Thakur seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 7: ESTABLISHING NEW AVOCADO VARIETIES**

During the last AIC meeting, held on March 12, 2024, the committee requested guidance from the AIP on the process of establishing new avocado varieties. Hughes stated the AIP was in the process of collecting data regarding the establishment of the dry-matter percentages and release dates of previously new avocado varieties. Furthermore, the AIP plans to have a document that will provide historical and comprehensive regulatory information, and procedures aimed at assisting the AIC with future avocado varieties. Hughes concluded by stating that the AIP intends to have a draft prepared for the next AIC meeting.

### **ITEM 8: PROGRAM UPDATES**

Sam Santander provided Program Updates. As of August, the AIP certified 339,057,628 pounds of avocados, performed 7,629 size counts, issued 93 noncompliance violations, rejected 6,191 containers for repacking, performed 1,264 informational tests, performed 46 maturity tests, and issued 226 exemption permits for farmer's markets.

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

The next meeting will be held on March 11, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. via Zoom. Agenda items will include information on how other countries inspect their avocados for maturity and how the United States Department of Agriculture's avocado standards compare to the State of California's standards.

**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m. by Chair Schaap.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Sam Santander, Program Supervisor  
Inspection and Compliance Branch  
Inspection Services