

Allen Chaikin

In Memoriam

Death has robbed the avocado industry of a dedicated, conscientious, and hardworking leader — Allen Chaikin.

Allen was an innovator, always eager and willing to experiment with new ideas and new equipment. He was an electronics and mechanics genius, and he put this talent to work in an attempt to improve the avocado industry. He was interested in almost anything he believed would be beneficial to our industry.

Allen came to Fallbrook some twenty-three years ago to farm avocados, leaving a successful electronics business upon doctor's orders. From the first day of his new life, he became involved in the industry. I recall the many Friday afternoons that Allen would attend the Avocado Production and Marketing Course, held each winter in Fallbrook. He was there to learn about growing avocados and to meet other growers. He served on many of my field research project committees. He gave generously of his time and effort to all aspects of the avocado industry.

In 1969, when I introduced drip irrigation to San Diego County, Allen Chaikin was one of the first growers, along with the late Bill Johnson, to realize the potential of this type of irrigation system. During the first few years of the development of drip irrigation, many private and public researchers met with Mr. Chaikin to discuss drip irrigation engineering and product development. Allen gave of his time and his knowledge, freely.

Allen Chaikin was one of the founders of the Avocado Growers Bargaining Council. He was the driving force behind that organization, making his leadership qualities once again evident.

Several years of service as a director on the California Avocado Advisory Board, and thereafter on the California Avocado Commission, demonstrated Mr. Chaikin's talents and diversified interest in the industry; e. g., equipment engineering, production problems, industry economics, marketing, advertising, and—his last endeavor— involvement with other leaders in efforts to develop a new method to test avocado fruit maturity, namely, the dry-weight method.

Allen was a strong supporter of the University of California in both research and in Extension programs. For years, he cooperated with Dr. George Zentmyer and his staff in an attempt to find a cure for avocado root rot. He participated in many other research projects, also. His deep interest in research resulted in his being elected to the Production Research Committee of the California Avocado Commission, and eventually to its chairmanship.

Many more accounts of his activities could be given, but those that have been mentioned here should make evident enough his keen interest and devotion to the avocado industry. We will not soon forget Allen Chaikin.

Don Gustafson