

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Annual Meeting -- 2006

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One of the rituals of any annual meeting is a report on how and what the organization is doing. You have heard the Financial Report and know that we are in good shape — financially.

Organizationally, we are in good shape as well. With the efforts of Trish Shade, our Executive Director, we have grown and become a more visible and viable presence within the avocado industry.

Now, I want to tell you what we are, and what we are not.

We are NOT your packer and shipper. We do not sell or market avocados. You will never get a check from us.

We are NOT the California Avocado Commission, and you have already realized that I do not have the public speaking ability of Mark Affleck. We don't have a big budget, we don't have a big staff, and we don't assess the proceeds from the sale of your crop. We don't develop markets, conduct promotions, and we don't deal with selling organizations from other countries, either directly or indirectly. Our keynote speaker will tell us more about these activities shortly.

We are NOT the farm adviser or the Cooperative Extension. For the most part, you can't call us if you have a problem, a question or want someone to come out to look at your grove.

So what are we?

What we are is one of the oldest horticultural societies in the country. We are charged with disseminating information about the cultural care and practices of raising avocados. As such, we try to draw on, and work with all the organizations I previously mentioned, as well as any other resource we can find. **OUR ONLY PRODUCT IS INFORMATION.**

We have to create enough demand for our product – information – so that you will want to voluntarily pay your dues every year to keep this organization financially viable. You are how we fund this organization – along with the industry patrons who also support our industry.

How do we try to get this information in your hands?

One of the primary methods is the **periodic seminars** we offer. We now have three locations where we present these seminars — the far north in San Luis Obispo, the

north in Ventura, and the south in Escondido.

This year, our speakers presented topics that included vertebrate pest control, insect pests, crop estimating, Best Management Practices, and plant nutrition. We also sponsored a field trip to the South Coast Research Station in Irvine, California, to look at the field trials of rootstocks and new avocado varieties.

Attendance at these seminars increased dramatically this past year, so much so, we could use your help here in the south. If you know of a larger facility where we can hold these seminars, preferably at little or no cost, please let us know. Perhaps a community room or office – and so forth.

A second way we try to disseminate useful information is via the **Annual Meeting**. We try to have interesting speakers, panels, and discussions on topics that growers have expressed a preference for.

Concerning our **Yearbook** — We are making a concerted effort to get our Yearbook out in a more timely manner. I am pleased to say that it should be in your hands already. We are going to continue these efforts to get it out even earlier next year.

Regarding our **website** — Carl Stucky has been instrumental in working with our web master to re-invent our website. It lists the dates of seminars and meetings and links to many other Internet sites connected with avocados. Eventually, we hope to get an index of suppliers that you, our grower members, use in your work to produce avocados. The Internet address is www.californiaavocadosociety.org.

We occasionally sponsor **Special Projects** funded by the Marvin B. Rounds Research fund. This is a fund established by Mr. Rounds to be used for special projects at the discretion of the Board of Directors. In 2005, we funded the BIOSA Project, a research effort conceived and administered by Ventura County Farm Advisor Ben Faber and Dr. Eve Overing. In 2006, the California Avocado Society donated \$5,000 to help establish the Harry F. Smith Scholarship which supports graduate students in entomology who are pursuing studies in biological control.

In short, the Avocado Society disseminates information to our members, who support us with their dues.

Now, we have a request for you. We need your input about the topics you are interested in. We may not be able to immediately find an authority, but we will endeavor to do so, and in the process try to keep you up-to-date with cutting edge research and techniques. Some of the topics I have already heard suggested are plant nutrition and irrigation. Subtopics under irrigation include salinity, waste water discharge, crop coefficients, and the development of salt tolerant rootstocks.

Let us know your thinking. It makes our job easier to know what our membership is seeking.