

California Avocado Society

2013 Award of Honor

Jan DeLyser
Irvine, CA



Award Presented by
CAS President Chris Ambuul

Jan DeLyser is the recipient of the 2013 California Avocado Society Award of Honor! She spent 22 years learning the produce industry before she came to us. Jan has been specifically focused on the California avocado industry for the past 15 years. Her entry into the California avocado industry came at a difficult time, when foreign imports cast an ominous shadow over our livelihoods. In just 15 years, US consumption has increased five fold, and we are still in business. Jan hasn't just left a mark on our industry; she is a big reason why we are all still here.

California avocado growers are not the only ones that have taken notice. Jan has been awarded and recognized in many ways by the produce community at large:

- Awarded: Southern California Leadership Award (Fresh Produce & Floral Council)
- Recognized as: Top 25 Produce Industry Leaders (The Packer)
- Recognized as: Top Women in Grocery TWICE (The Progressive Grocer)

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- Awarded: Women in Produce Award of Excellence (United Fresh Produce Association)
- Recognized as: Women Who Make a Difference (Shelby Report)
- 2011 Produce Marketer of the Year (The Packer)

Her leadership has been sought after by numerous affiliates:

- Vice Chair – Produce Marketing Association
- Vice Chair – PMA Foundation for Industry Talent Board of Directors
- Chair – Produce for Better Health Foundation Board of Trustees
- Chair – Fresh Produce and Floral Council
- Board of Directors – United Fresh Produce Association
- Board of Directors – PMA’s Retail Board
- Board of Directors – Buy California Marketing Agreement
- Contributing Author – “Boom: Marketing to the Ultimate Power Consumer”
- Visiting Professor – Cal State Polytechnic University
- Chair – Produce Marketing Association

On a personal level, I have attended many events set up by Jan to promote our avocados and I have looked forward and enjoyed every one of them. Jan has affected so many within our industry, that I wanted to include their thoughts. I had to ask that they keep it brief:

Rob Wedin of Calavo: “Jan DeLyser is a humble, down-to-earth marketer; always appreciative of the contribution others make to our avocado industry.”

Phil Henry of Henry Avocado: “One of the best things that ever happened for California avocado growers was when Jan agreed to head the marketing for the California Avocado Commission. Her dedication and expertise have benefited growers in countless ways. Plus, she is an incredibly nice and kind person.”

Tom Bellamore of CAC: “When you think of the “California Avocado” brand, you realize that, in many ways, it is a reflection of those individuals who have collectively contributed to its development over the years. It is held in high regard by retail and foodservice

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operators, who equate quality, integrity, dependability, and consistency with our brand. Those same attributes abide in Jan DeLyser, who has dedicated herself to advancing the California avocado industry. Jan's marketing prowess, deep experience at retail, and leadership role at the Produce Marketing Association have elevated the California Avocado brand to new heights, imbuing it with value and meaning that translate into successful programs for California avocado growers. Jan has made an indelible mark on our industry and our brand which can be summed up in one word: trust. That is the pinnacle to which every brand aspires—to be “trusted”—and Jan DeLyser, in large part, has brought us there.”

John Demytriv of Index Fresh: “I first met Jan back in the year 2000 while working for BuyProduce.com. Jan and the merchandising team at that time introduced themselves to roughly 40-50 of us green horns (newbies). Her passion for avocados was absolutely electrifying and contagious all at the same time. In my opinion, Jan is a trailblazer whose hard work and dedication to her craft has benefited everyone within the produce industry. Jan keep up the great work!”

Scott Bauwens of WestPak: “What Jan has done for the industry and for California Avocados is immeasurable. Jan is the embodiment of leadership and her passion, her vision and her innovation for the brand, for the industry, and for all the stakeholders is not only contagious but extremely motivating. I don't know where the industry or California Avocados would be without her and I can't think of a person more deserving of such an award. California growers must recognize that they have one of the industry's best and brightest leading and marketing their brand today and into the future. Congratulations Jan, thank you for all you do!”

Ross Wileman of Mission: “The avocado industry is very fortunate to have working on its behalf a person as qualified as Jan DeLyser. Her knowledge of the industry from a grower's perspective and balancing that with customer relations is extraordinary. She is well respected in the industry because of her straight forward approach to the issues.”

Brian Silberman of PMA: “Jan has done so much to understand how to build consumer demand for California avocados. She's been instrumental in driving consumption to new heights. Her work for the av-

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ocado industry is a model for many others to emulate. She's also been a magnificent elected chair of our association - again, a model for others.”

Bob Lucy of Del Rey: “Jan.” “Maybe it was Jan’s Midwest upbringing that made her so friendly and easy to be around. Maybe it was her Midwest roots that made her so credible. Maybe it was her Midwest values that made her so loyal to her colleagues. But, most importantly, maybe it was the Midwest weather that got Jan to Southern California. Our gain, their loss! “

“Jan is the consummate professional and our industry is blessed to have had her as a part of our avocado family all these years. Thank you Jan, from all your friends at Del Rey.”

Jan is here today with her husband, Duane and her first born daughter, Sally. We appreciate you sharing her with us. With a debt of gratitude and appreciation, Jan, please accept the California Avocado Society 2013 Award of Honor.