

CAC promoted heavily even on short crop year

BY RAND GREEN

Even though the 2011 California avocado crop was significantly lighter than last year — an estimated 253 million pounds compared to a 2010 crop of 560 million pounds — the California Avocado Commission has “promoted very heavily” throughout the season, beginning the last week in April. “And we are planning on going, if supplies last, through the end of August, into Labor day” with promotional activities, said Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the commission.

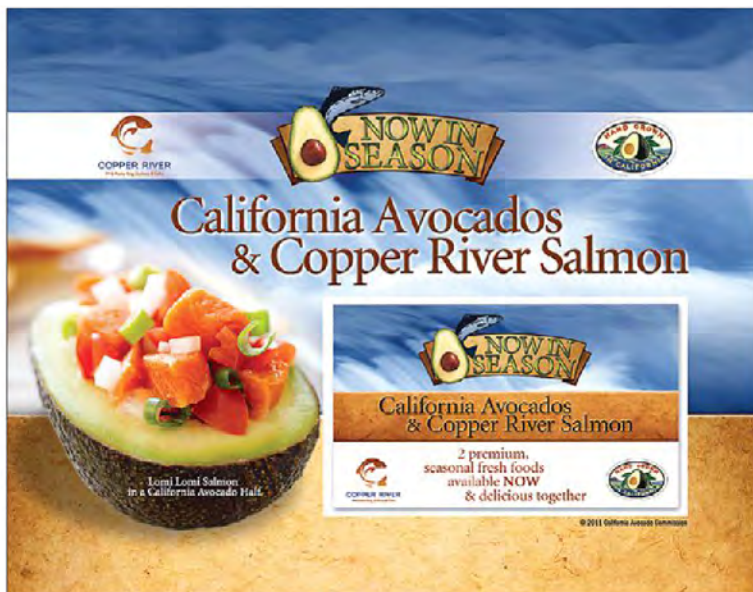
It has been “a really great season,” she said July 27.

It should be noted that although the California crop is smaller this year, growers and marketers are compressing the harvest and shipping season into a more compact window, so weekly volumes during the California season, although below average, continued to be significant through July with a wind-down expected through August into September.

Hass board projects record

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Super Bowl, all expenses paid.” This year, for the first time, “we are going to have all four associations” participating in the joint promotion,” he said. The California Avocado Commission, the Chilean Avocado



A point-of-sales card for the California Avocado and Copper River Salmon tie-in promotion.

(Photo courtesy of California Avocado Commission)

“On a lighter-volume crop, with tighter timings, that we were promoting,” Ms. DeLyser said, “the volume has continued to move very, very nicely.”

The commission had “a number of new promotions this year ... leading into the peak of the season,” Ms. DeLyser said. One of them,

around the time of Mother’s Day and Father’s Day was an Avo Babies Facebook photo contest in which consumers were encouraged to submit photos of their kids enjoying avocados.

Prizes for the contest were a \$5,000 scholarship for the grand prize and two \$2,500 scholarships for first prizes.

“That was a lot of fun,” Ms. DeLyser said. “We had some really great activity generated on Facebook and developed a number of new fans.” The fans voted on the winning photo submissions, “then the commission selected the finalists from the top entries voted by the Facebook fans,” she said.

The commission also had a tie-in promotion this year with Copper River Salmon for the first time, she said. The seasonality of Copper River Salmon is “very similar to California avocados,” and the product’s “premier image” complemented California avocados as well. In addition, “the nutritional profile of both products went very well together. So we did some joint foodservice and retail promotions,” which involved “a lot of web activities” as well as recipe development and photography. The promotion “received some good responses,” she said.

Currently, “we’ve got a Mediterranean program we are working on” with Cara Mia Marinated Artichoke Hearts and STAR Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Ms. DeLyser said. The promotion ties California avocados “with those items in a Mediterranean style of eating which, again, accentuates the nutritional profile of the California avocado in season.”

The promotion features a number of recipes available on the commission web site such as Lentil Salad with California Avocados and Cara Mia Marinated Artichokes, Mediterranean Pasta Salad with Artichokes and Avocado and Avocado and Artichoke Stuffed Tortillas.

Along with the promotions, “we have continued to do consumer advertising in a big way



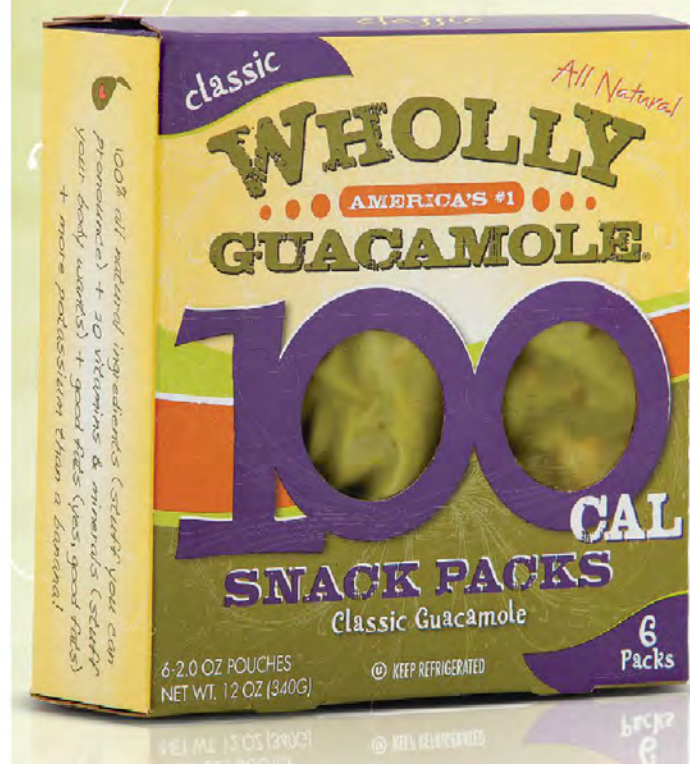
Jan DeLyser

with a core market strategy of general market radio,” Ms. DeLyser said. In addition, “with key accounts who wanted to promote California avocados that were out of our core markets, we developed special programming and worked with them on promotions in their specific areas.”

The California Avocado Commission plans to participate, along with the Chilean and Mexican avocado importers associations, in a Hass Avocado Board fall promotion tied to college football tailgating, she said. “The California Avocado Commission board of directors is supportive of the program and maintaining promotional activity during that fall window.”

Last year, California growers “had a crop during that time.” This year, with the shorter crop and the earlier finish to the California season, “we don’t,” she said. But with a larger crop anticipated for 2012, “next year we may well.”

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Wholly Guacamole would like to be 'hero of the American diet'

By RAND GREEN

The folks at Fresherized Foods in Fort Worth, TX, manufacturer of Wholly Guacamole, are "extremely excited" that consumers "are finally getting it, that avocados are a healthy fruit," according to Tracey Altman, vice president of Marketing.

Wholly Guacamole is produced using an ultra-high pressure process that "allows us to offer an all-natural guacamole or avocado product without any additives or preservatives," said Cindy Wong, vice president of foodservice, in an interview last year.

The ultra-high-pressure technology enables Wholly

Guacamole to retain the nutritional and health benefits of fresh avocados.

"We want to be the hero of the American diet," Ms. Altman told *The Produce News* July 22. "we want to help people with that healthier choice, so we love being part of the produce family, and we love that we are all natural, no additives

or preservatives."

Today's consumers are increasingly health-conscious in their diet choices, she said. But there continue to be problems, such as the childhood obesity epidemic, that "could easily be solved" with proper diet choices such as serving kids things like carrots and guacamole at snack time rather

than salty snacks.

"As retailers and manufacturers, we own some of that responsibility," she said, "not to tell people what to do but to offer them other alternatives."

At Fresherized, "we want people to shop more produce. We want people to experiment more in produce," Ms. Altman said.

Shoppers who buy Wholly Guacamole generally put other produce items in their shopping carts too, she said. "People add [other produce items] to our product all the time," so "the basket that includes Wholly Guacamole typically includes a red onion, typically includes tomatoes, typically includes cilantro and lime."



Tracey Altman

Earlier this year, Wholly Guacamole ran a health-oriented promotion called Biggest Loser, encouraging people to lose weight through healthy diet choices.

One of the major advantages of Wholly Guacamole is its convenience, Ms. Altman said. "I don't see avocados as a competitor," she added. "We want people to use avocados. We want people to use guacamole." When time allows putting a slice of avocado on a salad or sandwich or making some guacamole from scratch is a good thing. But "when you are busy," opening a package of Wholly Guacamole is a convenient and healthy choice.

Guacamole is "not just an ethnic food any more," she said. At one time, guacamole was served mainly with Mexican dishes. Then it became a dip. Now it is becoming "a spread or a condiment," used in place of mayonnaise or sour cream or ranch dressing. That is "really exciting for our industry in general."

Use of avocados "has really expanded, which means people are buying them not just for special occasions any more, but they are buying them for dinnertime and lunch time."

Fresherized Foods has manufacturing plants in Mexico and Peru. "We have been very strategic" about the location of the facilities, Ms. Altman said. "We are near the growing areas" and can "get avocados right before they are ripe, so that when we get them to the manufacturing plant, they are ripe and ready."

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