

WINTER/SPRING 2024

CALIFORNIA
CANNING PEACH
ASSOCIATION

CLING PEACH

OR REVIEW

IN THIS ISSUE:

- State of the Association
- 2024 Annual Meeting
- Extra-Early and Early Peach Varieties



CALIFORNIA CANNING PEACH ASSOCIATION
CLING PEACH REVIEW

WINTER/SPRING 2024

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STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Presented at California Canning Peach Association's
102nd Annual Meeting | *January 31, 2024*

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the 102nd Annual meeting of the California Canning Peach Association. It's an honor to stand before you today as we reflect on our 2023 accomplishments and chart our course for the new year.

The theme for today's meeting is "Together We're Stronger". These words encapsulate the DNA embedded in the Peach Association's 102 year history – a journey marked by collaboration, solidarity and unwavering peach grower determination.

As we gather today, I am optimistic regarding the peach industry's outlook for 2024. We're in a relatively balanced supply/demand position and it appears that will have sufficient labor available in our orchards to produce and harvest this year's peach crop.

However, we all recognize it won't always be like this. The peach business has always had its ups and downs and that is not likely to change – no two years are ever the same.

Today, I believe that peach growers are faced with three types of risks in 2024. The first of these risks is input cost increases. While some of our fertilizer and pesticide costs have moderated somewhat versus prior year levels, there is no doubt that growers will experience higher labor costs this year. As you all know, California's minimum wage rate rose 3% to \$16.00/hr on January 1st. Labor accounts for nearly 70% of our direct costs and the only question is whether farm labor costs will increase by more than 3% in the coming months.

However, the coming labor cost increases in 2024 is the risk easiest for us to quantify. The second set of risks that growers will face in 2024 are weather extremes – hotter hot days, colder winter temperatures, and more intense storms. While the experts continue to struggle with theories to explain why our climate is changing, there can be no doubt that growers

are now faced with increased weather related risks. We all understand that when it comes to growing peaches – "Mother Nature always bats last". There is very little that a peach grower can do to protect against weather risks, it ultimately is a matter of chance.

Finally, both growers and canners face the risk of potential future changes in U.S. trade policy which could adversely impact the canned fruit industry in California. Unfair foreign subsidies, labor and environmental practices, steel tariffs and rock-bottom prices have enabled processors in China, Greece, and other countries to capture more of our domestic market for canned peaches. To safeguard our domestic market it appears that we may need to seek additional protection against low-cost imports wherever possible. I'll have more thoughts to share with you on this subject shortly.

Aside from these three specific types of risk that I've identified for 2024, the universal risk that we all must deal with every single year is changing market conditions. While we recognize that the world changes every day, responding to changing market conditions can be more challenging for growers with permanent crops. Simply put, it can be very easy to overplant acreage based on recent favorable results and the current market outlook instead of basing planting and contracting decisions on likely market conditions three years from today when these trees begin to produce fruit.

While walnut growers and almond growers understand all too well the importance of aligning acreage with current market demand, it wouldn't take too many additional acres of new peach plantings before peach growers are dealing with an oversupplied market as well. Those of you who have been coming to Peach Association Annual Meetings for many years are probably saying to yourself, hasn't



Rich Hudgins
President and CEO
California Canning Peach
Association

The theme for today's meeting is "Together We're Stronger". These words encapsulate the DNA embedded in the Peach Association's 102 year history – a journey marked by collaboration, solidarity and unwavering peach grower determination.

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Ken Johnson,
Umpqua Bank Regional
Director

“After having some discussions with some members, I’d like to give my thoughts on the current interest rate environment, the banking environment in general, and just some general lender expectations you should have as customers.”

2024 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Presented at California Canning Peach Association’s
102nd Annual Meeting | *January 31, 2024*

Keynote speaker **Ken Johnson, Umpqua Bank regional director for agribusiness banking, CCPA 102nd Annual Meeting, Sacramento CA, Jan. 31, 2024**

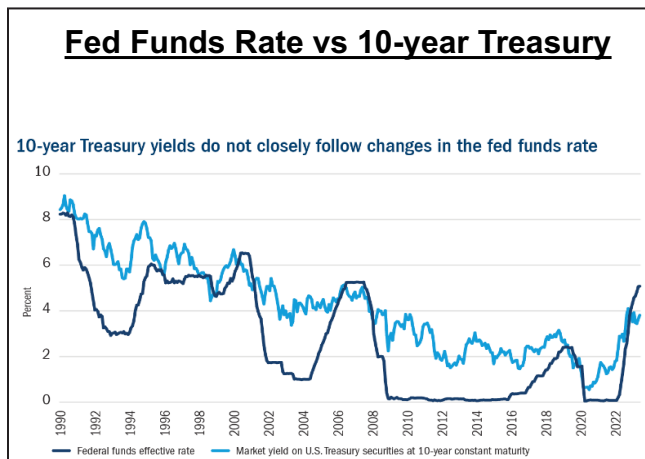
“I’m very honored to be here today. As Rich mentioned, I grew up in Placerville, California. My dad was a pear and apple farmer. The apples went out the front door of a fruit stand in Apple Hill, and my parents sold their pears to Del Monte Foods. In 1992, I went to work for Del Monte. I was hired by Kyle Reynolds, whom some of you know. It was a short interview process, about 15 minutes over the phone, and towards the end of the call Kyle said, ‘Are you interested in coming to work?’ and I said, “Yeah.” And I was pretty much hired sight unseen, which was a big mistake on Kyle’s part, and one I don’t think he’s made since! But looking back, I tell everybody that summer job I had at Del Monte was the best job I ever had. I’m real appreciative of the 7-plus years that I worked there full-time. Also, I have over 20 years of ag-lending experience. I’ve worked in commercial banks and for the Farm Credit system. I’ve held various jobs and learned a lot from customers of the

banks. The one thing I’ve learned is that bankers aren’t typically called to be keynote speakers. Desperate times, desperate measures! My profession is not the most popular. Legendary writer Mark Twain was known for his dislike for bankers and banks. It was

said one time Twain was teaching a young group of writers, trying to help their careers, when one of the young writers asked Twain what’s the difference between a tragedy and a catastrophe. Twain thought for a minute and said, ‘A tragedy is when a shipload of bankers goes across the middle of the ocean and the boat takes on water and starts to sink. And a catastrophe is when the bankers know how to swim!’

“After having some discussions with some members, I’d like to give my thoughts on the current interest rate environment, the banking environment in general, and just some general lender expectations you should have as customers.

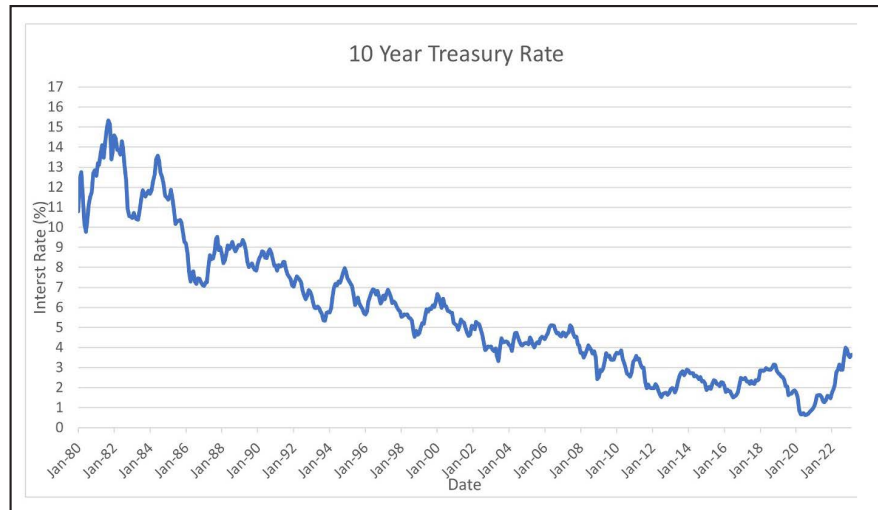
“Interest rates: how did we get here? Well, we had a period from about 2010 on of low interest and low inflation, and then COVID hit in 2020 and the world economy stopped. Government officials started spending to get things going again, and voila, in 2022, we had inflation of 7.5-8%. To combat this issue, the Federal Reserve began raising their short-term interest rate. It was at about 0.5% at the time, and they raised it up to 5.5% today. Now we’ve had periods from about 1994-2001 where we raised short term rates by over 5%. The issue is the speed the move. We moved 5.5% or 5% increase in 14 months. Now fast changes in interest rates affect all business-people, but it affects farmers like yourself more than most. That’s because you’re more dependent on financing than others. Take for example your receivables. Most of you deliver your crops in the late summer/fall, and you get paid back usually within 8-12 months by your marketer... So you need some sort of financing for your crops to make it to the next season. Additionally, most of your balance sheets are centered in fixed assets like real estate and those typically take some sort of financing to acquire or improve. If you’re going to look at the entire of financing needs, specifically



for this group, you have to look at long-term rates, Treasury rates that you use to finance the real estate. This slide here is a picture of the 10-Year Treasury rates. As you see, a similar pattern as the fed funds, if you look from about 2010-2020, we ranged between 2-3%, then all of a sudden COVID hit, and we dropped to 1%, then we jumped up to a little over 4%; Actually 4% isn't really significant if you look at it by itself, but you have to put it in perspective to the prior 10 years. During the period 2010-2020 we had low rates and reasonable commodity prices. Low rates, reasonable prices--so what did we do? We planted more tree crops. This slide shows you all the acres of almonds, walnuts, and pistachios in the state of California. In 2010 we had approximately 1.2 million acres of these three commodities combined and by 2020 we had 2.3 million acres combined. Additionally, we drove the price of real estate up. Real estate in 2010 was anywhere from \$18,000-\$22,000 per acre and by the time 2020 came it was anywhere from \$35,000-\$50,000 per acre. Statistics indicate that about 40% of a real estate purchase or the development of an orchard is financed. So, while we were profitable and our balance sheet was improving, we were also borrowing more money to plant all these acres. I will be the first to tell you, interest rates aren't necessarily going to drive your profitability, commodity prices are. They also aren't going to drive your real estate appreciation, but they will have an effect. Let me share with you a few examples of what this effect is.

"Let's first look at some crop financing. I took a 300-acre operation of almonds with total expenses of about \$1.2 million and I figured that the bank would cover 60% of the cultural costs. The remaining 40% will come from receivables or cash from the grower. I then looked at two rates: a 4% rate which would have been a reasonable operating cost maybe three or four years ago and 8% today. When you look at that, the ag cost of financing that crop alone is \$39,000 or \$130 per acre more. While it's not that significant, it affects your bottom line. Again, you have to look at two sides of the same coin, so let's look at some long-term financing costs.

"Let's look at a \$1 million real estate loan



fixed for 25 years and fixed the rate at 3.5% which could have been reasonable three or four years ago versus 7% today. Again, you see the annual increase in payment which adds \$24,000, which is not significant by itself; however, the cost of that project has now gone up over the life of the loan by \$618,000. That will affect the borrowers bottom-line.

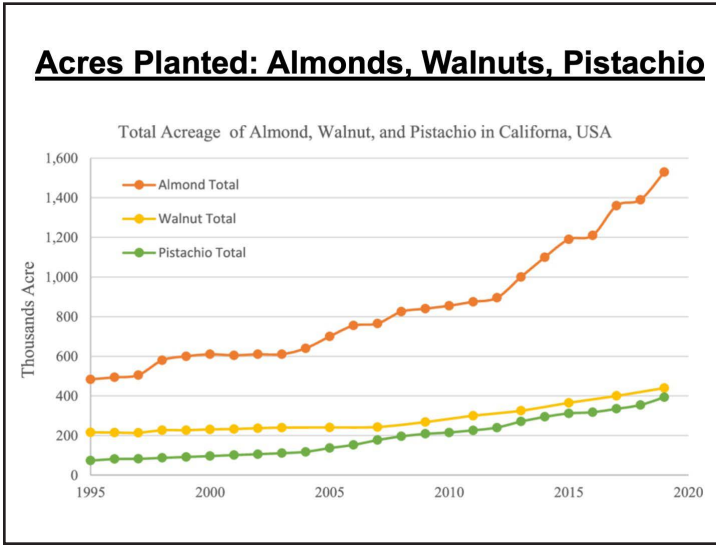
So, "The most common question I get is, where are rates going? Well, my crystal ball has a crack in it and frankly if it worked, I'd probably be in Vegas... So I don't have a clue, but I know that history is the best predictor of the future... This slide tracks the Fed funds rate with the 10-year Treasury for the last 30 years... If you go from about 2010-2018, I see a pretty reasonable spread there. The fed fund rate is somewhere between 0.5% to 1%- and 10-Year Treasuries are somewhere between 2.5% to 3.5%... That's considered fairly healthy. However, you've got years like 1994 and 2001, where these lines are pretty close. You've got 5 to 6% for both long-term and short-term rates. There's not much difference. During those periods, we had a reasonable economy and farming was profitable. In fact, the only time you see a significant rate decrease on the fed short term rates is 1991, 2001 and 2009. And that's not a coincidence. 1991 was the Gulf War with George H. Bush, 2001 was when the stock market crashed tied to the dotcom bust, and 2009 was the housing crisis. Today, while we've got some challenges in the

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2024 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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economy, most notably commercial lending, and some regional issues, I don't see big asset speculation. However, I can't predict what



kind of wars we might get into in the future. If you're asking me today what's going to happen in the near-term with interest rates, I think you're going to get a couple rate cuts in the fed funds group this next year, but

generally speaking, we're going to be in this range where long-term and short-term rates are pretty close, and you're going to be at about 7% to 8% for money that you borrow. So, to combat that cost, increased borrowing, you're going to need a little bit more cash or equity in your business.

"The banking environment: 'What are the banks dealing with today?' is one of the questions that I was asked. And the best way I can describe what banks are dealing with is to talk about the conversations I have with my customers. I think this conversation is similar to what other lenders are dealing with. One of my favorite customers, who, farms about 300 acres came into the bank three or four weeks ago. He wanted to go over his 2023 production and financials. He sat down, we had a cup of coffee, little chit-chat, and then he said, 'I'll get right to the point. I have good news and bad news.' I said, 'I, what's the bad news?' and he said, 'Ken, I added up all the numbers and I can't pay the bank back.' So, I said, 'OK, what's the good news?' And he said, 'I've given it some consideration and careful thought, and I'm going to give you

guys another year--we're not going to leave the bank this year.' Any bank is only as good as how their customers are doing. When you have challenges, we have challenges. Increasing rates not only give us more problem loans, but it squeezes our margin. What I want you to take away from here is the banking system in general is in relatively good shape. I believe it can withstand some of these pressures. I'd like to give you a couple examples.

"J.P. Morgan Chase, one the largest banks in the world with \$3.7 trillion in assets... they recently decided to double their loan-loss reserves to \$2.9 billion. That's a big number but it's not even 1% of the bank's total assets. And frankly, when a commercial bank puts out their loan-loss reserves, they usually only lose about 10%, so we're talking about \$290 million. Nobody wants pressure on the balance sheet. This bank is clearly in a position to withstand some pressure at this point in time.

"So...what's going on in the ag sector? If you want to get a pulse on what's going on in agriculture financing, you have to go to the Farm Credit system. They lend, for every dollar in U.S. in ag credit, about 40-50% comes from a Farm Credit bank. Co Bank one of the 4 funding banks for the system recently came out and said they have 95-96% acceptable credit quality. That means those loans are performing, are in reasonable shape and are doing what they intend to do. That's a pretty strong number. Additionally, they raised their loan-loss reserves to \$62 million. Well, \$62 million for a \$145 billion institution is not a big issue either. Again, nobody likes to lose money, but the banks are in a relatively stable position if there are more problems ahead. Now I do expect an increase in problem loans over the six months for both of these institutions and most other banks as well, but I'm convinced that the banks in the U.S. are in a generally in a strong position. Credit should be available to meet everybody's needs and the system should work relatively well.

"Another part of the environment that I want to talk about is ag real estate—what we're seeing in the marketplace. I went back and got

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CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Presented at California Canning Peach Association's
102nd Annual Meeting | *January 31, 2024*

Good afternoon. While we are gathered here today to celebrate our 102nd anniversary as a bargaining cooperative, we must always remember that our Association was made possible through the efforts of generations of peach growers.

We must not take the Association for granted, there is no shortage of California grower-owned cooperatives, which once were successful before they ceased to exist. We cannot assume that it will not take effort on our part to make sure that the Peach Association remains strong and able to meet the needs of a future generation of peach growers. My dad, Satinder Davit, served on the Association's Board for 26 years, and I am proud to have followed in his footsteps, as I begin my 23rd year as a Board member. We also have Karm Bains as 2nd generation Board member; his father Didar Bains put in 28 years of service. We currently have 9 Board members with 15 years of service or more. As I stand before you, I can assure you we're not here for the pay. We Board members strongly believe and will continue our efforts to achieve fairness in pricing and fairness in terms of sale for all peach growers whether you are a member, a non-member, or a co-op member.

However, the next generation of peach growers will have to lead and continue the strength of the Peach Association through many new challenges. Obviously, the fact that you are here today shows your support for our Peach Association. We need to pass a message to our friends and neighbors urging them to share in

the work of maintaining a strong organization representing peach growers' interests. The fact is that out of every 100 acres being planted today, we need to sign 70 acres of those new plantings into Association membership to maintain our current position of representing 70 percent of the state's cling peach production.

When you think about it, I do not believe that there is a grower of any other permanent crop in California who does not wish that they belonged to an organization representing 70 percent of the state's production, with the ability to ensure uniform raw-product pricing for all growers of that crop.

I am pleased to report that even growers who have not previously grown cling peaches recognize the importance of belonging to the Association. In the audience today, I am pleased to welcome members of the Elliott family, Richard Sr., Ryan, and Richard Jr. as the newest members of the Peach Association. Our Board approved their membership application earlier this afternoon. We trust that they will be as successful growing peaches in the Walnut Grove area as they have been growing and packing pears for generations.

I believe in this organization and cannot imagine what the peach business would look like if we did not exist to represent all peach growers in our state. Our goal is to continue carrying out our mission for many years to come. And I just want to say, may 2024 be a very prosperous year for all.

Thank you. 🍑



Ranjit Davit,
CCPA Board Chairman

I believe in this organization and cannot imagine what the peach business would look like if we did not exist to represent all peach growers in our state.



Thomas Gradziel,
Professor, UC Davis
Dept. of Plant Sciences,
Univ. of California, Davis

EXTRA-EARLY AND EARLY PROCESSING PEACH VARIETIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BREEDING PROGRAM.

The University of California at Davis (UCD) has a long history of developing varieties and rootstocks for the California processing peach industry.

In contrast, many fresh-market peach varieties are developed by private breeders. Breeding fresh-market freestone peach varieties is more profitable for private breeders because of the higher value of fresh-market peach trees as well as the reduced need for long-term grower testing prior to variety release (since many fresh market varieties are replaced with newer varieties at relatively short intervals). For the

lower value processing peach to be profitable for growers, however, a new variety must demonstrate high productivity over an orchard lifetime of 20 years or more. Unfortunately, the only way to ensure that a new variety will not fail over this 20-year interval is long-term testing in all the major growing regions where it will be planted and under all of the different growing conditions such as rootstock, etc. This need for 10–20-year testing to identify major problems prior to release for grower planting makes the breeding of processing peach varieties much less profitable for private breeders and the responsibility for variety development has fallen to the public breeding program at the University of California aided by long-term support from California growers and processors. A notable exception is Zaiger Genetics founded by Floyd Zaiger that has released important varieties such as Stanislaus and Klamath as well as rootstocks such as Viking.

As a result, most California processing peach varieties have been developed at UCD though, as shown in figure 1, many grower selections have also become commercially important. With the UCD release in the 1980s and 1990s of the Late-season varieties Ross, Dr. Davis, Late-Ross and Lilleland, and the Extra-Late varieties Riegels and Hesse, the breeding program turned its focus to developing improved varieties in the Extra-Early and Early harvest season. Breeding priorities included filling the production gap between Carson and Bowen resulting from the earlier loss of the Dixon variety that was prone to pit-splits and red pit-staining. Additional goals included improving fruit brown rot resistance as well as breeding for traits facilitating single-pass harvest.

Because traditional California processing peach varieties are very susceptible to fruit brown rot, disease resistance had to be brought in, primarily from Brazilian and South African

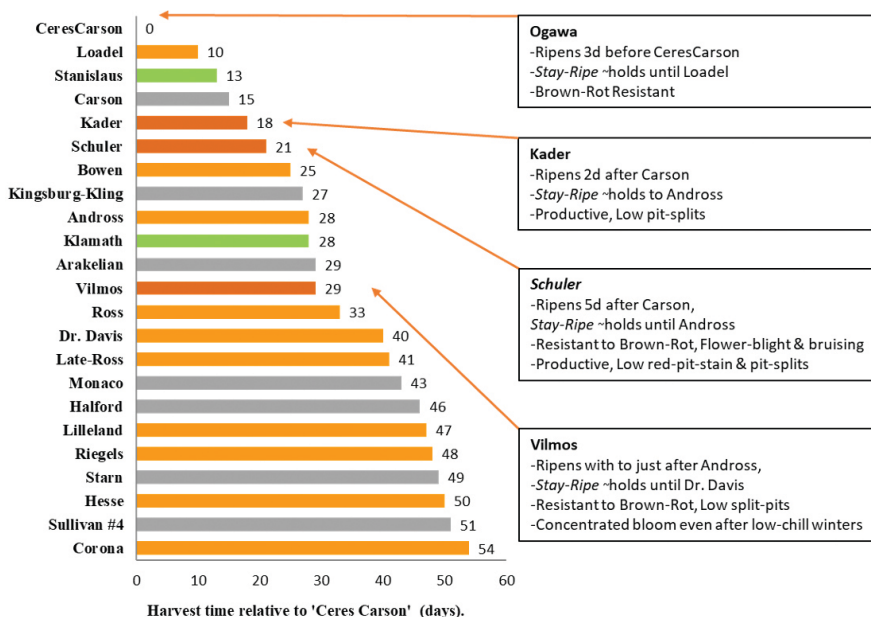


Figure 1. Harvest times for processing peach varieties presented as days after Ceres-Carson. (Actual harvest time will vary depending upon local conditions and rootstock). Orange bars identify UCD developed varieties while green bars are varieties developed by Zaiger Genetics. Gray bars identify grower selections, except for Carson which was released by the USDA in 1943 and Corona which was jointly released by UC and the USDA in 1942.

germplasm. A greater capability for single-pass harvest requires both uniform flowering as well as uniform ripening. A more uniform flowering has been achieved by intensive selection for a more consistent, compact bloom under a wide range of winter chill and spring temperature conditions.

Uniform ripening proved more difficult. Because fruit development is driven by exposure to sunlight and heat, fruit in shaded or more northern portions of the tree will invariably lag in development, resulting in delayed ripening times. To achieve the possibility of single-pass harvest, we therefore incorporated genetics that essentially reprogrammed the fruit to maintain tree-ripe qualities for a week or more after individual fruit ripening. This suppression of the normal degeneration and softening of the first-ripening fruit, referred to here as the stay-ripe trait, allowed later ripening fruit to essentially catch-up. In addition to facilitating single-pass hand or machine harvest, this time delay also allowed all fruit to achieve a higher level of maturity, including greater size and sugar content, which would contribute to greater overall orchard yields. This work has led to the development of four new varieties possessing good productivity, improved disease resistance and the capability for delayed harvest: Ogawa, Kader, Schuler and Vilmos.

OGAWA.

The very early ripening variety Ogawa was bred from a combination of Brazilian and Eastern European peach germplasm from the Rutgers University breeding program of Dr. Fred Hough that was terminated in the mid-1980s. The original seedling tree expressed sections of stem necrosis that we determined to be environmental rather than disease in origin. A series of clonal-source selections during the 1990's (based on our Noninfectious-Bud-Failure elimination strategies developed for almonds) has eliminated all trace of this condition in subsequent UCD and regional grower-trial trees. Tested in both the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys as Ultra-Early#1, this variety combines very good size and cropping potential for its very early maturity of approximately 3 days before Ceres-Carson. Despite its early maturity, Ogawa demonstrates exceptional compensatory-sizing capacity (the ability to divert more resources to fruit sizing if they become available, as would occur when

the crop is over-thinned or due to early fruit loss from weather, disease, etc.). This greater fruit sizing compensates for such early losses by making remaining fruit, and so final yield, larger. Ogawa has also shown good resistance to fruit brown-rot and has been an important parent for conferring fruit brown-rot resistance as well as early maturity, good fruit size and firmness. The exceptional size and yield potential for such an early season combined with its high level of brown-rot resistance have made this a particularly attractive variety for organic production of processed product because it allows the product to be processed in the cannery to avoid any comingling with later harvested non-organic fruit. Early processing of this golden-orange colored selection would also avoid the undesirable risk of mixing with later maturing lighter-colored fruit varieties (which would result in an inconsistent canned product color). High temperatures during fruit development (as occurred in 2020 and to a greater extent in 2021 and 2022) can result in irregularly shaped fruit. While this would discourage its use for processing peach-halves, much of the very early processing peach fruit is diced with some slicing, neither of which seems to present a problem for this time-period based on grower and processor discussions. Ogawa tends to flower early, between Ross and Andross, which made it more susceptible the 2022 freeze/frost damage though it's more protracted bloom, while normally undesirable, proved useful in providing later viable buds for subsequent fruit set. The potential for good fruit production and quality



Figure 2. Processed fruit of UCD variety Ogawa (tested by growers in both Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys as Ultra-Early#1) showing the exceptional fruit size and firmness for this early ripe date.



Figure 3. Ogawa fruit sampled from a Sutter County orchard showing its characteristic large-size but also its tendency to produce some irregularly shaped fruit.

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CALIFORNIA CLING PEACH BOARD REFERENDUM



The California Cling Peach Board (CCPB) will be conducting a referendum vote from voting underway through April 4th, 2024, to decide if the CCPB will continue to operate and work on behalf of California Cling Peach growers for another five years.

The last five years have been full of exciting promotions/marketing developments, trade efforts, and research; all efforts to promote California Cling Peaches and protect our farmers against continuous threats from abroad and threats at home in our fields.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2020-2024 IMPACT REPORT

DOMESTIC MARKETING PROGRAMS

The CCPB has been working with MJR Creative Group for the last 7 years. The last five

years have consisted of refining and revitalizing the messaging platform, tailoring it to the three key audiences: Consumers (parents), Health Professionals (RDs and nutritionists), and Food Professionals (institutional and foodservice buyers), updating the website to a more modern and visually appealing design, building communications materials (educations videos, orchard videos, recipe videos, trade show involvement, and social platform development). MRJ hopes to continue to make California Cling Peaches the number one choice for consumers, nutritionists, and in food service through the CCPB domestic promotions program.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE - BOARD EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE GROWING THREAT OF UNFAIR IMPORTS

Board Efforts to Address the Growing Threat from Imports:

Unfair foreign subsidies, labor and environmental practices, and rock-bottom prices have enabled canned peach suppliers in China, Greece, and other countries to capture all of the California industry's export markets and

CCPB CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

California canned peaches were some of the very first agricultural products grown in this state.

We have a long history and as everyone knows, the shelf life of canned peaches is unmatched. For this reason, I predict California cling peach farmers will continue to innovate and produce some of the best peaches in the world. That said, we will have to continue to work together and take advantage of our strengths.

This is already happening. In recent years, the California Cling Peach Board has become more flexible and is adapting to prioritize the interests of cling peach farmers. The Board is working harder to protect domestic markets for California canned peaches. CCPB is collaborating with the California Canning Peach Association to protect domestic markets for California cling peach farmers by negotiating tariffs and trade policies that discourage imports. They are also continually working to close loopholes that allow U.S. schools to easily purchase imported canned fruit.

Our Domestic Marketing program continues to bring value to the board through fresh innovative approaches to getting California Cling Peaches in the mouths of consumers. Our program has evolved to concentrate on diverse aspects such as marketing communications design, omnichannel advertising, social platform development! and the creation and management of influencer programs.

Adapting and developing new varieties and technology to increase productivity and lower costs are critical. By pooling resources through CCPB and working with other commodity groups, the CCPB is helping to fund research aimed at labor-saving processes and products that will reduce costs and improve efficiencies. If the CCPB were not in existence, who would do this work? This fact alone makes the organization critical to the future of California cling peach farmers.

So, while it is easy to be pessimistic, I encourage each of us to take a more positive view. We are in this together. We've accomplished a lot in the last five years and our goal is to accomplish a lot more in the next five. The old saying holds true – there is strength in numbers. So, let's continue to work together to adapt and succeed.



Sarb Johl,
Chairman California Cling
Peach Board Marysville, CA

put the industry's one remaining outlet, the US market, at serious risk. Because "normal" US tariff rates on canned peaches, canned fruit mixtures, and frozen peaches (17%, 14.9%, and 14.5%, respectively) are higher than most US tariff rates, they are vital to sustaining the US market for California production and need to be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Moreover, with low-priced foreign canned peaches still gaining ground in the US market even with normal tariff rates in place, additional protections against canned peach imports – whether in the form of supple-

mental tariffs, labor restrictions on imported canned peaches, stringent Buy America rules, improved labeling rules, and other import safeguards – have also become important to ensuring that the US market remains viable for the California industry.

Board efforts since 2019 to reaffirm the industry's import-sensitivity and fortify import safeguards:

The Board plays an active role in Washing-

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SPOTLIGHT ALBUM



2024 ANNUAL MEETING



Tim Melchiori, Marc Lund, Steve Zovickian, Eric Spycher, Ken Johnson, Laura Johnson, Christine Ott



Serena Courtney and Gurnam Pamma viewing peach display



Annual meeting crowd picture



Darryl Starn, Amanda Arnold, Craig Arnold



David Purewal, Ronnell Schuler, Nevin Purewal, Jesse Purewal



Ken Johnson, Rich Hudgins



Marjorie Bishop, George Chohan, Seema Chohan



Gurvinder Pamma, Karm Bains, Ranjit Davit, Jasbir Bains, Simon Sihota, Dave Dulai



Blake Smittcamp, Rich Hudgins, Emily Rooney, Bill Smittcamp



Martha Leon, Serena Courtney



Tricia Geringer, Rich Hudgins, Emily Rooney



Nevin Purewal, Ronnell Schuler



Bill Winterburg, Steven Silva, Ryan Elliott, Rich Hudgins, Alan Wilcox, Kristi Rhodes



Tricia Geringer, Andy Russick, Sarb Johl, Aaron Smith

CALIFORNIA CLING PEACH BOARD

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ton on all trade policy matters relevant to the California industry in order to widely profile the California industry's import-sensitivity and build support for protecting it against unfair competition wherever possible. Board efforts on behalf of the industry include frequent formal submissions in all trade policy proceedings that impact the industry and regular informal interventions with US trade officials to underscore the industry's policy concerns and requests. The following is an illustrative list of Board efforts over the past five years to help safeguard the California industry from unfair imports.

- Securing protective USMCA "rules of origin"
- Securing supplemental 25% tariffs on US imports of Chinese canned peaches and fruit mixtures
- Securing supplemental 25% tariffs on US imports of Greek canned peaches and fruit mixtures
- Sensitizing the US Government to the possible use of forced labor in China's canned fruit industry
- Sensitizing the US Government to the unfair advantages being conferred to foreign canned peach suppliers by the US "national security" tariffs on tinplate
- Ensuring that the US Government's annual inventory of trade policy priorities captures the California industry's main trade concerns
- Ensuring that any renewal of US duty-free treatment for goods from South Africa continue to exclude canned peaches and fruit mixtures

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond.

Important new tariff proposals are now being debated by the 2024 presidential candidates and US Congress. Some of these proposals would help further safeguard the California industry; others would impact the industry in unclear ways. The coming year is expected to

be a dynamic one for trade. The Board intends to continue working actively in Washington to bring all possible attention to the California industry's growing import-sensitivity, advocate for effective import measures that will help sustain the California industry, and oppose all measures that undermine the industry's competitiveness.

RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED

The California Cling Peach Board has invested in research aimed at helping cling peach growers reduce costs and improve overall production. Over the past five years, CCPB has spent nearly \$540,000 on research projects with 81 percent of the funds focused on developing new peach varieties that will lend themselves to mechanical harvesting, produce higher yields and provide more balanced harvest timing. The additional 19 percent of funds have been dedicated to disease control which is an ongoing issue for growers.

The California Cling Peach Board hopes to be able to continue to fund essential research that will support the success of the industry for years to come.

BREEDING PROGRAM

The breeding program has been the focus for the Research Committee and 81% of research funds have been dedicated to the development of cling peach varieties that have desirable qualities of the industry. Desirable qualities identified by the industry include: extra-early and early maturity periods, as well as pre-Loadel maturity; capacity for once-over harvest; fruit tolerant of mechanical harvest and transport; reduced requirements for pruning and thinning; and resistance to fruit brown-rot, mechanical bruising and inconsistent winter-chilling. Dr. Thomas Gradziel at University of California Davis continues to



Stay-ripe trait: Once-over harvest, improved yield & quality. Photo provided by Dr. Thomas Gradziel.

spearhead these efforts with his two projects titled Developing Cling Peach Varieties and Regional Testing of New Processing Peach Selections.

PRE AND POST-HARVEST DISEASE CONTROL

Management and control of diseases impacting the California cling peach industry have been an ongoing focus of CCPB’s research program. Dr. James Adaskaveg from the Department of Plant Pathology and Micorbiology at the University of California, Riverside has been conducting research on how to better control brown rot, powdery mildew, peach leaf curl, bacterial blast and canker diseases in cling peaches.

Recent Marketing Order Renewal Voting Results

Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes
2019	97	10	107
2014	106	35	141
2009	171	31	202
2004	151	45	196
2001	217	43	260
1998	225	79	304

OUR PARTNERS

In 1981 there were 11 companies canning California peaches. Today only two remain. As has been stated many times in this report, the importance of working cooperatively through CCPB is critical for the survival of peach farmers. Just as important is the need for CCPB work collaboratively with our valuable canning partners, Pacific Coast Producers and Del Monte. 🍑

EXTRA-EARLY AND EARLY PROCESSING PEACH VARIETIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BREEDING PROGRAM.

Continued from page 9

as well as brown-rot resistance in a very early processing peach variety offers the opportunity for both season-extension and expansion of organic production, though both of these options depend upon processing plants accepting peach deliveries this early in the season.

KADER

Kader harvests between Carson and Andross (within the harvest gap left by the loss of the Dixon variety). In both Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley grower trials, Kader has demonstrated very good fruit-sizing capacity with good eating quality and a stay-ripe firmness allowing delayed harvest so that interior and otherwise slower-growing fruit can continue to size, further contributing to a high final yield. Fruit weight under conditions of heavy flower thinning is among the largest of the Extra- Early and Early selections tested. This indicates an aggressive compensatory-sizing (similar to Andross) which should facilitate consistently good grower yields even when over thinned. Fruit are generally symmetrical; though occasionally somewhat asymmetrical. Flesh color is a desirable golden-yellow. Kader showed moderate fruit loss from the 2021 freeze. This vulnerability to freeze damage was partly due to its relatively concentrated bloom because there were fewer later blooming buds to compensate for the lost flowers. Fruit samples of Kader collected in both Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley regional trials showed good processing-quality including the ability of the fruit to hold on the tree for one week or more after developing to the full-ripe stage. Kader's improved resistance to fruit brown-rot and its higher resistance to flesh browning and bruising also contribute to good postharvest and processing quality. Some late-fruit in 2021 showed slight pink staining of the pit though this was not observed in the 2022 and 2023 harvests.

SCHULER

Schuler represents a 3rd-generation UCD breeding selection, being developed from Californian and South African germplasm combining the stay-ripe trait with a separate gene that effectively shuts down red pigmentation in the fruit flesh and skin even under very high summer temperatures. This selection has consistently shown good though somewhat brighter fruit color, good harvest- and post-harvest firmness along with good cropping potential in regional grower testing in Yolo, Sutter and Yuba Counties. Fruit can maintain integrity and quality 7 days or more after tree-ripe stage owing to the stay-ripe trait and so allow delayed or once-over harvest. Good levels of fruit brown-rot resistance have also been observed in both lab and field evaluations, as well as improved resistance to flower blight. The bloom period also remains relatively concentrated even in years of low winter chill, resulting in more uniform fruit ripening times. Fruit is medium large, uniformly round and firm, even when overripe. Fruit remains free of red blush on the skin with no red staining of the fruit pit-cavity even up to two weeks beyond the full-ripe date. The pit-cavity is medium and somewhat ragged. Fruit weight following heavy thinning was moderately large, being similar to Ross though smaller than Kader. Fruit can be slow to size, and this was



Figure 4. Processed fruit of the Kader variety showing good size, firmness and color.

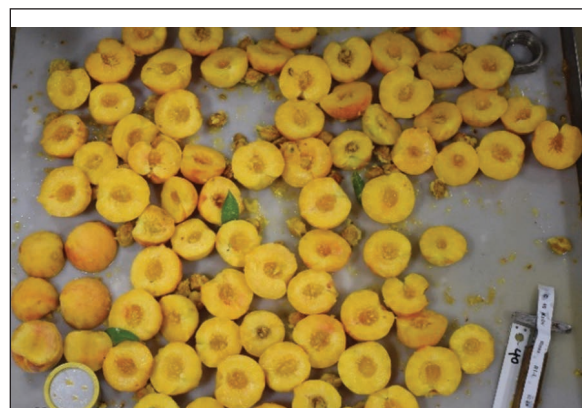


Figure 5. Tree ripe fruit of Kader harvested from grower plants in Sutter County showing uniform size and shape and general freedom from fragments and red pit staining.



Figure 6. Processed fruit of the Schuler variety showing good uniformity and color with a medium fruit size

particularly true in some 2022 orchards receiving reduced irrigation water. Trees tend to be upright-spreading and have been consistently productive under a range of winter and summer temperatures.

VILMOS

Vilmos ripens with to just after Andross and possesses tree characteristics similar to the variety Ross. Fruit is also similar to Ross in size though slightly more asymmetrical in shape and with less red blush. In hotter regions such as the southern San Joaquin, some Vilmos fruit flesh may develop reddish pit staining particularly 5 or more days after initial tree-ripe, though this staining has typically cooked-out during processing. As with Kader, Vilmos flesh show low bruising and low flesh browning and fruit readily hold on the tree for 7 days or more after initial tree-ripe even under higher summer temperatures. Vilmos fruit show good sizing potential, requiring less thinning than other varieties, though over-thinned fruit will only develop to a medium to medium-large size rather than the distinctly larger fruit observed in varieties such as Kader and Dr. Davis when over-thinned. Trees are hardy with yields comparable to Andross. Some fruit drop has been observed, particularly if developing fruit are left in clumps and harvest is delayed for a week or more after initial tree-ripe stage. Fruit process well, and the relatively small pit, combined with lower incidence of pit-staining and pit fragments can result in higher case yields than Andross. 🍑

UCD Variety	Tested as	Firm. (lbs.)	Ripe Date	Red in Pit	Splits & Fragments
Ogawa	Ultra-Early#1	6.5	1-Jul	low	low
Kader	Extra-Early#1	6.2	16-Jul	low	low
Schuler	Early#6	6.1	18-Jul	absent	low
Andross	(Reference)	5.4	2-Aug	high	medium
Vilmos	Early#5	6.1	3-Aug	low	low

Table 1. Ten-year averages from field evaluations in Yolo County for Extra-Early and Early UCD released varieties with Andross included for reference.



Figure 7. Schuler fruit harvested at the tree-ripe stage from Yuba County test plantings showing its characteristic medium-size, uniformly golden-yellow flesh color with absence of any red pigmentation in either the flesh or pit as well as the skin.



Figure 8. Processed fruit of the variety Vilmos, showing good color and firmness in a medium sized, somewhat asymmetrical fruit



Figure 9. Vilmos fruit harvested at the tree-ripe stage from grower plots in Sutter County showing good size, color and firmness with a slight pink staining the pit following usually hot July temperatures.



Steve Mobley

The Association continues to stress the dangers of overplanting peaches and cautions all growers not to plant without a processor contract.

MODESTO & KINGSBURG DISTRICTS

by Steve Mobley

After heavier than average YTD rainfall totals in 2023 (15.4”), the Modesto area has again received more rainfall thru February 2024 (13”) than the normal YTD average of 8.6”.

However, rainfall so far for the Kingsburg area is below normal levels with YTD 2024 amounts just over 6” compared to 13.5” YTD totals in 2023.

Chilling hours were down this year with Modesto totaling 898 hours compared with 1,338 last year. The chilling hours recorded for Modesto this year are the lowest since 2015 (802 hours). Chilling hours recorded in the Parlier area this year amounted to 793 hours, down 37% from last year’s 1,260 hours. Chilling hours are defined as total hours under 45 degrees from November 1 thru February

29. The minimum Chilling hour requirement for Cling Peaches is 800.

For the greater Modesto/Kingsburg regions, total year-to-date pullouts remain well below 100ac with the majority coming from the Kingsburg area and across all Varietal groups. Currently, Association member plantings for the Modesto/Kingsburg areas in 2024 total just over 150ac with the vast majority of these new plantings being Extra Early varieties. Due to the continuing rainfall, it is anticipated that there are an additional 75 -100 acres still yet to be planted in the southern regions. Bearing acreage in the Modesto/Kingsburg areas for the 2024 harvest is expected to be approximately 4,530 acres, up approximately 130 acres from 2023. It is also anticipated there will be no unsold acres this year in the southern regions. The Association continues to stress the dangers of overplanting peaches and cautions all growers not to plant without a processor contract.

Growers are busy attempting to keep up with their various sprays between rainstorms and as a result, growers are spending more money as they apply additional sprays. In addition, many growers are reporting increased pruning costs this winter as the California minimum wage has increased again for 2024. For the Southern Regions, our 2024 full bloom dates are anticipated to be slightly earlier than last year’s bloom dates of - March 12 for Kingsburg and March 15 for Modesto. 🍑

Chilling Hour Totals November 1st - February 29

Area	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Verona	781	1,282	1,179	1,143	1,082
Davis	622	1,152	921	745	761
Modesto	898	1,338	1,126	1,064	978
Parlier	793	1,260	1,129	1,128	1,035

YUBA/SUTTER REGION

by Sutton Hunter

There are currently a total of 249 acres which have been pulled since the 2023 harvest with 193 acres in the Yuba/Sutter area.

In comparison, a total of 913 acres were planted in the Yuba/Sutter area by CCPA members in 2023. Recent rain events have slowed planting in 2024, more planting will ensue with warmer and drier weather. The Association continues to tell growers not to plant peaches unless you have a processor contract for any new plantings.

Verona chilling hours for 2024 have amounted to 781 compared to 1,282 hours last year. Davis received a similarly low number of chill hours, 622 in 2024 and 1,152 hours in 2023. The minimum chilling hour requirement for cling peaches is 800 hours (under 45 degrees) between November 1 – February 28. Low chilling hours this year may result in a sporadic bloom and irregular uniformity of the 2024 peach crop.

From January 1st to March 5th, 2024 Verona has received 8.86 inches of precipitation, during the same time frame, in 2023 Verona

received 8.93 inches of precipitation. Similarly, Davis received 9.75 inches of precipitation from January 1st to March 5th 2024 while last year received 12.71 inches of precipitation. With good amounts of rainfall this year, coupled with our Sierra snowpack, our reservoir levels are now above historical averages for Northern California.

Bloom in 2024 seems to be progressing faster than the 2023 bloom date of March 14th. If the weather continues to warm, our 2024 bloom date is near. Warm weather now is welcome, disease poses a greater threat to peach blossoms in a cool and wet environment. Growers have been hard at work spraying fungicides to protect their trees while the trees are vulnerable. Growers are confident their efforts will protect the blossoms thus preventing significant damage.

In closing, we will be conducting our 2024 Prethinning Estimate in early May. We hope all goes well for growers during the 2024 peach harvest. 🍑



Sutton Hunter

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STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Continued from page 3

he been saying the same thing for a long time? Sadly it's a message that still bears repeating. The Peach Association continues to press our processor customers urging that they avoid contracting for more acres than they will need to supply their actual customer demand three years from now. Given the nonbearing plantings already in the ground, the Association is currently projecting a 9% increase in the State's bearing acreage by 2026. The open question is where will the new customer demand come from to absorb a 9% increase in our raw product supply?

Another important role for the Peach Association is being your voice in Washington as we advocate on behalf of California's cling peach industry. During my remarks at last year's Annual Meeting, I mentioned that we intended to pursue strengthened Buy American provisions at the Federal level as part of the upcoming Farm Bill. Following our meeting, I am pleased to report that this resulted in our working together at the highest level during 2023 with our processor customers as we seek strengthened Buy American provisions for school food purchases. I'd like to acknowledge Del Monte Foods' CEO Greg Longstreet, PCP's CEO Matt Strong, and Wawona's CEO Bill Smittcamp for their willingness to join with us in sharing the cost of retaining a team of topflight lobbyists in Washington, D.C. as we pursue a dual track regulatory and legislative strategy to achieve this goal in 2024. Without question, the combination of growers and processors is stronger together.

Unfortunately, fewer and fewer members of Congress come from farming or ag backgrounds. As we navigate the halls of Congress, it's vital to have a wide range of our elected representatives hearing firsthand about peach grower concerns. I'm pleased to report that our team at FGS Global has filled this role very capably and I look forward to crossing the finish line on our Buy American effort regarding school food purchases in the coming months.

Sadly, our efforts to strengthen Buy American requirements when taxpayer funds are being spent will now need to extend to a new area.

Here is a photo taken several weeks ago of a food box which was delivered to a San Joaquin valley farmworker. As you can clearly see, this box included Chinese canned peaches. Sadly, with more Chinese canned peaches entering our U.S. market, we will have fewer jobs for farmworkers in the peach orchards and fewer jobs available in canneries. This will, in turn, result in the need for more food boxes. Funding for the food box I'm referring to was provided by the State of California. China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. I find it ironic that our state which prides itself on leading the way in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is simultaneously spending it's taxpayer dollars on Chinese canned peaches which were transported more than 7,000 miles across open ocean. It should not come as a surprise to anyone that canned peaches from China are less expensive. China has extremely low labor rates, no overtime pay, and labor laws which are inconsistently and infrequently enforced. The typical Chinese cannery worker is paid less for an entire day's work than their California counterpart earns in less than 30 minutes. There is growing concern that the low cost steel being used in China to manufacture fruit cans was produced through forced labor. Currently there is more than 50% cost differential in processor can costs between China and the US. In addition, Chinese pesticides and spray applications are not carefully regulated and worker safety measures are lacking.

There is no doubt in my mind that given China's input cost structure and the same regulatory environment, the California canned peach industry could more than offset the current cost differential vs. the Chinese canned peach industry.

However, that isn't the world that we live in. We operate under labor, environmental, and food safety rules and regulations which have been formulated in Washington D.C. and Sacramento. U.S. farmers and ranchers are expected to strictly adhere to all of these rules

and regulations. I believe that it's only right for our farmers and ranchers to expect that the elected officials and government agencies responsible for developing these rules and regulations also make every effort to ensure that all food purchases made utilizing taxpayer dollars be for domestically sourced products-provided they are available in the US in sufficient quantity and quality.

As I describe some of our efforts to speak with a collective industry voice in Washington D.C. and Sacramento, I want to again put in a plea for growers who are not members of Peach-PAC asking that you join. Our contributions may not buy votes but they do open doors so our message can be heard. This isn't a new thought, the words I just spoke come from my predecessor Ron Schuler's 1987 Annual Meeting speech. 37 years later, they still ring true.

Today we have just over 160 Association members who currently contribute to Peach PAC but we also have nearly 150 members who are not currently contributing. I have a simple question for our members who are not contributing to Peach PAC. Are you willing to commit the equivalent cost of dinner and a glass of wine at a nice restaurant for you and your spouse to assist us in advocating on your behalf in Washington and Sacramento? If all of our non-supporters agreed to contribute \$100 per year to Peach PAC we would have an additional \$15,000 in PAC funds to work with each year. Quoting from Ron Schuler's 1987 Annual Meeting speech again- "Regardless of the crops you grow, the chances are that all of them are subject to rules and regulations being made in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento. It takes participation by all of us. When you join Peach PAC, you won't need to write a check, instead we will make the appropriate pledge deduction from future payments that we make to you."

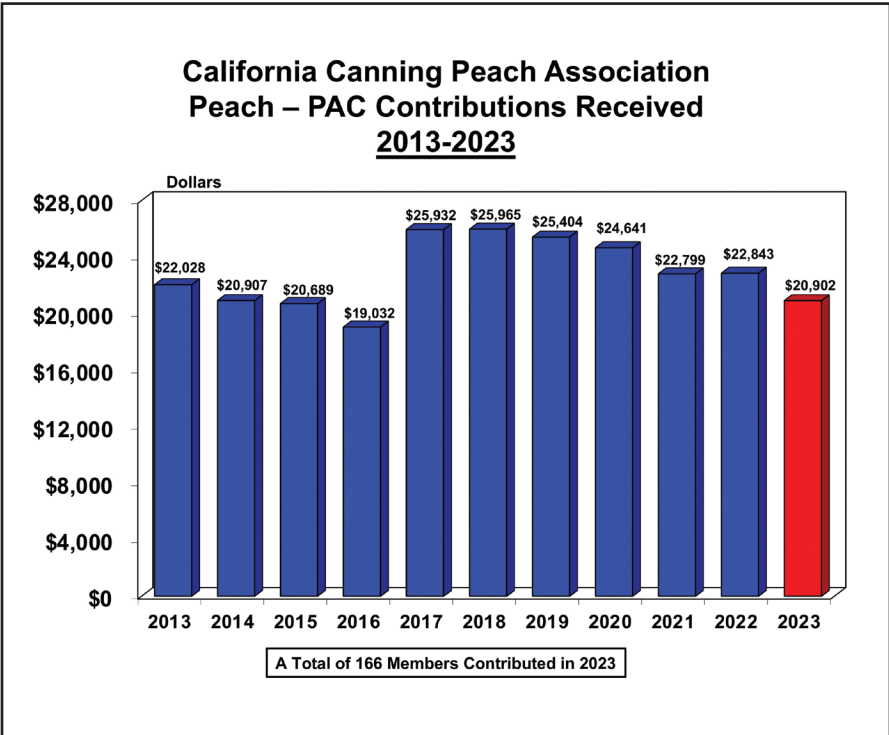
In closing my remarks today, I'd like to return to the theme I mentioned in my opening - "Together We're Stronger".

Every peach grower in the audience today owns this organization. Our mission remains unchanged as we continue working on your behalf to maintain a strong peach industry in

California. I believe you have a great team working to make this happen. Let's face it without great people, we don't stand much of a chance to succeed as an organization. At this time, I would ask each Peach Association staff member to stand as I call your name and let's hold our applause until the entire staff has been introduced.

For 102 years the Peach Association's collective strength has allowed us to accomplish results that any individual grower on his own would be unable to achieve. We stand here today as a testament to the power of this grower unity, truly together we are stronger. The coming years will surely bring many new challenges for the peach industry; However, just like a peach tree, the Peach Association has a strong root system of unwavering grower support along with our core values of integrity and respect which will allow us to weather any storm. Together we will continue to lead the way in maintaining the California canned peach industry's prosperity for years to come.

Thanks again for your dedication and support as we continue the journey in 2024. 🍑



2024 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Continued from page 6

some data for the last two years in the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced, for parcels of 20 acres and larger. We then looked at areas that had two sources of water that were tree-adaptable versus the single source, groundwater land.

What we've seen for the last few years in sales, even though we've had a little bit of pressure on commodity prices, ground with two sources of water, those areas for pricing are holding up very well. The average price paid 2022 vs 2023 is actually down about \$100 per acre and the days on the market and days at close is another factor that we look at, they seem relatively close and reasonable--these are all signs of a healthy supply-demand situation.

"Now when we look at real estate with a single-source for water, we see a little bit more pressure. We first see that the average sales prices in 2023 are about \$1,300 per acre less. Additionally, we also see that days on the market jump up dramatically. They go up from 128 days to 215 days. Those are all signs of stress in my opinion and they're all tied to the lower commodity prices and SGMA (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act) taking hold.

"If you look into the future and try to predict what is going to happen with land, I believe that ground with two sources of water, is probably going to continue to hold up very well...I think long-term those assets have the opportunity to appreciate in the future.

I think some of the ground with a single water source is likely going to have some more pressure on it. And the ability for that ground to appreciate to me is uncertain, and banks are going to lend less into these assets based on the risk they see.

Finally, "I'd like to talk about a couple areas that are important for lenders and customers to discuss.

First and foremost, all lending is local. It all starts at the customer level...If I were a full-time farmer, I wouldn't necessarily worry about the name on the front of the bank, but

I'd try to find a qualified person who knew my commodities and was willing to sit down and understand my business. And there are a lot of qualified people out there and they are at community banks, regional banks, big banks and Farm Credit. Why do I say that finding a local person with knowledge is important? First of all, it makes your banking needs a little easier to meet when your lender understands your business. Secondly and more importantly, is if you go to stretch yourself financially and buy that piece of land that you've been waiting to go up for sale, or you happen to be in a situation where you're challenged financially, your loan officer is the one representing you. If they don't understand what you do or your commodity, how on earth are they going to be able to serve your needs as a financier?

Additionally, the importance of communication. Your lender needs to stay in touch with you and you need to stay in touch with your bank. Not just the normal responsibility of the banker like taking customers out to lunch and dinner and buying adult beverages from time to time, or updating financials and annual budgets, etc. .

But the lender also needs to be doing a deeper dive, especially with you folks who have permanent plantings. I really think we need to start focusing on 3- to 5-year outlooks. The cost to develop orchards is going to keep getting more expensive and getting ahead of the curve, making sure there's adequate capital, is going to be imperative for the customer's success and the bank's success.

Finally, I tell people, if you're in a challenging situation, make sure you talk to your bank early and get in front of it. Usually when you talk to the bank sooner, there are more options to help solve the problem. If you're a customer and you think you are in a challenging situation, and you really don't want to discuss it with your banker, you might be with the wrong banker, frankly.

"I'd like to thank everyone for the opportunity to share some of my thoughts with you today. I wish everyone a prosperous 2024." 🍑



**Our staff is requesting photographs
for our annual almanac!**

If you want to participate, we are looking for pics of your orchards, blooms, peaches, tractors, harvest, sunsets, weather or anything peach related.

If we decide to use a picture you've submitted for the 2025 Almanac, we will pay you \$100 per photo.

For more information, contact: scourtney@calpeach.com



CALIFORNIA CANNING PEACH ASSOCIATION

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