

LOOKING TO THE 2018 FARM BILL

The Impact to the California Almond Industry

The California Almond industry has successfully leveraged many Farm Bill titles. Among the most beneficial for almond growers and handlers from the current Farm Bill are:

Title II: Conservation

- The Conservation Reserve Program
 - Sets aside land that is used for bee habitat; protecting pollinator habitats is a vital component to keeping honey bees healthy.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 - Promotes production and environmental quality as compatible goals and optimizes environmental benefits by assisting producers; almond growers have used EQIP to upgrade ag motors to comply with stricter air quality standards.
- Conservation Stewardship Program
 - Provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on tribal and private working lands; one program grant provided data showing the dust reduction from almond harvesting equipment focused on lower particulate emissions.
- Gross Income Caps
 - The value of California specialty crops is higher than most production ag commodities. With that higher value, grower income limits, in terms of program participation and qualifications, have restricted almond grower participation.

Title III: Trade

- Market Access Program; Foreign Market Development Cooperative Program; Emerging Markets and Facility Guarantee Loan Program
 - ABC has leveraged all the USDA/FAS programs to open new markets, address trade barriers, and build consumer demand for California Almonds.
- Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops
 - ABC has leveraged the TASC program to bring foreign authorities to California to learn firsthand about the California Almond industry and our commitment to food safety and other issues impacting the movement of almonds. The easing of import requirements in Europe and India was a direct result of these activities.

Title VI: Research

- Specialty Crops Research Initiative
 - Used to develop and disseminate science-based tools to address issues affecting specialty crops including food safety, pest management, pollinators, and use of processing by-products.
- Food, Ag, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
 - Provides education and training for Cooperative Extension Service agents and other professionals; through Cooperative Extension, research is quickly moved into the grower community, encouraging the adoption of improved production practices and minimizing environmental and other societal impacts.

Title X: Horticulture

- Specialty Crop Block Grants
 - Block grants to states support projects in marketing, research, pest management, and food safety; the almond industry has successfully competed for these grants to fund public/private projects focused on FSMA implementation, training for growers, and almond lifecycle analysis of almond production.
- Plant Pest and Disease Control
 - Provides protection to agriculture and natural resources from foreign plant pest threats; specialty crops such as almonds can obtain pest and disease free planting stock through the Clean Plant Network.

Title XI: Crop Insurance

- Pilot programs for specialty crops and livestock
 - About 83% of California almond growers carry USDA endorsed crop insurance. (Source: 2016 Risk Management Agency data)