



almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

MAY-JUNE 2023

NEW

THIN DIPPED ALMONDS



Kai Bockmann Discusses Weather, Crop Forecast, and Incentives

NEW! Thin Dipped Almonds Hit Walmart Shelves

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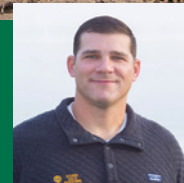
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Blue Diamond volunteers prepare grant recipient's (The GreenHouse) community garden

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Kai dives into highlights from INC World Nut & Dried Fruit Congress he attended in May, and provides information on water in California, OSIP incentives, and a brief crop forecast.

10 NEW! Thin Dipped Almonds Now Available at Walmart

Thin Dipped Almonds hit Walmart shelves this May and come in two delicious flavors: Double Dark Chocolate and Dark Chocolate Sea Salt Caramel. Try this tasty new product that contains half the sugar of the average chocolate covered almond!

22 Blue Diamond Volunteers to Serve Grant Recipients

Dozens of *Blue Diamond* employees spent a day volunteering for a "Day in the Dirt" helping one of our grant recipients in Sacramento prepare their youth community garden, while others served at the Love Stanislaus County (another grant recipient) events to brighten the community!

40 Time to Consider

Blue Diamond Regional Manager, Trent Voss discusses three crucial components of the spring/summer seasons: irrigation, hull split, and leaf analysis.

ON THE COVER:

Blue Diamond celebrates the launch of Thin Dipped Almonds; the new, better-for-you option for chocolate covered almonds!



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Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



It's hard to believe that summer is here when we can still see mountaintops covered with snow throughout the greater Central Valley.

While the topic of drought seems to have dominated state and national headlines over the past several summers, this year it's more likely that reports of full Shasta and Oroville reservoirs, and of course the re-emergence of Tulare Lake, will take center stage.

Although the ag industry will continue to face the challenges associated with California's water allocation and delivery system, as the record-level Sierra snowpack continues to melt, lack of water should not overshadow our growers' hard work each day as they deliver their almond crops.

As we shared in our recent market update, the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) subjective almond forecast released in mid-May estimated a 2.5 billion pound crop for 2023. Still a significant number of almonds, this crop size would help reduce carryout this year and potentially stabilize market pricing a bit. Overall good news for the industry.

I was certainly impressed attending my first INC World Nut and Dried Fruit Congress in London in May. *Blue Diamond* helped sponsor the global tradeshow — the largest international gathering of fruit and nut food professionals, suppliers, traders and buyers. This year's event drew 1,300 participants from more than 60 countries and offered countless opportunities for our *Blue Diamond* representatives to network and market our growers' almonds.

We recently completed a tour of the Central Valley, meeting with members of the Grower Liaison Committees. Those who participated heard Mel Machado give a somewhat sobering update about this year's crop development, continued increases to your input costs and the world almond market. I realize growers are fully aware of the challenges you've already faced this year with extraordinary bloom weather and its potential impact on your crops. As we communicated in those meetings, I want to assure you that your co-op will continue to honor our grower progress payment schedule and do all we can to support you throughout the year.

One of the innovative ways we're backing our growers is by providing financial incentives around sustainability. I think it's incredible that, in 2022, our Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP) paid over \$1.74 million directly to growers for practices most were already doing in their orchards.

I'm incredibly proud of our co-op's continued commitment to sustainability and to doing what we can to be responsible stewards of the lands we farm and the processes we use throughout our supply chain. Our OSIP now covers 40% of all *Blue Diamond* member acres, representing more almond acres in a sustainability program than any other company in the world...and we plan to increase this over the coming years.



We are also working to launch *Blue Diamond's* USDA Partnerships for the Climate-Smart Commodities Grant Program with our grower-owners — a major step to expand the use of, and markets for, almonds grown with climate-smart practices. There is a lot of terrific progress to celebrate in the area of sustainability. Our collective commitment as a co-op helps further our growth mindset as we continue to grow the global market for our almonds.

Have a great summer! ◆

Kai

Kai Bockmann
President & CEO

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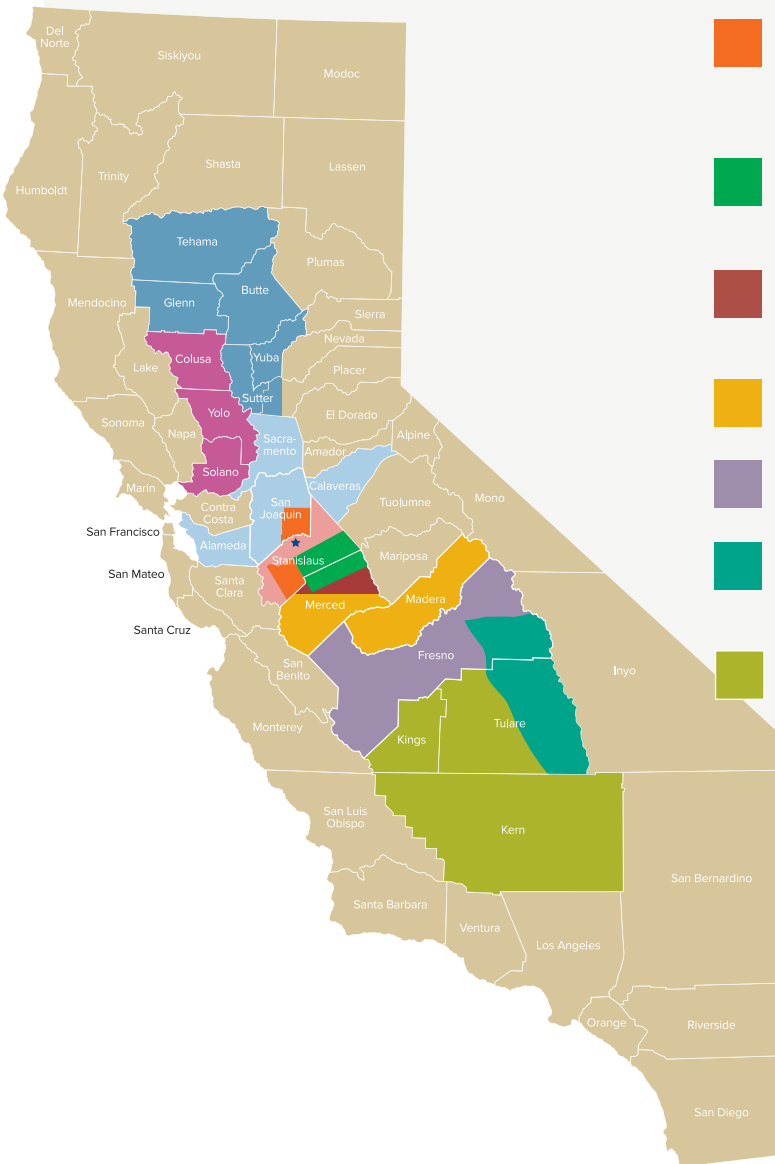
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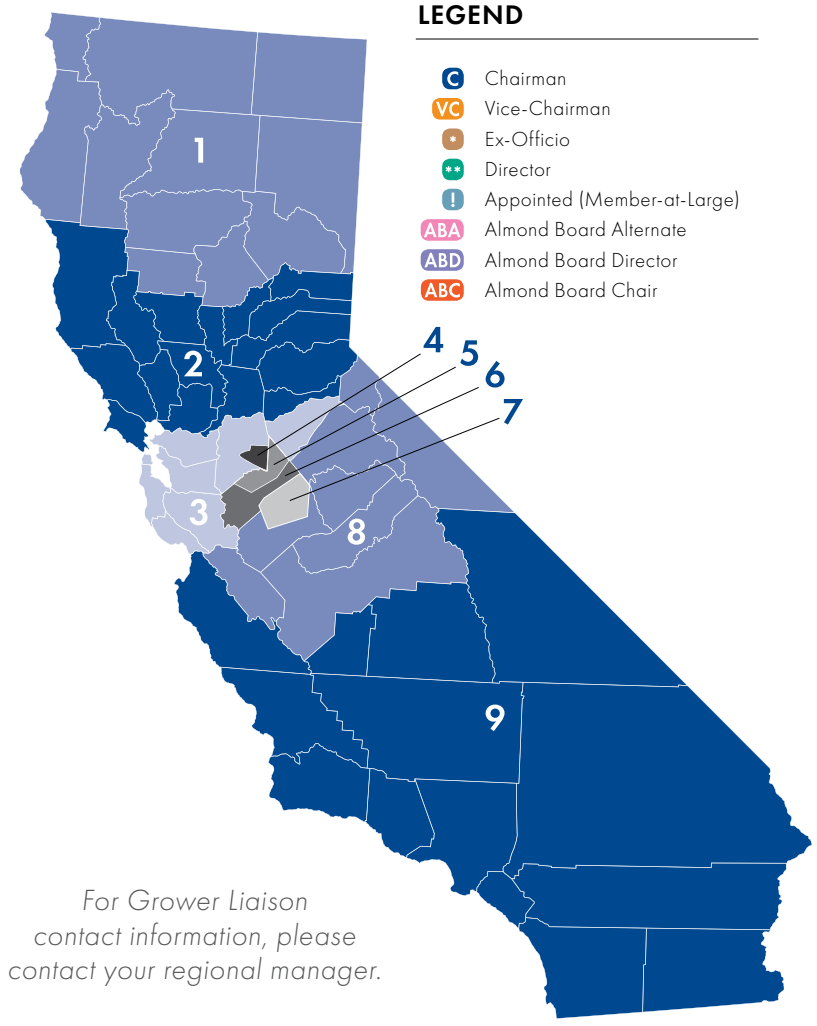
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For Grower Liaison contact information, please contact your regional manager.

Blue Diamond Introduces NEW Chocolate “Thin Dipped Almonds”



Blue Diamond’s first-ever chocolate-covered product line boasts great taste with half the sugar of the average chocolate-covered almonds.

Blue Diamond Growers kicked off the spring season with a fresh new product line that is hitting the snack nuts aisle in June: Thin Dipped Almonds. These delicious, better-for-you option of chocolate-dipped almonds will be available at Walmart in convenient, four-ounce bags.

“We are so excited to present our customers with yet another incredible innovation within *Blue Diamond’s* iconic snack almond portfolio,” said Raj Joshi, Sr. Vice President of Global Consumer Division, *Blue Diamond Growers*. “Whether you’re a health nut or not, Thin Dipped Almonds offer a smart choice when it comes to sweet snacking. The thin layer of chocolate enhances the almond’s natural crunch while allowing snackers to enjoy a delicious, sweet treat – without the guilt!”

Thin Dipped Almonds come in two irresistible flavors: Double Dark Chocolate and Dark Chocolate Sea Salt Caramel. Both products contain 50% less sugar than the average chocolate-covered almonds. One serving (about 19 almonds) has 170 calories and five grams of protein. Thin Dipped Almonds are free of cholesterol, high in Vitamin E, contain no artificial colors or flavors, and do not have a shiny wax or gloss finish.

Blue Diamond is a world-class leader in consumer trend analysis and flavor forecasting that leads to new products like Thin Dipped Almonds and many other unique flavors within the *Blue Diamond Growers* snack almond line up. Check out all the *Blue Diamond* snack almond flavors on the website at bluediamond.com. ♦



Remembering Howard Isom, Former Chairman of *Blue Diamond* Board

January 4, 1933 – November 15, 2022

“Howard always displayed a sense of decorum and professionalism that he brought to every *Blue Diamond* event. He was a stabilizing figure during a trying time for all almond growers, and he helped make *Blue Diamond Growers* the industry powerhouse it is today.”

—Mel Machado, VP of Member Relations, *Blue Diamond Growers*

W. Howard Isom, who served as *Blue Diamond Growers'* chairman of the board for 16 years, passed away in Chico, California, November 15, 2022.

After graduating cum laude from Chico State University with an accounting degree in 1960, Howard spent time in San Francisco as a CPA before returning to Chico to start Matson and Isom Accountancy. He ventured into farming first with a prune orchard in 1964, followed by almonds, walnuts and grapes.

Over the years, Howard expanded both his accounting firm as well as his farming operation. When one of his farming partners, Fred Montgomery, stepped down from the *Blue Diamond Growers* board in 1988, Howard replaced him.

Of the 18 years on the board, Howard served 16 as chairman. In that role, he witnessed statewide almond production grow from 300 million meat pounds to more than 1 billion pounds. *Blue Diamond* responded with investments in new processing technology and enhanced innovation to develop new almond-based products.

Current *Blue Diamond* Chairman Dan Cummings noted how Howard's production and financial backgrounds served the cooperative well. "Howard brought to bear valuable business and financial insights to the benefit of *Blue Diamond* from his very

successful accounting business background. He was a leader in his community and at *Blue Diamond*, serving as chairman of the board for 16 of the 18 years he was on the board of directors."

Blue Diamond Vice President of Member Relations, Mel Machado praised Howard for successfully guiding the co-op through a particularly stormy time in the industry.

"Howard always displayed a sense of decorum and professionalism that he brought to every *Blue Diamond* event. He was a stabilizing figure during a trying time for all almond growers, and he helped make *Blue Diamond Growers* the industry powerhouse it is today."

Howard also held a myriad of other leadership roles, including director of CoBank in Denver and North State National Bank in Chico. In addition, he was active in the community and helped form the Chico Economic Planning Corp., was a Chico Rotary member for 50 years, and was a strong supporter of Chico State School of Agriculture, Enloe Hospital, Butte Humane Society and many other local groups.

Howard was preceded in death by his wife, Joan Isom (née Anderson), and her daughter, Paige Skillern. He is survived by his children, son-in-law and grandchildren. ♦



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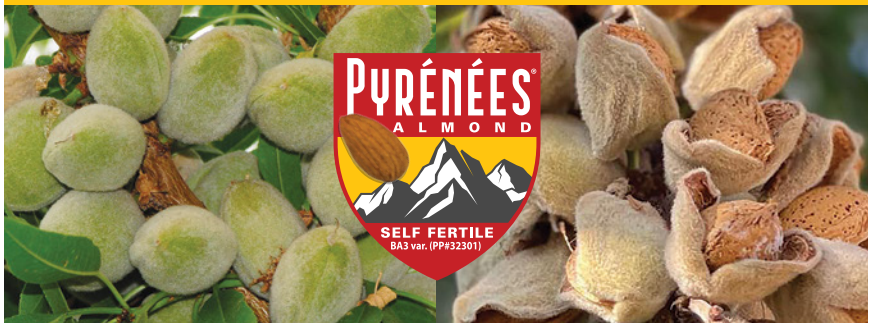
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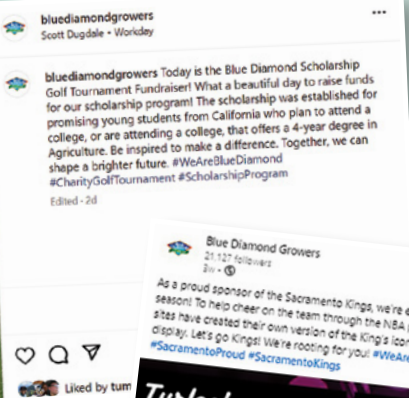
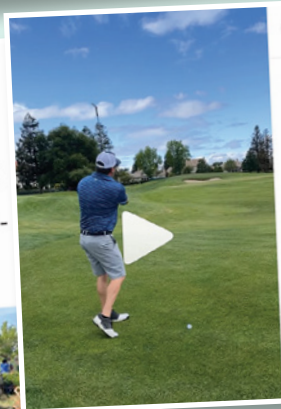
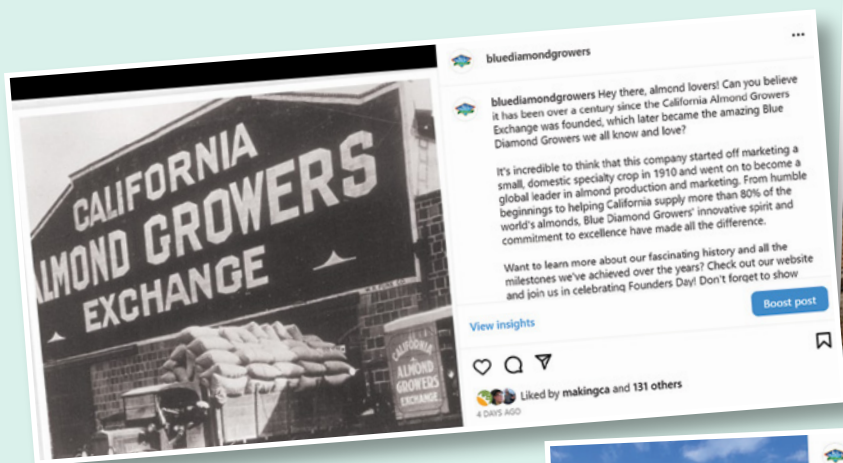
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#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity

These past two months have been packed with activity at *Blue Diamond*! Employees volunteered to serve their communities through a “Day in the Dirt” at The GreenHouse, along with a work day for Love Stanislaus County; both of which are *Blue Diamond* Community Grant recipients! We celebrated Earth Day by providing educational materials and best practices to live a sustainable day-to-day life. *Blue Diamond* celebrated its 113th birthday, Founders Day, on May 6. We celebrated the excellent season the Sacramento Kings played and lit up our buildings in purple! Finally, golfers joined for a scramble to raise funds for the *Blue Diamond* Growers Foundation to provide scholarships for ag students! ♦



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Current Investment Rates available as of June 1, 2023

Blue Diamond Growers offers members short-term and long-term investment programs.

The objective of these programs is to serve as a competitive investment alternative for our members and provide *Blue Diamond Growers* with a steady source of funds. The interest rates effective June 1, 2023, for the program are listed here:

	Short-Term Investment Certificate (STIC)	Long-Term Investment Certificate (LTIC) (Maturity Date of 6/30/2025)
Initial Investment Required	\$1,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	6.00%	2.95%
	(Variable, subject to change)	(Fixed rate)

For more information, contact your local Regional Manager, or Member Services at (209) 545-6225.

This summary does not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation to purchase investment certificates. We will provide a package of documents for the programs to those members who are California residents and who express an interest in participating in the program.

Mocha Banana Protein Smoothie Bowl

Time: 5 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serving: 1

Ingredients

- 1 large frozen banana
- ½ cup *Almond Breeze*®
Chocolate Almondmilk
(*plus more if necessary*)
- 1 scoop of your favorite Protein
Powder (*plain, vanilla, or chocolate*
recommended)
- 1 cup spinach
(*if you want a superfood boost*)
- A few ice cubes
- 1 packet instant coffee; if desired
- Almond butter (*optional*)
- Toasted almonds (*optional*)
- Chia seeds (*optional*)
- Low-fat granola (*optional*)
- Sliced bananas (*optional*)
- Fresh strawberries (*optional*)
- Carob chips (*optional*)
- Unsweetened coconut
flakes (*optional*)



Directions

1. Add all ingredients except desired toppings to a blender and blend until smooth and creamy. If necessary, add more almondmilk and/or ice to reach the desired consistency. The smoothie should be fairly thick so that you can eat it with a spoon.
2. Pour into a bowl and top with desired toppings such as chia seeds, your favorite *Blue Diamond* flavored almonds, and granola.

Blueberry Date Shake

Time: 8 minutes Difficulty: Easy Servings: 2



Ingredients

- 1 cup *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Vanilla Almondmilk
- 2 medium bananas cut into chunks and frozen (about 8 ounces or 1½ cups slices)
- 1 cup frozen blueberries (about 4 ounces)
- 3 pitted Medjool dates, plus additional to taste
- 1 tablespoon almond butter, plus additional to taste
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2-3 ice cubes (*optional*)

Directions

1. Place the banana, blueberries, dates, almond butter, vanilla extract, and almondmilk in a high-powered blender (if you do not have a high-powered blender, blend the almondmilk and half of the frozen fruit first, then slowly add the rest of the fruit and remaining ingredients). Blend until smooth.
2. If you would like the shake a bit thicker, add a few ice cubes and blend again. Taste and add additional almond butter if you'd like the shake a little richer or another date if you'd like it sweeter. Pour and enjoy!

Find Your Perfect Smoothie!



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Find your recipe



Blue Diamond Australia: Almond Breeze® Extra Creamy to Launch in Coles This September



Almond Breeze® Extra Creamy almondmilk will hit shelves this September in key Australian retailer, Coles. The International Consumer team has optimized the U.S. Extra Creamy formulation for Australian consumers, who have a high rate of purchasing both plant and dairy milks.

Extra Creamy combines the taste and health benefits of our Almond Breeze® almondmilk with a creamier and smoother texture like dairy milk. The product received an excellent score through Australian consumer concept testing.

Coles' acceptance of this innovation is attributed to Almond Breeze®'s legacy brand in the market, a strong consumer demand for creamier plant-based offers, and a compelling retailer presentation delivered by our new licensee partner Grocery Corporation Brands (GC Brands).

Blue Diamond Managing Director Bjorn Grobler and Brand Manager Ashley Logsdon visited the cooperative's Australia and New Zealand licensee partner GC Brands in April. In May, GC Brands returned the visit to the Sacramento campus. During discussions around portfolio, consumer, channel and innovation strategy, the team finalized a launch support plan for the introduction of Almond Breeze® Extra Creamy. GC Brands also had the opportunity to visit our orchards, meet some of our growers, and learn how we bring the best almonds from the orchard to the grocery aisle! ♦



Visit to key retailer Coles. Left to right: Ashley Logsdon Brand Manager Blue Diamond, Michael Quilter National Business Manager, Jenelle Trisic Marketing Director GC Brands, Bjorn Grobler Managing Director Blue Diamond. Photo credit: Jenelle Trisic



A short walk from GC Brands office on Manly Beach Australia. Left to right: Bjorn Grobler Managing Director Blue Diamond, Anthony King owner GC Brands, Myles Thompson CEO GC Brands, Jenelle Trisic Marketing Director GC Brands, Michael Quilter National Business Manager GC Brands, Ashley Logsdon Brand Manager Blue Diamond. Photo credit: Jenelle Trisic



Anthony King owner GC Brands.
Photo credit: Ashley Logsdon



Marketing Director GC Brands Jenelle Trisic, Myles Thompson CEO GC Brands.
Photo credit Ashley Logsdon



Myles Thompson CEO GC Brands, Marketing Director GC Brands Jenelle Trisic, Blue Diamond growers Gerry Rominger and Larry Rominger. Photo Credit Ashley Logsdon



Blue Diamond Director Member Relations, Ben Goudie, Myles Thompson CEO GC Brands, Marketing Director GC Brands Jenelle Trisic, Blue Diamond growers Gerry Rominger and Larry Rominger. Photo credit Ashley Logsdon

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Blue Diamond Almond Breeze® Almond & Oat Launches in Brazil

This new product combines the creaminess of oats with the tasty flavor of almonds.

With consumers eager for healthy, plant-based beverage options, along with the increase of food restrictions and allergies, this market space continues to grow, which expands our opportunities to innovate! With this in mind, Blue Diamond launched the only almond and oat plant-based drink in the Brazilian market! Almond Breeze® Almond & Oat is gluten-free, rich in calcium and vitamins, is a good source of fiber and is available in a one liter carton that can be incorporated into recipes or enjoyed all on its own!

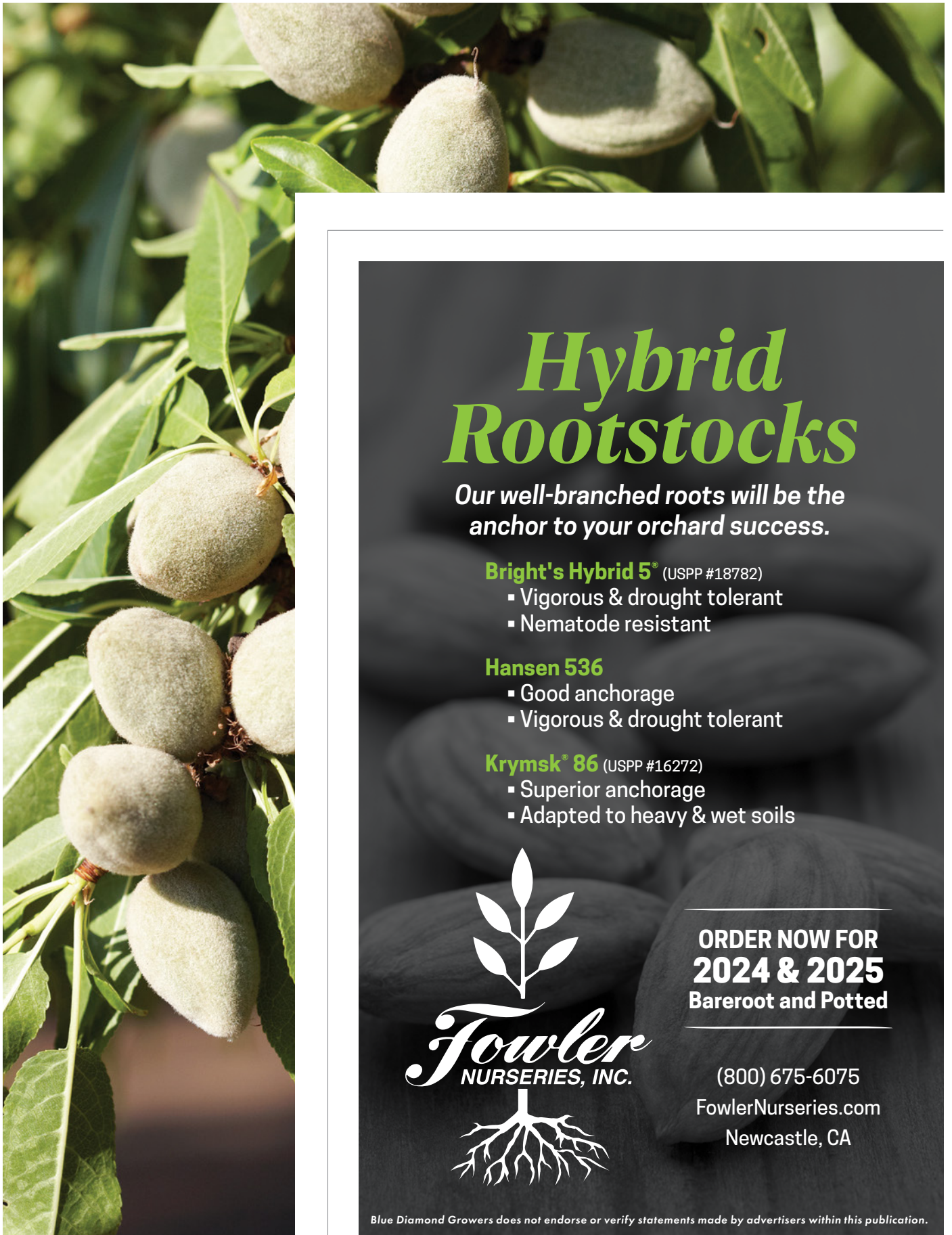
“For some time now, we have noticed changes in consumers’ eating habits. They are adopting a lighter, more balanced diet, rich in vitamins without sacrificing great taste. As the number one almondmilk brand in Brazil¹ Almond Breeze® drinks have already conquered a loyal audience. Now, by uniting California almonds with the creaminess of oats, we have achieved an incredible result for the palate that we believe our consumers will love,” says the Country Manager for Almond Breeze®, Ricardo Ebel.

“We were able to bring together incredible flavor and essential health nutrients in a single product while serving a varied audience such as vegetarians, vegans, and those who are lactose intolerant,” Ebel highlighted.



The plant-based beverage, Almond Breeze® Almond & Oat is available in one liter packaging and can be found in the main points of sale across Brazil, and also in e-commerce, on sites such as Amazon, Magazine Luiza, Extra, Shopee, Casas Bahia and Americanas.com. ◆

1. Brazil sales by volume, Nielsen MOV December 2021



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Volunteering in Our Communities



On a beautiful, bright, spring morning with clear, blue skies, nearly 40 *Blue Diamond* employees from the Sacramento site gathered at The GreenHouse Educational Garden, one of *Blue Diamond's*

community grant recipients to spend a "Day in the Dirt" for a good cause! The GreenHouse is a special organization where local children can participate in many enriching after-school and summer programs, including learning to cook healthy meals using the fresh vegetables they grew in the garden!

During this year's "Day in the Dirt," the *Blue Diamond* team pulled weeds, trimmed trees, built a new fence and gate, installed trellises (which the children signed their names on), spread mulch, and taught the children about agriculture and gardening.





Executive Director for The GreenHouse, Rena Crocker, worked right beside the *Blue Diamond* team as she's done for all four of *Blue Diamond's* "Day in the Dirt" visits. When the workday concluded, she shared, "Every year when *Blue Diamond* visits we take a huge leap forward in our educational garden. This year, *Blue Diamond* installed trellises in our garden beds which will enable kids to plant and harvest new vegetables in our cooking and gardening program. I see the impact of access to the garden every day in young people's lives and we are so thankful for *Blue Diamond's* partnership in making it happen."

Many *Blue Diamond* volunteers commented that they love the opportunity to serve our community while building relationships with other *Blue Diamond* employees that they don't normally cross paths with. The team's passion is evident in the work that was completed in just one, short day. Take a look at the before and after photos below to see the incredible transformation of The GreenHouse Educational Garden. Now, it's all ready for the children to finish their spring planting!

BEFORE



AFTER



GROWING THE GOODNESS



Love Stanislaus County Events in Modesto and Turlock

The Love Modesto and Love Turlock events were a huge success thanks to everyone who volunteered. Dozens of *Blue Diamond* team members had a great time volunteering for this noble cause to give back to the community. They helped keep the event clean by picking up trash and recyclables throughout the day. The team led the sustainability project and also assembled hundreds of hygiene kits for a local Shower Shuttle (a service that provides showers for homeless people) in their warehouse where they will be stored for future use. Some team members also helped with set up and registration then took on a project to help a double transplant patient clean up his yard.

Jeff Pishney, CEO & Founder of the Love Our Cities organization had this to say about *Blue Diamond's* partnership: "It is evident that Turlock and Modesto are truly loved by *Blue Diamond*! Every year, their strong partnership, and hearts to serve shine through by the dozens of volunteers who show up to help Love Our Cities. With the help of companies like *Blue Diamond*, our cities shine a little bit brighter!" ♦

Overall event highlights:

3,500+ volunteers	75+ projects	19,250+ volunteer hours
\$612k+ in community service donated		300+ businesses, organizations & congregations involved



About The GreenHouse

The GreenHouse is a non-profit, 501c3 organization located in the Gardenland/Northgate neighborhood of Sacramento, California. They offer after-school tutoring, mentoring, spiritual development, and leadership development for neighborhood youth.

They serve a neighborhood with one of the highest concentrations of children in the Sacramento area. They operate out of an "Asset-Based Community Development" model where they build on the inherent dignity, strengths, and leadership gifts of families and youth for the purposes of community-wide transformation.

They're seeing youth from this community discover their gifts, renew their focus on academics, grow as neighborhood leaders, attend local colleges and universities, and even become members of The GreenHouse staff and Board of Directors. They celebrate seeing young people lead transformation in their own community!

Learn more about The GreenHouse at www.thegreenhousecenter.org

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To help cities lead city-wide volunteer days, facilitate city-wide initiatives, and become city-wide conveners while networking and collaborating with fellow city leaders. They are proud of their teams for their hearts to serve. The volunteers let their actions speak of Love Our Cities cooperative's deep commitment to sustainability of our lands and our cities by stewarding the land well and by preserving our cities for the next generation.

Learn more about Love Our Cities at loveourcities.org



Jillian Luna,
Managing Editor,
Corporate Communications
Blue Diamond Growers

Community Giving Grant Cycle is Open!

The *Blue Diamond Community Giving* 2023–2024 grant cycle is open from **June 5, 2023 – July 15, 2023**

Every year, *Blue Diamond* provides funding for small grant requests, typically between \$500–\$15,000, for nonprofit organizations that meet the two pillars of our Community Giving Program: **Agricultural Education and Health & Wellness/Food Security**.

Eligibility Requirements

Funding requests must focus on at least one (preferably both) of the following areas:

- Agricultural Education — *Blue Diamond* supports programs and projects that provide youth education in the areas of agriculture, including how food is grown, processed, packaged, and distributed.
- Food Security focused Health & Wellness — *Blue Diamond* supports programs and projects that address hunger, food security, improve nutrition, and increase the overall well-being of youth and families in the community.

Is there a local nonprofit organization you are passionate about? Please have them visit our webpage to see if they meet our eligibility requirements and to apply. The grant cycle is open through July 15, 2023. bluediamond.com/community-giving ◆



Blue Diamond Community Giving Website

Golf Tournament Benefits *Blue Diamond's* Scholarship Foundation

This spring, 130 golfers gathered at the Brookside Golf and Country Club in Stockton, CA for the 26th annual Golf Scramble benefiting the *Blue Diamond Growers* Scholarship Foundation. Every penny of the funds raised at this year's event will go towards scholarships for college students who are pursuing a degree in an agriculture-related field; the scholarship is also open to dependents of *Blue Diamond Growers* employees and grower-owners. The Foundation was established in 2011 and has assisted nearly 300 students in their pursuit of higher education. We're so grateful for the tremendous support over the years as we strive to foster and inspire the next generation of leaders in agriculture. ♦



GROWING THE GOODNESS



Steve Van Duyn with raffle winner and Justin Elam, Regional Manager, Blue Diamond Growers



“Blue Diamond growers and friends enjoyed a golf tournament where proceeds benefit the Blue Diamond Scholarship Foundation. The Foundation helps build the next generation of California ag leaders by providing scholarships to Central Valley students planning to study agriculture at a 4-year college or university.”

—John Monroe, President of the Blue Diamond Growers Foundation

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Water Strategy Requires Improved Planning to Achieve Resilience. *What are the priorities?*

Department of Water Resources (DWR) Task Force

In March, I was selected to participate in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Drought Resiliency Interagency & Partners (DRIP) Collaborative, which is a newly formed 26-member task force to proactively plan for future drought events, such as mitigation, emergencies, and response.

With swings between severe weather patterns becoming more intense, the DWR-led task force comprises 18 members from the private sector, and I am participating as an agricultural representative.

I am thankful DWR made room for agriculture on this important committee. We are often the first to experience pressure from extreme weather events — whether it be the ruthless flooding many are facing right now or devastating drought. I am pleased we have this opportunity to be proactive and plan for future events, as opposed to continually reacting to disasters.

State agency representatives also serve on DRIP, including the California Natural Resources Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Food and Agriculture and Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as officials from other areas within state government.

The first meeting of the DRIP Collaborative was held in April. Ag Council educated the committee on the impacts of extreme weather events on the agricultural community and advocated for water storage projects, additional infrastructure and improved regulations to allow for increased groundwater recharge projects. I am pleased the group developed its initial list of priorities, and we share many of the same goals.

Among the list of priorities, projects that took precedence within the group include investing in new surface water storage infrastructure, removing barriers to groundwater recharge projects, beneficial land use opportunities in

rural communities, analysis of hydro/power grid vulnerabilities and better coordination between local, state and federal governments.

Given the diversity of the DRIP Collaborative, the initial list of priorities gives me great hope that we will be able to find common ground in prioritizing our local communities and better planning for drought and all extreme weather events.

Potential Water & Climate Bond for the 2024 Ballot

California continues to experience boom and bust water years with many in agriculture suffering in times of drought and flood. As we seek to secure a stable, reliable water supply, better planning to anticipate weather extremes is not only necessary, it is vital to our survival.

Ag Council supports what California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot calls an “all of the above” approach to water planning, which encompasses groundwater recharge, surface storage, water conveyance, water recycling, desalination, flood protection, regional and climate resilience, ecosystem enhancement and much more.

Taking action in these categories is needed not only to improve water supply capacity, but to ensure all water users win in the end through better water quality, flood and drought protection, environmental sustainability and additional benefits.

To achieve those goals, Governor Newsom is expressing support for a potential climate and water bond for the 2024 ballot, and legislators are negotiating to proceed accordingly.

Ag Council is cognizant of the trepidation of a climate and water bond within the agricultural community given the provisions in the 2014 water bond (Prop 1) created a

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Ag Council's 105th Annual Meeting

Omni La Costa Resort & Spa, Carlsbad, CA

March 11–13, 2024

system that severely restricted opportunities to significantly increase our water supply. Certainly, the lessons learned under Prop 1 must be taken into account to ensure projects to boost water supply resilience are not hindered by a cumbersome and lengthy process or left out altogether.

With multiple climate and water bonds under consideration in the State Legislature and the governor's support, it is realistic that a climate and water bond could move forward and come before voters in 2024.

What are the issues on table in the discussions?

Categories under consideration for funding include:

- **Surface water storage**, which is part of Governor Newsom's Water Supply Strategy identifying the need for over four million acre feet of storage facilities;
- **Groundwater recharge** to support the over 300 proposed local recharge projects to boost groundwater storage and prepare for the future;
- **Flood protection** to fortify levees, bypasses and other flood management tools and protect public safety;
- **Regional water conveyance**, including new infrastructure, as well as repairs of existing facilities;
- **Regional watershed resilience** helping implement regional projects to further local self-reliance, examples include Integrated Regional Water Management projects;
- **Water quality & safe drinking water** to directly assist disadvantaged communities in addressing water quality challenges;

- **Dam safety and reservoir operations** to protect the public and augment storage capacity;
- **Water conservation**, including water use efficiency programs; and
- Other tools, such as recycling and desalination.

Ag Council has not yet taken a position on the bond measures given conversations are ongoing. In addition, the cost of a bond must be considered. Greater discussion is needed to fully vet ideas and coalesce around priorities. Ag Council will be looking to our board of directors and members for input in this process.

Thank You

Ag Council's team is grateful for the over 100 years of partnership and collaboration with *Blue Diamond Growers* through your membership. We look forward to working to ensure the next 100 years are successful for *Blue Diamond* as a cooperative and for growers.

Further information about our work is available at: agcouncil.org. If you have any questions about these or other issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at: emily@agcouncil.org. ♦



Emily Rooney,
President,
Ag Council

Spreading the Word on Sustainability in Europe

This spring, Blue Diamond employees Dr. Dan Sonke, Sr. Director — Sustainability, Chris Cromwell, International Sales Director, and Dominic Kwiatkowski, Global Sales Director — Functional Foods, visited six key customers in Europe. The trip allowed the team to present Blue Diamond’s Sustainability initiatives to a wide array of European customers of all sizes to create awareness of Blue Diamond’s sustainability efforts. They also gained awareness of what customers are doing to increase sustainability in their companies and what they expect from Blue Diamond as a supplier. Finally, they identified potential partners on sustainability initiatives and discovered opportunities to enhance Blue Diamond’s value to current and future customers.

The cruciality of sustainability in the European Union is expanding well beyond something that’s “nice to have.” Sustainability regulations are in the works. Currently these are emerging country by country, but it is anticipated that the European Union commission will have additional regulations in place European Union-wide by 2025 as part of the European Green Deal. This opens the opportunity with customers to highlight *Blue Diamond’s* practices in sustainability.

Every meeting was well attended, with all companies bringing their corporate sustainability leads and some bringing C-suite executives from Managing Directors to CEOs. All customers were already heavily engaged in sustainability with some already publicly communicating goals around CO2 emission targets. The trip was a success, and a greater depth of relationship was established with current and prospective *Blue Diamond* customers. ◆



Sonke, Cromwell, and Kwiatkowski pictured with Zuzana Rejdovianova, Director of Sustainability for Purchasing Group at Mondelez



Sonke, Kwiatkowski, and Cromwell outside Ferrero



Seeberger Team: Ralph Beranek, Managing Director; Verena Schaedler, Head of Sustainability; Christian Liebsch, Head of Purchasing

Chris Cromwell, Dan Sonke, and Dominic Kwiatkowski visiting Simply V headquarters near the foot of the Alps



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THE BEE BOX

Tips and Tricks for Planning & Planting Cover Crop

Project Apis m.'s Seeds for Bees program is currently accepting applications to give growers free or subsidized cover crop seed. If you've never tried to cover crop, it can seem a little daunting, but it shouldn't be. In this article we will go over a few helpful tips and tricks to help growers begin their cover crop journey.

Cover cropping is essentially adding a new tool to your orchard toolbox. Like any tool, there are a few suggestions that can help with implementation and success. Be patient as you begin the journey, knowing that you will probably make some mistakes along the way. The cover crop tool can be an effective one for many underlying issues growers face in their orchards, but it's not a silver bullet and it has to be managed well.



(Left) A Seeds for Bees sign is seen in the orchard of a seed recipient. (Right) Seeds for Bees Annual Clover Mix. May 2023. Credit: Project Apis m.

Like all things in the orchard, cover crops need to be managed. First and foremost, managing your crop starts with planning. It is important to select a cover crop that meets your needs and moves you towards your goals. Once you have determined your needs, such as reducing

soil compaction or adding nitrogen to your soil, you can begin the first steps towards cover cropping.

Planning

April through August is the time to start the planning process for your cover crop season. This is when Seeds for Bees has its open enrollment period, when we send out seed, and when we begin finalizing all the necessary aspects that go into planting after harvest.

There are three fundamental questions at this point in the planning period:

What kind of mix to plant? Here is where you select which seed mix will best suit your goals.

How much seed do I need? This answer is dependent on your selected planting method, the number of acres to be planted, and the seeding rate for your mix.

Choosing a planting method? There are a variety of planting methods available and each one has its own benefits.

Once these questions are answered, you are well on your way to a successful planting.

What Kind of Mix to Plant?

If you are new to planting, we suggest starting with a brassica mix, like Seeds for Bees' PAm Pollinator Brassica mix. It has three mustards, a canola, and a radish. This is an effective mix to start with because the brassica seeds are small and relatively homogeneous in size, making planting easy. Brassicas have a generally strong germination, take in any Central Valley scenario, and grow on relatively little water. Brassicas offer tremendous soil health and bee health benefits, too.



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How Much Seed Do I Need?

How much cover crop seed you need will depend on two factors: 1. the size of the area to be planted and 2. the seeding rate of the mix. If cover crop is being planted in an orchard or vineyard, calculating the cover crop acreage has one additional step. To calculate the planting area in an orchard or vineyard, divide the width of the cover crop by the tree to tree spacing of your field. Then multiply the result by the total acreage of the field you want to plant.

(Planting width ÷ by tree-to-tree spacing across) X total orchard acres = cover crop acres to be planted

For example, if a grower wanted to plant an 8-foot row of cover crop in their orchard with a tree to tree spacing of 22 feet then 8 divided by 22 would be 0.363. If that orchard was 100 acres, then multiply 0.363 by 100 to get 36.3 acres planted in cover crop. Once you know the total acreage that will be planted into cover crop then it is simple to multiply the acreage by the seeding rate of your selected mix to get the total amount of seed that you'll need.

Choosing a Planting Method

Every grower will have to answer for themselves what kind of planting method can be utilized for their farm. We suggest trying to find a no-till drill as this is one of the most effective methods for good germination, but other planting methods can have great success too if other factors are done well. For example, if you cannot find a seed drill, a broadcaster on the back of an ATV has worked well for many growers. Especially if they follow it up by dragging a spare piece of chain link fence over the area after the broadcast.

Soil Preparation:

A good seed bed is one that is level and clear of weeds with a good tilth. For almond farmers this seed bed has already been largely created in preparation for harvest. Some clean up may be needed regarding sticks, but most of the heavy work has already been done.



Left: the short and compact Land Pride PS15 Series has some chain link attached by the grower to help cover the seed once set. Right: grain drills can also be used in the orchard if the bottom branches of the canopy will allow, and many times produce a wider planting width with one pass. Bottom: a drill specially designed by Truax for planting cover crop in CA almond orchards. Credit: Project Apis m

Water and Timing of Planting

We strongly recommend planting cover crop seed in early to mid-October. This planting window gives winter cover crop mixes enough time and warm weather to sprout and become established in time to take advantage of winter rains. Depending on the type of irrigation system in the orchard, there may be a need to time planting just prior to forecasted rains. Growers with solid set irrigation systems can lightly irrigate their cover crop seed if dry weather persists after planting (this may also be recommended for the health of their orchards if the trees are severely water stressed). For growers without this option, it is recommended to plant a few days before a forecasted rainstorm to aid seed germination.

Navel Orangeworm and Cover Crops

Navel orangeworm is a pervasive pest in almond orchards and winter sanitation is a highly effective tool in managing this pest. Since both activities are conducted in October, conflict can arise between winter sanitation and cover crops if not planned for accordingly. There are several solutions for balancing cover crops with winter sanitation. Winter sanitation could be conducted before or shortly after planting the cover crop before the seeds sprout. Additionally, some growers elect to plant every other row of their orchard so that there is a clear row to blow and destroy mummy nuts or conduct other management activities.

In a research article titled "Developing cover crop systems for California almonds: Current knowledge and uncertainties," published in 2023, it was shown that cover crops can be used to help suppress Navel orangeworm. It is believed that cover crops can speed decomposition of fallen mummy nuts by maintaining humid conditions on the orchard floor or even hiding nuts from egg laying moths. However, it is important to note that cover crops are not a replacement for winter sanitation but can work synergistically with the practice.

Apply now! Seeds for Bees and Project Apis m.

The Seeds for Bees program is a California based opportunity that was founded to supply farmers with free or subsidized cover crop seed for both honeybee and soil health. Successful first year applicants can receive up to \$2,500 in free seed and second year applicants can receive up to \$1,500 in seed. After the first two years, returning applicants get their seed at wholesale prices with free shipping. The application process is simple and does not require any additional documents. Access the application page on our Project Apis m. website: projectapism.org or scan the QR code at the top of this page. ◆



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THE ALMOND BOARD

German Magazine Partnership Emphasizes Sustainability, Nutrition

Germans love almonds for their taste and the variety of ways they can be used in recipes. And like millions of consumers around the world, people in Germany also want to be reassured that the foods they eat — including almonds — are nutritious and grown in an environmentally responsible way.

With those two concerns in mind, the Almond Board of California formed an editorial partnership with one of the best-known German women’s lifestyle magazines, Brigitte. A selection of articles and videos are currently live in both the print and online versions of Brigitte and Brigitte Be Green, its sister publication with a focus on sustainable living.

It is the first editorial partnership designed specifically for the German market, said Kath Martino, Deputy Director, Europe and Strategic Communications Lead for the Almond Board of California. She said the goal was to educate Germans about how California almonds are not just healthy, but grown responsibly, too.

water efficiency, whole orchard recycling, the use of cover crops and zero waste to show how almond farmers are part of the climate change solution.

For instance, the headline on one story asks the question “Healthy AND sustainable?” Gemperle provides the answer.

“As climate change makes California more vulnerable to water shortages, farmers are eager to use this precious resource wisely,” Gemperle explained. “After decades of research, they have learned to use water as efficiently as possible, reducing consumption per pound of almonds by 33% between the 1990s and 2010s. By 2025, they aim to achieve another 20% and have already achieved 15%.”

The story goes on to say that 85% of California almond growers use demand-oriented irrigation scheduling, soil-moisture sensors and micro-irrigation to water their trees only when and as much is needed.

Sustainability and nutrition are important messages in Germany, which ranks first in Europe and fifth internationally in almond consumption. Germany is one of the top importers of California almonds, accounting for 119 million pounds in 2021–22 and 157 million pounds the year before (shipments were down in 2021–22 because of COVID-related issues).

In addition to the video and online article, the partnership also includes two print articles: one in Brigitte and the other in Brigitte Be Green. These print articles go even deeper into telling the industry’s water and zero waste stories, and they touch on topics such as family farming and the decades of sustainability research invested by the industry.

“Most importantly, it addresses head-on the single biggest concern Germans have about California almonds — water use,” Martino said.

The magazine includes an online interview and video featuring almond grower Christine Gemperle, who shares her experience in areas such as



Both articles (Brigitte Be Green version pictured) also touched on topics such as family farming and the decades of sustainability research the industry has invested in.

ANZEIGE

„Im Gegensatz zu anderen Lebensmitteln wird beim Mandelanbau nichts verschwendet“
Christine Gemperle, Mandelfarmarin aus Kalifornien

Die Mandelfarmar*innen sorgen dafür, dass auf den Feldern keine Abfälle entstehen. Die Schalen dienen als Einstreu für Vieh und die Hülsen werden als Futtermittel für Milchkühe genutzt

Gesund UND nachhaltig?
Mandeln stecken voller guter Nährstoffe und sind der perfekte Snack für zwischendurch. Aber ist der süße Biss von Mandeln eigentlich auch nachhaltig?

Print articles in *Brigette* (pictured) and *Brigette Be Green* featured grower Christine Gemperle and tells the industry's water and zero waste stories.

Gemperle also stresses another key point that is important to German consumers – zero waste. More and more, every part of the almond is used in some way – kernel, shell, hull and the tree itself.

- The kernels – the part we eat – serve up 13 grams of good unsaturated fats (with only 1 gram of saturated fat), 6 grams of plant protein per serving and are rich in essential nutrients.

- The shells and hulls are used as livestock feed and bedding, and research is exploring new uses such as using shells to strengthen recycled plastic and reduce new plastic, and hulls as a food ingredient.
- The trees store a lot of carbon and at the end of their lives they get returned to the ground as wood chips, sequestering 5 tons of carbon per hectare (about 2.5 acres), equivalent to living car-free for a year for each acre of land.

“Nothing is wasted with almonds,” Gemperle assured the German audience.

The stories also touch on the health attributes of almonds and include comments from German nutritionist, Rebecca Kunz.

“Almonds contain valuable nutrients like 6 grams of protein per serving that provides energy for the day,” said Kunz, who described the nuts as “little power packs that help us glow from the inside out.”

Article contributed by the Almond Board. ♦

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TIME TO CONSIDER

“If you want to see the sunshine, you have to weather the storm.” After what felt like nonstop rain throughout the winter and during the duration of bloom, I thought this quote by Frank Lane was perfect to sum up the current farm year. Wind, clouds, and rain have finally taken a back seat and growers can get back to what they are best at...farming!

Now that the sun is out, the first thing that usually comes to mind is “When do I start **irrigating**?” Or, after the wet spring you may be thinking, “Who needs to irrigate?” The amount of rain we received this spring may have caused a false sense of security when it comes to soil moisture. The temperatures are rising rapidly and can reduce deep soil moisture. Growers do not want to get behind on moisture because they may never be able to catch back up. With the probability of good water supplies, growers will want to be sure to maintain maximum vigor in their trees for optimal fruit wood development for next year’s crop. The use of soil moisture probes or the tried-and-true soil auger will help give you, as a grower, an idea of where your current soil moisture stands.



Figure 1 by Trent Voss

As the temperatures rise, so do the number of insects, and that is always a point of concern when it comes to **Hull Split**. The first question to ask is, “When is hull split?” Hull split varies from year to year, so growers cannot rely on when they sprayed last year. There is a great tool that

can be found at the UC Davis Fruit & Nut Research website (fruitsandnuts.ucanr.edu), which will give you an estimated hull split timing. All you must do is enter the date of peak bloom in your orchard and select the weather station for your area. It is also important to know this model will only work once we are 90 days post bloom. That is because it uses those 90 days to record temperatures to

predict an estimated date. If you have a possible date, you can now ground-truth it by spending time in the orchard. Navel orangeworm cannot get into the nut until it splits, so spraying should not occur until then. As a grower you know the cost of this application is high, and it is something you do not want to waste because you sprayed before the almonds were even vulnerable. As always, hull split will begin on the edges and tops of trees. When considering material, remember most hull split materials require the insect to ingest the material for control. That means the material needs to be on the suture of the almond before the eggs hatch. Pyrethroids must come into contact with the actual pest and will affect adult moths but can cause secondary pest issues like mites. As always, confer with your PCA about what materials and timing work for your orchard.



Figure 2 Emerging NOW by Trent Voss

Once this article comes out you will be well into your nutrition program for the year. Nitrogen and potassium, along with other nutrients, are applied to your specific orchard. Do you know if you are doing the right program, though? One way to stay on track is to take, or have your PCA take, a **leaf analysis**. Nutrient deficiencies may not be identifiable until they are severely deficient. A leaf analysis may show low or minimum levels that our eyes cannot see, so you are able to correct them before they ever show up visually in the tree. Below is a chart from the UC ANR publication "Almond Production Manual," which lists the critical nutrient levels for July leaf analysis.

Nutrient	Deficient	Adequate	Excessive Over
Nitrogen (N)	< 2.0%	2.2-2.5%	>2.7%
Phosphorous (P)		0.1-0.3%	
Potassium (K)	< 1.0%	>1.4%	
Calcium (Ca)		>2.0%	
Zinc (Zn)	<15 ppm		
Manganese (Mn)		>20 ppm	
Copper (Cu)		>4 ppm	
Magnesium (Mg)		>0.25%	
Sodium (Na)			>0.25%
Chlorine (Cl)			>0.3%
** Boron (B)			
(Hulls)	<80 ppm	80-150 ppm	>200 ppm

The three factors listed above are all important during the growing season. Much of the time growers look at bloom and harvest to determine the success of their year, but all the work that is done in the middle plays a vital role in that success. Using the tools that are available to you will lead to the achievement of those goals. ♦



Trent Voss,
Regional Manager,
Blue Diamond Growers

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Older tractor with loader, 25 – 40 h.p. Also need a manure spreader, preferably single-axle.

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- Rhino 10' offset flail mower - \$2,000
- Randell modified sprayer - \$1,000
- Ferguson Spring Tooth 7' - \$500
- Custom orchard float - \$250
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Contact Ann at:

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- John Deere low profile 5100ML with exact cab tractor
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