



almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

JULY-AUGUST 2023



TURLOCK

= 10 YEAR =

ANNIVERSARY

Kelli Evans, *Blue Diamond* Almond Grower, Named "Member of the Year" by the Almond Alliance

Blue Diamond, Turlock Celebrates Turning 10!

The USDA Climate-Smart Farming Grant Program has Launched!





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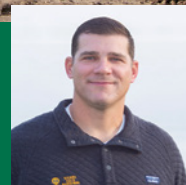
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Turlock was recognized for its achievements by elected officials at the 10-year anniversary celebration



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20 *Blue Diamond*, Turlock Celebrates 10 Years of Operations

Blue Diamond’s Turlock plant celebrated their 10-year milestone of operation. The Turlock facility hosted an anniversary luncheon where *Blue Diamond* employees, Senior Board members, *Blue Diamond* growers and elected officials celebrated.

30 *Kelli Evans: Grower, Advocate & Mother*

Third-generation California farmer and *Blue Diamond* grower, Kelli Evans, was named 2023 Almond Alliance “Member of the Year.” Her recent work has helped secure funds for a new Pollinator Habitat program, and she has given California growers a greater voice in state and national legislatures.

34 Sustainably Speaking

Blue Diamond’s Dr. Dan Sonke, Director of Sustainability, discusses the USDA Climate-Smart Farming Grant program that has been officially launched. He also discusses the Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program, customer partnerships and manufacturing sustainability.

ON THE COVER:

Blue Diamond celebrates the 10-year anniversary of its Turlock facility; a huge milestone for the company and local community!



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Almond Facts, established in 1922, is published bimonthly by Blue Diamond Growers, 1802 C Street, Sacramento, California 95811. Address all correspondence to the Editor, Almond Facts, P.O. Box 1768, Sacramento, California 95812. Advertising subscription rates provided upon request.

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Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



I enjoyed getting the opportunity to talk with many of you at the recent District Meetings held throughout the state. This was my first chance to participate, and I was impressed with the turnout and the honest, thoughtful conversation at each session.

It's no secret that the industry is facing extraordinary challenges this crop year as a result of numerous factors combined. During the District Meetings, Mel Machado listed out just some of the unique influences that have contributed to this year's challenges — an outlier 2020 crop yield that impacted market pricing and drove up inventory carryout; unprecedented supply chain and shipping disruptions produced by the COVID pandemic, unforeseen fiscal impacts fueled by inflation; global challenges and high interest rates that in some instances tripled input costs for our growers; and, of course, the extreme weather conditions growers faced during bloom. Mel eloquently summed it up by saying, "Farmers are a resilient bunch, and if we faced any of those factors by themselves, we could have handled it without pause. But all of those factors building together makes it impossible to avoid significant impacts."

So for all those reasons and more, yes, we are facing considerable headwinds as an industry. But I want to assure you that your *Blue Diamond* team is up for the challenge. We've spent the last two months building a strategic plan for the next three years from the ground up to address the unique challenges and opportunities we foresee for the co-op.

Over the last century, *Blue Diamond Growers* has thrived on a solid foundation built by supplying quality almonds that meet the needs

of our customers and markets around the globe. However, given the unique challenges we are facing this year, it's important to recognize that what got us to where we are today is not what's going to ensure our success tomorrow.

So I've challenged our leadership teams across the co-op — Innovation, Sales and Marketing, Manufacturing, Procurement, IT — to dive deep and think outside the box to find solutions that expand markets and uses for your high-quality almonds. We're also looking at ways to cut costs and increase efficiencies across every area of our co-op. Maximizing our global supply chain and procurement partnerships to help reduce our growers' input costs is just one example of those opportunities. You will hear more about this in the coming months.

As I write this, we've just launched our USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant Program, which offers financial incentives and no-cost seed to *Blue Diamond* growers for implementing cover crops or conservation cover on your acreage. Since the announcement of the USDA grant award last year, our Sustainability and Member Relations teams have been working tirelessly to bring this grant to life. Thank you all for your patience in this process. In addition to helping sequester carbon, these practices, which many of you already implement, further enhance soil health and resiliency of your orchards.



Speaking of that commitment to sustainability, I want to take a moment to acknowledge a significant milestone that we shared at the recent District Meetings. Currently more than fifty percent of *Blue Diamond* acreage is now enrolled in our Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP). That is the largest amount of almond acreage in the world participating in a sustainability effort! What's more, over fifteen percent of *Blue Diamond's* acreage is now Bee Friendly Farming certified. That accomplishment matters deeply to our employees, communities, customers and consumers around the world, and is a remarkable testament to your dedication to being responsible stewards of lands you farm. We are actively communicating these efforts to key customers to enhance sales and make your cooperative their preferred supplier.

I'm pleased to report that our planning efforts for the 2023 Annual Growers Meeting are well underway for November 15, 2023, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Modesto. We're utilizing attendee feedback and lessons learned to develop a productive and informative agenda that allows you all an opportunity to hear about and experience the latest innovations from our co-op. I look forward to seeing you all there.

With almond harvest just around the corner, we are entering into the busiest time of year for you, our hard-working grower-owners. On behalf of *Blue Diamond's* 1,800 team members, I wish you all favorable weather conditions and a successful harvest season! ◆

Kai

Kai Bockmann
President & CEO

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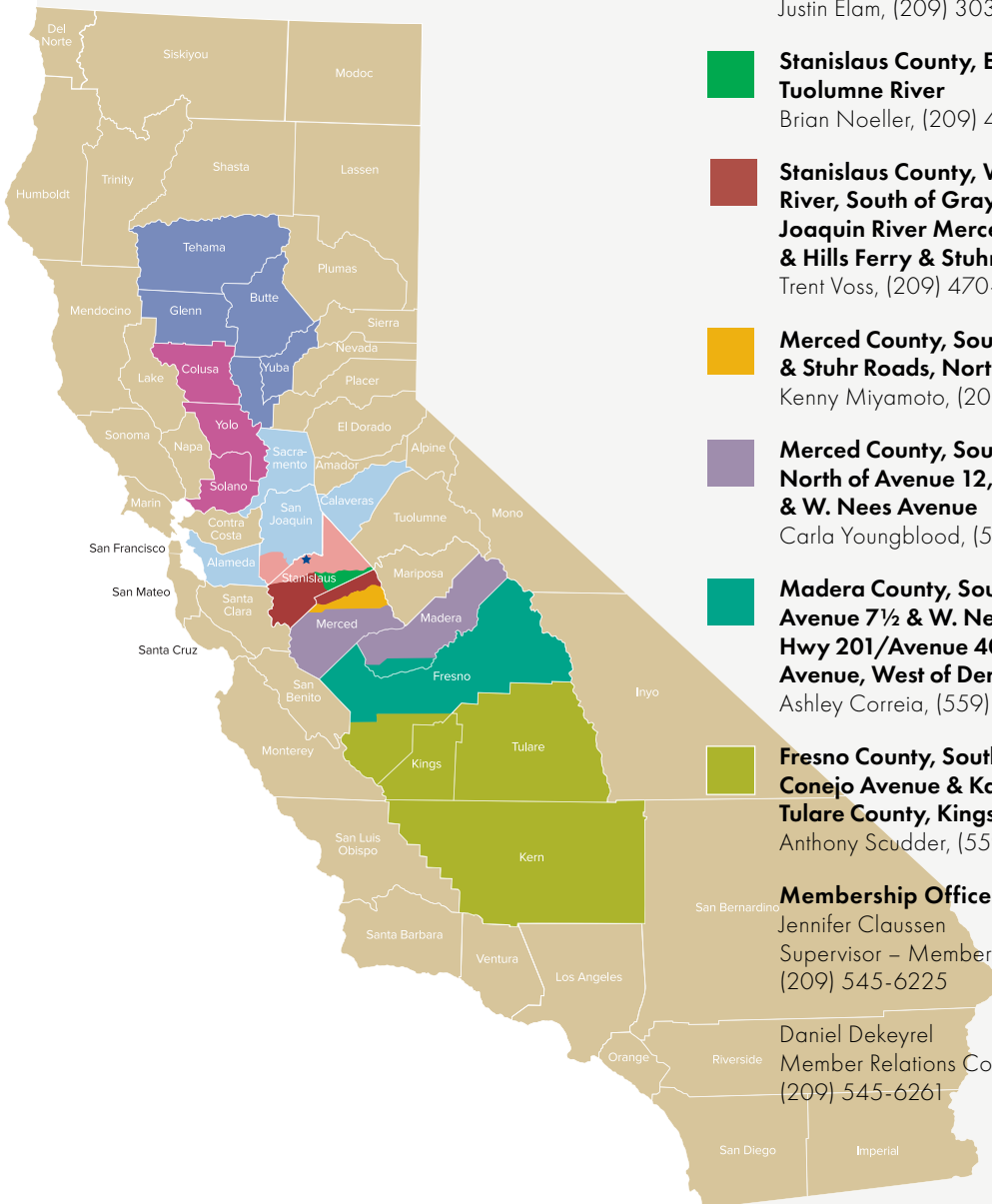
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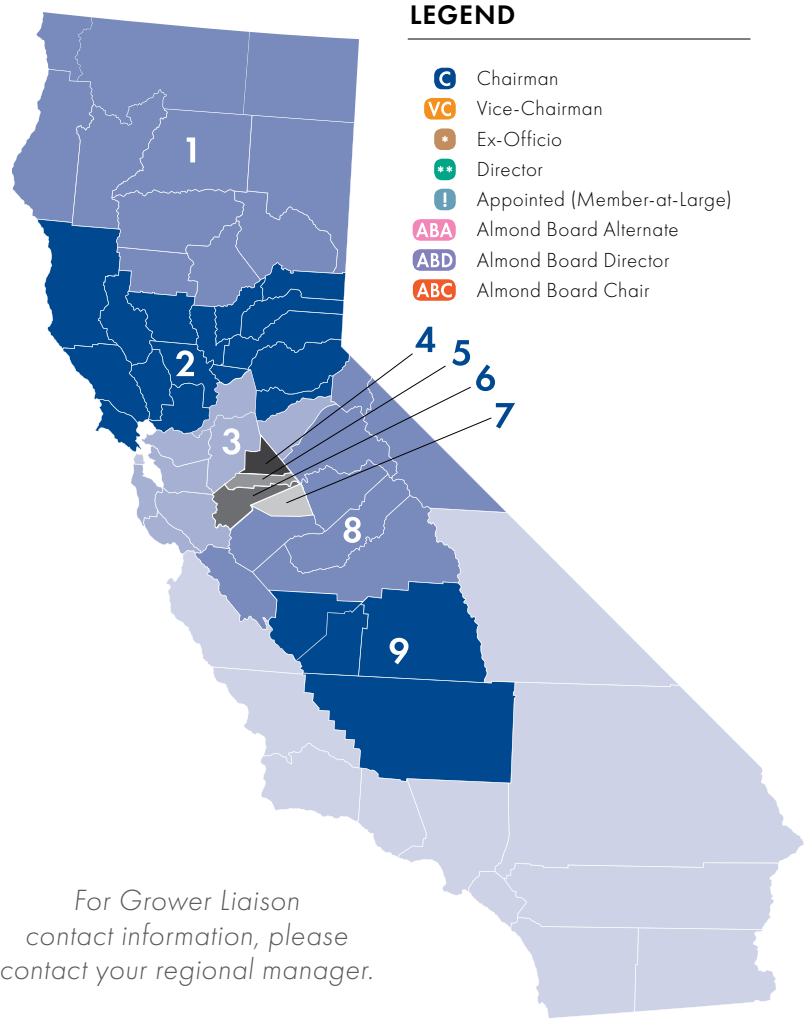
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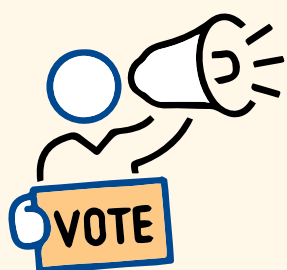
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Blue Diamond Growers Annual Meeting Voting What is a Proxy & Why is a Quorum Needed at Annual Meeting?

The Blue Diamond Annual Meeting is more than a luncheon or a social gathering; it is a required business meeting that is defined in the cooperative's bylaws. To be valid, a quorum of the membership must be present, either in person or by proxy. Since it is a business meeting, the quorum is required if a motion is made from the floor and a vote of the membership is called for.



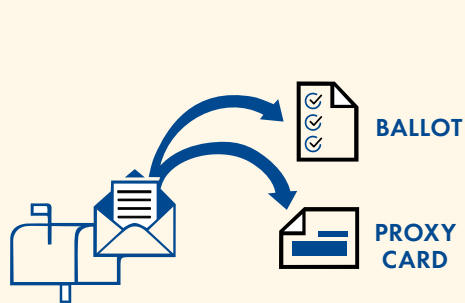
Annual General Election

It is time once again for the Blue Diamond annual general elections. This is a great opportunity for you to exercise one of your fundamental rights as a voting member to shape the future of your Blue Diamond Growers cooperative: electing members of the Board of Directors and Grower Liaison Committees. This year, you have the opportunity to vote for District Directors in districts 3, 5 and 7. You also have the opportunity to vote for Grower Liaisons in each of the nine districts. Ballots will be mailed the week of October 9 to voting members with Crop Agency Agreements. Voting will close on

November 3, 2023. Only ballots received by this date will be counted. Your vote matters! Be sure to submit your ballot in plenty of time so your vote is received before this deadline.

How to Vote

Like last year, there are three ways to vote: paper ballot, online, or by phone. Your election packet will include the paper ballot, return envelope and instructions for online and phone voting. This year, if you choose to vote by proxy, you will be able to return the Proxy Card by mail or assign a proxy online.



<p>1 PAPER</p>	<p>2 ONLINE</p>	<p>3 BY PHONE</p>
<p>1 PAPER</p>	<p>2 ONLINE</p>	

Like last year, you will be able to vote by paper ballot, online or by phone.

This year, you will be able to return the proxy card by mail or assign a proxy online.

Make Sure You Are Represented — Return the Proxy Card!

Not sure if you can attend the annual meeting? No problem! You may assign your vote to a proxy, another voting member, to vote on your behalf. This year, you will be able to return the Proxy Card by mail or assign a proxy online. Mail in your Proxy Card (separate from the ballot) and rest assured that you are being represented in the election and annual meeting, even if you can't directly participate. If you do decide to attend the meeting yourself, know that your presence always comes first. The Proxy Card is a backup plan for if you can't attend. ♦

SAVE THE DATE!



We want to hear from you!



Grower Annual Meeting Survey

113th

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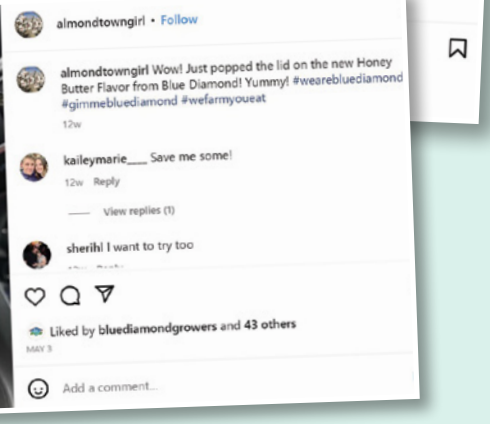
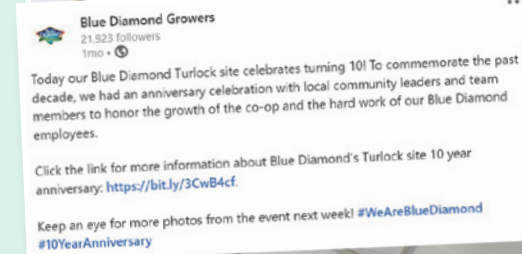
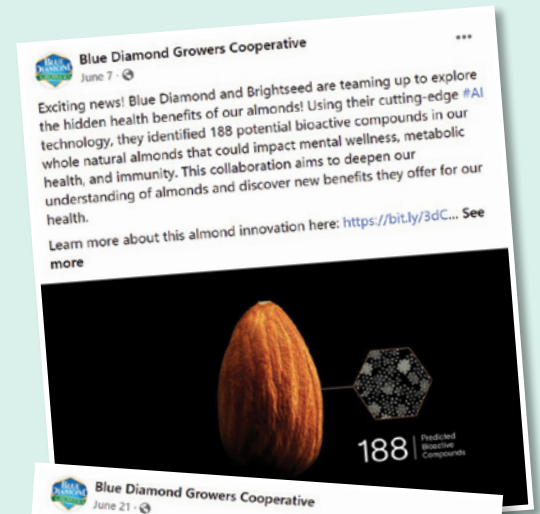
Blue Diamond Growers Meeting

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#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity



Blue Diamond has started the summer off strong! To kick off the summer season, we welcomed our 2023 summer interns. It's always an exciting time for us because this is an opportunity for us to work with our future leaders. We recognized Pollinator Week and the importance of pollinators for our growers and almonds. Blue Diamond partnered with Brightseed to help discover the hidden health benefits of our almonds using cutting-edge AI technology. We loved seeing our new Honey Butter flavor snack almonds being shared on some of our growers' social media profiles. We also hosted 30 members of the Membership Leader Program, where they learned more about the co-op's manufacturing, supply chain and marketing divisions, met with some of our board members and took a tour of our Salida facility. Last, but not least, our Turlock site celebrated its 10-year anniversary with employees, government officials and association representatives. ♦



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BLUE DIAMOND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

Current Investment Rates available as of August 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 August 1, 2023, for the program are listed here:

	Short-Term Investment Certificate (STIC)	Long-Term Investment Certificate (LTIC) (Maturity Date of 6/30/2026)
Initial Investment Required	\$1,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	6.25%	4.25%
	(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.

Baklava

Difficulty: Hard Servings: 24 *Recipe and image courtesy of the National Honey Board.*

Ingredients

- ½ pound sheets filo dough, frozen
- 2 cups blanched almonds, ground
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon rind, grated
- ¾ teaspoon cinnamon, ground
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted
- Almonds, sliced for garnish
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon rose water

Directions

For Baklava:

1. Thaw filo dough for 8 hours in the refrigerator, if frozen. Unfold sheets of filo dough so they lie flat. Cover with waxed paper, then a damp towel, to prevent them from drying out.
2. Preheat oven to 325°F.
3. In a medium-sized bowl combine ground almonds, sugar, lemon rind, and cinnamon. Generously butter an 8 to 9-inch-square pan.
4. Carefully fold two sheets of filo to fit pan; place in pan one at a time, brushing each with butter. Sprinkle about 3 tablespoons of the almond mixture over the top sheet. Fold one sheet of filo to fit pan; brush with butter. Sprinkle evenly with another 3 tablespoons of almond mixture.
5. Continue to add layers, using 1 folded sheet of filo, a generous brushing of butter, and 3 to 4 tablespoons almond mixture for each, until nut mixture is used up (there should be about 10 nut-filled layers).
6. Fold the remaining 2 to 3 sheets of filo to fit the pan. Place on top, brushing each with butter before adding the next.
7. With a very sharp knife, carefully cut diagonally across the pan to make small diamond shapes — about 1½-inches on a side — cutting all the way to the bottom of the pan.
8. Pour on any remaining butter.
9. Bake until golden brown (about 45 minutes).

For Honey and Rose Water Syrup (last four ingredients):

10. Combine sugar and the water in a 1½-quart saucepan; bring to a boil, stirring. Mix in honey and cook until syrup boils again. Remove from heat; mix in rose water.
11. Pour warm honey and rose water syrup over top.
12. Decorate each piece with an almond slice. Cool before serving.



Crispy Almond Fish Tacos with Homemade Almond Tortillas by Chef Amanda Freitag

Time: 60 minutes Difficulty: Medium Servings: up to 8

Ingredients

Fish Tacos:

- 2 cups red cabbage, shredded finely
- 3 limes, some juiced for 2 tablespoons and the rest cut into wedges
- 1½ teaspoons fine sea salt, divided
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons of your favorite hot sauce
- 1 pound of firm fish (mahi-mahi, cod, or grouper)
- ½ tablespoon smoked paprika
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- ½ cup *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour®
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup salsa verde (jarred or homemade)
- ¼ cup cilantro leaves
- Sliced jalapenos (*optional*)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Tortillas (*Almond Flour recipe included*)

Almond Flour Tortillas:

- 1 cup *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour®
- ¾ cup masa harina
- ¾ cup water

Directions

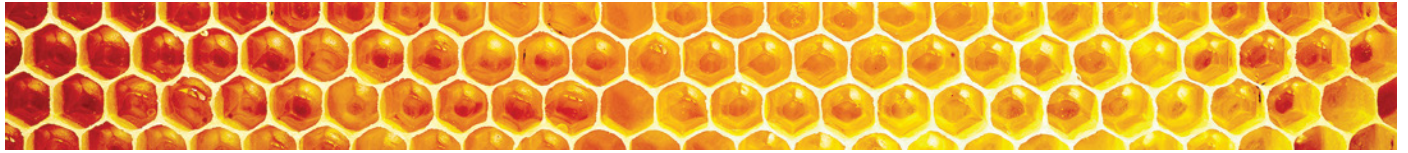
Fish Tacos:

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix the shredded cabbage with the two tablespoons of lime juice and season with a half teaspoon of salt. Massage the lime and salt into the cabbage and let marinate and wilt while preparing the fish.
2. For the sour cream, add a sprinkle of salt and pepper, a dash of your favorite hot sauce, and a quarter teaspoon of salt and mix to combine. Reserve.
3. Combine the paprika/chili powder with ¾ teaspoon of fine sea salt. Cut the fish into 1-inch thick finger size pieces. Sprinkle the seasoning over all of the fish.
4. In a medium bowl, crack open the egg and beat with the water. In a separate small baking dish, combine the almond flour, cornmeal, salt and pepper. Piece by piece, dip the fish fingers into the egg, shake off any excess and dredge in the flour/cornmeal mix until fully coated. Reserve on a plate.
5. Heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a medium sauté pan on medium high heat. Place the fish fingers in the pan and sear on one side without moving for 2-3 minutes. Turn and sear on all sides until the fish is cooked (7-10 minutes). Remove the fish from the pan to a clean plate to rest for 5 minutes.

Almond Flour Tortillas (*optional*):

6. In a medium bowl, combine the masa, almond flour and water. Using your hands mix them very well until a solid ball of dough is formed. Wrap with plastic wrap and let set in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
7. Divide the dough into 8 golf ball-sized balls. Using a tortilla press or rolling pin, flatten each dough ball into tortillas, 1/16-of an inch thick.
8. Heat a griddle on medium high heat and cook each tortilla for one minute, flip it over, and cook for one more minute. Remove the tortillas when ready and keep them warm, wrapped in aluminum foil until ready to assemble the tacos.
9. To assemble: place tortillas into a taco holder or on a plate, add a teaspoon of salsa verde, top with the fish, then chipotle cream. Then add cabbage and cilantro to finish. Serve each taco with a lime wedge for squeezing.



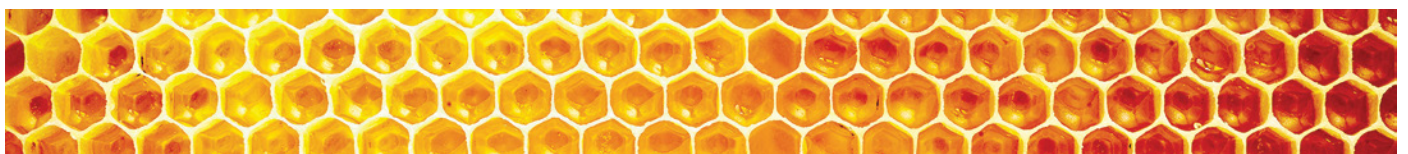


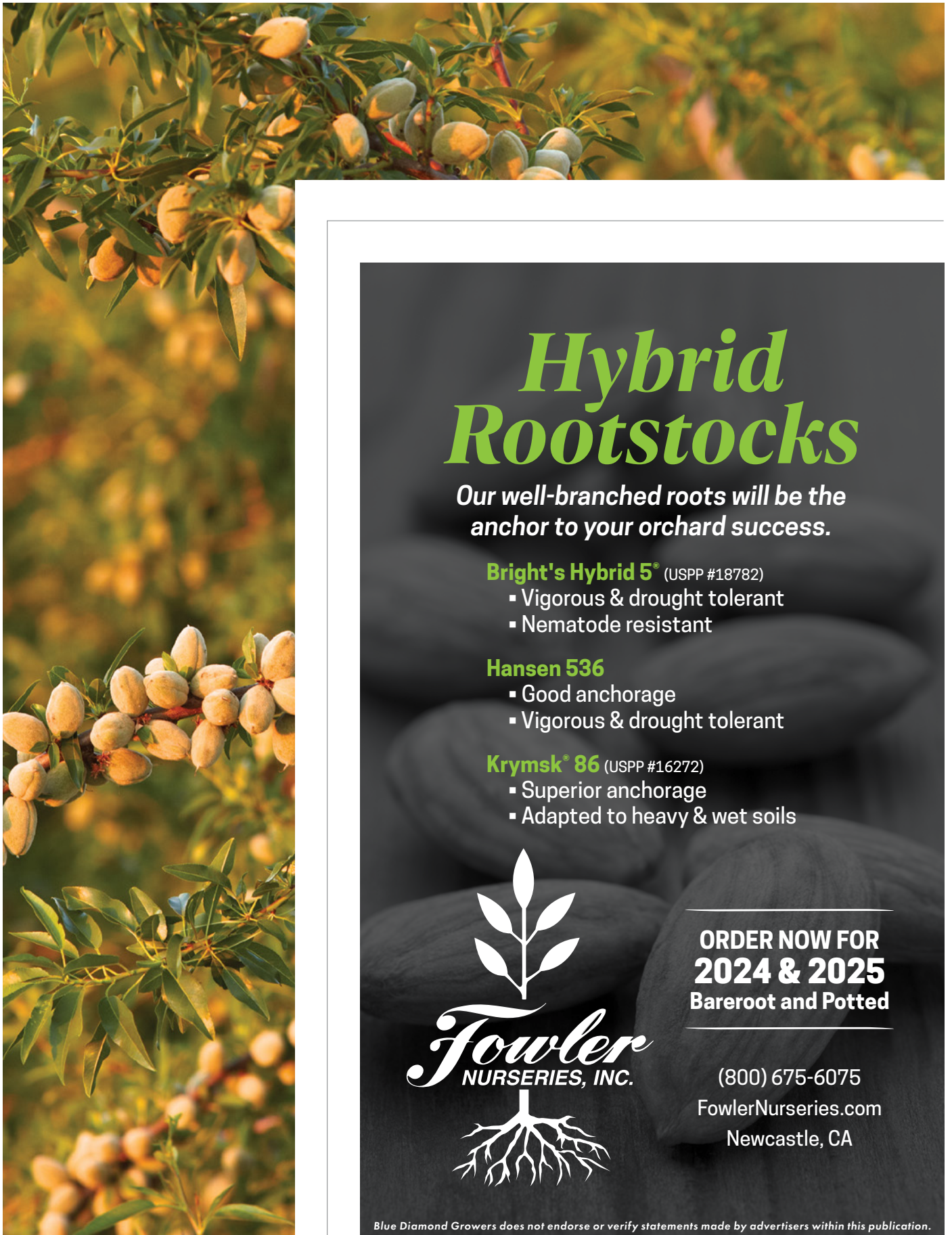
Blue Diamond's New Honey Butter Almonds Hitting Shelves for a Limited Time Only

As the 6-ounce can of Chilé 'n Lime finishes its six-month rotation to store shelves, *Blue Diamond Growers* is replacing it with an all-new flavor, also available for a limited time. For the next six months, Honey Butter Flavored Almonds are available at Walmart, the *Blue Diamond Nut & Gift Shops*, as well as through our online store at bluediamondstore.com. Inspired by the popular Korean Honey Butter Chips, these snack almonds boast a velvety smooth blend of honey and buttery flavor.

"We never stop innovating at *Blue Diamond*," said Maya Erwin, Vice President of Innovation and R&D, *Blue Diamond Growers*. "Honey Butter Almonds were proudly developed by *Blue Diamond's* R&D scientists to create the perfect flavor balance. Our goal is to ensure that our consumers never have to search outside our products to find every flavor category they crave. These snack almonds satisfy the sweet and salty flavor blend beloved by so many — but be sure to try them before they're swapped out for another exciting flavor!"

Honey Butter Almonds, available in the iconic, 6-ounce can, are high in antioxidant Vitamin E, have 5g protein per serving, and are ketogenic and kosher certified. ◆





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Blue Diamond, Turlock Celebrates 10 Years of Operations

This June, Blue Diamond's Turlock plant celebrated its tenth year of operation, a vital milestone for the youngest addition to the cooperative's manufacturing power. To mark the occasion, the Turlock facility hosted "Turlock Turns 10," an anniversary luncheon, where plant employees rubbed shoulders with elected officials and interns shook hands with senior board members. It was a colorful scene, with many of the roughly 175 attendees dressed in a wide variety of Blue Diamond shirts and hats.



In 2012, *Blue Diamond* broke ground on a plot of land in Turlock, CA, that would become the cooperative's single largest investment since its founding in 1910. At 255,000 square feet (nearly six acres), the Turlock plant is an impressive, state-of-the-art almond processing facility. The plant boasts a variety of processing lines, including production lines for almond flour and a substance known as "bev-base," a core ingredient in *Blue Diamond's* top-selling *Almond Breeze*®. As Turlock's site director, Travis Hill put it in his commemorative speech, "whether it's your favorite cereal, candy, or breakfast bar, if it has almonds, it likely came from Turlock."

Blue Diamond is committed to staying engaged with the local community, and the Turlock Turns 10 event was evidence of that commitment. Andrea Fragoza, the Department Lead for Environmental Health and Safety at the Turlock *Blue Diamond* facility, and a Master Sergeant



GROWING THE GOODNESS

in the Salvation Army led the luncheon attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance, after which Salvation Army Captain Jeff Breazeale led the luncheon in a meaningful invocation before lunch. The Salvation Army, a longtime social outreach partner of *Blue Diamond*, was not the only member of the Turlock community present. Other special guests included representatives from the City of Turlock and the Turlock City Council, from the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, and from the offices of Congressman John Duarte, Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil and Assemblymember Juan Alanis. Each congressional office took time to publicly recognize *Blue Diamond*, Turlock for its contributions to the Stanislaus County community and to California's economic success.

The Turlock Turns 10 event emphasized the tight-knit community that *Blue Diamond*, Turlock enjoys. In 2013, the

plant was manned by a team of 35 employees, a staff that has grown to over 160 employees. To celebrate the team members who were pivotal to *Blue Diamond*, Turlock's launch ten years ago, the luncheon featured video interviews with a group of ten-year Turlock employees. Through the interviews, attendees heard what drew these long-term employees to *Blue Diamond* and learned of their future plans and, of course, their favorite *Blue Diamond* products.

Blue Diamond, Turlock has received its fair share of recognition over the past ten years. In 2014, Food Engineering Magazine named Turlock the 2014 "Plant of the Year," following the plant's expansion to include the bev-base and almond flour lines. A few years later, in June 2021, *Blue Diamond*, Turlock was Green Business Certified by the Modesto Chamber of Commerce's California Green Business Network.

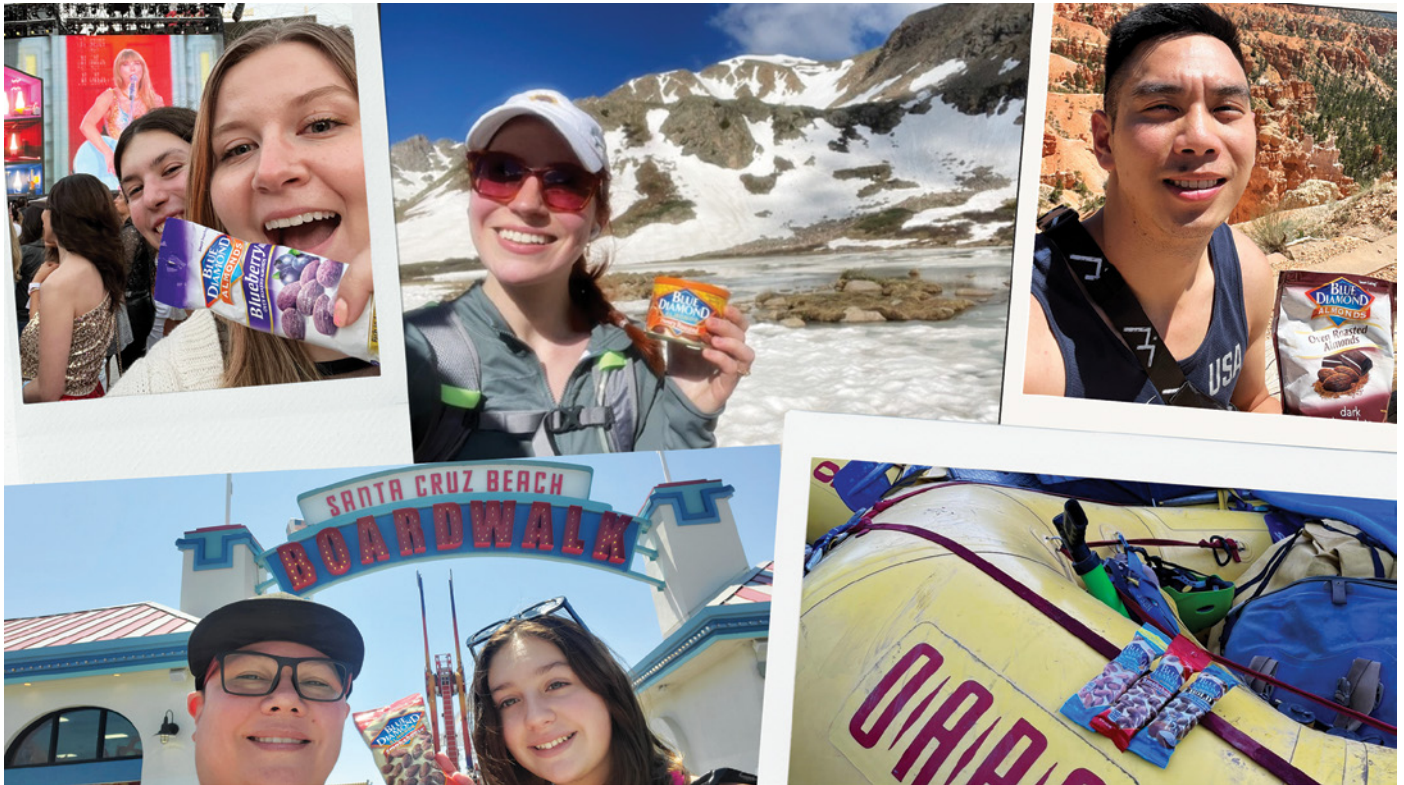


The Turlock plant's ten-year anniversary marks a major milestone in the co-op's history. In ten short years, Turlock's processing and manufacturing abilities have boosted *Blue Diamond*'s production abilities and have provided more opportunities for product development and sales boosts. We're looking forward to continued growth of the Turlock site and what the next ten years brings to *Blue Diamond*. ♦



Summer Selfie Snapshots

There's a lot of *Blue Diamond* pride throughout the co-op and employees love showcasing all the great products available. Summer vacations or staycations are the perfect time to show off our snack nuts, *Almond Breeze*® and *Nut-Thins*® in unique locations. So we challenged employees to make their summer a little more festive by showing us how they enjoy *Blue Diamond* while on their adventures. Whether it was snacking on *Smokehouse* next to the pool, wearing a *Blue Diamond* windbreaker while rafting down a Utah river, or even bringing a pack of *Blueberry* to an uber-popular pop concert, our *Blue Diamond* team had fun promoting our high-quality almonds and products all summer. Thank you to all the employees (and growers!) who represented our fantastic cooperative this summer! ♦



Meet *Blue Diamond's* 2023 Summer Interns!

This summer, Blue Diamond was joined by 16 college interns participating in a 12-week internship program. The Blue Diamond Intern Program creates a unique development experience through meaningful, project-based work, cohort group meetings, development sessions, team building events, field and site tours, and regular coaching.

We're excited to share that over the years, several of our interns have been hired as full-time *Blue Diamond* team members following their internship. That says a lot about the excellent caliber of our interns and the quality of their experience at *Blue Diamond*.

The 2023 class of interns will be integrated with our teams in Corporate Communications, Engineering, Finance, Government Affairs, IT, Logistics, Maintenance, Manufacturing, Marketing, Operations, Process Improvement, Procurement, Project Management, Supply Chain and Sustainability. They will gain valuable insight into the almond industry while learning new marketable skills and developing key relationships within their teams. We are pleased to have the following interns in our program this summer while they work on special projects:



Madison Bavaro, Texas A&M, Operations (Turlock). *Project: 5S of Maintenance Shop – 2 Tool Cabinets, Lean Practitioner Certification (Phase 1), and reducing spillage on the IBB line (same project, separate areas/lines).*

Yuval Braeman, UC Davis, Supply Chain (Sacramento). *Project: Corrugated displays and recommendations for improvement.*

Sam Davison, UC Davis, Procurement (Sacramento). *Project: Market Research: Agricultural Supply Companies, Bulk Ordering.*

Anthony Do, CSU Sacramento, Global Supply Tech. (Sacramento). *Project: Establishing a priority matrix and building a priority/project database.*

Mark Hanson, Brigham Young University, Project Engineering (Salida). *Project: MPL1 Grader Room Upgrade and the MPL HVAC Upgrade projects.*

Louis Heinzer, CSU Sacramento, FP&A (Sacramento). *Project: Bev Base Split Model, Forecast & Analysis.*

McKenzie Hoff, CSU Global Logistics (Sacramento). *Project: Aged product and reduce scrap, end of line product process tracker.*

Abegale Jones, University of Pittsburgh, Maintenance (Sacramento). Project: Identifying obsolete parts and updating the inventory management systems (iMaint/ SAP/ Zeus).

Beth Miller, UC Davis, Government Affairs (Sacramento). Project: Local advocacy projects, working cross-functionally with supply chain on a food donation project.

Envira Muran, UC Berkeley, Operations Excellence (Sacramento). Project: Reducing unplanned plan downtime on all lines/all sites and data analysis.

James Nguyen, UC Davis, Project Management (Sacramento). Project: Vendpak Automation – upgrade machines/communication card to allow for remote support; Review SOP documents to improve post audit.

Maria Rechdouni, UC Davis, Sustainability (Sacramento). Project: Pillars, establish/determine systems and processes that manage and validate data; Corporate Environmental Reporting; Community Giving Grants.

Jake Sonke, Covenant College, Corporate Communications (Sacramento). Project: Expand internal newsletter, social media coordination/page cohesion.

Yasmin Vasquez, CSU Stanislaus, Operations (Turlock). Project: 5S of Maintenance Shop – 2 Tool Cabinets, Lean Practitioner Certification (Phase 1); Reducing spillage on the IBB line (same project, separate areas/lines).

Grant Wiebe, California Poly SLO – Process Improvement (Salida). Project: Implementing brand digital platform (POKA) on operation floors of Main Processing Line and Manufacturing buildings.

Zachary Wong, San Jose State University, IT Projects (Sacramento). Project: Implementation of Klein LMS SSO; Development of Annual Cybersecurity Training. ♦

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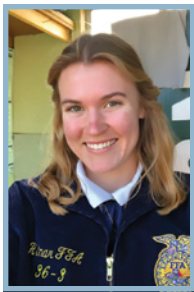
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25 Students Awarded *Blue Diamond Growers* Foundation Scholarship

To ensure the success of agriculture in the years to come, it will demand the dedication and hard work of the next generation. The Blue Diamond Growers Foundation selected 25 young people to receive a scholarship for the 2023–2024 academic year. The Foundation assists students who are passionate about making a difference in their communities and influencing the future of agriculture.

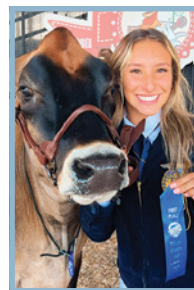
Meet this year's Blue Diamond Growers Foundation scholarship recipients and read excerpts from each of their essays where they described their goals for the future.



McKayla Aiken (Hilmar, CA)
Fall 2023 School: UC Davis
Major: Ag Development

I hope to become a missionary and work for a non-profit in Africa or Latin America to help developing communities learn sustainable farming techniques. I grew up in Tanzania, and love that culture and way of life, but many developing countries, like Tanzania, struggle to grow adequate crops to sustain their populations. I want to equip these developing countries with the knowledge and skills needed to adequately provide for their populations. I now live in California, so I see the constant struggles that farmers face in keeping up with the demands of a growing population. I want to help California's global ag market expand to benefit developing countries around the world.

and energy to give back to my community, making positive changes that will benefit my industry, my society, and the lives of people around me.



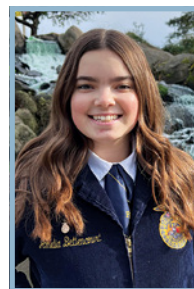
Madison Andrade (Visalia, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Agribusiness

After college, I plan to return to Tulare County and pursue a career as an ag economist, using the management skills I acquire in college to serve my county in various leadership roles. I want to come back to my hometown and help Tulare County achieve the rank of number one ag producer. I've been blessed to be surrounded by Tulare County's amazing dairy industry, and I want to effect positive change for others and for Tulare County as a whole.



Janessa Alba (Springville, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Agribusiness Management

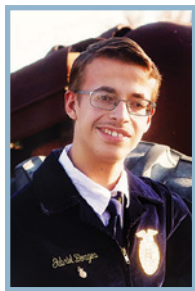
After I get my degree, I hope to work in sales and marketing for an Ag business, eventually working my way up to Administration/CEO. I want to continue growing my engagement and knowledge in community service and the ag industry, especially in the political process that surrounds our nation's ag needs. I want to be a leader, mentor, and advocate for my community and for the ag industry. I want to use my time



Amelia Bettencourt (Turlock, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Agribusiness

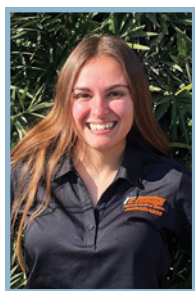
Once I complete my education, I plan to begin my career as a marketing analyst for an ag company, specifically marketing for the food industry. This interest stems from my work in high school involving food production, such as vegetable cultivation. I am also pursuing this career field because of my natural math abilities and love for critical thinking. With this career choice I'll have the opportunity to connect the

ag industry to the public. I feel that is important for people to know where their food comes from, so they can hopefully grow their appreciation of ag.



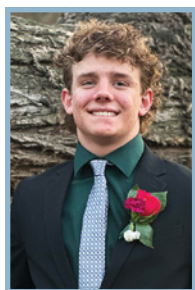
Gabriel Borges (Fresno, CA)
Fall 2023 School: CSU Fresno
Major: Horticulture

My goal for higher education is to combine my love for design and floral horticulture and to achieve a position in the floral industry. For me, bloom season is one of the most important stages of growth during a crop season. I would like to help California's ag industry continue to grow and to continue to be the best producer of ag commodities in the world. We need leaders to help create jobs for our society and I plan to be one of those leaders. My family has been involved in the ag industry for generations and has always had a positive influence on the ag industry. I believe I can do the same for California's ag community and for society in general.



Haylie Caetano (Riverdale, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Reedley College
Major: Plant and Soil Science

Ag feeds the world. Without it, we would all starve. I was raised in a small town in the heart of the Central Valley where there are more cows than people and my great-grandparents have owned a farming business for most of their lives, so I have had the opportunity to see first-hand what it's all about. I want to pursue a career in either farm management or in the sales aspect of the ag industry. The ag industry has so much to offer for people and I want to play a role in it. My knowledge will help farmers remain in business and will improve yield productivity.



Caleb Callison (Hanford, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Ag Systems Management

My dream career is to manufacture, modify, and troubleshoot ag equipment like tractors, semi-trucks, farm implements, and trailers. I have a passion for welding, fabrication and ag equipment, and I firmly believe that this college

and major will help me accomplish my goals and desires. Through my career, I can help build better machines for performing specialty ag purposes. I want to make different machines like harvesting equipment, sprayers, mowers, and more implements. I want to help with develop and design equipment to be more environmentally friendly and that is more efficient and effective for farmers.



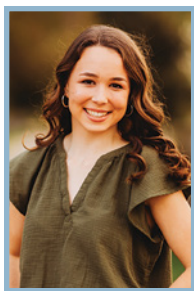
Avery Fowler (Wilton, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Corban University
Major: Ag Science

I have a passion for issues related to family-run farms and am often disheartened by the lack of government support in ensuring that family farm legacies can be continued, especially when facing intense economic hardships. I have decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in ag science to learn about various ag sectors. I want to use this education to analyze public policy and understand the government's impact on the ag sector. This will lead to a career in ag policy, where in the role of advisor, lobbyist, or lawyer, I can increase cooperative efforts between legislators and farmers, uniting them under a common goal: to provide food for a growing world population. I hope this will benefit society, creating better farming policies and practices to increase access to food and to boost the American economy.



Trista Fry (Kingsburg, CA)
Fall 2023 School: CSU Fresno or UC Davis
Major: Plant and Soil Science

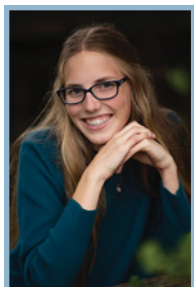
Plants, trees, soil and science fascinate me, and farming has been in my family for generations. I am especially astonished by genes. The fact that the whole code for our being is microscopically stored within cells that carry out the functions it has inscribed within it, without us even realizing, is mind-blowing. I think that there is untapped potential in studying DNA and genes. By learning more about plant genetics and DNA, I believe that I can help farmers continue farming more sustainably for generations to come. Learning how we can use technology to edit genes, making them more resistant to changing climates, pests, and diseases, will let us feed the world's growing population more sustainably.



Kaylen Jaime (Rancho Cordova, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Ag Communications

Over the past five years, I have competed at various public speaking competitions at the state level. During my time competing, I studied and collected farmers' stories, shared

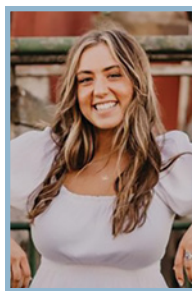
their kind smiles and walked through bits of their life. As I learned about the struggles and joys of the people who I interviewed, I developed a love for the ag community. This newfound love motivated me to share their stories with society and encouraged me to research careers as an ag lobbyist or a public relations specialist to help bridge the disconnect between the ag industry and its growing consumer population. With my college education, I want to contribute my growing knowledge of the ag industry toward a position that will help further my goal to educate consumers about the significance of ag in their daily lives.



Megan Kroon (Farmington, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Dordt University
Major: Agribusiness

As a student pursuing an ag degree, I am learning the value of a strong center to ag education. My educational intentions are simple; I am learning about the ag industry as it stands

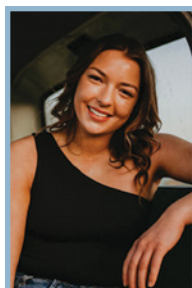
today and my own place in it. I plan to use my degree to serve others, and although I have yet to find a specific way of doing so, I know that a career in ag should always be centered around service. This mindset will benefit society, especially as science and technology make more advancements in our world that will affect the ag industry. My experience in California walnut and almond production has been one of the core reasons why I am pursuing this degree. With strong individuals helping produce the food supply of the world, our industry will grow as a whole, not only in how we see ourselves but also in how others view us and our practices.



Karli Lanzi (Artois, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Oklahoma State University
Major: Ag Education

I hope to become a high school Ag teacher. Coming from a small farming community, there is a great need for ag education. Through teaching, I can

directly impact the people who are the future leaders of our world and of our ag industry. Cultivating young adults and their leadership career and advocating the positive message surrounding ag are more ways I pursue my passions as a teacher. I hope to make the same positive impact on my future students, just like my Ag teachers did for me.



Meika Lauppe (Nicolaus, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Arizona State University
Major: Agribusiness

I have always had a passion for investing and finances, but I hate to see big corporations buy the farmland around us and hurt the ag industry.

Through agribusiness and real estate, I can help farmers and businesses learn to invest their money into the ag industry. This can include showing ag community members how to maximize their profits by buying a flying service, a new dryer for their commodity, expanding their farm, and more. The more I can drive the ag industry to invest its resources back into the same industry, the stronger the industry can become. Through my agribusiness major I want to understand the industry better and to continue to help strengthen and innovate an already successful industry.



Christina Moitozo (Gustine, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Oklahoma State University
Major: Ag Communications

I have a passion for ag and the dedicated, hard-working people involved with this industry. I grew up in Gustine, California, a small farming

community with row crops, orchards and dairy operations. This has allowed me to have a clear view to the benefits of ag, the hardships that exist and the people who work every day to produce food for our nation and world. My local 4-H club, FFA chapter and family farm operation educated me on the importance of this industry, but also the various challenges that our industry is faced with each day. As I began applying for college and deciding on a potential major to study, I wanted to address the challenges that ag faces with government officials and a general population who do not have an ag background and could view the industry negatively.



Kaylie Ramos (Fresno, CA)
Fall 2023 School: CSU Fresno
Major: Ag Education

My goal is to be an educator, teaching future generations about the importance and opportunities of the ag industry. I want to be a good example that current leaders in our

industry, my peers, my future students can be proud of, look up to and make an impact in their lives for the better. As the world advances, it seems that people do not understand the significance of farming, animal production and forest management. If we do not continue to increase awareness of the incredible benefits of the ag industry, we are doing an injustice to future generations.

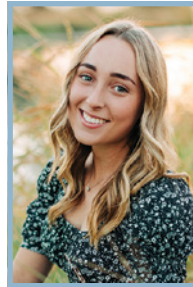


Reagan Richard (Visalia, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Agribusiness

I have a strong passion within the ag industry. Using my degree, I want to manage large corporation's finances, and guide them for useful loans. These businesses include dairies, farmers,

and packaging producers all over the state. As California

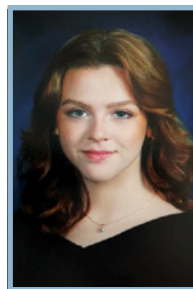
is one of the largest ag providers in the world, I want to help the companies that fuel the economy. The ag industry is highly under-appreciated, resulting in a lack of support for those who work in the ag world. My goal is to help these corporations feed America efficiently so that society will begin to thrive as they receive their food from successful farmers.



Holly Rudnick (Bakersfield, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Ag Communications

I understand the hard work that goes into raising livestock and how important it is to keep family ranches and farms for the next generation to enjoy. A major in Ag Communications will give

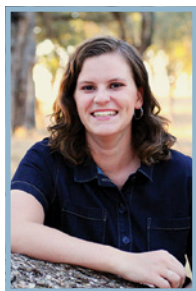
me the knowledge and skills to advocate for the ag industry and for family farms and ranches. I would like to expand positive messaging about the health benefits of our local ag commodities. I would also like to focus on the legacy of what ranching and farming means to our local economy and to the world's food supply. I want to write for ag magazines, newsletters, government agencies and social media platforms. I also want to give back to my community by educating children about the importance our local ag has in our world. Ag is very important to me because it reflects my passions and achievements. It has taught me about hard work and responsibility, and it brings me joy to bring healthy food to our tables. I am looking forward to a bright future for not only myself but for the next generation.



Kelsey Solimine (Modesto, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Agribusiness

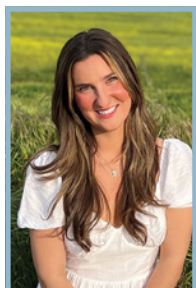
Marketing is an extremely important aspect within the ag business because it determines where and how ag products are shipped or advertised and ensures that certain areas are

provided with the correct farm and food supplies where needed. Ag marketing can also impact the income of farmers, and when it done correctly, it can lead to an increased income for farmers, and better prices for ag products. With the building of my leadership skills, along with my education at Cal Poly SLO, I want to make a positive impact in this area.



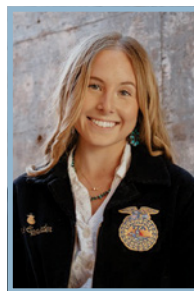
Emily Sonke (Roseville, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Covenant College
Major: History

I am pursuing a career as an archivist in a corporate or museum setting. I want to make art and history available to the public so that everyone can learn more about culture from art, records, furniture, or other historical objects. History is relevant to all people and has so much to tell us about who we are. I am passionate about protecting art and artifacts from those who would wish to harm it through destruction, theft, or forgery. The job of the archivist is to make sure people don't forget what came before them. Archiving helps us remember what is important to us and to celebrate accomplishments. It also serves as inspiration because new ideas are built on old ideas.



Alyssa Sozinho (Visalia, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Ag Education

My parents do not have a disposable income to pay for me to go to college, so I will be working to put myself through college. I am heavily involved in leadership positions at school and at church, and hard work and dedication are important concepts to me. After I graduate, I plan to come back to the Central Valley as a teacher. I feel blessed to have grown up around the ag industry and I want to show my future students the importance of the ag world. Through hard work and education, it is important that I give back to my community after I graduate.



Julie Sporleder (Acampo, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Cal Poly, SLO
Major: Plant and Soil Science

My long-term goal is to own a wine label and business so I can serve my community as a local winemaker. I want to implement support for the future of our ag industry, just like others have done for me. I wish to build relationships with ag producers and work alongside them to produce quality wines. I have also witnessed the benefits of support from ag businesses that help students attend leadership conferences within the FFA. As an ag producer, I hope to donate to students in these organizations to provide students with the experiences that I am grateful to have had.



Cade Stafford (Live Oak, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Oklahoma State University
Major: Agribusiness

Young farmers in California are a dying breed. Our state needs more people seek a career in the production ag industry to preserve our way of life and keep California the largest farming state in the country. I plan to continue farming and grow my company while in college pursuing my degrees. I hope to become a Certified Pest Control Advisor after college, and I have considered continuing my education afterward by attending law school. Within our community, I see the number of children that have no interest in the future of California ag, and it is quite concerning. I believe staying active in organizations like 4-H and FFA has allowed me to be an influence on my peers as well as younger children who might also pursue a career in the ag industry. All it takes is one good mentor, one good experience, or even one good story and you are hooked for life.



Mallory Sutherland (Bakersfield, CA)
Fall 2023 School: CSU Fresno
Major: Agribusiness

Ag education sparked my interest in serving others as a leader. The tight-knit community of the California ag industry works together as a team to deliver food to the tables of families across the

globe. Advocacy is crucial for the ag industry to flourish in today's society. As an advocate, I can give insight to those who are misinformed on ag issues. I will be one of the advocates who, one day at a time, helps the world realize that the ag industry is essential in life. Creating a world that is ag literate makes the world a better place.



Gianna Vaccarezza (Linden, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Auburn University
Major: Agribusiness

I am pursuing a career in ag because I want to give back to my community. I was raised in a large ag town and my family have been in the farming industry for generations. My interests are with

the law and policy, as well as ag, so I decided to combine them and enter ag law. If I can help secure more water for Northern California farms, I think farmers would benefit and I would be able to give back to the community that raised me.



Erika VanderMaarl (Visalia, CA)
Fall 2023 School: Texas Tech University
Major: Agribusiness

I plan to pursue a career in ag real estate, where I will be able to efficiently communicate with clients while being the middleman. I want to build close,

trusting relationships with clients, both inside and outside the business world. Building these relationships will allow clients to trust me to make the right decisions. I want to build up communities with farmland to give people more jobs and opportunities to succeed in life. All people in the community will benefit from these business deals, and I believe that I will be able to accomplish these things in any community. ♦

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Kelli Evans: Grower, Advocate & Mother

This year, the Almond Alliance of California recognized Kelli Evans as the 2023 “Member of the Year.” Evans is a third generation California farmer and an advocate who works to give California growers a voice in state and national legislatures. Some of her most recent work helped to secure a new \$2 million grant for a new Pollinator Habitat program, funds that help farmers implement new practices that protect native pollinators and grow healthier crops.

Kelli Evans wears a lot of hats: farmer, wife, grant writer, mother, business owner...the list goes on and on. But to California almond growers, one particular title stands out: advocate. Evans’ work as an advocate began when she started applying for grants for her own farm. As she jumped through many hoops to meet the expectations of agricultural grants, Evans realized that the requirements for agricultural grants were not only confusing to farmers but were sometimes unrealistic when compared to the reality of farming operations. When we chatted with her in June, Evans noted that no two farming operations are identical. As she put it, “The dynamic of how [farms are] run through the family is different. Having that understanding makes a difference.” As she went through the process herself, Evans began helping friends and neighbors write their own grants, an effort that quickly evolved into Evans Ag Consulting, Inc., where Evans helps farmers across California know what grant programs are available to them and how to apply. Evans’ own extensive farming background helps her understand different growers’ operations and fit growers into grant requirements she sometimes describes as “cookie-cutter.” Evans explained, “with most of these grants, you have someone sitting behind a desk who doesn’t have anything to do with agriculture and they think everything’s very cookie-cutter, but farming operations are not cookie-cutter.”

After a trip to Washington, D.C., with *Blue Diamond* representatives, Evans began to recognize the value of having a voice in government. “It made me realize that our voice is very powerful as growers...It’s way more impactful being able to tell our own story.” Evans noticed that when farmers spoke directly with congressional representatives,

the farmers’ voices had a significant impact on the elected officials. Evans noted that while *Blue Diamond*’s government affairs team is highly effective, officials are particularly interested in hearing stories and experiences from farmers themselves.

Evans’ role as a voice for farmers doesn’t end with *Blue Diamond*. Evans chairs the newly formed Almond Alliance Grower Committee, a committee specifically designed to represent farmers. Because the Almond Alliance represents the entire almond industry, Evans can directly voice the everyday needs of the farmers to congressional representatives and other government officials. This kind of advocacy is reflected in programs like the LandFlex Grant Program, which, as Evans noted, gives farmers more control over their properties. “LandFlex is huge, right,” said Evans, “[It] gets us money so that we can choose to pull an orchard,



leave it out for a year or two, and get paid for it." Because she understands the complexity of California farms, Evans has a vital understanding when explaining to lawmakers how farms and farmer needs differ from one another.

Kelli Evans was recently selected to serve on the Almond Board of California, where she hopes to give growers a more equal voice alongside huller-sheller advocates. Evans encourages other farmers to share their needs and opinions with the Almond Board as well. "Get on a committee. If anyone is interested, they need to reach out to Mel [Machado] and get on the list. We're always looking for committee members from *Blue Diamond*." Almond Board sessions are open meetings, and Evans encourages growers to attend. "You can't vote, but you can sit in [on the meeting] and give your opinion." Evans is proud to have started "at the bottom" as a farmer, working her way through different committees until finally coming to sit on the Almond Board. "I could have skipped some of those steps, but I feel much more powerful when I talk because I understand so many levels of [the Almond Board]."

Between her work in grant writing, farmer advocacy through *Blue Diamond* and the Almond Alliance and her work on the Almond Board, Kelli Evans dedicates serious time to family as well. Evans' husband, Tim, is their orchard foreman, often allowing him to be home taking care of their two children. Evans also complimented her own team, saying, "We have a pretty big team that helps me, which frees up a lot of time for me to be able to get away from the farm and into different roles." Evans has been very clear with her children that they can choose whatever career they want. No matter what field Evans' children enter, she says that "they [shouldn't] be afraid to speak up when they need to and should always strive to be leaders." Evans is committed to being a solid role model for her children, showing them that certain commitments or sacrifices are worth making for the betterment of everyone.

As she advocates for California growers' needs, Kelli Evans encourages almond growers to get involved in the Almond Alliance, in *Blue Diamond* and in the Almond Board. "More people helping would be wonderful. Our voices are very powerful when we join together. If you're not happy with something, get involved. If you're not happy with the direction of *Blue Diamond*, the Almond Alliance, or the Almond Board, you have to speak up. We must join together for the better good." ♦



Jake Sonke,
Corporate Communications Intern,
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From Budgets to Tariff Relief: All Things Washington, D.C.

1. Legislative News from Capitol Hill

Speaker Kevin McCarthy reached a deal with the President and passed a budget deal to raise the debt limit and avoid a U.S. default on its debt payments. Now the Speaker must get the appropriations bills passed to fund the government before the money runs out at the end of September. If this is not done, there will have to be a short-term continuing resolution to fund the government. The House and Senate must pass the necessary appropriations bills: if the content differs between them, they will have to go into Conference to resolve differences. Needless to say, this will all take a lot of time.

As the budget work grinds on, the Senate and House continue working to pass a new farm bill. However, since 1990, no Farm Bill has passed except in an election year. This Farm Bill may not be an exception.

Of particular importance in the new Farm Bill is obtaining a doubling of the Market Access Program (MAP) funding from \$200 million to \$400 million. This will provide agricultural exporters increased assistance to advance agriculture exports worldwide. In addition, there is a serious effort to increase the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limit to allow specialty crop producers to participate in these programs including almond farmers.

There are now multiple announced Presidential candidates for the 2024 election in both the Republican and Democratic parties. The primary dates vary by state, and all will occur next year. While the press is currently reporting on national polls, remember that these polls do not provide much real information as the voting is on a state-by-state basis. Polling by state provides more accurate information as to how each candidate is really doing.

The Democrats are working hard to maintain their majority in the Senate, which may prove difficult. The Republicans are working just as hard to maintain their majority in the House. This also may be hard to do. The outcome of the presidential election as well as voter turnout will have an impact on both the House and Senate.

2. Environmental News in California

Congress continues to consider legislation to help California with water storage and other water saving provisions. While the current water situation is improved, there is still a need for increased storage. The Supreme Court decision on the EPA rule on the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) will prove to be helpful. This overturned the bad EPA rule.

3. Global Trade News

There was some much-needed good news on the trade front for almonds. The extra duty imposed by India on almonds in retaliation for the duties imposed by President Trump have now been removed. This will help increase California almond exports to India and will benefit *Blue Diamond's* customers.

Despite the positive news from India, frustration continues as the Administration avoids entering into new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). There are several countries that would like to obtain an FTA with the US. The most important among these is the United Kingdom, which could easily be accomplished. India also has asked for an FTA, but it is not being considered.

The Administration is working on several regional agreements, but these agreements are not focused on reducing tariffs and do not contain provisions for legal enforcement. These often include labor standards and climate provisions. One is the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which covers 13 Pacific Rim Countries. This agreement is separate from the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Agreement (APEC), which the Department of Commerce is leading instead of the United States Trade Representative. Both are being worked on at the same time. Another is the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, which covers North, Central and South America.

The geo-political landscape remains uncertain as political relations with China continue to deteriorate. This is in part due to the United States' decision to increase its trade and military support of Taiwan. Additionally, both the Administration and Congress are considering new restrictions on China doing business in the United States. This action will only escalate existing tensions.

Increased tensions in the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and continued conflict in Ukraine all have the possibility of interrupting trade at any moment as these geographical areas. These

geographical areas encompass very important almond markets and cover important trade routes.

4. Regulatory News for the Almond Industry

There was positive regulatory news for almonds recently. FDA has now published regulations allowing the use of the word "milk" on plant-based products including almond milk. This has been difficult to obtain and is being strenuously opposed by the dairy industry. The dairy industry will try to obtain a change in this regulation in either the Farm Bill or in an appropriations bill. ◆



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Updates from the *Blue Diamond Growers* Sustainability Team

It is a busy summer for everyone at the Blue Diamond headquarters in Sacramento. Strategic planning activities for the Board of Directors and our new CEO are urging the company on to new heights by investing in both sales growth opportunities and cost savings from efficiency improvements. The sustainability team is no exception. Here are a few of the things our team has been working on:

USDA Climate-Smart Farming Grant

By the time this article reaches you, announcements should have gone out about the launch of the USDA Climate-Smart Farming Grant program. As previously reported here, *Blue Diamond Growers* was awarded a USDA grant for up to \$45 million to support climate smart activities in your orchards over the next five years. This grant will provide funding

to our *Blue Diamond* Members, or those who farm *Blue Diamond* orchards, to implement specific conservation practices in the orchard. We also have shared previously that we have been patiently waiting for the go-ahead from the USDA to begin work on farms.

We are now happy to report that the program is opening to our growers this summer to implement one or both of the following practices:

- Annual Cover Crops
- Conservation Planting (i.e., bee pasture/permanent cover near the orchard or on fallow/idle land)

Unfortunately, due to on-going challenges resulting from the USDA review, we are forced to delay the launch of Whole Orchard Recycling and Hedgerow plantings until we receive more guidance and information. As this is being written, we are actively exploring options. Your Member Relations team will share updates as soon as we are able.

Given the size and complexity of the grant, we are treating the rollout of this first year as a pilot to learn what works well and where there's opportunity for improvement in the following years. As such, you can expect the application process and some of the requirements to change in future years. I want to especially thank Kabir Tumber, Sr. Manager, Membership Development & Sustainable Agriculture, Jasdeep Bains, Stewardship Specialist, and Erik Stanek, Sustainability Specialist, for all their hard work in setting up this program.



Cover crop in member orchard, Sacramento Valley, 2022

In addition to helping our members adopt these practices, grant funds will also be devoted to connecting these climate-smart practices to customers to enhance sales for the cooperative. The goal is to create a market premium to benefit your farm far beyond the life of the grant.

Customer Partnerships

We are actively pursuing ways to educate current and potential customers about the grant project to drive sales and increase customer loyalty. As was mentioned in the last Almond Facts issue, a few of us visited sustainability-minded customers in Europe this spring to share with them our journey and our plans through the grant. Often the focus on sustainability was able to attract sustainability staff and innovation teams into meetings, rather than just procurement officers. We see our program as a way to increase customers' perception of *Blue Diamond* as a valued supplier. Two of the customers we visited have a joint research project and have already asked us to sign on to explore biodiversity in their supply chains. The grant

is a way to show that *Blue Diamond* almond orchards can benefit local biodiversity and pollinators; investing in this relationship helps keep customers coming back for more.

Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program

Your entire Member Relations team deserves a big thanks as well, as they have all invested enormous effort into the annual Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP) this year. Through their efforts, you may already know that OSIP pays members a higher price per pound of almond for participation in the California Almond Stewardship Platform (CASP) from the Almond Board of California. Even more incentive can be earned for also using the Cool Farm Tool carbon footprint calculator and getting Bee Friendly Farming Certified.

In the 2021 crop year, participation in OSIP involved an impressive forty percent of all *Blue Diamond* acres. For the crop year 2022, now ending, the team set a goal of fifty percent of all member acres. As of this writing, the final



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Ben Goudie, Director of Member Relations, in Conservation Planting, Sacramento Valley, 2022

participation numbers for crop year 2022 are still being tallied. However, the team is confident that they have exceeded that goal. Final numbers will be shared at our annual meeting, but we look forward to telling customers and other key stakeholders that most of our acres take part in our sustainable agriculture program.

Manufacturing Sustainability

While we've been launching programs for orchards, we also are seeking sustainability opportunities in our manufacturing sites. We recently partnered with a large international energy consulting firm to educate our sustainability and manufacturing teams about different options for supplying or crediting renewable energy to

our sites. Renewable energy options today go beyond things like solar panels, now they include options like investments in Renewable Energy Credits or Virtual Power Purchase Agreements. As you might expect, these types of projects often have longer payback periods than we'd like, especially in the current almond market, so we're continuing research to uncover ways to bring that into reach. Thanks to Geoff Pyka, Environmental Manager, and Kate Capurso, Sustainability Manager, for their hard work in launching that effort. Geoff also has invested years of working with folks like Cindy Woodruff, Operations Coordinator, and Anthony Putman, Sanitation Technician Lead, who voluntarily spearhead sustainability efforts at our Turlock and Salida facilities, respectively. Their teams have been instrumental in creating projects which increase recycling and reduce waste for the company. In fact, several materials, such as hull bits, shell fragments, and blanched skins, either used to cost us money to dispose of or were simply given away. These materials are now sold to companies that recycle them or put them to beneficial use. We are always excited to find ways to drive sustainability while also increasing our returns to our members, so we are thankful for their leadership.

Annual Meeting

We are planning to update you on these and other topics at the annual meeting on November 15, 2023. Details will be communicated through various media. Please plan to attend the event. I hope to meet many of you there. ♦



**Dr. Dan Sonke,
Director of Sustainability,
Blue Diamond Growers**

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Sow What?

Although they aren't a new technique, cover crops are becoming a more widely used practice in farming and cropping systems across the United States. There are more resources than ever before to help farmers apply the extensive benefits of cover crops to their fields. If you are new to cover cropping, it may seem like there are a lot of factors to consider. Whether you want to improve the quality of your soil, expand the sustainability goals for your orchard or get the most out of your hive rentals, cover crops are a great tool to consider. This article provides some information on cover crop seed mixes and how to select a cover crop that targets your orchard's specific issues.

The Seeds for Bees program provides growers and orchardists in California with free or subsidized cover crop seed. This program offers six different mixes, each designed to increase honeybee health and address common concerns in almond orchards. Some of these benefits include suppressing weeds, increasing water infiltration and reducing erosion. Certain varieties of cover crops fix nitrogen, helps suppress nematodes, and boost natural enemy populations. Some farmers have even reported a reduction in fertilizer and pesticide applications since implementing cover crops.¹ Depending on what areas of production you want to target, there's a cover crop for that!

Here, we break down some of the seed mixes provided by the Seeds for Bees program by benefit and targeted applications.

Nematode Suppression

Cover cropping with brassicas can aid in reducing nematode populations; this is due to a chemical that is toxic to nematodes that is released by the plants as they decompose.² Choosing a mix that includes brassicas such as mustards is an effective method to add supplemental support to your current pest management strategy.

Seeds for Bees Pollinator Brassica mix is comprised of three varieties of mustard, a variety of canola and a daikon radish, making it a good option if nematode suppression is a goal on your farm.



Brassicas, once reincorporated into the soil, can be used to manage nematode pests. Their bright, yellow flowers bloom early in the season, providing early forage for rented colonies. Photo credit: Project Apis m.

Reducing Soil Compaction

Different root systems have different impacts on the soil; planting a seed mix with diverse vegetation can help to target compaction throughout the soil profile. Grasses have fibrous roots that grow web-like root networks that break up topsoil compaction and grow into deeper layers to tackle deep compaction. Plants with taproots, such as daikon radish, grow a single, large root that can "drill" into the soil,

with some able to penetrate up to six feet deep!³ Both root systems are great at breaking up compaction, with some systems able to infiltrate even the toughest soils.

Seeds for Bees offers several mixes that include a mix of these compaction-busting crops. If addressing soil compaction is a management priority for you, the **Pollinator Brassica**, **NitroBuilder** and **BioBuild3** mixes all have a dependable array of root systems to address soil compaction in your orchard.

Reducing Erosion/Run-off and Increasing Water Infiltration

Cover crops that provide good ground cover and active roots, stabilize soil and help improve water infiltration, reducing surface run-off and preventing erosion. Seed mixes with varieties that contain deep taproots create channels in the soil that support water infiltration, while a mixture of fibrous roots, like those from grasses, are well-suited to minimizing soil movement off the field.⁴

With a mix of vetch, triticale, and daikon radish, Seeds for Bees' **NitroBuilder** mix is a great choice to tackle erosion in your orchard. This mixture of grasses, legumes and brassicas provide a diverse underground root network specifically suited to reducing erosion.

Increasing Nitrogen Availability in Soil

Legume mixes are a popular choice for their ability to fix nitrogen into the soil. This symbiotic process allows legumes to fix atmospheric nitrogen in a form that is more readily available for crop uptake. Cultivating legume cover crops can help supplement fertilizer applications.

Seeds for Bees has several options for nitrogen fixation that can work well for your orchard. The **NitroBuilder** mix contains vetch, triticale and daikon radish. Research suggests that a successful stand of vetch can fix



Bulky daikon radish roots penetrate deep into soil, breaking up compaction and creating large pores that allow increased water infiltration. Credit: Project Apis m.

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Cover crops on the right side of the road help reduce standing water and run-off by increasing infiltration into the soil. Photo credit: Project Apis m.

up to 100 lbs. of nitrogen per acre. Another option is the **Annual Clover mix**, a low growing and easy-to-manage groundcover that can fix up to 80 lbs. of nitrogen per acre in optimal growing conditions.

Adding Soil Organic Matter to Your Soil

The addition of any crop cover will introduce added sources of biomass into your soil. Planting cover crops and incorporating them into your soil increases soil organic matter (SOM). SOM allows your soil to hold more nutrients, increase water holding capacity and can improve soil structure and overall soil health.

Most Seeds for Bees cover crops can contribute a significant amount of biomass, which can increase SOM. Most of their seed mixes contain some blend of different seed varieties, typically in the grain, legume or brassica category. Almost all Seeds for Bees mixes are a great option if you want to target your SOM, with the exception of the Annual Clover mix, which is designed to be less hardy than other mixes. The **BioBuild3** mix is an abundant mix of two varieties of peas, four varieties of brassicas and triticale. Planted at a heavy seeding rate, **BioBuild3** is designed to increase biomass, biological activity and biodiversity. While **BioBuild3** is a great option for adding soil organic matter, it can require more management considerations.

Best Return On Investment for Rented Hives

Of course, as the name suggests, all Seeds for Bees mixes are designed with pollinator and hive health in mind! Seeds for Bees encourages the use of cover crops to increase the density, diversity and duration of bee forage in California working lands while also improving soil health and crop production. Adding a cover crop provides a diverse food source for bees, keeping them in your orchard and boosting hive productivity, which can help maximize your return on investment for your hive rentals. Some beekeepers will even reduce rental fees for growers that provide blooming cover crops.⁵

There are many options and considerations to selecting the cover crop that's right for you. Having a basic understanding of a mix's components and essential functions can guide you toward making a more informed decision. Strategically selecting a cover crop mix can be used to stack multiple functions, manage multiple goals at once and maximize the return on your investment.

For a full list of Seeds for Bees' cover crop mixes, and more information on water requirements and planting guides visit Seeds for Bees website at projectapism.org.

The Seeds for Bee's team at Project Apis m. provide **free seeds** and technical support to choose the cover crop that is right for your orchard. Apply today at projectapism.org/seeds-for-bees. ◆

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A healthy stand of the Seeds for Bees Clover Mix cover crop in an orchard. Clovers are legumes: plants that fix nitrogen in the soil. Credit: Project Apis m.



Both the roots below the soil and green biomass above ground break down after crop termination and contribute to organic matter inputs in the soil. Photo credit: Project Apis m.

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THE ALMOND BOARD

Pending Endangered Listings: What Growers Need to Know

As many almond growers have added pollinator forage to their properties, two pollinator species are pending addition to the endangered species list, a decision with major implications for farmers. Dr. Josette Lewis, Almond Board of California (ABC) chief scientific officer, said that 2023 will be a decisive year for the endangered listing of the monarch butterfly and native bees in California, which leads to questions for growers. Lewis took some time to sit down with the Almond Board and discuss potential protections for growers who are already working to protect pollinators.

Almond Board: What is the status of the monarch butterfly being listed as an endangered species?

Dr. Josette Lewis: A couple of years ago, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made the decision that monarch butterflies were warranted as an endangered species, but they had other priorities at the time. So, while it was not going to be listed, they are required by law to revisit that decision by the end of this calendar year.

AB: If they are listed as endangered, what does that mean for almond growers?

JL: It means a couple of things:

The first is that a lot of almond growers have stepped up and added pollinator forage, flower resources and habitat to their farms and land around their farms. We've seen a great response in terms of the number of growers who have registered as Bee Friendly Farms (BFF), who are putting in flowering cover crops and working with organizations like Monarch Joint Venture to specifically put in monarch habitat around their ranches. Several handlers are working with growers on pollinator habitat as well, as it has value to some almond buyers.

For those growers who have stepped up, we want to make sure that they are protected if the monarch is listed as an endangered species. So, if they accidentally harm the caterpillars or the butterflies themselves, we want to make sure that they are not breaking the law because they've done such a good job of adding that forage into their operation.

The other issue, on an industry level, is that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who must approve every crop protection product our industry can use. It was mandated by law to increase their review of the potential negative impacts of pesticides on endangered species.

We know that if the monarch is listed, some of the products we use when they come up for re-registration, or any new products that are developed and need to be registered, will have extra scrutiny for their potential impact and could involve more restrictions on the use of those products.

AB: So, it sounds like there could be legal concerns for growers and a bigger concern of more regulation on certain products if the monarch gets listed as endangered.



If pollinators that are found in almond orchards are given endangered species listings, ABC has partnered with other organizations to outline protection for growers who are using cover crops.

What is ABC doing to address these two concerns?

JL: We've been working with the Almond Alliance of California, other California agricultural interest groups, and some conservation groups who have been valuable partners of the California almond industry to negotiate a conservation agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that would protect growers who have monarch habitat if they accidentally harm any of those monarch butterflies or larvae.

In those agreements, we have to show that there's a net benefit to the pollinators. Things like adding flowers and habitat for monarch butterflies, and in exchange for doing those good things, in this agreement you're then protected if you accidentally harm monarchs.

Also, as part of those negotiations, we are including practices that reduce risks of crop protection products and are working to demonstrate that we can use those safely and still have a net benefit to monarch butterflies.

AB: "Net benefit" seems like the important term in this conversation. ABC grower-funded research has already been completed in this realm and showed pollinator gains from increased habitat outweighs the risk. Can you explain that?

JL: That's right. ABC funded research with a native bee expert at UC Davis, which was published last year. That research showed that when farmers add floral strips, such as wildflower strips, part of a hedge row or just wildflowers

near the outside the orchard, the added food for native bees helps protect those bees from the impacts of pesticide exposure. So, there is a net benefit to those native bees.

This research provides quality, peer-reviewed and data-based evidence that shows these kinds of activities we have seen many growers in our industry do have a net benefit.

AB: ABC and partners are already addressing these concerns, which is good because more and more growers and handlers are utilizing this practice, right?

JL: A lot of growers have been looking at cover crop and adding that into their orchard management. This year in particular, I heard a grower who planted cover crops talk about how the water didn't stay standing in their orchards back in early spring when we had so much rain, rather than the water infiltrated and drained much more quickly.

There are agronomic benefits from the practice that are worth considering, in addition to benefits to pollinators. And adding more permanent habitat outside the orchard is another area where a number of our handlers in the industry have seen a market value. Buyers want to know that they have a supply chain of almonds that allows biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem on the farm. Some handlers have really leaned in with their growers and are encouraging those kinds of practices, and that's added certain value to both growers and handlers.

Article contributed by the Almond Board of California. ◆



The partnership is also conveying industry practices that reduce pollinator risk from crop production products to avoid added scrutiny and restrictions of those products.

TIME TO CONSIDER

Have you ever noticed that the “Time to Consider” articles fall under the “In Your Orchard” section of the Almond Facts Magazine? Well, I thought I would switch it up this issue and not just talk about what is happening in the orchard, but what happens when your almonds leave the field. The correct title for this issue should probably be called “In Your Test Room,” because I’m going to take you behind the scenes of how your product is graded at Blue Diamond Growers.

Now, I can’t forget about the orchard entirely since we are in an important part of the year, I’ll start by going over Navel Orangeworm management and considerations for a wet harvest. Navel Orangeworm is always the primary topic during these harvest months. By the time this article comes out, your hull split spray will most likely have already been applied to your Nonpareil crop. Growers who may be in high pressure areas, or who have experienced high damage in the past, will need to target the hull split on the pollinizer varieties as well. When doing multiple hull split applications chemical selection is very important. Rotating chemicals to prevent resistance and Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI) need to be factored in when making that choice.



Figure 1: Navel Orangeworm Larva. Photo credit: Mel Machado

We all have been praying for rain for the last couple of years and we sure got it over last winter. I know we are praying for it to continue, but when you receive rain, you have to learn to deal with the mud. With the possibility of having a wet harvest, here are a few key points if we arrive at that situation.

1. If you are planning to shake when rain comes through, don’t! Shaking almonds with rain in the forecast will only cause problems down the road.
2. If you have already shaken and the almonds are on the ground, keep them flat. Do not sweep them until they have dried a bit, as sweeping wet nuts into wet soil will not help them dry.
3. If the nuts are already in the windrows, “pick them up and put them down.” In other words, run the crop through a conditioner to remove the leaves, soil and other debris in the windrow. This helps the almonds get as dry as possible. If a conditioner is not available, you can run the crop through a harvester, but spreading it back on the ground is a better option than allowing the crop to sit in a wet windrow mixed with leaves and soil. While the moisture in the windrow is the most apparent problem, it is the heat created by microbial activity in the wet windrow that actually causes the greatest losses.
4. Finally, communicate with your huller and Regional Manager about your wet product so we can help you navigate the next steps and know if the product will need to go to the dryers.



Figure 2: Shaker Operation. Photo credit: Mel Machado

Delivery Weight	Number of Samples	Sample Size
1 – 2,500 lbs	1	500 grams
2,501 – 30,000 lbs	1	1,000 grams
30,001 – 60,000 lbs	2	2,000 grams
60,001 – 90,000 lbs	3	3,000 grams



Figure 3: Janet Brady-Fox, BDG's Test Grading Department Lead, with a Brown Spot example. Photo credit: Jake Sonke

Once the product is successfully delivered to *Blue Diamond Growers*, what happens next? The first step before your product even shows up to the test room is a sample is taken at delivery. The sample is taken from a continuous flow that represents the entire load. This "continuous-flow method gives the most random and fair sample for your delivery. The sample size varies depending on the size of delivery (i.e., the larger the load, the larger the sample). Once the sample is received at the test room, it is randomly reduced and split into two samples. A "Test Sample" for the initial grading and the "Reference Sample" is held at *Blue Diamond Growers* in case the grower would like a retest on their initial grade. To establish a grade, the first sample is assessed by a trained grader inside the test room. The grader is trained to look for rejects such as Navel Orangeworm, Brown Spot, and Ant damage. It also separates chipped and scratched nuts, foreign material and doubles. After everything is identified in the sample, the gram weight of each component is established. We use gram weights rather than ounces because this metric gives us a more accurate unit of measure (28.3 grams equal one ounce). The gram weights are entered into our payment system and are used to determine the percentages that you see on your delivery statement. The quality adjustments



Figure 4: Brady-Fox grading an almond sample. Photo credit: Jake Sonke

(premiums or deductions) come from the percentages of rejects, foreign material, chipped and scratched, and doubles. Please refer to the 2023 Crop Delivery Guide for detailed information about grading practices and standards.

We at *Blue Diamond Growers* hope this answers some questions about what happens to your product once we receive it. If you have any questions about your deliveries during this year's harvest, please reach out to your Regional Manager. We are your best resource at finding any problems that may arise and will fix those problems quickly and efficiently. ♦



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.

Call (209) 667-6895

WANTED

3-axle Dump truck with steel sides (diesel).

Call (209) 614-2632

WANTED

Used walnut chain for Johnson pickup machine.

Call (209) 838-2108

WANTED

1930-36 cars or pickups and 1932 Ford pines winterfront grille insert also 1930-1934 Ford running chassis.

Call (925) 872-0980

WANTED

Gasoline Memorabilia: Old gas pumps, gas signs, oil signs, car signs, and old cars and pickups.

Call (559) 485-9496

FOR SALE

(2) Johnson's pickup machines, \$5,500 each or reasonable offer.

Call (559) 485-9496

FOR SALE

2 supercarts, good tires. \$4500 each.

Contact (209) 202-4184. Ceres

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Amarillo Irrigation Well Gear Head with PTO shaft. \$850. Used very little.

Call (209) 620-4924

FOR SALE

- New super strong shaker tires – 10 ply-14.5/75 – 16.1. \$1,350 each.
- Skid steer connect with forks and brush rake attachments (call for prices).
- 350-gallon fuel tank - \$400
- 3-point nut crowder - \$1,500

Call Sam (209) 765-0027

(leave message) Ceres.

FOR SALE

Set of 4, Firestone Turf and Field tires and wheels. Like new. 50-75 hours on the tires. Fits Kubota M 85/60 tractor. 18" rims on rear tires, 8" rims on front. R-3 tread. Asking \$4,800.

Call (209) 604-7444

FOR SALE

Flory 6656 Sweepers:

- 2011 ± 4900 hours \$25,000
- 2014 ± 2400 hours \$35,000

OMC Sprint Shakers:

- 3) 2016 ± 4000 hours \$65,000 each
- 2011 ± 6000 hours \$45,000

Serviced and field ready. Located in Denair.

Call Ed: (209) 874-1268

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Verisimo fail mower Model #SC-100: \$5,000.00

9ft. wide float roller: \$1,000.00

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FOR SALE

- Milk cans with lids
- Heavy Duty Ripper (3 shanks), \$2,500 OBO
- 150 gal Water Tank on frame with new tires, paint, and gravity flow. Used one season \$1,800 OBO

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Flory 7 ft sweeper head, Series 77. Good condition. \$8,000 OBO.

Call or Text (209) 605-2603.

Manteca area.

FOR SALE

Walnut stakes, 3/4", 10' long, used sucker rod, pallets of 10 or 200 up to 5600 available. \$2.50 each, Escalon area.

Contact (209) 652-5164

FOR SALE

Model B Case tractor circa 1946-50, peach trailers, Almond Roller, Brush fork, Lift for bins, Levee maker, Ridger, Propane tank, Long camper shell, hose pull with sled, International Tractor with front end loader, water pressure tanks, almond bottom dump trailer, windows.

Contact Ann at:

(209) 632-4346 for more info.

FOR SALE

Tree Stakes for Almonds. 1000's of used steel stakes to keep your almond trees growing straight:

- 3' @ 75 cents each
- 4' @ \$1.00 each
- 5' @ \$1.25 each

Please call (209) 969-0526

FOR SALE

- R & L Easy lift Elevator. 10' Height 12" cups. In pieces. FREE!
- Jessee 500 Air leg 32" belt, no motor. FREE!
- 11ft. Orchard float w/ Hydraulic wheels CALL for pictures & pricing.
- 4 Stage sizer, good condition. \$4,000
- 60 H.P. Sturdavent Shell Fan with motor. Complete. \$1,500

Contact Ron Piazza at:
(209) 678-0788

FOR SALE

- OMC Shaker Mono Boom Walnut Pattern. \$350
- Rear end Housing for OMC Shaker Mono Boom Shaker – make offer
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FOR SALE

Qty 2 6656 Flory Sweepers: 6½ ft head, Kubota diesel. Field ready. \$29,500 each.

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Contact Gale Langum at:
(209) 612-4830

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Beautifully restored to original 1931 Ford Roadster Pickup, \$18,000 or best offer.

Call (925) 872-0980

FOR SALE

- Tractor trailer, 10'x6'-6". 22.5 tires. Crank up ramps. \$4,500
- Enviromist Sprayer. 6'-6" spray band. Brand new. Never used. Cost \$2,500. Sell \$1,250.

Call (209) 537-9491. Ceres.

FOR SALE

Used Precleaner. \$150,000. Items include: pit liner and auger; pit elevator; cross conveyor; stick reel; 2 sand screen elevators; 2 sand screens; 2 foresberg P8 destoners; 2 detwiggers; bottom auger flighting; bin elevator; cross bin auger; misc air ducting; misc steel spouting. Does not include: mac baghouse and all connected items; mac baghouse blower; mac baghouse clean air pump.

Contact (209) 358-1759

FOR SALE

- Rears Orchard Sprayer
- Disc, Springtooth
- Rainbird and Toro Low Impact Sprinklers

Call (559) 268-3087

FOR SALE

- John Deere low profile 5100ML with exact cab tractor
- 12' V Risimo flail mower
- 8' V Risimo flail mower
- PBM 500 gallon weed sprayer with electric valves (new, never used)
- Durand Wallon 500 gallon tree sprayer
- 12' Domries orchard leveler float

Contact Joe at (209) 404-3326

Free listings in this section are for the exclusive use of Blue Diamond members.

Classified ads for personal use — not as an additional means of advertising commercial ventures members may own. Ads are limited to a maximum of 10 lines and may be submitted to Blue Diamond regional manager or the editor at:

**Editor: Blue Diamond Growers
P.O. Box 1768, Sacramento, CA 95812**

**Or contact BDG Communications
Email: communications@bdgrowers.com**

Unless advised otherwise, ads will run two consecutive issues. To guarantee placement, classified listings must be submitted by the 10th of: January, March, May, July, September & November.

FOR SALE

2008 8 Channel Satake Ultrascan.
\$60,000

- Includes platform, Infeed dump hopper, Anex C-style bucket elevator with 50/50 split buckets
- Stainless steel hopper over chutes has been modified to prevent plugging and bridging of product
- Machine is currently set for 2 passes (4 channels each) and can be run as a single pass (8 channels)
- Walnut Setting (can be converted to Almonds)

Please contact Nina at:
(209) 609-6689



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