



almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2024

Four generations
(and counting) of
almond farming.
And how OSIP
is impacting
Moeller Farms.



President & CEO
Discusses Harvest
and Crop Return

OSIP Talk with Grower,
Steve Moeller

Big Ten® Partnership
News

Almond Breeze®
Gets Spooky



All Top Self-Fertile Varieties Now Available

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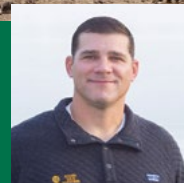
**ASK ABOUT OTHER NEW
SELF-FERTILE OPTIONS!**



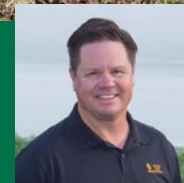
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A sweet way to start your autumn, these baked apple donuts are cozy and delicious! (Page 19)

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Almond Breeze® dips into the spooky season since it is, after all, scary good for your bones!

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30 Almond Grower, Steve Moeller Gets Real About OSIP

Learn all about the pros and cons of cover cropping, the extra efforts it takes to participate in OSIP, and much more in this interview with *Blue Diamond* almond grower Steve Moeller.

ON THE COVER:

Steve Moeller (right) pictured with son, Andrew (left) discusses OSIP. Photo Credit: Jake Sonke



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ALMOND FACTS STAFF

Blue Diamond Growers Communications Department,
communications@bdgrowers.com

Jillian Luna, *Managing Editor*

Jake Sonke, *Assistant Editor*

Mel Machado, *Contributing Photographer*

Gray Allen, *Advertising Sales*
916.783.4334 & 916.765.3234

Blue Diamond, the world's largest processor and marketer of almonds, exports to over 100 countries.

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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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



This summer has been a scorcher! Here, in Sacramento, temperatures soared well over 100 degrees. Like the California summer heat, you have been relentless in cultivating your orchards and the team at Blue Diamond headquarters is relentlessly marketing your almonds and trying to get you the best possible return for them.

Despite a brief respite from the heat in early August, we began receiving the first loads of almonds on August 5 and we are at peak harvest now. Last year's unexpected hurricane and heavy rainfall during harvest made for a challenging season, so we look forward to a better crop this year. Many growers are still recovering from last year's setbacks, and this year's ongoing challenges have only added to the pressure.

One of the biggest threats to our crop this year has been the carpophilus beetle coupled with webspinning mites, which Mel Machado and the team have been closely monitoring. Mites can prematurely defoliate trees and significantly reduce next year's crop potential. We'll continue to keep a watchful eye on the situation as harvest progresses.

Final Return for the 2023 Crop			
Variety	Overall Average	Average of High Quality	Maximum Possible
Nonpareil & Sonora Inshell	\$1.97	\$2.04	\$2.07
Nonpareil /Supareil Meats	\$1.83	\$1.91	\$1.97
Sonora Meats	\$1.81	\$1.89	\$1.93
Independence Inshell	\$1.70	\$1.73	\$1.75
Independence Meats	\$1.63	\$1.67	\$1.70
Carmel & Winters	\$1.59	\$1.62	\$1.66
Monterey /Neplus	\$1.56	\$1.61	\$1.66
California /Price /Fritz /Wood Colony	\$1.51	\$1.56	\$1.59
Butte & Padre	\$1.56	\$1.59	\$1.62
Mission	\$1.38	\$1.40	\$1.43

Note: The above rates do not include Volume Premiums, Sustainability Incentives, Domestic Production Activities Deduction (DPAD) or IC-DISC advantages.

Huller and sheller operations are running at full capacity, and harvesting will continue for several weeks. It's an exciting time to see the fruits of our labor from earlier this year.

Although we won't have a complete picture of the crop until harvest is over, you can see the latest crop return data on the chart on the left.

The rates displayed on the left of the chart do not include Volume Premiums, Sustainability Incentives, Domestic Production Activities Deduction (DPAD) or ICDISC advantages. Your actual crop earnings, including those applicable additions, are shown in the box on the last page of your personal grower's statement.

At the end of August, the board approved our annual operating plan, marking the one-year point of our strategic plan. We're excited to share more about our progress and upcoming initiatives at *Blue Diamond's* 114th Annual Meeting on November 20 at the Modesto Centre Plaza.

The team is working diligently to prepare for the meeting, and we're all looking forward to sharing updates and discussing some of our new initiatives. There's a lot to be excited about and we can't wait to see you all there.

We hope you're enjoying a successful harvest and that the summer heat is starting to ease up wherever you are. We look forward to reconnecting with all of you in November! ♦



Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



Regional Managers



Vice President, Member Relations

Mel Machado
(209) 545-6222 – Salida
(209) 531-6352 – Cellular

Director, Member Relations

Ben Goudie
(209) 225-0413

Tehama, Butte, Glenn, Sutter, & Yuba
Christine Ivory, (530) 518-9109

Colusa, Yolo & Solano
Nicole Jansen, (530) 338-6440

Sacramento County, San Joaquin County, North of Hwy 205 & East of San Joaquin River
KC Clendenin, (209) 596-5375

San Joaquin County, West of San Joaquin River & South of Hwy 205 Stanislaus County, North of Tuolumne River & Hwy 132
Justin Elam, (209) 303-7306

Stanislaus County, East of Hwy 99, South of Tuolumne River
Austin Jackson, (209) 417-2010

Stanislaus County, West of Hwy 99, South of Tuolumne River, South of Grayson & Howard Road's West of San Joaquin River Merced County, North of Merced River & Hills Ferry & Stuhr Roads
Trent Voss, (209) 470-5981

Merced County, South of Merced River & Hills Ferry & Stuhr Roads, North of Hwy 140
Kenny Miyamoto, (209) 323-8454

Merced County, South of Hwy 140 Madera County, North of Avenue 12, Firebaugh Blvd, Avenue 7½, & W. Nees Avenue
Carla Youngblood, (559) 240-0906

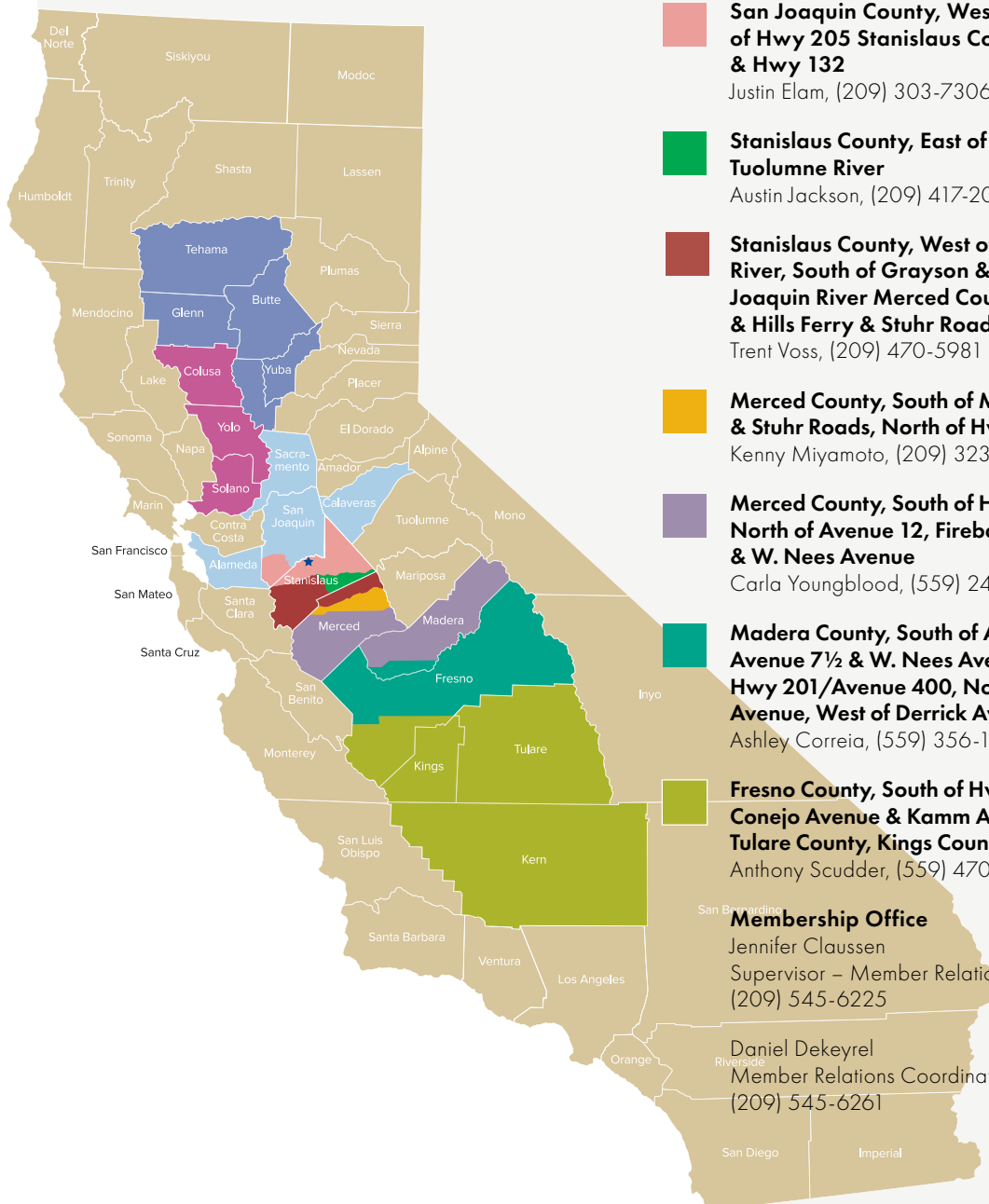
Madera County, South of Avenue 12, Firebaugh Blvd, Avenue 7½ & W. Nees Avenue, Fresno County, North of Hwy 201/Avenue 400, North of Conejo Avenue & Kamm Avenue, West of Derrick Avenue
Ashley Correia, (559) 356-1584

Fresno County, South of Hwy 201/Avenue 400, South of Conejo Avenue & Kamm Avenue, East of Derrick Avenue, Tulare County, Kings County, & Kern County
Anthony Scudder, (559) 470-9731

Membership Office

Jennifer Claussen
Supervisor – Member Relations Administration
(209) 545-6225

Daniel Dekeyrel
Member Relations Coordinator (Delivery Tags)
(209) 545-6261



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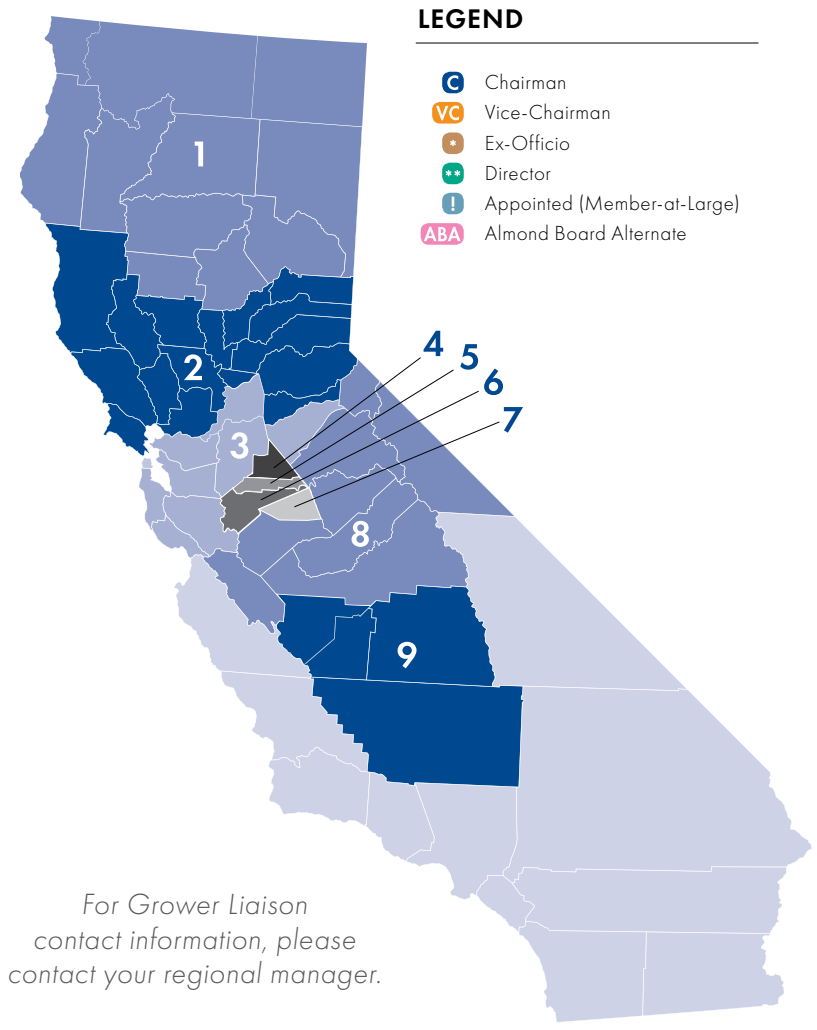
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ALMOND MARKET UPDATE



Blue Diamond Almond Market Update – September

OVERVIEW

The California almond industry began the 2024 crop year with August shipments totaling 168.3 million pounds, a decrease of 6% from the previous month and 21% from last year. Domestic shipments were strong at 62.1 million pounds, up 1% from the previous year. In contrast, exports cooled to 106.2 million pounds, down 29% from the prior year. Overall, shipments fell short of expectations due to slower exports resulting from tight inventories at the end of the 2023 crop year. However, with new crop inventories now available, September shipments are anticipated to increase.

SHIPMENTS

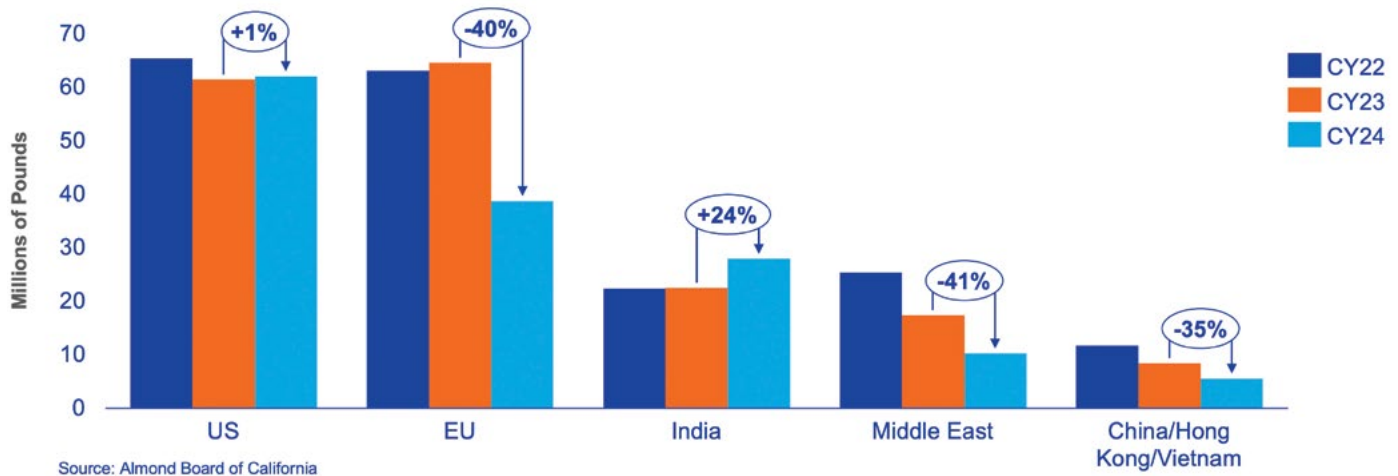
India:

India began the crop year on a high note with shipments totaling 27.9 million pounds, marking a 24% increase from the previous year. After a sluggish July, market activity picked up throughout the month due to dwindling local inventories and longer transit times. As a result, prices strengthened. Demand is expected to remain robust through October and into November as the market prepares to meet post-Diwali needs.

China/Hong Kong/Vietnam:

Shipments to the region totaled 5.5 million pounds, marking a 35% decline from last year. Chinese buyers have increasingly favored Vietnam due to its duty advantage, with Vietnam receiving 3.8 million pounds of this volume, a 71% increase from the previous year. Buyers have returned to the market, gaining confidence that prices are not likely to drop in the near term. The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, celebrated from September 15-17, will be closely monitored for insights into consumer demand. This holiday, a precursor to Chinese New Year, will significantly influence buying activity in the weeks leading up to the Festival.

Year-Over-Year Shipments August



Europe:

Shipments to the region reached 38.7 million pounds, a 40% decrease from last year. In Europe, buying activity has slowed, resulting in a more cautious market. Buyers are currently making minimal purchases, looking for signs that prices might soften before placing larger orders. This hesitation is preventing significant buying beyond immediate needs. As prices remain stable without signs of decline, buying activity is anticipated to increase as the region gears up for upcoming holiday demand.

Middle East:

Shipments to the region totaled a modest 10.2 million pounds, marking a 41% decline from last year. This drop was anticipated due to limited buyer activity as they awaited softer prices to conclude the previous crop year. As local supplies have diminished, activity has increased recently, with buyers requesting prompt shipments. Demand is expected to remain strong in the coming weeks, driven by the early timing of Ramadan in 2025 and the need for buyers to secure coverage well in advance due to lengthening transit times.

Domestic:

In August, shipments totaled 62 million pounds, a modest 1% increase from the previous year. After a volatile year for monthly shipments, it's promising to see the domestic market begin positively despite limited inventories of in-demand products. New sales for the month were 9.1 million pounds, with total commitments down 26.8% compared to last year. On a positive note, recent weeks have shown a rise in sales as buyers adjust to post-Objective Estimate pricing. With substantial demand still to be met for the current crop year, buyer activity is expected to continue.

COMMITMENTS

Total commitments for the year started at 607.6 million pounds, a 2% decrease from last year. However, uncommitted inventories have dropped significantly to 11.1 million pounds, down 68% from the previous year. New sales have also fallen sharply by 62% to 159.3 million pounds, as buyers delay purchases in anticipation of lower prices. With an expected crop of 2.8 billion pounds, current shipments and commitments account for 24% of the total supply, compared to 26% last

year. Although industry commitments are down by 2%, destination inventories are lighter than last season. Given the recent increase in demand for prompt shipments, the industry is anticipated to close this gap and regain the lost ground.

The carry-in figure was the most notable surprise of this position report. The carry-out from July's position report was adjusted with an actual loss and exempt percentage of 2.1%. This put the carry-in at 503 million pounds, which is significantly higher than the industry was expecting due to the lower 2023 crop quality, which had an average of 4.2% of rejects.

CROP

Crop receipts for the year began at 290.1 million pounds, reflecting a 314% increase compared to the previous crop year, which experienced a delayed harvest by 2-3 weeks. Recent concerns have emerged regarding lower yields from the southern region of the Valley, leading many in the industry to doubt the feasibility of a 3.0- billion-pound crop. Some are even speculating that the final yield could fall below 2.8 billion pounds. Consequently, California packers are adopting a cautious stance, limiting offers until there is greater clarity on the new crop's potential. ♦

Market Perspective

The 2024 crop year began with mixed results. Shipments fell short of expectations due to softer demand at the end of the 2023 crop year. Buyers approached the new season with caution, anticipating potential price pressure as harvest commenced. Unlike last year, when the industry faced significant carry-in pressure, this year does not have the same burden. Despite the subdued demand, prices have remained stable with no signs of decline. As buyers begin to cover upcoming demand and replenish inventory, prices are expected to stay supported, particularly as regions prepare for the holiday season.

As the harvest progresses, the industry will continue to assess crop quality and supply potential. The total supply outlook will remain uncertain until more clarity is gained on the carry-in figures.



Laura Gerhard,
Vice President of Ingredients
and International Branded,
Blue Diamond Growers

CLIMATE-SMART GRANT

WHOLE ORCHARD RECYCLING (WOR) LAUNCH

Up to \$900/acre for WOR

Funding is first come, first served. Apply beginning October 15



Pulling out an orchard soon?

Starting October 15, you can apply to receive up to \$900/acre for recycling it. Mark your calendar to apply!

- This funding is provided on a first come, first served basis. Enroll while funds last!
- Be sure to have all the requirements completed before applying.
- Find more information using the link or QR code below.

LINK: bit.ly/csg-bdg

Questions? Email jbains@bdgrowers.com

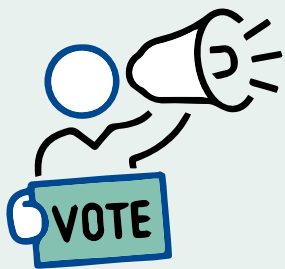


**Funded by the USDA Partnerships for
Climate-Smart Commodities program**

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 required.



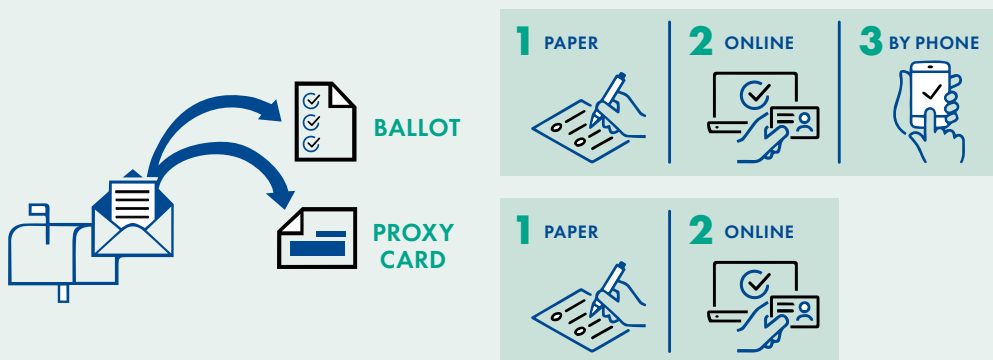
Annual General Election

It is time 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 1, 4 and 6**. You also have the opportunity to vote for Grower Liaisons in each of the nine districts. Ballots will be mailed the week of October 3 to voting members with Crop Agency Agreements. Voting will close on November 8, 2024. 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.



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. ♦



114th

Annual Meeting



GROWING TOGETHER

Growers! Registration for the 2024 Annual Growers Meeting is now open! Registration instructions can be found in the **link emailed** to you or on the **postcard** sent to your home. See you there!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL BDGROWERS@MOSAICEVENTS.COM

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT:

TALINE TABAKIAN
EXHIBITION + SPONSORSHIP TEAM
BLUE DIAMOND GROWERS ANNUAL MEETING

(415) 848-7802
TTABAKIAN@MOSAICEVENTS.COM

#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity

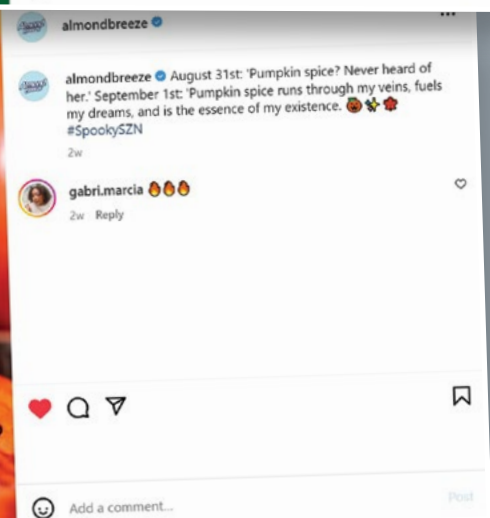


Blue Diamond began the season by celebrating World Honey Bee Day and highlighting our partnership with the Blue Diamond Climate-Smart Grant partners Pollinator Partnership and Project Apis m., whose Seeds for Bees® program began delivering free cover crop seed to almond growers' orchards in August. Blue Diamond also kicked off the annual #WelcometotheOrchard harvest series with weekly highlights from regional managers across the Valley. Our Almond Breeze® and Snack Almonds pages highlighted new ways to enjoy Blue Diamond products, from poolside treats to fall-favorite drinks. ♦



Blue Diamond Growers Cooperative
Published by Sprout Social
• August 22 at 9:03 AM •

Last week, students from The GreenHouse, a local Sacramento nonprofit, visited our Sacramento facility. The GreenHouse offers summer programs for high school students interested in pursuing careers in recreational management, culinary arts and digital communications. The students toured our Almond Innovation Center™ and learned from Blue Diamond employees who work in R&D, agricultural and corporate communications, public affairs, and manufacturing. We're grateful for the op... See more





bluediamondgrowers
Marshall Rogalski • Make My Day

bluediamondgrowers Welcome back to the orchard! Almond harvest is here, and our farmers are hard at work bringing in the crop from their orchards. Harvest typically begins in early- to mid-August, with Blue Diamond's farmers running their operations for several weeks. This is one of our busiest and most exciting times of year, so stay tuned to see what comes next this season!

#wearebluediamond

Blue Diamond Growers
25,136 followers
4w • Edited •

Happy National Honeybee Day!

Did you know almond trees need honeybees to produce the almonds we know and love? Without bees there wouldn't be almonds! Blue Diamond partners with programs and organizations to promote healthy, resilient pollinators in our farmers' orchards.

Through programs like Seeds for Bees and a USDA Partnership for Climate-smart Commodities Grant, our farmers can get free seeds (pictured) to plant flowering plants called cover crops that supply extra nutrition for honeybees during almond bloom in February. This helps bees start the year healthy and strong!

Our partners, **Project Apis m.** and **Pollinator Partnership**, help to accelerate adoption of climate smart practices such as cover crops in our farmers orchards.

At Blue Diamond, supporting healthy and happy bees is an important part of growing the best almonds.

#wearebluediamond



almondbreeze

almondbreeze Because you never know when you'll need to whip up a latte at a summer concert. Who says you can't be your own barista in the park? ☺️🍷🍷🍷

2w

chefchrischo Hey @almondbreeze, just sent you a DM! Thanks!

2d Reply


Add a comment...

BLUE DIAMOND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

Current Investment Rates available as of October 1, 2024

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 October 1, 2024, for the program are listed here:

	Short-Term Investment Certificate (STIC)	Long-Term Investment Certificate (LTIC) (Maturity Date of 6/30/2027)
Initial Investment Required	\$1,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	5.75%	4.50%
	(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.

Fog City Fondue Recipe

Cook Time: 45 minutes Difficulty: Medium Servings: 8

Ingredients

1½ cups vegetable broth
1 cup *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Original Almondmilk
2 cloves minced garlic
8 ounces Teleme, Brie, Camembert, Fontina, Boursault or Havarti cheese
3 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 cup shredded Swiss or Jarlsberg cheese
2½ Tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon spicy brown mustard
½ teaspoon Maggi Seasoning, or to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
Cubed San Francisco Sourdough Bread

Directions

1. Place broth in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and reduce to ½ cup. Add *Almond Breeze*® and garlic and bring to a simmer. Tear Teleme (or alternative) cheese into pieces and add to pot, stirring until melted; remove from heat.
2. Place cheeses and flour in a medium bowl and toss to coat cheese evenly with flour. Add cheeses to saucepan a little at a time, placing back over very low heat and stirring until fondue is smooth and cheese is fully melted. Stir in mustard and pepper. Serve with cubed San Francisco Sourdough Bread.



Baked Apple Donuts

Cook Time: 15 minutes Difficulty: Easy Servings: 6

Ingredients

Donuts:

1 cup apple sauce	1 teaspoon cinnamon	½ cup <i>Blue Diamond</i> gluten-free flour blend (<i>recipe below</i>)
⅓ cup butter	1 Tablespoon vanilla	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 egg white	¼ teaspoon salt	
½ cup sugar	1½ cups <i>Blue Diamond</i> Almond Flour	

Caramel Glaze:

¼ cup almond butter
¼ cup honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 Tablespoons butter

Directions

Donuts:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Place apple sauce, butter, egg white, sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and salt into a mixer and blend until well combined.
3. Mix almond flour and gluten-free flour blend. Slowly add to wet ingredients in the mixer. Mix for 2 minutes.
4. Turn off mixer and stir in baking soda by hand.
5. Butter donut pans and fill to rim with batter. Bake for 15 minutes.
6. Allow to fully cool before dipping into caramel glaze.

Caramel Glaze:

1. In a microwave-safe bowl wider than the width of the donuts, add all ingredients for caramel glaze. Microwave for 2 minutes, stopping and stirring every 30 seconds until smooth.
2. Dip donuts into caramel and top with favorite toppings.



Gluten-Free Flour Blend:

Makes about 7 cups

Ingredients

2 cups brown rice flour
2 cups white rice flour
2 cups tapioca flour
1 cup corn starch
½ Tablespoon xanthan gum

Directions

1. Sift all ingredients together thoroughly.
2. Store in an air-tight container. Refrigerate for up to 3 months or freeze for up to 6 months.
3. Bring flour to room temperature before use.



Kicking off the Football Season With The Big Ten®

The 2024-25 college football season just got serious about snacking! *Blue Diamond* is the Official Snack of the Big Ten Conference this year, giving an exciting bump to the Cooperative's exposure to Big Ten college football fans across the country.

The Big Ten Conference — whose legacy stretches over 125 years — is a can't-miss partnership opportunity for *Blue Diamond*. The investment in the Big Ten Network includes television and streaming commercials for *Blue Diamond* Almonds in all Big Ten Saturday football games on BTN, plus the occasional Thursday and Friday games. The partnership also includes tailgate sponsorships early in the season as well as one in mid-November at USC. These tailgate events offer Snack Nut samples, *Blue Diamond*-themed cornhole and similar games, and additional social media exposure via the Big Ten's social media handles. Additionally,

we'll have a big presence at the Big Ten Championship Game Fan Fest in Indianapolis on December 7.

The *Blue Diamond* — Big Ten partnership includes social media, online video, and streaming audio outlets. The collaboration also features *Blue Diamond*'s first ever Athlete/Influencer program, partnering with Big Ten Football athletes to create almond centric content for Instagram and TikTok launching in September.

As the football season progresses, be on the lookout for exciting appearances by *Blue Diamond* Almonds when you tune in to the next Big Ten football game. ♦



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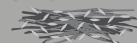


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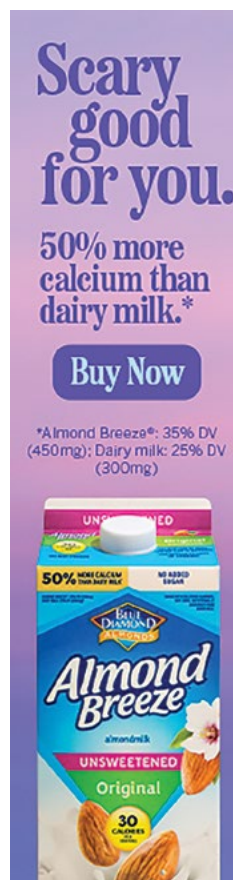
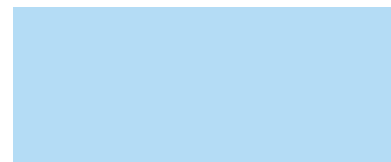


BUILT BY FARMERS FOR FARMERS...WE UNDERSTAND!

Almond Breeze®: Scary Good for Bones

Many Almond Breeze® drinkers also happen to be major fans of Halloween! So, there's no better season than fall to dig deep into the brand's many health benefits, especially its richness in calcium that does a world of good for the bones. This integrated campaign will focus on leveraging the goodness of almondmilk on these chilly autumn days and challenge the consumer to reach beyond dairy for a glass of Almond Breeze® to satisfy the nutritional needs of their skeletons.

Inspired by popular skeleton décor trends, Blue Diamond Almond Breeze® is excited to make a spooky splash at Nights of the Jack with an unforgettable 20-foot animatronic skeleton and giant Almond Breeze® Almondmilk cartons located in the graveyard experience. Almond Breeze® will be served at hot chocolate stands around Nights of the Jack, providing guests with a delicious non-dairy milk to support strong and healthy bones. The 120 thousand attendees are invited to pick up exclusive coupons for Almond Breeze®, so they can support their own bone health at home. As an excellent source of calcium, Almond Breeze® is scary good for bones. ♦



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Three Things to Evaluate After Harvest

As the dust settles on the 2024 harvest, I want to suggest you review three areas that will help you produce a successful crop next year. I'm sure you have taken a preliminary look at your Delivery Advance statements to see what grades you had on each lot. This harvest has been swift and quite the whirlwind, so it's good to get fully organized and do a full review after all the information comes in. One of my favorite principles is to "Begin with the end in mind" made famous by Stephen Covey. As it relates to harvest, evaluating what happened in 2024 is the best way to begin the next crop cycle to ensure you successfully produce a strong, quality crop, and receive the best results, come this time next year.

“Begin with the end in mind.”

— Stephen Covey

Get Your Records Straight!

Sit down at your desk and either pull out all your statements and final summary statement that you received through harvest or open the *Blue Diamond* Portal on your computer and review all your information together. On the Portal, you can look primarily at the "Deliveries" or "Production" tabs on the home page for a great overview. There are also several reports available to help you view the data in different aspects. If you are a grower with a single orchard, this is a straightforward process and takes little time. If you have multiple *Blue Diamond* accounts and subcontracts, this review is essential!

- ✓ Double check your statement weights between subcontracts. Does one subcontract look light and another look heavy? It is possible that a delivery arrived under the wrong subcontract. If that's the case, we can move delivery lots to the correct subcontract through a "Delivery Transfer."

- ✓ Verify the accuracy of the acreage you have listed in the Portal. This is what we use to calculate the yield figures under the "Production" tab. If you don't use the Portal, ask your regional manager to provide you with a copy of your "Exhibit to Crop Agency Agreement" which lists all your acreage details. If something looks incorrect, let your regional manager know and they will do an acreage update to reflect the accurate information on your account.
- ✓ Review your grade information to identify any outliers. You may see that most of your grades were in a relatively tight range, say, 1-2% rejects, but one load shows a significantly higher value. This could be an end-run lot that could have lower quality than the bulk of your product. In the case of box deliveries, end-runs are typically smaller, weighing just a few hundred pounds. End-runs also typically have higher foreign material and reject values as these problems can accumulate during the sheller run and wind up in the last box. However, if the delivery is not an end-run, and its values do not align with the rest of your deliveries from that orchard it may be worth requesting a retest for further evaluation.
- ✓ Samples are taken at the time of receipt according to a strict protocol, but sometimes, due to field variation, pockets of higher-than-average insect damage or foreign material can occur. At our Sacramento Test Room, the samples are divided, with one-half of the sample stored in a reference library for use in the event a retest is requested. The reference samples are retained for at least 60 days. The process of requesting a retest starts with a call to your regional manager. You may also want to consult your huller to get their opinion on the delivery. Huller operators typically maintain notes on each delivery and may be able to shed some light on the situation. *Your regional manager will advise you on the retest process as there is a possibility of negative financial impact if the grade deteriorates in the retest process.*

- ✓ Make sure that all your names line up on contract and subcontract with your other business interests (trust name, partnership name, exact corporate name) or other legal purposes. Most often, crop insurance companies will require your statements (including the names and acreage of each subcontract) to correspond exactly with what is detailed in the policy.

Orchard Removals

Planning for orchard removals and replanting occurs year-round, and right after harvest is the best time to let us know if an orchard that was harvested in 2024 will be pulled and going out of production for 2025. Be sure to let your regional manager know of any acreage changes such as pullouts, orchard sales, or ownership transfers sooner rather than later. Most importantly, this helps *Blue Diamond* keep our current acreage basis straight. Better to let us know now! If you plan on replanting but haven't figured out what variety or exactly when you'll replant, no problem. We can list that subcontract as an unknown variety and put in a tentative replant date that we can track and update later.

Set an Appointment with your PCA/CCA

Having a meeting right after harvest with your PCA is arguably the most important step you can take to "Begin with the end in mind," or in terms of harvest, *end with the beginning in mind*. Your grade results will have a direct impact on planning implications for the next crop cycle. Gather your statements, or pull a "Variety by Grade Summary" report from the Portal, in order to provide all the data you need to have that conversation.

If your grades for 2024 looked great, congratulations! What you did last year was effective and you should use that as the basis for your IPM plan again next year. You could also look for opportunities to fine tune your IPM program and be ready for emerging pest threats in the coming season.

If some of your grades didn't look good or you had greater challenges in 2024 than in prior years, you are not alone. Although overall rejects are coming in lower in 2024 than 2023, they are still higher than any other prior year in recent history, including what we referred to as the "Wreck" in 2017. A key factor this year is the damage caused by the plant bug complex on top of high navel orangeworm pressures. Added to that, many growers saw damage from the emerging pest,

Sample Breakdown Test for Rejects	
Brown Spot	45.71%
Beetle	11.43%
Orange Worm	40.00%
Mold	2.86%

(Figure 1) The reject breakdown will show the proportions of damage that occurred by each causal pest. In this case, the overall total reject percentage "Reject meats" was 3.5% (not shown here as it appears on the main line of the statement) and each percent listed is a fractional percent of the overall 3.5%.

the *Carpophilus truncatus* beetle. This combined pressure has driven reject values higher than what many growers experience with navel orangeworm alone.

The focus on your statements should not just be on the total reject percentage, but on any reject breakdowns that were performed this year. We have made a major push to bring awareness to the value of having at least one reject breakdown performed on each orchard. This gives you the fractional breakdown of the total reject damage and list the proportional impact of each type of pest (as illustrated in figure 1). If you did not request a reject breakdown and would still like to get the information, you can request a retest that is "information only" which will not affect your grade.

Our regional managers are available to support this process as well. We often meet jointly with member-growers and their PCAs to provide our perspective. These services are just one reason why *Blue Diamond's* member-growers produce the highest quality almonds, leading to higher grower returns. ♦



Ben Goudie,
Director, Member Relations,
Blue Diamond Growers

Giving Tuesday is December 3rd

To join *Blue Diamond* in Giving the Gift of Blue on Giving Tuesday on December 3, 2024, visit calaged.org or

mail a check payable to:

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Application
Cycle Opens
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— ★ ★ ★ —

Blue Diamond Growers Foundation Scholarship available for 2025 - 2026 School Year



Scholarship Requirements:

- Must currently live in Almond Growing Regions of California
- Must intend to pursue college major in Agriculture related field, with specific emphasis on plant and crop-related majors
- Must have 3.3 GPA or higher
- Enrollment verification to a college or university offering a four-year degree will be required for disbursement of award funds
- Application deadline: **March 31, 2025**

This is a one-time award. Applicants who have applied and not previously been awarded a Blue Diamond Growers Foundation Scholarship may re-apply. Scholarship is available to applicants entering any year of a four-year degree program.



apply.mykaleidoscope.com/scholarships/BlueDiamondGrowersScholarship2025



California's legislature adjourned the 2023-2024 legislative session in the early morning hours of September 1. More than 2,100 bills were introduced this year with major topics ranging from Artificial Intelligence, retail theft, warehouse regulations, social media reform to campaign finance. By the end of session, hundreds of bills were approved by the Legislature and now sit on Governor Newsom's desk where he has until September 30 to decide whether or not they become law.

As *Blue Diamond's* Government Affairs team, our job is to advocate for our grower-owners and represent the Cooperative. We work each day to provide a voice for *Blue Diamond* and our grower-owners at key decision-making tables. Our team sifts through bills to find those that could have the most impact, positive or negative, and advocate accordingly. A large part of advocacy is developing relationships with a wide range of government officials, both elected and appointed, and building their understanding of the Cooperative, its membership, and the almond industry. Doing this in partnership within our industry

associations, like the Almond Alliance, Agricultural Council of California, and California Manufacturers & Technology Association, allows us to ensure strong coalitions around priority issues and the protection of our *Blue Diamond* brand and growers.

This year, advocacy was critical as multiple bills on water rights, pesticides, and labor and manufacturing were introduced, all having an impact on *Blue Diamond* and our growers' operations and bottom line. Through our advocacy as a Cooperative and with our associations, many of these bills were either amended, mitigated or in some cases and when favorable, pushed through with support. These outcomes were possible because of the robust relationships *Blue Diamond* has with our associations and with legislators and their staff.

As the legislative year closes, all focus, both in California and in Washington, is on the election. This is a pivotal year with many elected positions, from the presidency to city council, up for grabs. In the state legislature alone, at least

34 seats will turn over — representing 25 percent of each house. While *Blue Diamond* is not involved in elections, we will certainly be watching the outcomes. Coming out of the elections, it will be critically important to build our relationships with these newly-elected officials and ensure their understanding of the Cooperative and our issues. This work is foundational to our success in advocacy.

Blue Diamond is fortunate to have a long history of strong relationships with representatives at all levels of government. Our success can be attributed to our continued engagement and the strength of the *Blue Diamond* brand. The Cooperative and grower story and our delicious, nutritious product resonate with all types of elected leaders, opening the door to engage on policy discussions and important issues. This fan-based connection to our innovative products and story has created the unlikeliest of almond champions and in turn, created a broader voice for the Cooperative and our growers. In times such as these, having supporters from across the political spectrum is important for successful advocacy.

Come January, we will have a new year, a new president and new elected members at all levels. Whether it is building connections to the *Blue Diamond* story, relationships with representatives or coalitions with our associations, your Government Affairs team continues to ensure the Cooperative and its members have a strong voice within the halls of government. ♦



Mallorie Hayes Taasaas,
Government & Public Affairs Manager,
Blue Diamond Growers



Alicia Rockwell,
Chief Government
& Public Affairs Officer,
Blue Diamond Growers

Bill Outcomes:

Please note at the time of printing, the governor had not yet signed these bills.

AB 1963 – Paraquat Evaluation – Requires the Department of Pesticide Regulation to reevaluate the herbicide paraquat dichloride by January 1, 2029, and determine whether to retain, cancel or suspend its registration or place new restrictions on the herbicide. This could have an impact on agriculture’s ability to utilize the herbicide. **Status: Passed the Legislature – awaiting governor signature**

AB 2113 – Pesticide Tax Increase – The governor’s budget included a proposal to increase the mill tax paid for by farmers on pesticides. While the mill tax was passed, agriculture was able to negotiate a deal that brought some long-sought-after wins to agriculture, including an increased timeline from two years to four years for the increase, expedited timelines required for DPR to register new products and active ingredients, and that new staffing hires be for registration of new products. The increase will begin immediately upon passage. **Status: Passed the Legislature – awaiting governor signature**

SB 399 – Employer Communications – Restricts how businesses communicate with their employees. The aim is to limit discussions between employees and employers on “political matters,” though it could impact employers’ ability to discuss new law or regulations with their employees. **Status: Passed the Legislature – awaiting governor signature**

AB 98 – Warehouse and Logistics Measure – Prohibits cities and counties from approving a new or expanded logistics use unless specific standards are met. Requires logistics facilities to submit truck routing plans that prioritize routes designed for heavy duty and other commercial vehicles. **Status: Passed the Legislature – awaiting governor signature**

SB 366 – CA Water Supply Plan – Creates a water supply planning target of nine million acre-feet of additional water, water conservation, or water storage capacity to be attained by 2040, as part of the 2028 update to the California Water Plan. **Status: Passed the Legislature – awaiting governor signature**

Moeller Farms and OSIP

Implementing Blue Diamond's Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP) and the practices supported by the USDA-funded Climate-Smart Grant (CSG) may seem daunting. Steve Moeller, Triple Diamond OSIP member, who runs a fourth-generation almond farm with his family, shares his story, stewardship practices and how these have impacted their farming operations. Steve is a member of his district's Grower Liaison Committee and has been a Blue Diamond member since 1985. Moeller Farms is Bee Friendly Certified and is operated by Steve and Micki Moeller, Andrew Moeller, Chris Moeller, and Carrie Davis.

Almond Facts (AF): Thank you for letting Almond Facts join you at your farm to talk about your involvement in OSIP and CSG in your operations at Moeller Farms. Your children are the fourth generation working this almond farm, and the fifth generation is still too young to jump in and join at this point, but we know that's the hope! As a member of the Grower Liaison Committee whose operations are Bee Friendly Farming Certified and Triple Diamond status in OSIP, it's clear you're all doing a lot here. Could you share a little about your operations and your history with *Blue Diamond*?

Steve Moeller (SM): I've been a *Blue Diamond* member since 1985. But before that, my wife's grandfather, Alfred Koehn, was a member who joined in the 1940s. The family ran a small dairy farm back then.

AF: So, if it started as a dairy, how did your family get into almonds?

SM: I wasn't around when that began, but Alfred started growing almonds because he could see the potential in almond farming. My father-in-law, Willis Nichols, farmed alfalfa, sweet potatoes and watermelon before he planted almonds in the 1960s. I grew up in agriculture in the Patterson area, and I began working with almonds when my wife and I got married in 1980.



Steve Moeller examining an almond just prior to harvest

AF: What motivated you to continue your family's *Blue Diamond* membership after all these years?

SM: Stability. I was busy working as a pharmacist, as well as a hands-on farmer. I didn't want to have to track down payments for my almond crops. I don't have to do that with *Blue Diamond*. *Blue Diamond* was going through a rough patch in the 1980s and some growers went to independent handlers, but I didn't want to do that. I'd drop my product off and the banker would say, "*Blue Diamond*, you'll get your money." *Blue Diamond* is dependable, and the payments come through quickly. I like farmer-owned co-ops like *Blue Diamond* because you may not always get the top dollar, but you're going to get near the top dollar, and there's stability and assurance that you will be paid.

AF: Now let's talk a little bit about *Blue Diamond's* Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP). Why did you decide to join OSIP?

SM: We were already doing some of what OSIP required that wasn't being reported, so when *Blue Diamond* started putting a financial incentive value to what we were already doing, we thought, why not get credit for it? I retired from the pharmacy recently, and I am still farming with my sons. I had a talk with them years ago and I decided that if they



Andrew (L) and Steve (R) Moeller with their regional manager, Kenny Miyamoto (C)

want to run the farm, great! They both wanted to continue farming, and they've learned how to do it all. They handle repairs, reports, accounting, fabrication, installations, building and maintenance, as well as the day-to-day farming. We do as much as we can ourselves to cut back on costs, so it's been a blessing to have them both. They are very good at what they do. So yeah, it comes down to the dollars. We were already planting cover crops, so if you're going to pay me to do that, I might as well take advantage of whatever I can and do the little extra work to get the extra money.

AF: Do you feel like it's been worthwhile doing the extra work for OSIP and CSG?

SM: Yes, but you need to do certain things. You must consider when to terminate your cover crop, what the impacts are to mowing vegetation in the middles, and how it impacts you at harvest.

Conditioning the almonds once they are in windrows can be an important consideration. Conditioners remove most of the extraneous wood, soil and debris from the crop prior to picking up. My son, Andrew, said that in one 40-acre field he cut out three hours of picking up time by using a conditioner. The conditioner can make all the difference in the world when picking up.

AF: Regarding the implementation of the practices for OSIP and the USDA CSG grant, which have been the easiest and hardest and what practices do you anticipate will have long term agronomic benefits?

SM: The hardest part of the OSIP implementation is the paperwork. We were already doing most of the cover crop



Andrew Moeller explaining differences in almond varieties to Blue Diamond's Jillian Luna while Kenny Miyamoto looks on

work. A lot of growers already focus on water penetration, soil revitalization and caring for the bees. But you must get it registered in the program. So, we do the paperwork because we get paid for doing it. If I can get paid per acre to do the cover crop, which I'm already doing now, and Blue Diamond is going to buy me the seed, then why not? It does cause problems at harvest, though.

AF: What are the problems with cover crop at harvest?

SM: Getting the cover crop seed to germinate at the proper time is the first challenge. For a lot of people, that means relying on rainfall. If your irrigation system can adequately cover the middles, you can irrigate the crop up. Orchards using drip irrigation will not be able to get water to the middles and you're forced to rely on winter rainfall.

The next challenge is when to terminate the cover crop. Obviously, you want the cover crop to bloom so you have food for the bees prior to the start of the almond bloom. If you let the cover crop grow through the almond bloom, it can get pretty tall, depending on what you planted. You'll want to time the termination of the cover crop to have a clean orchard floor in time for harvest. It can be hard to get the cover crop to dry and deteriorate in time.

Gophers can be a challenge too. The gophers will feed on the cover crop roots, and the tall cover crop plants will hide their mounds, making it difficult to see and maintain them. So, they can be quite damaging to the trees' root systems.

AF: How has the farm benefited from OSIP? And what benefits do you see for the next generation of almond farmers, this fifth generation of farming Moellers who are being trained up?

SM: Number one is the financial benefit. But even if there was no incentive, we're already doing a lot. Getting recorded for your Double or Triple Diamond requires paperwork and time. It's meeting with your regional manager to get your stuff lined out, taking pictures, and turning the documents in. It's the stuff that no farmers really like to do. It does take time, but you're going to do it. And it's financially rewarding. *Blue Diamond* is incentivizing growers to assist in growing the market for our crops. As growers, we help *Blue Diamond* promote our crops, which ultimately comes back to all of us.

There is also a benefit to our soils. Cover crop helps restore the organic compounds within the soil, it's the natural way of doing it. We also do moisture monitoring in our orchards. Irrigating is not cheap, and we don't want to flush our fertilizers into the groundwater. Monitoring our soil moisture levels and the needs of the trees means that I'm not putting anything further than a three-foot root zone. It's simply a matter of documentation. And it's also what I like to do to ensure that we're not causing problems for the next generation.



AF: Would you recommend your fellow *Blue Diamond* members to join OSIP? Why or why not?

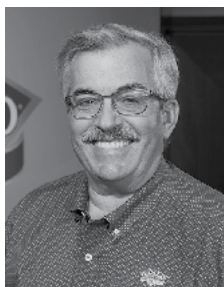
SM: It's a matter of personal choice. If you don't mind the paperwork and all that goes into it, it's very rewarding. Just like with schooling, you see kids who are motivated and kids who are not. Same with farming and OSIP. You're getting incentives to do what you should be doing anyway. The reason why I do it is because I care, and *Blue Diamond* has put an incentive out there for us to do it. I care about the land, the next generation, and the incentives. Money is not what it once was. You're looking at everything you can to get a penny, so a penny a pound goes a long way for your bottom line. By doing these things, *Blue Diamond* has shown their concern in doing the right thing to the purchaser and thus will likely get a higher return because it's what the buyers want to see.

AF: Do you have any closing thoughts for your fellow almond farmers?

SM: *Blue Diamond* is a group of good people to work with and is valuable in improving the farmer's bottom line so we can keep farming. Again, it's so helpful to receive extra money for practices many of us are already doing. ♦



Jillian Luna,
Communications
Manager,
Blue Diamond
Growers



Mel Machado,
Vice President,
Member
Relations,
Blue Diamond
Growers



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THE BEE BOX

Planting Precision: Overview of Planting Methods for Winter Cover Crops in Almonds

Benefits of Cover Cropping in Almond Orchards

Cover cropping is becoming a more widely adopted practice across the almond industry, offering a practical and cost-effective solution to many operational challenges while enhancing ecosystem benefits in the orchard. Cover cropping supports various agronomic goals, such as improving soil health, reducing erosion, improving water infiltration and improving pollinator populations. By planting winter cover crops after harvest, when almond trees are dormant and orchard activities are minimal, growers can improve soil health and boost crop vitality with minimal disruption to usual operations. As the 2024 almond harvest comes to a close, the time to plant cover crops is now. This article will provide an overview of the key considerations and best practices for different planting methods.

Timing and Preparation

In almond orchards, winter cover crops can be planted from early fall through winter. In much of California, planting in early to mid-October is ideal, as it allows growers to take advantage of seasonal rains, align cover crop bloom with almond bloom, and provide the longest possible growing period. While early October is optimal, many growers opt to plant through November and into early December, adjusting based on weather, harvest schedules, and individual timing needs. According to the Almond Board of California's Cover Crop Best Management Practices guide, seeding before December is recommended to ensure adequate soil temperatures and day length for reliable germination and establishment. The most critical factor in determining planting time is water availability — seeding before orchard irrigation or anticipated rainfall significantly increases the likelihood of planting success.

Soil type, seed mix, budget and existing equipment will all influence your planting method and preparation. The most common methods for planting cover crops in almonds are broadcasting or using a seed drill—either grain drills or no-till drills.

For optimal results, it's best to plant in a prepared seedbed. Light tillage or aeration may be needed to break up compaction, reduce weeds and create a more favorable environment for seedling emergence. If you're using a broadcaster or grain drill, a light tillage pass is recommended to prepare the seedbed. With no-till drills, thorough bed preparation becomes less crucial, as they can handle more crop residue or slight surface crusting, reducing the need for soil disturbance to achieve a good stand.





Seed Planting Methods

Broadcaster

- What** A broadcast seeder is a mechanized device that is used to evenly scatter seeds or materials over the soil surface.
- Why**
- Versatile and easy to use method
 - Available in a variety of sizes and applications
 - Best for beginning cover croppers and small size farms



Seed Drill

- What** A seed drill plants seeds for crops by positioning them in the soil and burying them at a specific depth.
- Why**
- Offers precision control over seed placement
 - Can increase seed germination rates
 - Can save on seed costs for large acreages



Pros

- Generally more affordable than other options
- Easy to use and calibrate
- Lower maintenance costs
- Widely available
- Can be used for other tasks

Cons

- Typically requires more seed than seed drills
- Can have lower germination rates than drills
- Requires seed to be incorporated into the soil
- Less control over seed placement than seed drills
- Requires a clean, well prepared seed bed

Pros

- Greatest level of control in seed placement
- Generally offers better germination
- Requires less seed
- Permits for a rougher seed bed
- Can allow for later planting in the season

Cons

- Typically more expensive than broadcasters
- Harder to use and maintain
- Not widely available in California
- Emitters can clog, leaving unplanted areas
- Can be difficult to road transport

Cover Crop Planning Guide. For more information or to view the full guide visit: [SFB+Planning-Planting-Termination+Guide-2024-1.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#) Photo courtesy of Seeds for Bees®

Broadcasting

Broadcast units are a widely available and affordable option. Broadcasters scatter the seed across the surface of the soil and are a popular method for planting cover crops. It is recommended to loosen the soil bed before spreading the seed. Once broadcasted, measures should be taken to incorporate the seed into the soil. Seed can be shallowly incorporated into the soil with a pass using your existing equipment, such as a roller or cultipacker, a light disking, or dragging a piece of chain link fence to ensure adequate seed-to-soil contact.

Sandier soils are more favorable for broadcasting seed as they provide a fluffy seedbed conducive to seedling germination. In contrast, compacted or crusted soils will require more attention to bed preparation. If broadcasting into heavy clay or crusted soils, a light disking may be needed to create a seedbed suitable for germination. If you have heavy soils or are in a particularly dry region, a seed drill or no-till drill may be a better option to address these potentially limiting conditions.

Upper left: seed size comparisons are being made while calibrating a SureFeed Broadcaster to plant cover crop seeds in an almond orchard. Bottom left: A chain link fence is dragged behind a mule to incorporate seeds after being broadcasted. Photos courtesy of Project Apis m.



Seed Drill planting over crops. Photo courtesy of Project Apis m.



Uniform planting and seedling emergence after planting with a seed drill. Photo courtesy of Project Apis m.

Seed Drills

Drilling is a more precise and efficient way to plant cover crop. Seed drills provide greater control over seed placement, resulting in more uniform planting and improved germination rates. Drilling ensures better seed-to-soil contact, which is critical for good germination, and requires less seed to cover an area compared to broadcasting.

The ability to control seeding depth is one of the key benefits to using a seed drill. Different seeds or seed mixes have specific requirements for depth and spacing. Some seed mixes with larger seeds can be placed deeper to improve coverage and moisture contact, while smaller seeds might require shallow planting for better seedling emergence.

Check that disc openers are sharp and that settings are accurate for your seed mix's desired seeding depth and rate. Monitor the seeder as you work, adjusting as needed to maintain the proper seeding rate and depth. It's better to err on the side of planting too shallow rather than too deep, which risks seedlings not being able to emerge.

Proper calibration is essential to ensure efficient seed use and successful stand establishment. Well-calibrated equipment allows you to control the seed rate, ensuring the right amount of seed is distributed throughout the orchard middles. This prevents under-seeding, which can lead to poor crop density, or over-seeding, which can cause competition and stunting among plants (not to mention wasting valuable seed).

Conclusion

Cover cropping offers significant benefits for almond orchards, enhancing soil health, reducing erosion, increasing water infiltration and supporting healthy honey bee hives. The success of cover cropping depends on tailoring your approach to your specific orchard conditions, including factors like orchard age, soil type, and irrigation system. These elements will guide your choice of seed mix and the most effective planting method for your situation.

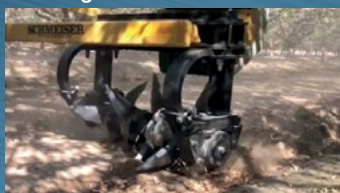
As you consider incorporating cover crops into your operation, plan ahead and start small, scaling up as you gain experience. Engage with fellow growers or seek advice from professionals to refine your approach. Remember, a new management practice will take several seasons to master. The investment is worthwhile. Over time, cover crops can improve soil health and reduce both the frequency and costs of inputs like fertilizers and pesticides. The benefits of cover crops compound year over year, improving soil structure, water retention, and nutrient cycling, making your orchard more resilient and profitable for the long term.

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Seeds for Bees® has partnered with *Blue Diamond* to support the adoption of cover crops and other pollinator and soil-health practices. For more information on cover crops, including guides on planting and seed selection, please visit projectapism.org or contact Brett LeDuc, Climate Smart Habitat Manager at Brett@projectapism.org ♦



Brett LeDuc,
Climate Smart
Habitat Manager,
Project Apis m.

References:

1. Almond Board of California. Cover Crops Best Management Practices. July 2021, https://www.almonds.com/sites/default/files/2021-07/Cover%20Crops%20Best%20Management%20Practices%20BMPs_0.pdf



Boosting Pollinators with Cover Crops

Cover crops offer critical forage for bees, enhancing pollination and supporting the vitality of rented hives. When bees arrive in late winter, natural forage is scarce leaving bees with limited access to food. By planting cover crops that bloom before, during and after almond bloom, growers provide bees with the nutritious food source that keeps them healthy and productive.

Early blooming cover crops provide a nutritional boost that helps to kick-start hives out of winter dormancy. When bees discover these abundant food sources, they stimulate brood production, increasing the hive's pollinating workforce. This creates a positive feedback loop, with healthier, more vigorous pollinators ensuring better pollination outcomes for the orchard.

The seed mixes available through Seeds for Bees® and the USDA-funded Climate-Smart Grant are designed to bloom at these critical parts of the year when pollinators need it most. For more information on cover crops and to sign up to receive free seed please visit our website at projectapism.org/sfb-home

THE ALMOND BOARD

Prime Time Returns for California Almonds

The Almond Board of California (ABC) has once again partnered with NFL legend and college football coach Deion “Prime Time” Sanders to promote the health benefits of almonds through their “Own Your Prime” campaign. After a resounding success in its first year, the campaign is set to return for a second season, bringing with it a fresh wave of enthusiasm, new content, and an expanded reach.

Building on Success: Why Prime Time is Back

Last year’s “Own Your Prime” campaign exceeded all expectations, capturing the attention of not only almond growers and industry insiders but also the general public. Deion Sanders, known for his charisma and larger-than-life persona, was the perfect ambassador for a campaign focused on staying in peak physical condition, no matter your age.

Laura Morin, ABC’s director of global market development in North America and China, expressed her excitement about continuing the partnership. She said, “We’re thrilled to have secured Coach Prime for another year. His energy, professionalism, and genuine love for almonds made last year’s campaign an overwhelming success. We couldn’t have asked for a better partner, and we’re eager to see what year two will bring.”

A Strategic Media Blitz

The renewed campaign isn’t just about riding the coattails of last year’s success; it’s about expanding its impact. ABC has meticulously planned a strategic media blitz, ensuring the campaign reaches a broader audience. According to Morin, the campaign will be featured in a variety of high-profile publications, including Sports Illustrated, GQ, The Sporting News, ESPN, and even lifestyle outlets like People magazine. This diverse media presence is designed to reinforce the message that almonds are not just a healthy snack, but an essential part of a lifestyle aimed at peak performance.



Coach Deion “Prime Time” Sanders proudly showing off a California almond on the football field

“We’ve already had one media session that included these major publications,” Morin said. “The coverage we’re expecting will be phenomenal, reaching both hardcore sports enthusiasts and a more general audience interested in health and wellness.”

New Content, Same Prime Energy

The content for this year’s campaign has been refreshed to keep the message lively and engaging. Morin highlighted that a significant portion of the campaign’s success last year was due to the compelling content featuring Sanders. To ensure they had enough high-quality material for this year, ABC dedicated an entire day to filming with Coach Prime.

“We spent a full eight hours shooting new content, including digital and social assets, videos, and still images,” Morin explained. “We loaded the schedule with a ton of different shots and ideas, thinking we’d have to cut some of them. But Deion was such a pro — he nailed every shot so perfectly that we ended up finishing early.”

Sanders’ genuine enthusiasm for almonds shone through during the shoot. “He truly believes in almonds,” Morin shared. “He really does eat them regularly on his own, which makes this partnership feel so authentic.”

Reaching New Heights

With the campaign already in full swing, the Almond Board of California is optimistic about its impact. The ads are scheduled to air during the fall college football season, strategically placed to capture the attention of a sports-loving audience.

For California almond growers, the campaign is not just about boosting sales but also about enhancing the public perception of almonds as a versatile and healthful product. By aligning with a figure like Deion Sanders, who embodies peak performance and a winning mindset, ABC aims to position almonds as a key component of a balanced diet for anyone looking to stay at the top of their game.

The Perfect Partnership

The partnership between ABC and Deion Sanders appears to be a match made in marketing heaven. Morin described the collaboration as not only effective but also enjoyable. "It was easy and fun to work with him. Deion and his team went above and beyond, proving to be true professionals. We knew we wanted to do this again because it was such a positive experience for everyone involved."

As the campaign continues to roll out, ABC is confident that the "Own Your Prime" message will resonate even stronger this year, reaching new audiences and reinforcing the idea that almonds are a prime choice for anyone looking to fuel their active lifestyle.

Looking Ahead

The "Own Your Prime" campaign with Deion Sanders is more than just a marketing initiative; it's a statement about the future of almonds in the competitive health and wellness market. With Sanders as the face of the campaign, ABC is poised to continue its mission of promoting almonds as a nutritious, natural, and powerful food that supports an active and healthy lifestyle.

For growers, this campaign represents a golden opportunity to elevate the perception of their product, reaching new consumers who might not have considered almonds as part of their daily routine. As the campaign unfolds, it will be exciting to see how this partnership evolves and the impact it has on the almond industry.

Article contributed by the Almond Board. ♦

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TIME TO CONSIDER

By the time this article is published growers will be finishing up this year's harvest. It is also the time of year where you will look at delivery statements. You might be wondering what caused your rejects. Every year it feels like the almond industry faces a new pest. Navel orangeworm (NOW), leaffooted bugs, stink bugs, ants, carpophilus beetle...the list goes on. In this article I will address the damage these insects cause and what the actual damage looks like so you can see the difference amongst this ever-growing list of pests.



Pinhole damage caused by NOW. Photo credit: Mel Machado



Large NOW larvae. Photo credit: Mel Machado

brown head. However, the biggest indicator is the crescent shaped mark right behind the worm's head. Now that harvest is coming to an end, the first attempts to control this pest lie in winter sanitation by removing overwintering habitat for this pest. As more studies are conducted on this pest, new techniques develop to control it. I will share those with you once available.

Let's start with the longstanding number one pest on a grower's hit list: **navel orangeworm (NOW)**. NOW is still the largest driver for rejects in the almond industry. Growers focus on year-long programs to try to reduce and control this pest. This includes winter sanitation, mating disruption and treatments with insecticides. What does the damage from this pest look like? Only the NOW larva feed on the kernel. They remove the skin of the nut and eat the meat. You will usually find large frass and webbing that is left from the larva feeding. The larva itself is a pinkish/cream color with a dark

color with a brownish head and two brownish projections at the end of the abdomen. The damage on the kernel is different compared to NOW. While carpophilus does feed on the kernel, it causes little to no damage to the skin of the nut. The frass has a fine, powdery consistency that's white in color and can be intermixed with nut meat meal left behind from feeding. Control of this pest is still uncertain, but research is currently under way. The first battle was learning that this pest exists, so if we want to win the war, we need to learn how to control it!



Carpophilus damage. Photo credit: Mel Machado

Rounding out the big three, or maybe four now, is damage caused by **leaffooted bugs** and **stink bugs**. The leaffooted bug is easy to identify since it has a small appendage on its hind leg that looks like a leaf. Stink bugs can be a little more difficult since we have multiple species in the orchard. The two that cause damage are the green stink bug which is a native species to California; they look just like they sound. The second, possibly more worrisome stink bug, is the invasive brown marmorated stink bug also known as BMSB. The damage caused by each of these pests is very similar. Each feed on the nut using piercing/sucking mouthparts, much like a mosquito. The feeding causes a clear gumming to extrude from the nut. This damage will either cause the nut to abort or leave the reject known as "brown spot." Monitoring for this pest is still the best tactic to prevent damage.

Lastly, I wanted to talk about two pests that are usually a second thought. **Ants** can cause severe damage, but much of it is not seen on your grower statements. Ants feed on the meat of the nut but will leave the skin of the almond intact. I like to say they leave the crust of the bread. These



Evidence of carpophilus feeding. Photo credit: Mel Machado

The **carpophilus beetle** has garnered ample attention this year, and for good reason. Both the adult and the larva feed on the nut, and a control strategy for this pest has yet to be established. The adults are small, only about 2-3 millimeters long. The larva is a creamy white



Webbing caused by spider mites.
Photo credit: Mel Machado

leftover remnants of damage are easily blown out by the harvester and during the hulling process. Just as with plant bugs and stink bugs, monitoring ant colonies is the best strategy to control them. This year, many growers dealt with **mites**. Due to the mites' webbing habits, many orchards looked like they were ready for Halloween in August. Mites do not specifically cause any rejects in almonds, but they can reduce your production for the following year. The webbing can cause early defoliation, which reduces the chances of the tree producing and storing carbohydrates for developing fruiting buds. To put it simply: No leaves = fewer almonds. Mites should be treated when populations are excessive. Before an application is made, you must monitor your beneficial insect populations, such as the six-spotted thrip, and see if mite populations are increasing or spreading. Six-spotted thrips are ferocious feeders and will keep mite populations from exploding. If you are not seeing an increase in mite population, it may be your beneficial insect population that's keeping them in check.

There are more pests that cause rejects than I listed above, but these are the few that cause the majority of the damage. If you faced any of these pests this year, now is the time to start planning your control measures for 2025. The best plan of action is to arrange a meeting with your Pest Control Adviser (PCA) and review your grower statements to see where the majority of your rejects came from. I like to say that next year's crop starts when the last nut from this year's crop leaves the field. So, it's time to start protecting your crops now! ♦

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