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115th Annual Meeting: Blue Diamond Growers Details Strategic Actions to Maximize Grower Returns

Farmer-owned cooperative advances long-term competitiveness through operational restructuring, brand innovation and global expansion

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Blue Diamond Growers, the world's leading almond cooperative, held its 115th annual meeting on Nov. 19 in Modesto, highlighting a year defined by bold operational decisions and strategic transformation.

Kai Bockmann, president and CEO, Blue Diamond Growers, shared with growers in attendance that the cooperative navigated a challenging year by responding with urgency and clarity to strengthen long-term competitiveness and grower returns.

"Our industry is facing real headwinds, from rising input costs and pest-related crop damage to persistent market volatility," Bockmann said. "But we must stay focused on what matters most: maximizing returns for our growers while building a cooperative that will thrive for generations to come. The actions we are taking position us to do exactly that."

At the meeting, Blue Diamond's leadership outlined concrete steps taken to enhance operational efficiency and strengthen the cooperative's market position across three strategic pillars.

Transforming Operations to Drive Efficiency

Earlier this year the cooperative announced plans to close its Sacramento manufacturing plant and consolidate operations to the existing Turlock and Salida facilities. The move will maximize efficiencies while moving the manufacturing facilities even closer to the almond-growing regions that are at the heart of the cooperative. The transition strengthens both efficiency and sustainability while honoring Blue Diamond's commitment to growers.

"It comes down to one fundamental thing: build a stronger and more profitable Blue Diamond that provides the best return for our growers' almonds," Bockmann said. "We've made the tough calls this year with decisions that position us for long-term success."

Driving Brand Performance and Innovations

Despite category softness, Blue Diamond maintained the No. 1 position in both Almondmilk and Snack Almonds. The cooperative executed its first brand refresh in more than two decades, laying critical groundwork for renewed consumer engagement. The year saw the successful launch of new product lines including Almonds and More mixed nuts and almondfruit produce blends in partnership with Oppy® to help establish a presence and ignite growth in the produce section. Additionally, limited-time flavors – including Cherry Slurpee® and Mike's Hot Honey® – drove consumer excitement and helped the brand remain top-of-mind in a competitive marketplace.

Expanding within International Markets

Blue Diamond continues to expand its international footprint across multiple regions and segments. In Canada, the cooperative grew distribution with major retailers at a pace faster than both category and private-label growth. Strategic beverage partnerships and pipeline opportunities took shape in Japan, while new flavor tests launched across Europe for broader retailer expansion. The cooperative also strengthened its core almond segment leadership with in-shell almonds showing impressive growth in key markets including India, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

Announcing the 2025 Chairman's Grower Ambassador of the Year Award

At the annual meeting, Blue Diamond's Board Chairman Steve Van Duyn presented the 2025 Chairman's Grower Ambassador Award to George Goshgarian Jr., a Blue Diamond grower whose family has farmed with the cooperative for nearly 50 years. Goshgarian Jr. is from Fresno and is completing his MBA at Fresno Pacific University School of Business.

Blue Diamond Board Chairman, Steve Van Duyn (left), presents the 2025 Chairman's Grower Ambassador Award to George Goshgarian Jr., a Blue Diamond grower from Fresno whose family has farmed with the cooperative for nearly 50 years.

For more than 13 years, Goshgarian Jr. has served in various capacities at the Almond Board of California, including the Environmental Committee, Almond Quality and Food Safety Services Committee, and Strategic Ag Innovation Committee. He also served on the Board of Directors for eight years, including two terms as vice chair. He values being part of a team that creates solutions to challenging industry issues and serves as a voice for farmers.

"Serving at the Almond Board gives even the smallest farming operation a seat at the table," Goshgarian Jr. said. "I've been very proud to represent Blue Diamond at the Almond Board of California for more than a decade."

Bockmann concluded the annual meeting with remarks reflecting the cooperative's readiness for the years ahead.

"Our balance sheet is strong, our strategy is clear, and our team is energized to execute," he said. "The coming year – and beyond – is about translating strategy into results. We do this in service to our growers, and we're confident in the direction and path forward."

About Blue Diamond

Blue Diamond Growers, a grower-owned cooperative representing approximately 3,000 of California's almond growers, is the world's leading almond marketer and processor. Established in 1910, it created the California almond industry and opened world markets for almonds. Blue Diamond is dedicated to delivering the benefits of almonds around the world and does so by providing high-quality almonds, almond ingredients, and branded products. Headquartered in Sacramento, the company employs more than 1,800 people throughout its processing plants, receiving stations and gift shops. To learn more about Blue Diamond Growers, visit www.bluediamond.com and follow the company on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

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