



**Blue Diamond Growers: May 2026 Almond Crop Estimated at 2.69 Billion Pounds**

As the world’s largest almond handler, Blue Diamond Growers is well-positioned to provide a comprehensive and reliable view of the conditions shaping the 2026 California almond crop. Established in 1910, we are the largest almond cooperative in the world, representing nearly 3,000 growers spanning from Red Bluff in the north to Mettler in the south. This gives us an extensive reach and provides strong insight into the conditions in which California almonds are produced.

Blue Diamond Growers expects the 2026 almond crop may fall in the 2.675 to 2.72 billion-pound range, consistent with recent seasons. Within that range, based on current conditions and performance, the estimate reflects a crop of about 2.69 billion pounds. This report outlines the factors that inform our crop range and will guide the outlook as the season progresses.

We are providing a crop estimate range based on the following data:

- Orchard-to-orchard comparisons using historical delivery data to compare against crop potential for current crop
- Varietal-based grower survey across all geographies
- Valley-wide observations, conducted over more than 12,000 miles of orchard coverage, focused on macro-conditions by 10 Blue Diamond in-field managers
- Public and BDG proprietary data used to quantify regional acreage trends, including age, yield patterns, and additional key indicators

To develop this estimate, the cooperative draws on orchard level comparisons, grower surveys, field assessments, and regional acreage and yield data. The range also incorporates the economic, water, acreage, and weather pressures that continue to influence yield potential and shape statewide production.

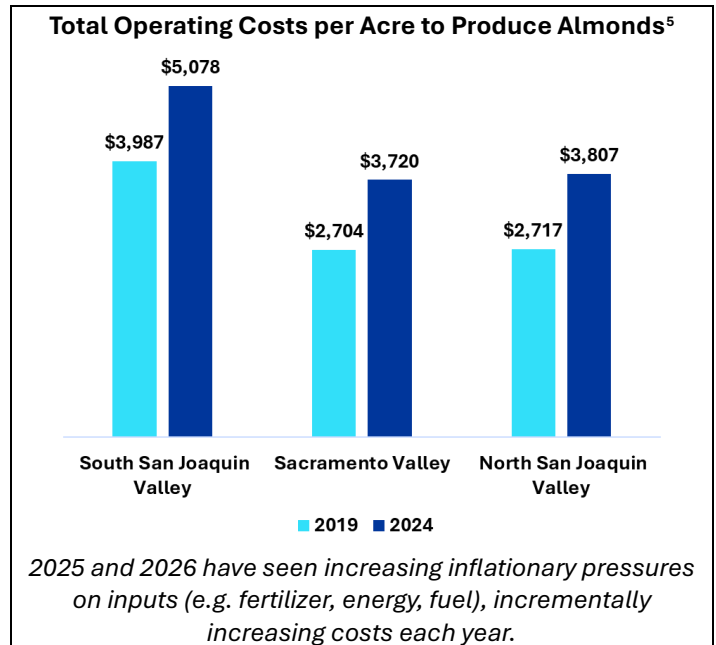
**Crop Influences**

As the season progresses, future reports will refine the range and validate or update our crop yield assumptions. Several factors will influence the crop in the coming months.

**Economics**

Grower economics have a direct impact on crop yield potential. Returns for growers were under \$2 per pound in four of the past five years,<sup>1</sup> often below production costs. As a result, some growers cut essential activities including pest management and nutrition programs, reducing overall yields. In the most severe cases, some growers abandoned orchards because they could no longer afford basic operations.

Growers are facing higher input costs for 2026, with fuel rising an estimated 50%,<sup>2</sup> energy (groundwater pumping cost) increasing steadily,<sup>3</sup> and fertilizer 30%<sup>4</sup> up from last year, driven largely by conflict in the Middle East. These increases are forcing growers to scrutinize every orchard activity and stretch limited budgets. Ongoing economic pressure is expected to keep yield potential low. Even with better market conditions, higher costs still limit growers’ ability to reach full crop potential, and no major changes in cultural practices are expected compared with the previous five seasons.



<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (2025). *California Almond Forecast: May 2025*.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2026). *California No. 2 diesel retail prices (dollars per gallon)*.

<sup>3</sup> Pacific Gas and Electric Company. (2019-2026). *Electric rates*. PG&E.

<sup>4</sup> Based on industry feedback.

<sup>5</sup> University of California, Davis, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. *Almond Cost and Return Studies (2019–2024)*.



### **Acreage**

Land IQ estimates 1,398,081 standing acres for 2026 and 1,385,870 bearing acres after accounting for 12,211 acres projected to be removed by August 31, marking the first decline in bearing acreage since 1995.<sup>4</sup> The reduction reflects fewer new plantings in the southern San Joaquin Valley and modest gains in the Sacramento Valley and northern San Joaquin Valley, where water is more reliable, but yields are typically lower. More difficult to quantify is the number of low or minimal care, or abandoned orchards that still count as bearing in the Land IQ imagery. In the 2025 Land IQ Final Acreage Estimate, nearly 20,000 acres showed severe stress and another 17,000 showed moderate stress, all included in bearing acreage.<sup>4</sup> The 2026 stressed acreage figures will be reported in Land IQ's final update later this year. These stressed or unharvested acres depress true yield per acre, and similar conditions are expected this year, as growers facing high costs often cannot afford full management or orchard removal.

### **Water**

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and inconsistent snowpack are now reshaping the consistency of water supply for California. Fresno, Kern, and Madera, representing three of the top four counties of acreage, are seeing the greatest impact and account for 44% of 2025/26 orchard removals.<sup>6</sup> State and federal water allocations remain low at 30%<sup>7</sup> and 20%,<sup>8</sup> respectively, even though reservoirs are above historical averages. Weak snowpack this past winter will limit runoff and force water conservation. Some local irrigation districts have full water supplies, but many growers with limited water are prioritizing younger orchards, removing or scaling back care on older blocks, and experiencing water related yield stress. Crop potential will depend on how allocations change as the season progresses.

### **Current Conditions**

#### **Pre-to Post Bloom Influence**

Bloom conditions set the tone for crop potential. This year, low chilling hours, elevated bloom temperatures alongside adverse weather that significantly limited bee activity, and rapid flower development all constrained pollination. With record-high March temperatures, we may see a reduction in kernel size. The crop also appears to be developing about two weeks ahead of expectations because of the temperature variation.

#### **Current Crop Development Observations**

Regional differences continue to shape California's almond crop outlook, with climate, soils, water, and

orchard conditions driving distinct outcomes across the Central Valley.

In the Sacramento Valley, four storms during bloom reduced pollination and affected key varieties such as Nonpareil, Aldrich, Butte, and Padre, contributing to expectations of a crop below 2025 despite added bearing acreage. The Northern San Joaquin Valley shows stronger potential supported by younger orchards and more reliable water, with Independence and Monterey improving over last year and Butte and Padre holding steady, while severe hail and storm damage was limited to a small set of orchards. The Southern San Joaquin Valley remains the most variable region because SGMA limits groundwater, varied surface-water access, driving differences in orchard conditions. In the south, variety performance ranges from flat Nonpareil to slightly stronger Monterey, Independence, Butte, and Padre, creating a wide range of possible outcomes.



*Abandoned orchard in Kern County.*

### **Forward Outlook**

Conditions will continue to evolve across the regions over the coming weeks. We will share updates in our June Market Report and our July Crop Forecast Report, with later reports providing a more precise forecast as we progress through harvest.

**Disclaimer:** Blue Diamond's crop estimate is a forward-looking forecast based on currently available information, including field observations, grower feedback, internal historical data, and selected public sources. Actual production and receipts may differ materially due to weather, water availability, pest and disease pressure, orchard management practices, and other factors. This estimate is provided for informational purposes only and is not a statement of pricing, sales strategy, or supply commitment.

<sup>6</sup> Land IQ. (2025). *Almond Acreage & Removal Reports*. (Almond Board of California).

<sup>7</sup> California Department of Water Resources. *State Water Project Water Contractors – Table A Amounts* (2024).

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. *Reclamation announces updated 2026 water supply allocations for California* (2026).