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NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

115th Annual Meeting Recap

Advocacy Report
with Ag Council

Christmas Crept
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The annual *Blue Diamond* business meeting in Modesto, Ca

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At the annual meeting, president and CEO, Kai Bockmann shared that this was a year of transformation with higher revenues, net sales and grower payments despite market challenges. Kai and the leadership team are focused on cost reductions, innovation, and new markets to strengthen long-term success.

8 Chairman's Address

At *Blue Diamond's* annual meeting, chairman of the board, Steve Van Duyn highlighted leadership and scholarship programs supporting future ag professionals. Van Duyn expressed strong confidence in the executive team as *Blue Diamond* moves through a period of transition and future-focused strategy.

28 "Christmas Creep" Activation on Halloween

Blue Diamond launched Christmas early with a bold Halloween "Christmas Creep" activation that drew thousands to an immersive Almonds and More experience. The brand is now wrapping up its Big Ten Football presence and shifting to upcoming launches, including new almondmilk products!

32 Advocacy Report with Ag Council

The Ag Council is advocating for California's ag sector regarding the implementation of the new SB 54 packaging law. Learn about the secured amendments to limit the ultra-processed food bill (AB 1264) to school-related food. They are also seeking state funding for key climate programs that support emissions reductions within the food and ag industry.

ON THE COVER:

Christmas is around the corner, so get your holiday almonds!



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Kai Bockmann, *President and CEO*

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

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Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



"GROWING TOGETHER" ANNUAL MEETING 2025

President & CEO's Speech

It has been quite a year of change, but we are forging ahead together. It has been tough out there for many industries, especially in the food and beverage industry. For Blue Diamond Growers, revenues and net sales were up, grower payments were up, and fortunately, markets are also continuing to improve.

However, our payment relative to our industry peers was disappointing. Over the last decade, we've done well relative to our peers, but this year was different. To take accountability for the result, to provide context on how we got here, to address concerns, and to dispel rumors, leadership spent weeks traveling through the Valley to meet with many of you. Most importantly, those conversations focused on our path forward and what we are doing considering our headwinds.

If you were at our annual meeting, you heard us say that our business is in fact doing well, but this is a marathon, not a sprint. Revenues and net sales were higher than the previous year, grower payment was higher than the previous year, and our balance sheet remains very robust. This has been a year of transformation. We embarked on the biggest change journey in our history to reduce our cost structure. We accelerated our innovation pipeline to get into new products and new markets, moving away from our overdependence on *Almond Breeze®* and Snack Nuts.

The market is more volatile than ever. Consumers are shifting and we face an inflationary environment and tariff uncertainty. To win, we need to stay ahead. We need to evolve and adapt, because volatility is the new normal.

Blue Diamond has been successful for 115 years as it has shown resilience in the face of change. This year was full of change: a brand refresh, new products, new markets, and new consumers. Difficult but necessary





Mel Machado, Carmen Bourgaize, Jeff Hatfield, and Kai Bockmann

changes, including the Sacramento plant closure and corporate staff reduction, will result in long-term savings for the Cooperative. These changes do not happen overnight, but they set us up for the future. We have a culture of agility and nimbleness, and we are moving away from initiatives that don't generate a strong return for our growers.

Even though we are on a major change journey, what hasn't changed is our commitment to our growers. You are at the heart of everything we do. We are pivoting and transforming *Blue Diamond* for long-term success. We've seen 115 years of good times and some tough times. The exciting changes we are making will set us up to enjoy the good times and navigate the tough times for another 115 years.

Despite recent headwinds, we have a strong balance sheet. We have flourishing brands that continue to grow our market-leading positions. We have an unmatched innovation pipeline, and we continue to drive efficiencies and reduce costs. Most importantly, we have a highly motivated team focused only on one thing — delivering higher grower returns.

Thank you to our teammates and our board for their passion and commitment to working hard for our growers. Most importantly, thank you, our growers. You are the backbone of our *Blue Diamond* cooperative. As you look ahead, we want you to have confidence in our direction and the opportunities ahead, and confidence in knowing that we fight for you every day to drive higher returns. From my family to yours, thank you, and Happy Holidays. ♦

Kai

Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



Stephen Van Dуйn
Chairman of the Board

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD ADDRESS – ANNUAL MEETING 2025

Welcome to the 115th Annual Meeting of the Blue Diamond Growers cooperative.

Firstly, thank you to our military veterans for your service and sacrifice for our country. We are honored that you are part of our Blue Diamond family. To show our appreciation, every Veterans Day, our Blue Diamond facilities host annual flag raising ceremonies followed by breakfast for our team members and retirees who are veterans. These events are always well attended and we're grateful to have the opportunity to honor our Blue Diamond employees who are military veterans.

Thank you to John Monroe for his years serving on the board. John completed his service this year after sharing his experience, not just in almond farming, but with his engineering mind. John served as Governance Committee chair and he kept us running efficiently. He also chaired the *Blue Diamond Growers* Foundation. John's passion for the next generation of California farmers is contagious, and it is because of his dedication and strong efforts that hundreds of students have benefited from scholarships provided by the Foundation. John takes great pride in being part of the board that hired Kai as our president and CEO, stating that "Kai brings energy and focus and challenges us to think bigger and move faster to strengthen grower returns." John has been truly valuable to our Board and to California farming.

As farmers, we are Growing Together alongside our cooperative through dedication to the next generation of farmers and industry leaders. *Blue Diamond* is dedicated to fostering leadership through several programs that support current and future *Blue Diamond* members and industry professionals.

Since 1994, the *Blue Diamond* Leadership Program has had over **550** members graduate to become voices and advocates for *Blue*

Diamond and for the ag industry. While the program was on hiatus for 2025, applications for the 2026 program closed earlier this month with much anticipation for the opening session in January. The second session will follow in June. I look forward to hearing how the program influences the 2026 class and in turn, how they will influence the future of California farming. I'd like to also thank Nick Blom for serving as chair of this vital program.

Blue Diamond also supports the next generation of ag leaders by providing college scholarships to local students through the *Blue Diamond Growers* Foundation. **250** scholarships have been awarded by the Foundation since 2011. The awards aid in these students' success in achieving their goals of becoming ag professionals. Again, thank you to the Foundation's exiting president, John Monroe, for working on behalf of the next generation of farmers. Please consider supporting our Foundation and the future of California farming by supporting these students.

Since 2017, *Blue Diamond Growers* and the California Future Farmers of America (FFA) have partnered in the pursuit of investing in the next generation of farmers, food



producers, and ag leaders. Our partnership for the Give the Gift of Blue initiative during Giving Tuesday provides deserving students with FFA jackets and uniforms. Through *Blue Diamond's* and your support, FFA has provided **5,717 jackets** to students across the state – this is an incredible achievement and one we are very proud of.

We are excited to announce that for the ninth consecutive year, *Blue Diamond* will match your donations to FFA on Giving Tuesday, December 2, up to \$25,000 to help raise funds for students to receive their iconic blue jackets. Thank you all, for being such strong supporters of our FFA students, and thank you to FFA for all the work you do for farming.

The 2025 Grower Ambassador of the Year award is a third-generation almond farmer whose family has been *Blue Diamond* members for nearly fifty years. Currently in his final year of his MBA program at Fresno Pacific University School of Business, this individual has great pride in being a *Blue Diamond* member.



This year's Chairman's Ambassador of the Year award recipient is George Goshgarian Jr.

For over 13 years, George has faithfully served in various capacities at the Almond Board

including the Environmental Committee, Almond Quality and Food Safety Services Committee,

Strategic Ag Innovation Committee, Board of Directors for 8 years, and two-time vice chair. He savors being part of a team that creates solutions to challenges issues in the industry and acting as a voice of change for farmers.

To quote George, he says that "Serving at the Almond Board gives even the smallest farming operation a seat at the table. I've been very proud to represent *Blue Diamond* at the Almond Board of California for the last decade and a half."

I'm so grateful for families like the Goshgarians who keep our industry so strong. My own family remains deeply committed to *Blue Diamond* because of the dedication and hard work of our entire team—people who strive every day to deliver the best possible returns for our growers in a constantly evolving market.

Today, *Blue Diamond* is in a period of transition. While transitions can bring challenges, they are also moments of renewal and opportunity. What gives us confidence is the strength of our leadership and the unity of our cooperative.

Throughout our long history, *Blue Diamond* has navigated both prosperous and difficult seasons. Each chapter, and each CEO, has contributed unique strengths that



Left: Steve Van Duyn with John Monroe.
Right: Steve Van Duyn and George Goshgarian Jr

helped move the Co-op forward. Our leaders have built upon the foundation of those before them.

Now, as we are moving through this next chapter, I have complete confidence in our current CEO, Kai Bockmann. In his two and a half years at the helm, Kai has brought clarity, discipline, and a strategic vision that is strengthening our foundation and positioning *Blue Diamond* for a strong, successful, sustainable future.

Thank you to the *Blue Diamond* Board of Directors and our Leadership Team for walking us through the strategic plan. Kai and the team are working hard to market and sell your almonds to new and existing audiences to ensure a bright, lasting future for *Blue Diamond*. We're not going anywhere, and with this team in place, I am confident that will remain true. ♦

Stephen Van Duyn
Chairman of the Board

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Chief Agricultural Officer

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Merced County, South of Hwy 140 Madera County, North of Avenue 12, Firebaugh Blvd, Avenue 7½, & W. Nees Avenue

Carla Youngblood, (559) 240-0906



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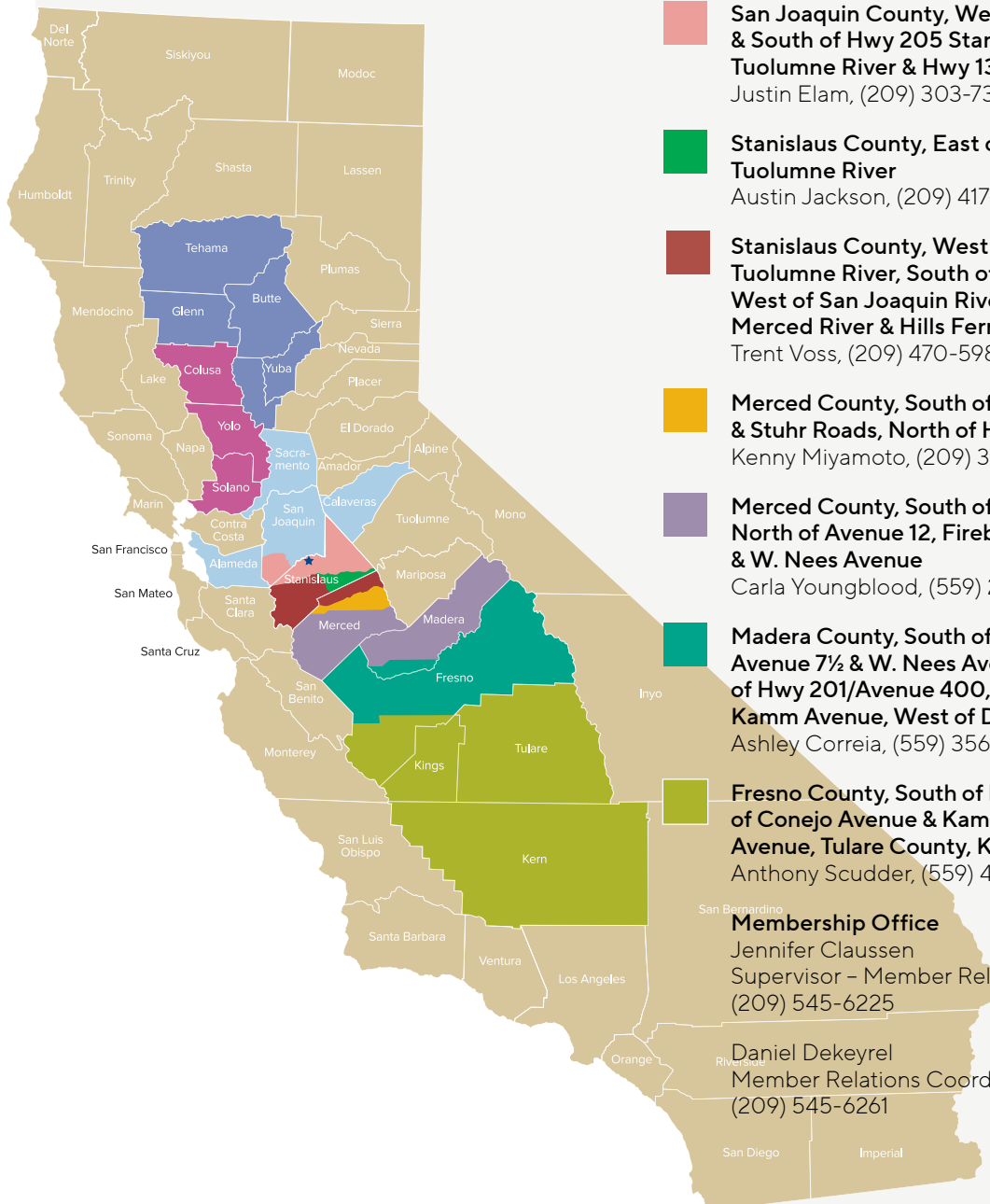
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2026 Grower Liaison Committee Members

GLC members to begin their service at the January 2026 GLC meeting.

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 P. Samantha Lewis
 Larry Bradley
 Luke Kony
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 Brian Erickson
 Ray Antonowich !
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 Catherine Marsh
 Michael Samra
 Jacob Amsler
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 JonnaLee Dunn C
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 Ryan Finnen !
 Ashley Dowden !
 Jake Amsler VC
 Joe Ferrini
 Joe Martinez
 Gabe Grimmer

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 John Thoming *
 Tim Mohler
 Jeff Stuit
 Jack Dalton VC
 Clayton Bogetti
 Don Freitas
 Andrew Kamper
 John Almeida
 Jordan Van Vliet !
 Nathan Mussi
 Michael Petz
 Zack Reinstein

DISTRICT 4

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 Kevin Fondse *
 Kenneth Roos *
 Spencer Franceschetti
 Martin Adrian
 Lukas Doornbal
 Ed Tilma
 John deVisser
 Scott Sand
 Wayne Bruns
 Joe Martin !
 Brandon Longstreth
 Connor Wagner
 Dwain Zack

DISTRICT 5

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 Neil Van Duyn *
 James Kinzie
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 Jon Beck
 Jonathan Flora
 Bob Kulina
 Cody Vella
 Naomi Layland !
 Garret Bowman
 Brandon Riddle
 Paul Vermeulen

DISTRICT 6

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 Charles Crivelli III *
 Steve Vilas *
 Steve Scheuber VC
 Allen Peterson
 Jeff Lee
 Matt Romero
 John Hack
 Stan Chance
 Trevor Cordova
 Don Clark !
 Bob Marchy
 Patrick Machado
 Bart Muller

DISTRICT 7

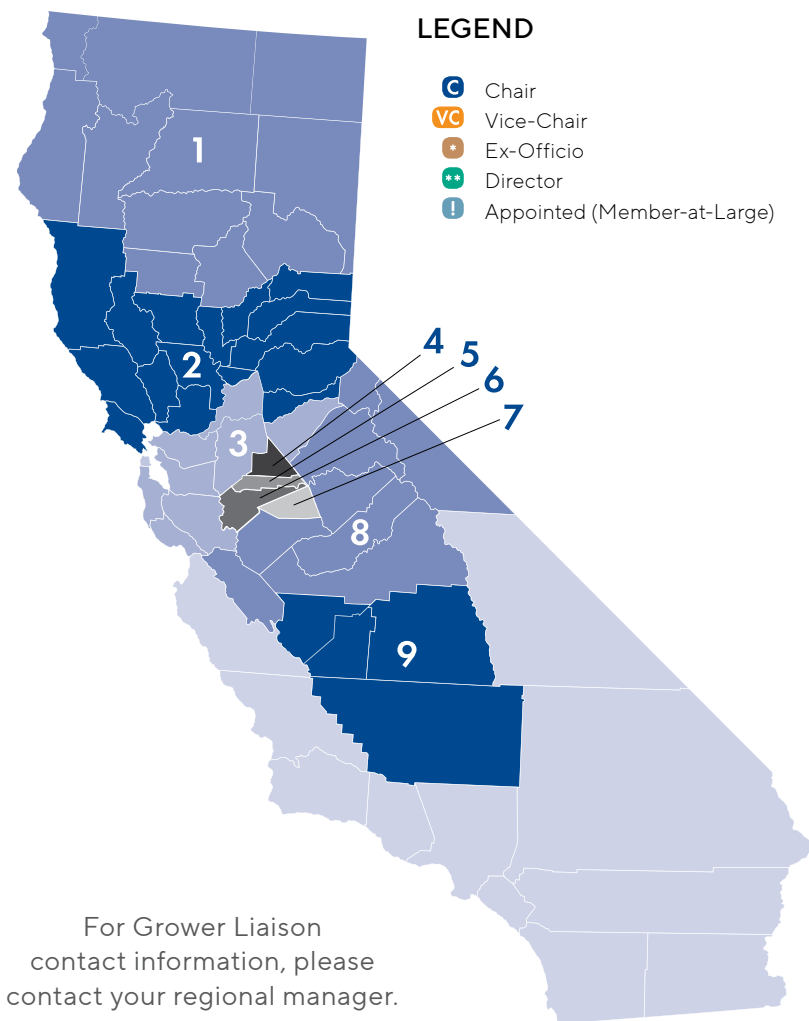
Dan Mendenhall **
 Robert J. Weimer *
 Steve Moeller
 John Pereira
 Bryan Jacobs
 Rick Scoto
 Dante Migliazzo
 Paul Atwal
 Minda Nespoli
 Jed Kruppa !
 Steve Moreda
 Scott Sherman
 Dan Smith

DISTRICT 8

Matt Efird **
 George Goshgarian *
 John Locker
 Andrew Cunha
 Ryan Metzler
 Michael Keith Smith
 Ranvir Tung
 Kam Bopari
 Mitch Bagdasarian
 Mike Mohammadi !
 Steve Bains
 Jay Mahil
 Macklin Riffel

DISTRICT 9

Kent Stenderup **
 Clinton Shick *
 Ankit Behl C
 Sam Ghilarducci
 Garrett Gilcrease
 John Allen
 Doug Kindig VC
 Brian Medeiros
 Karmjeet Jhandi
 Keith Gilbert !
 Lisa Marroquin
 Harjinder Gill
 Mark Tos



CEU Sessions

At the annual meeting, *Blue Diamond* held two grower continuing education seminars focused on general standards of care and local pesticide use updates as well as an overview of almond acreage and economic factors affecting the crop quality and pest management decisions. Speakers included *Blue Diamond*'s chief agricultural officer, Mel Machado and representatives from the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.



Industry affairs panel session with Matt Efird, Clarice Turner, Alexi Rodriguez, and Alicia Rockwell

Stronger Together: Driving the Industry Forward

This panel, moderated by Matt Efird, *Blue Diamond* board director and PAC Committee chair, brought together Clarice Turner, president and CEO of Almond Board of California, Alexi Rodriguez, president and CEO of the Almond Alliance, and Alicia Rockwell, *Blue Diamond* chief government and public affairs officer. The panel discussed the industry's most pressing challenges from crop estimates and regulatory pressures to trade, tariffs, and global market growth. The team shared how collaborative advocacy and coordinated strategies are strengthening the industry and creating new opportunities for California almond growers.

Translating Orchard Stewardship to Market Value

Blue Diamond's head of sustainability, Dr. Dan Sonke explained how *Blue Diamond* wins over new customers through growers' dedicated stewardship practices and how the Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP) and the USDA grant impact those practices.



Dan Sonke leads the stewardship session



Industry affairs panel session

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ANNUAL MEETING



"GROWING TOGETHER"
ANNUAL MEETING 2025



ALMOND MARKET UPDATE



Blue Diamond Almond Market Report – November 14, 2025

OVERVIEW

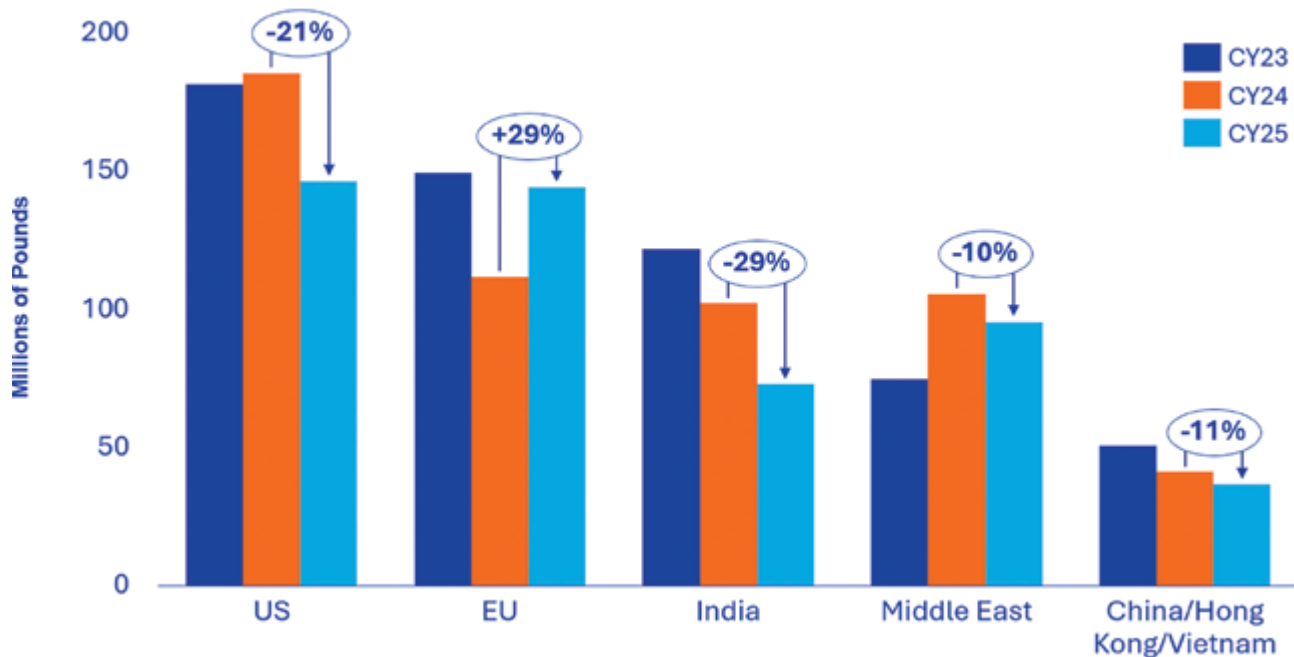
For the third month of the crop year, industry shipments totaled 249.2 million pounds, reflecting a 26% increase from last month, though 3.6% lower than the same period last year. Exports reached 201 million pounds, marking a 36% increase from last month, and a 5.2% increase compared to last year. This indicates continued strength in the international marketplace. Domestic shipments reached 48.2 million pounds, a 2.7% decrease from last month and were down 28.5% versus the prior year. While overall October shipments came in slightly below market expectations, driven primarily by softness in domestic demand, the export sector continues to show resilience. Forward momentum is expected to persist as global markets move to replenish inventories ahead of the expected holiday consumption and early-year buying cycles.

SHIPMENTS

India:

October shipments totaled 28.3 million pounds, nearly even with the prior month and down 4% from the prior year. The year-to-date gap is currently at 29%, with total shipments at 72.8 million pounds, compared to 102.1 million pounds at this time last year. October's inshell shipments show that India is still hesitant to book at California origin prices as uncommitted cargo shipped from California continues to suppress the local market pricing and sentiment. The market remains under-covered, and the timing and scale of further Indian buying will be a key driver for pricing into the end of the year.

Year-to-date Shipments (Oct)



China/Hong Kong/Vietnam:

October shipments into the region came in at 20.4 million pounds, with Vietnam once again carrying the load. The market continues to show upside, posting 30.1 million pounds for the month, which is 132% up for October and a 94% increase year to date, a remarkable run by any standard. On the flip side, China/Hong Kong remains soft, reflecting the structural slowdown we've been watching all season. Shipments were down 73% in October and 75% year to date. Combined shipments to the broader region flattened out this month, down 2% and 11% on the year. We expect to see the region pick up next month with the recent 10% tariff reduction in China.

Europe:

Europe continues to be the standout growth region early into this crop year. Total shipments to Europe reached roughly 144 million pounds year to date, up about 29% versus last year. Western Europe alone is up 31%, with Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands leading the gains. Buyers remain selective and value focused, but the growth demonstrates that European demand is stepping up to absorb a meaningful share of this year's crop.

Middle East:

Shipments to the Middle East totaled 47.2 million pounds in October, down 17.4% from the prior month and 9.6% year over year. Despite the softer results, the region remains a core growth market for California almonds. While volume growth trails Europe, demand for quality products continues to improve, with buyers increasingly targeting premium grades and larger sizes.

Domestic:

October shipments reached 48.2 million pounds, down 28.5% from the same period last year. The domestic market has now seen twelve consecutive months of softer demand, resulting in the market being down 21.2%. Corresponding commitments increased by just over 5% from last month with a decline from last year of 7.5%. Buyers have been assessing holiday projections and coverage through Q1 of 2026, waiting for a drop in pricing to determine when to step into the market, as there is ample demand to be covered for the forward ship periods.

COMMITMENTS

Total commitments currently stand at 561.5 million pounds, a 16.7% decrease from last year. New sales for the month totaled 261.8 million pounds with the domestic market layering in an additional 62.5 million pounds, while exports added an additional 199.3 million pounds of new coverage. In total, commitments for the domestic market now stand at 198.9 million pounds, and exports stand at 458.1 million pounds. Uncommitted inventory sits at 982.2 million pounds versus prior year 997.1 million pounds, down 1.5%.

CROP

Crop receipts through October reached 1.7 million pounds, reflecting a 7.9% decline compared to the previous crop year, largely driven by a slower receipt pace. Overall crop receipts are lighter, driven by lower Nonpareil yields and overall turnouts (kernel weight as a share of hull, shell, and kernel). Given these factors and analyzing year-over-year orchard comparisons, overall crop size will challenge even the viability of the Subjective Estimate's 2.8-billion-pound crop. Pollinizer receipts through December will inform overall crop size. In October, growers attempted to complete in-field harvest activities, but some were delayed by a strong weather system. The storm forced growers and hullers to adjust operations, focusing on incoming field deliveries versus running stockpiles. Higher reject levels have been observed in later-harvesting varieties; however, overall reject levels are lower than the 2023 and 2024 crop years. LandIQ will publish the 2025 Standing Acreage Final Estimate in November, providing insights into orchard removals, new plantings and bearing acres. This will inform future crop potential. ♦

Market Perspective

The October report brought greater clarity to market fundamentals and reinforced a firming tone across the industry. At present, supply is clearly tighter than last year, and export demand continues to build momentum with shipments tracking ahead of prior-year levels. As we move through the remainder of Q4 and into early 2026, market sentiment points toward a stable-to-firm trajectory, with potential for further strength should India and other key destinations accelerate coverage. As the market transitions into a more disciplined and sustainable balance between supply and demand, confidence is returning to both sides of the trade. Stable fundamentals and consistent export performance provide a strong foundation for informed purchasing decisions and long-term value creation.

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BUILT BY FARMERS FOR FARMERS...WE UNDERSTAND!

Planning for Tomorrow: *Blue Diamond* CEO Highlights Ongoing Retooling Efforts

While *Blue Diamond Growers* provided members with industry-leading returns for the past 11 years, such was not the case with the 2024 crop when the cooperative trailed some competitors.

West Coast Nut recently sat down with CEO Kai Bockmann to discuss the challenges the co-op faces, the steps it is taking to address them and the exciting opportunities Bockman sees moving forward.



To stir consumer excitement, *Blue Diamond* has launched *Almonds and More* mixed nuts, a product line it hasn't been in historically.

Q. Let's discuss a few of the challenges and the programs *Blue Diamond* has developed to address them.

Consumer preferences change very quickly. We've been on quite a ride over the last decade when non-dairy beverages saw phenomenal growth. As an example, our *Almond Breeze*® business was a big driver of our returns.

We were in an enviable position when that trend took off, and the *Almond Breeze*® business grew at an exponential rate up to 2021. Post-COVID, there's been a decline in consumption of not just almondmilk but all non-dairy beverages.

There are a couple of contributors, with one being people's paychecks only going so far. They're having to make tough choices about what to put in their grocery basket, and they're coming back to dairy milk, which is at a lower price point.

The good news is we continue to increase our share in that space. We're still the market-leading brand even though we have formidable competitors, whether it's on the almondmilk side or other non-dairy options.

We remain relevant with consumers, but we have to continue to innovate and develop new products to stay that way. As an example, we are launching a new line of

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almondmilk under our *Blue Diamond* brand with just three ingredients: almonds, water and sea salt. Having a “clean label” helps differentiate ourselves from what’s out there, and we have the brand equity because everybody knows *Blue Diamond*.

Q. What is the co-op doing to stir consumer excitement?

Shoppers tend to make their purchase decisions at the shelf within just a few seconds. We need to attract their attention. So we’re doing a total brand refresh because we haven’t changed our packaging or logo for over 20 years.

We need to bring excitement back to the category, and it’s already resonating with consumers and key retail decision-makers. We’re seeing increased turns of our products, whether it’s Mike’s Hot Honey-flavored almonds or getting into mixed nuts with Almonds and More, something we haven’t done historically.

It’s bringing a whole new generation of consumers to *Blue Diamond*. Forty percent of consumers who buy Almonds and More have never had a *Blue Diamond* product. So we’re excited about the brand relaunch, which has a whole new look and feel.

With it comes all the marketing, and not just the traditional outlets like TV and social media, but also in-store sampling. When we get people to try our product, they’re like, “Wow, this is pretty awesome.”

The good news is we’re getting increased household penetration. This year alone, we’ve added 250,000 new households to our snack nuts business. We’re also getting into the produce department, which is a different part of the store that people haven’t seen us in before.

We’ll continue to expand our portfolio to different parts of the store because we want to have an increasing share of the stomach.

Q. How have decreased domestic almond shipments weighed on the co-op?

Having a large domestic presence is a strength but also can be a detriment when consumers in that market have to tighten their belts financially. You have to have a diversified business so you’re not over reliant on any one outlet. If you look at grower returns for the 2023 crop, which was also a challenging year, our diversified business helped us outperform our industry peers.



For us, it's about not being reactive to short-term movements. We have to be agile and nimble, but at the same time we can't abandon our disciplined, methodical approach when it comes to diversified products and markets.

There are other amazing opportunities right in our backyard in the U.S.

Q. How has *Blue Diamond* reacted to the uncertain export situation?

It's a very uncertain environment, and tariffs and non-tariff barriers are changing on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. We can't focus on those elements outside our control. Instead, we focus on areas we can control.

What we can control is making sure that in the big markets like China and India, we don't put all our eggs in relatively few baskets. Take Canada as an example. We've been able to accelerate our growth even in light of the tariff situation.

It's about making sure we're in a lot of different markets. We rely on our resources to continue to lobby in Washington, D.C., to make sure lawmakers understand the impact tariffs have on our grower-members. And we're looking for opportunities like in India, where they recently backtracked some of the tariffs they had in place.

Q. How will closing the Sacramento plant benefit grower returns?

This is a journey that will take us to June 2027, and it will mean stronger returns to our growers. We're shutting down the largest almond processing plant in the world and letting go 600-plus employees so we can run as efficiently as possible.

At the end of the day, we'll have the same capabilities that we have today in two assets rather than three. (The two facilities to which he referred are in Turlock and Salida.)

We're reducing our workforce by over 40%. So if we're doing more with less, obviously it has a significant positive impact on our efficiencies and ultimately our grower returns. That's what it's all about.

Q. How is *Blue Diamond* responding to lackluster grower returns?

We're not satisfied with the 2024 returns. We know our growers aren't satisfied with them either. We made sizable investments five-plus years ago to meet forecast consumption that ultimately never materialized. Obviously, there's a cost when you make significant investments that hits the bottom line and ultimately grower returns.

The other thing I would add, we got fat in terms of overhead structure because we were trying to ramp up to match anticipated growth. Again, no one had a crystal ball, and things changed very quickly. Since I took over as CEO, we've reduced our corporate headcount to 2018 levels, and that's before we even close the Sacramento plant.

This year was a miss in terms of grower returns, but we've launched a lot of changes to ensure we regain our industry-leading position. Closing Sacramento was a difficult but necessary decision because we know it is the right decision for the longer term. If we didn't do this now, we'd ultimately pay the price down the road.

For us, it's a marathon and not a sprint. We strongly believe future returns will reflect the decisions that we made, but they'll take time.

Blue Diamond has been around for 115 years. Our balance sheet is strong, our brand is flourishing, our product is amazing, and our people have never been more fired up to deliver the best possible return to our growers. These are tough times for sure, but I have never been more excited about what's ahead.

By Vicky Boyd. Reprinted with permission from West Coast Nut magazine. ♦

The advertisement features a photograph of a microsprinkler system in operation within an orchard. The sprinkler head is visible in the foreground, with multiple nozzles spraying water in a fan pattern over the dry ground. In the background, rows of trees are visible under a clear sky. The BOWSMITH logo is prominently displayed at the top left of the image. Below the photo, a list of products is shown in bold, italicized text. At the bottom right, the company's website, address, and 'American Made'/'Family-Owned' status are provided.

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#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity



This month, *Blue Diamond* celebrated board director, Kristin Daley, for being selected as an NACD Directorship 100 honoree. Our team members had a bit of Halloween fun with a friendly costume competition. The Cooperative held its 115th annual meeting in Modesto, which was well attended and full of energy. Finally, we collaborated with influencers, the hilarious Holderness Family to bring our brand message to life. ♦





BLUE DIAMOND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

Current Investment Rates available as of December 1, 2025

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 December 1, 2025, for the program are listed here:

	Short-Term Investment Certificate (STIC)	Long-Term Investment Certificate (LTIC) (Maturity Date of 6/30/2028)
Initial Investment Required	\$1,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	4.75%	4.00%
	(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.

Cranberry & Almond Muffins

Prep Time: 25 minutes Bake Time: 20 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serves up to: 12



Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 1 Tablespoon orange zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Original Almondmilk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey
- 2 Tablespoons coconut oil, melted and cooled
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups almond flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup cranberries, thawed, if frozen
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced almonds, roughly chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350° Prepare a muffin tin with liners or spray with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, orange zest, vanilla extract, orange juice, almondmilk, honey and coconut oil together until well combined.
3. Stir in almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, and salt until just combined. Fold in cranberries and almonds. Fill each muffin cup with batter and gently press to compact.
4. Bake 20-25 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
5. Allow to cool about 10 minutes in tin, then remove to a wire rack.
6. Serve.



Developed by: Stephanie Doan, Sr. Manager Product Development, Blue Diamond Growers Research & Development

Blue Diamond Almond Flour Holiday Gingerbread Cookies

Prep Time: 120 minutes Cook Time: 12-16 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serves up to: 2½ dozen

Ingredients

2½ cups *Blue Diamond* blanched almond flour
½ cup white rice flour
½ teaspoon xanthan gum
1½ teaspoons baking soda
2½ teaspoons ground ginger
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground clove
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup packed light brown sugar
⅓ cup unsalted butter
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup molasses
½ cup sugar in a separate bowl

Directions

1. Whisk together almond flour, white rice flour, xanthan gum, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt in a large bowl and set aside. In large bowl using an electric mixer, beat butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla until well mixed. Add molasses and beat until fully combined and no dark streaks remain, scraping down the sides and beaters as needed.
2. On low speed or by hand, slowly add blended dry ingredients. Mix until dough just comes together. Do not overmix.
3. Cover dough and refrigerate for at least one hour.
4. **Preheat oven to 325°F.** Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Place ½ cup sugar in a shallow bowl.
6. Scoop dough into tablespoon size balls and roll in sugar until fully covered. Place on baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Do not flatten.
7. Bake 12-16 minutes, until the edges are set and slightly browned and tops are cracked.
8. Allow cookies to cool for about 5 minutes on the baking sheet, then gently remove to wire rack to cool completely.
9. Enjoy!

Blue Diamond Stopped Trick-or-Treaters in Their Tracks with a Bold “Christmas Creep” Activation on Halloween Night

Blue Diamond kicked off the season early this year with a bold “Christmas Creep” activation on Halloween night, celebrating the launch of the holiday-themed Almonds and More line. Leaning into the trend of earlier holiday enthusiasm, the team transformed a home on Diamond Avenue (fitting, right?) in South Pasadena into a full Christmas spectacle, complete with an Almonds and More Christmas tree, festive lights, snow machines, the Nutty Cruiser™, and a Santa photo station, weeks before anyone expected him.

More than 4,000 trick-or-treaters visited the street, stopping in their tracks as

Christmas collided with Halloween. “The energy was electric. The Santa photo booth had a line all night and the Nutty Cruiser™ was a huge draw from the street. The lights looked even more magical as soon as the sun set,” said Blue Diamond brand manager, Tom Tran. Carolers performed throughout the evening while the team handed out thousands of Almonds and More samples featuring three bold flavors: Smokehouse, Roasted Salted, and Honey Roasted.

This activation proves that when it comes to spreading joy (and delicious almonds), it’s never too early to start the celebration.



**B1G Football + Almonds
and More**

Blue Diamond will wrap up its Big Ten Football presence at Fan Fest on December 5–6, with the Nutty Cruiser on-site and strong in-game branding during the championship. A new 15-second Almonds and More digital spot launched at the end of November across Big Ten Network and Connected TV.



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Looking Ahead

December marks the shipment of *Blue Diamond*’s newest innovation—*Blue Diamond Almondmilk*, rolling out in four SKUs and showcasing at Kroger and Albertsons in January. The new year will also bring Thin Dipped promotions tied to wellness, influencer support, and additional programming across *Blue Diamond* brands. ♦



Almond Breeze® Mower Raffle Supports FFA

Blue Diamond was Thrilled to Provide an Amazing Raffle Item: A Craftsman riding mower that was featured in “The Obvious Choice” Almond Breeze® TV commercial earlier this year. The raffle was held at Blue Diamond’s 115th Annual Meeting with all ticket proceeds supporting the California FFA. The winner was announced at the meeting and attendees were thrilled to be part of an exciting raffle that supported the future leaders in California agriculture! ♦





Blue Diamond Growers Foundation Scholarship available for 2026 - 2027 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, 2026**

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 via the link: bit.ly/BDGF26-27

Scan the QR to Apply



Leading the Way through California's Bold Ambition

Will Rogers said, "I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts." In all seriousness, it can occasionally be tough to find enjoyment in operating a business in California. Our farmers meet the boldest regulatory standards in the nation, if not the world, while providing for their own families. Every now and then, the hard edges of state laws and regulations can seem impossible to smooth out.

However, through innovation, strategy, and persistence, California's ag community rises to the challenge time and time again to achieve advancements in sustainability, food safety, emissions reductions and more.

Along the way, Ag Council is here to smooth out some of those hard edges you face on the farm and in food processing facilities to help you prosper as an important part of California's diverse food ecosystem.

This year, our focus continues to be on implementation of the state packaging law, SB 54, and pursuing the most optimal outcome for *Blue Diamond* and all of our members. In addition, AB 1264 (Gabriel), the ultra-processed food bill, was a strong focus that Ag Council was heavily engaged in throughout this legislative year. Ag Council also persists in our advocacy to attain funding for key climate programs that help food and agriculture dramatically lower emissions. *Blue Diamond Growers* remains a steadfast partner in each of these advocacy efforts and others.

In all of this, Ag Council's goal is always to help you, as a grower, succeed while also supporting *Blue Diamond Growers* as one of our heritage members that has been an integral part of our membership since 1919.

Packaging Regulations

Ag Council recently led a broad coalition of food and agricultural associations in submitting comments to CalRecycle regarding the latest draft regulations of SB 54, the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act. The coalition emphasized the need for flexible compliance timelines, protection of trademarked or proprietary business information,

and compliance flexibility for packaging that protects product quality and food safety.

Our letter calls on CalRecycle to maintain the categorical exclusions achieved by Ag Council and to acknowledge the feasibility concerns of the agriculture community in complying with the Act.

For the almond sector, we are requesting that certain packaging be excluded due to food safety and the need to protect environmental and human health. Additionally, common industry protocol dictates that new packaging is tested and validated prior to commercial usage. Ag Council is making sure state regulators understand that food utilized in this process is discarded as it is not allowed for human or animal consumption. That said, testing new packaging for the purposes of this regulation could result in excessive food waste, which runs counter to California's goal to reduce organic waste.

On a positive note, almond byproducts are being tested in alternative packaging, and Ag Council is supporting investments in research and development to lower costs and improve efficiency in this space. The current options are not cost effective; however, we hope that over time, this will be an option for byproducts in the future.

To read the letter to CalRecycle, go to www.agcouncil.org/blog and scroll to the October 28 article.

Ultra-processed Food

With bipartisan support, the Legislature pursued passage of an ultra-processed food (UPF) bill, AB 1264 (Gabriel), and it was signed into law by Governor

Newsom in October. The measure defines UPF. It also requires the state to identify “UPF of concern” and “restricted school foods” and prohibits those foods in schools starting July 1, 2032.

Though the original bill applied to all food and beverages, amendments to AB 1264 ensure the bill is limited to “food and beverages intended for sale or to be served to school pupils on campus during the school day.” Ag Council was pleased with this narrowing of the bill to focus on UPF in schools.

Ag Council staff worked extensively to pursue amendments to the bill, which incorporate exclusions to the definition of UPF, such as minimally processed food (comprises roasting and smoking, among other processes), Class 1 milk, and the removal of surface finishing agents (e.g., waxes used on fruit).

We appreciate Governor Newsom for adding an amendment to AB 1264 to move regulatory authority from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Ag Council was among those who requested this change given OEHHA does not have expertise in food and nutrition.

Under AB 1264, UPF is defined as a food or beverage containing high amounts of saturated fat, sodium or added sugar, and the food or beverage contains one of the substances listed in the bill (e.g., emulsifiers, thickeners, stabilizers, colors/coloring adjuncts, flavoring agents/enhancers, non-nutritive sweeteners, or surface-active agents, etc.).

Salt, sodium chloride, natural spices and seasonings, as well as natural flavorings and colors — by themselves — do not categorize a food or beverage as UPF. Amendments were also included in AB 1264 to ensure that noncompliance with the bill does not create a private right of action, which would have made it easier to bring lawsuits.



Ag Council’s 2025 Influential Legislator Award presentation to Sen. Ashby. Chief gov’t and public affairs officer, Alicia Rockwell (first row, left) with Sen. Angelique Ashby (D-Sacramento) next to Rockwell pictured with Ag Council board members.

Though certainly not a perfect bill, Ag Council moved to a neutral position given the amendments the author added after extensive conversations, including the exclusions described above, the move to CDPH, and limiting AB 1264 to schools.

Ag Funding Key to Reducing California’s Emissions

Among the most successful programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California are those operating in the food and agriculture sector, and the programs need Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) funding to continue.

In 2025, Ag Council and over 30 ag organizations united to request funding for specific programs via GGRF that substantially reduce emissions. Unfortunately, though billions are provided for other purposes this year, agriculture’s requests were not part of the final package.

This includes programs in the top tier of all the California Climate Investment programs in terms of the significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced for the dollars spent – providing the state with a strong return on investment.

Most of the projects funded via the programs are also located in disadvantaged or low-income communities. In addition, the projects are advancing the latest technologies and serve as a model of innovation.

Going forward, Ag Council and others are working to urge legislators and Governor Newsom to commit to funding these effective matching state grant programs,

and we appreciate *Blue Diamond Growers'* support as well. Those programs are:

- **Food Production Investment Program (FPIP)**
 - \$50 million
 - emissions reductions and energy efficiency improvements in California food production and processing via competitive grants
- **Sustainable Agricultural Waste Management**
 - \$75 million
 - soil incorporation, composting, biomass, and biochar of orchards and vineyards after removal
- **Livestock Methane Reduction Programs**
 - \$75 million
 - lowering emissions on dairy farms
- **FARMER Program**
 - \$200 million
 - ag equipment upgrades for cleaner-emitting tractors, trucks, and harvesters ♦



Group from Blue Diamond participating in Ag Council's Legislative Day



*Emily Rooney,
President,
Ag Council
of California*

Legislative Conference

Ag Council sends a huge “thank you” to our *Blue Diamond* board member Alicia Rockwell and all *Blue Diamond* attendees for joining us this past spring for our Legislative Conference. Attendees spent the day reaching out to dozens of legislators to discuss critical issues, such as water, budget items, and ultra-processed food. We appreciate all who helped us amplify agriculture’s voice on these consequential issues.

Read more about Ag Council’s work at www.agcouncil.org.



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Adapting and Advancing: Supporting Growers Through Change

After a successful summer application period for our *Blue Diamond* Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) Grant, we found ourselves facing unexpected challenges. New paperwork requirements and the federal government shutdown meant we were unable to proceed with providing enrolled growers with seed material and incentive funding to implement practices outlined in the AMP Grant. This posed a major setback, not only for our cooperative but for the many growers who were eager to implement pollinator habitat.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining momentum, especially for those enrolled in our Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP), we knew we needed to act quickly. Many growers participating in OSIP aim to achieve the highest recognition level, Triple Diamond, which requires the establishment of pollinator habitat. This requirement can be met through the implementation of cover crops.

In a matter of weeks, our team pivoted. We sourced an alternative funding opportunity and established a partnership with a customer committed to advancing sustainability and pollinator health. In less than thirty days, we developed a new application, reviewed and approved submissions, finalized contracts, and distributed seed materials to participating growers.

The results were impressive; more than 10,000 orchard acres were able to implement cover crops through this new funding initiative. This rapid response not only helped growers meet their stewardship goals but also ensured that valuable conservation practices continued despite the AMP Grant delay.

Looking ahead, we remain optimistic about our grant. Now that the federal government has reopened, we plan to re-engage with the USDA and NRCS to reestablish a pathway for supporting growers through the AMP Grant. Our goal is to, once again, provide incentives for cover crops, conservation cover, hedgerows, and offer whole orchard recycling, practices that continue to support sustainable orchard management for generations to come. ♦



Jasdeep "Jaz" Bains,
Ag Stewardship Manager
Blue Diamond Growers





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THE ALMOND BOARD

Biologicals: Exploring How These Products Fit into the Pest Management Toolbox

At the California Association of Pest Control Advisors (CAPCA) Annual Conference in Reno, NV, Almond Board of California (ABC) Pest Research Manager Dr. Lauren Fann took the stage to discuss one of the industry's most timely topics: biological pest management. Fann outlined both the scientific potential and the practical realities of using biological products — products derived from naturally occurring organisms or substances — to manage disease and pest pressure in almond orchards.

Evolving Pressures, Emerging Opportunities

California produces roughly 80 percent of the world's almonds, and with that comes global scrutiny. Tightening international regulations on pesticide residues, shifting hazard-based criteria in export markets, and the gradual loss of long-trusted chemistries have all put pressure on growers to diversify their pest-control options.

"We're seeing increasing constraints on conventional tools," Fann explained. "Biologicals offer an opportunity, not as a silver bullet, but as part of a broader, integrated pest management strategy that can help sustain the tools we still have."

Building Confidence Through Research

Recognizing both the promise and the skepticism surrounding biological products, ABC launched a multi-year initiative to evaluate commercially available biological products in almonds. The goal: generate credible, transparent data that helps growers and PCAs make confident decisions.

"We knew there was a confidence gap," Fann said. "Many growers have tried biologicals with mixed results. Sometimes that's due to limited technical support, unclear instructions, or storage and application challenges. Our goal is to understand how these products perform under real-world conditions and to share that data openly."

ABC's biological project is designed to mirror how products would actually be used in the field. All trials are conducted by independent research organizations across multiple growing regions to capture environmental variation. Companies submit registered products for consideration, agree to data transparency, and provide the material for testing, while ABC funds the application and data collection.

Trial Design and Preliminary Findings

The first two years of trials included both small-plot high-pressure disease trials and large-scale field trials at commercial orchards. Four biofungicides were compared with two conventional fungicides and an untreated control, focusing on brown rot and other key blossom-time diseases.

"All of the biologicals showed some level of activity," Fann reported. "They didn't outperform conventional products under heavy disease pressure, but they demonstrated measurable efficacy. That's encouraging and it tells us we're working with products that can contribute as part of a program."



All of the biological products tested in the trial showed measurable efficacy. The early findings show that these products could be part of an integrated pest management program

The results helped refine ABC's next phase of work. Trials in 2025 will zero in on bloom-time applications, exploring program-based strategies that rotate or tank-mix biological and conventional products to maintain efficacy and resistance management.

Laying the Groundwork for Practical Adoption

Beyond performance data, the project is helping ABC and its research partners understand the nuances of working with biologicals, everything from refrigeration and handling requirements to environmental sensitivity and spray timing and mixing.

"Biopesticides often need to be applied earlier, under the right conditions, and stored carefully to maintain viability," Fann noted. "These details matter, and they're part of what we're learning to communicate better."

ABC's long-term vision is to increase the number of biological products included in UC IPM's conventional fungicide guidelines. This resource could further help

PCAs and growers plan rotations that extend the life of existing tools while meeting evolving regulatory expectations.

An Invitation to Collaborate

Fann encouraged both growers and biological product developers to engage directly with ABC's pest research program.

"If you're a grower or PCA interested in participating in future trials, or if your company has a biological product that could benefit almond production, we want to hear from you," she said. "The industry is already leading in stewardship — this is our chance to lead in biological innovation too." Interested companies or growers may email Lauren Fann: lfann@almondboard.com

Article Contributed by the Almond Board of California ♦



THE BEE BOX

Bee Friendly Farming

Bee Friendly Farming (BFF) is a Pollinator Partnership program that collaborates with growers to protect, preserve and promote the health of pollinators.

BFF offers growers simple, affordable, science-based guidelines to enhance pollinator health on their land. These guidelines include providing nutrition and habitats for bees, as well as implementing integrated pest management strategies.

By joining BFF, you contribute to the preservation and protection of pollinator populations by implementing positive, incremental changes on your property. Program members play a vital role in maintaining healthy pollinators and an abundant food supply.

To learn more, visit pollinator.org/bff/bff-us.

Currently, BFF offers two levels of participation:

- **Original “BFF Certification”:** This is a second-party verified program, meaning Pollinator Partnership both developed and verified the standards. *Blue Diamond* Growers’ OSIP program has used this version until now.
- **Rigorous third-party certification:** This option involves independent verification by an auditing firm, Where Food Comes From.

Note: The BFF program is scheduled to undergo changes in 2026.

How Is BFF Changing?

At the start of 2025, Bee Friendly Farming supported 365,999 acres of farmland and managed 156,136 acres of habitat across 801 farms. As we continue to expand, we are excited to announce that the original BFF second-party certification will be converted into a membership program, referred to as the Bee Friendly Farming

Program, beginning January 1, 2026. The transition will allow producers to continue establishing and maintaining BFF standards on their farms but will reserve the word “certification” only for third-party verified growers and brands. The third-party certification is available now and audited through Where Food Comes From.

This change helps protect the integrity of the word “certified” in the marketplace for those who undergo the most rigorous verification.

For existing BFF second-party participants, this change will have little impact on your current BFF status and will provide you with more resources and support. Reporting will remain similar, and communication around BFF and your membership will not change.

As part of the new BFF Program:

You may enroll in the program regardless of your current amount of habitat, IPM activities or other BFF criteria. Buyer incentive programs such as OSIP, which launches January 5 this crop year, will work closely with us to prevent any disruption to enrollment schedules.

To remain eligible for OSIP Triple Diamond level, members must achieve BFF Tier 3, whose requirements mirror the standards previously required for BFF second-party certification. Members currently enrolled with an active status will automatically be placed in Tier 3.

Log in to your BFF portal to ensure your farm status is “active” rather than “compliance is due.” If you are due for compliance, please renew before January 1 to ensure a smooth transition into the new program.

For more information on tier requirements and standards, see the “What Are the Criteria to Become a Bee Friendly Farming Member?” section below.



Applications for new farm enrollment will be welcomed starting January 1, 2026. Once enrolled:

- Access learning materials and technical assistance, including habitat grants when available.
- Track your progress through a self-assessment that generates an automatic report and score.
- The three-year program structure will remain, after which you are encouraged to graduate to BFF Third-Party Certified.
- You may remain in the BFF Program beyond three years if you do not want third-party certification.
- You may still use the green BFF logo on marketing and outreach materials upon meeting required thresholds and completing a licensing agreement.

Fee increase: Beginning January 1, 2026, the annual BFF membership fee will increase to \$75 per year or \$180 for three years.

- **Bloomerang and Bloomerang Fundraising payment processor:** Beginning January 1, 2026, members using PayPal for membership fees will be asked to switch to Bloomerang, our new customer relations management system.
- If you use PayPal for your recurring payment, switch to Bloomerang Fundraising using this link:

bit.ly/3XaQb5p. Then you may choose your payment start date. After switching, cancel your recurring PayPal donation.

- Bloomerang allows members to create and access a portal to view giving history, update payment information and access tax receipts.
- On December 31, 2025, all PayPal recurring payments will be terminated. Members are encouraged to set up a Bloomerang profile ahead of renewal.
- We will continue providing updates as we approach the transition on January 1, 2026. For questions about the new program, contact bff@pollinator.org.

The Importance of On-Farm Habitat

75% to 95% of all flowering plants depend on pollinators, which support more than 180,000 plant species and over 1,200 crops—making one in every three bites of food possible (Ollerton et al., 2011; Klein et al., 2007; Buchmann and Nabhan, 1996). Their global economic contribution is valued at \$217 billion, with honey bees alone adding up to \$5.4 billion annually in U.S. agriculture (Gallai et al., 2009; Losey and Vaughan, 2006; Southwick and Southwick, 1999). Pollinators also sustain ecosystems by stabilizing soils, supporting wildlife, and improving air quality (Costanza et al., 1997).



Unfortunately, many pollinator populations are declining due to habitat loss, chemical exposure, disease, pollution, and climate change (NRCNA, 2006; Kremen et al., 2002). California's almond industry, producing 76% of the world's supply and relying heavily on cross-pollination, depends on healthy pollinators for quality and yield (Almond Board of California, 2023; CDFA, 2020, 2023; USDA, 2022). In intensive agricultural landscapes, habitat loss and pesticides are major drivers of wild bee declines (Stulligross and Williams, 2020; Kremen et al., 2002; Sheffield et al., 2008).

Growers can help build resilient pollination systems by adopting best management practices. Bee Friendly Farming provides standards, such as offering nutrition, habitat, and integrated pest management, that support pollinator health and long-term agricultural sustainability.

BFF Member Criteria

Forage

Offer forage providing good nutrition for bees on at least 3% of cropped acreage. Forage can be temporary and include cover crops if left to bloom. Provide bloom of different flowering plants throughout the growing season, from early spring to late autumn. There is no minimum land coverage for seasonal bloom.

On the forage section of the application, you will be asked for:

- The location and type of pollinator forage
- Plant species used for forage and the seasons in which they bloom

To receive full points for the highest tier, qualifying habitat acreage must be at least 3% of cropped area.

For third-tier points, forage must:

- a. Bloom in spring, summer and fall
- b. Be located inside or outside cropped areas
- c. Include more than two blooming species per season

Permanent Habitat

Incorporate permanent pollinator habitat with forage features equivalent to 0.5% of total cropped area.

You will need to provide:

- Type of permanent habitat, such as hedgerows, brush, buffer strips or bare ground
- Acreage of permanent habitat and total habitat
- Total habitat includes both temporary and permanent habitat
- Permanent habitat includes areas that do not require annual reseeding or revegetation (cover crops do not count)
 - For highest-tier points, permanent habitat must equal at least 0.5% of cropped area. This requirement applies to new and existing farms by 2027.
 - You must provide evidence of nesting resources. Apiaries or honey bee boxes do not qualify.

ORCHARD STEWARDSHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM



Water

Offer clean water for bees when managed bees are on site, unless restricted by government-imposed water limits. You must provide location and source of clean water for bees if managed pollinators are brought onto the property at any time from early spring to late fall.

IPM

Utilize integrated pest management to reduce or eliminate chemical use.

You will need to provide:

- Your IPM system, including pests treated, monitoring, decision making, prevention techniques and more.
- Alternatively, proof of an accepted certification can waive the IPM section.
 - For highest-tier points, you must provide either proof of an approved qualification or detailed information covering all IPM strategy components.

Additional Information

1. Orchard locations:
 - a. Orchards within a two-mile radius and under the same management may be included in one application. All land/habitat features within this radius must be owned/managed by the same entity.
 - b. Orchards outside this radius require separate applications and fees.

APPLY JANUARY 5, 2026 – MAY 1, 2026

Orchard Stewardship Incentive Level Requirements and Payments	
Double Diamond Full completion of the CASP assessment 1. CASP Assessment Completion: a. Orchard Setup b. Business Management c. Orchard Practices Base Pmt: \$750 plus \$.005/pound	Triple Diamond Full completion of the CASP assessment + Bee Friendly Farming Program 1. CASP Assessment Completion: a. Orchard Setup b. Business Management c. Orchard Practices 2. Bee Friendly Farming Program Base Pmt: \$1,000 plus \$.01/pound

JAZ BAINS | JBAINS@BDGROWERS.COM | 916-834-5651

2. Pollinator Partnership requires up to six weeks to review applications. All materials must be submitted by March 20, 2026, for review before the May 1, 2026 OSIP deadline.
3. Monitor your email for questions regarding your application.
4. If no response is received within six weeks, or if you have questions, contact bff@pollinator.org.
4. Under “Existing Certifications or Audit Files,” select “California Almond Stewardship Platform” and upload your CASP Assessment Progress Report.
5. Complete all “Bee Forage and Habitat” questions. Photo uploads are required for:
 - a. Bee forage
 - b. Water sources (if applicable)
 - c. Nesting habitat
 - d. Permanent habitat acreage
 - e. Total habitat acreage

Already Submitted Your CASP Self-Assessment and Are BFF Eligible? Follow These Steps:

1. Visit pollinator.org/bff-cert/apply to create an account or continue an existing application.
2. Select “Add a Farm” in your BFF profile for new applications.
3. Complete the “About Your Farm” section, including your best phone number and email address.



Cody Wilson,
Agricultural
Manager,
Pollinator
Partnership

TIME TO CONSIDER

Now that the California almond harvest has wrapped up, growers are shifting their focus to post-harvest tasks. One question I often hear from people outside the industry is, “What are those white piles on the edge of the field?” Almond growers know these are typically soil amendments. The more common questions I get from growers themselves are: “Should I use gypsum or lime?” and “Is sulfur really necessary?” In today’s article I’m going to break down the differences between some common soil amendments and how they might fit into your operation.

Gypsum

Gypsum is a great option for when you need calcium but don’t want to alter your soil pH. It’s pH neutral, meaning it won’t raise or lower pH levels. Gypsum helps break up clay soils and improves water infiltration. If you’re dealing with sodium issues or poor drainage, gypsum can be especially beneficial. When combined with good winter rains, it can help flush sodium out of the root zone. It’s typically applied using a broadcast spreader, with application rates varying based on specific conditions.

Best Use: Heavy clay soils, high sodium levels, or when calcium is needed without affecting pH.

Ag Lime

Ag lime is ideal for soils that are too acidic. It raises pH and supplies calcium. If you’re unsure about your soil’s pH, a simple soil test can provide clarity—your PCA or CCA can assist with this. If your soil test indicates a low (acidic) pH, lime can help restore balance. Keep in mind that lime works gradually, depending on soil type, so results won’t be immediate. Like gypsum, it is applied with a broadcast spreader, and rates depend on your soil’s pH level.

Best Use: Acidic soils needing a pH increase and calcium.

Dolomite

Dolomite is similar to Ag Lime but includes magnesium. It raises pH and adds both calcium and magnesium. If your soil test shows low magnesium levels, dolomite is a solid choice. Magnesium is essential for photosynthesis, and maintaining a proper calcium-to-magnesium ratio is

key to overall plant health. Dolomite is also applied with a broadcast spreader, and results may take time depending on soil type. Application rates vary based on pH.

Best Use: Acidic soils with low magnesium levels.

Sulfur

Sulfur has the opposite effect of lime—it lowers soil pH. If your soil is too alkaline, sulfur can help bring it down. In addition to adjusting pH, sulfur also contributes an essential nutrient. It’s important for protein formation and nitrogen uptake in plants. Like lime and dolomite, sulfur takes time to work. It’s typically applied in pelletized form using a broadcast spreader with rates dependent on your soil’s pH.

Best Use: Alkaline soils.

Quick Comparison

Amendment	pH Effect	Nutrients Supplied	Best For
Gypsum	Neutral	Calcium, Sulfur	Poor infiltration, sodium issues
Ag Lime	Raises	Calcium	Acidic soils
Dolomite	Raises	Calcium, Magnesium	Acidic soils with low magnesium
Sulfur	Lowers	Sulfur	Alkaline soils



Gypsum Spreading Oakdale



Spreading Gypsum Oakdale Ranch



Chowchilla Gypsum Pile

Soil amendments aren't one size fits all. The right choice depends on your soil test results and your crop's specific needs. If you haven't pulled a soil sample recently, now is a great time to do so. Your PCA or CCA can help you determine which amendment is best and how much to apply. A little preparation now can prevent bigger issues down the road. ♦



***Trent Voss,
Sr. Regional Manager,
Blue Diamond Growers***

WANTED

- Used OMC A-6 shaker head. Must be in good condition and complete.

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- KCI Almond Nut Carts (2), \$800 each

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- Adjustable 9 foot rear push brush rake: \$700

Call (209) 522-5045

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- 30 HP electric lift pump rated at 1000/gal/minute with screen basket: \$3,000

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- New super strong shaker tires — 10 ply-14.5/75 — 16.1: \$1,350 each.
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- 350-gallon fuel tank: \$400
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Call Sam (209) 765-0027 (leave message). Ceres

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- Vrisimo flail mower Model #SC-100: \$5,000
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- 2,000 gallon PBM water tank with Honda pump on dual-axle trailer and fifteen foot discharge hose with camlock fitting. Like new, used 3-4 days a year for quick fill-up of orchard sprayers: \$12,000
- Maibo PTO air compressor: \$250

Call (209) 986-2409. Manteca

FOR SALE

- Pruning tower, older model Jackrabbit with 3-cylinder Kubota diesel. Includes hydraulic lopper shears and chain saw, both very little use. \$16,500.

Contact Tim (209) 648-3724

FOR SALE

- KCI Elevator/Honda Engine. Very good condition: \$7,000
- 3 Almond carts: \$500/ea
- Allis-Chalmers 16 ft field cultivator with Unverferth spike harrow and crumblers: \$3,000

Call (209) 631-3160. LeGrand

FOR SALE

- 2018 KCI Kingsburg Cultivator Inc 2418 HS Field Elevator/ Conveyor with Honda Motor and new battery, \$10,000 OBO.
- 1994 Lely Roterra, \$6,000 OBO.

Call Brett, (209) 756-8733. Atwater between Hwy 99 and 140.

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