



MAR-APR 2026

almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT



Key Nutrients for Almond Production

Kai Speaks on
Market Expansion

The Cooperative Edge
with Dr. Keri Jacobs

NEW *Blue Diamond*
Almondmilk Line



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10 NEW! The Cooperative Edge with Dr. Keri Jacobs

Join Dr. Keri Jacobs in this all-new Almond Facts segment that digs into the heart and function of the user owned structure of cooperatives. Cooperatives remain one of the most resilient and impactful business models in the U.S. economy, and *Blue Diamond* is a proud part of it.

17 *Blue Diamond* Almondmilk Line Launches

Blue Diamond is proud to expand its beverage portfolio with the launch of *Blue Diamond* Almondmilk. This new line, available in four flavors, is designed with today's consumer in mind and built on the strength of the almond itself.

34 Time to Consider — Key Nutrients for Almond Production

This Time to Consider article walks through the key nutrients that support almond production and highlights new insights and tools released in 2026 that may help guide your orchard nutrition program as summer approaches.

ON THE COVER:

Nonpareil, Monterey and Fritz bloom in Colusa County. Photo credit: Mel Machado



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Kai Bockmann
President & CEO



This bloom season came and went quickly, officially concluding on March 8, with temperatures in the high 60s and 70s. With beekeepers busy moving hives out of the orchards, growers are doing post-bloom preparations to ensure full care and prevention of fungal diseases. We will have a better look at crop development in the coming months.

Here at *Blue Diamond*, our teams are fully charged up and executing our plans, which are at or ahead of schedule. As part of our Ingredients business, we launched four flavors including Hickory, Honey Roasted, Strawberry, and Spicy Chile in eight countries within the European Union. We have seen success here, and we are in the process of evaluating a couple more flavors for a launch later in the year.

We are also continuing to have success with our cover crop program, which is a real differentiator within the industry and drives value for our growers. Similarly, our Bee Friendly Farming® Almonds project with KIND and Kite Hill recently launched a protein cream cheese using *Blue Diamond* Blanched Lightly Roasted Almond Butter.

In the international space, we have exciting new products backed by K-pop stars in South Korea, and we continue to see how the almond category is also growing in South Africa. We know our brand carries weight across the world, and we are looking forward to further leveraging that weight as we continue to build partnerships and strengthen our position.

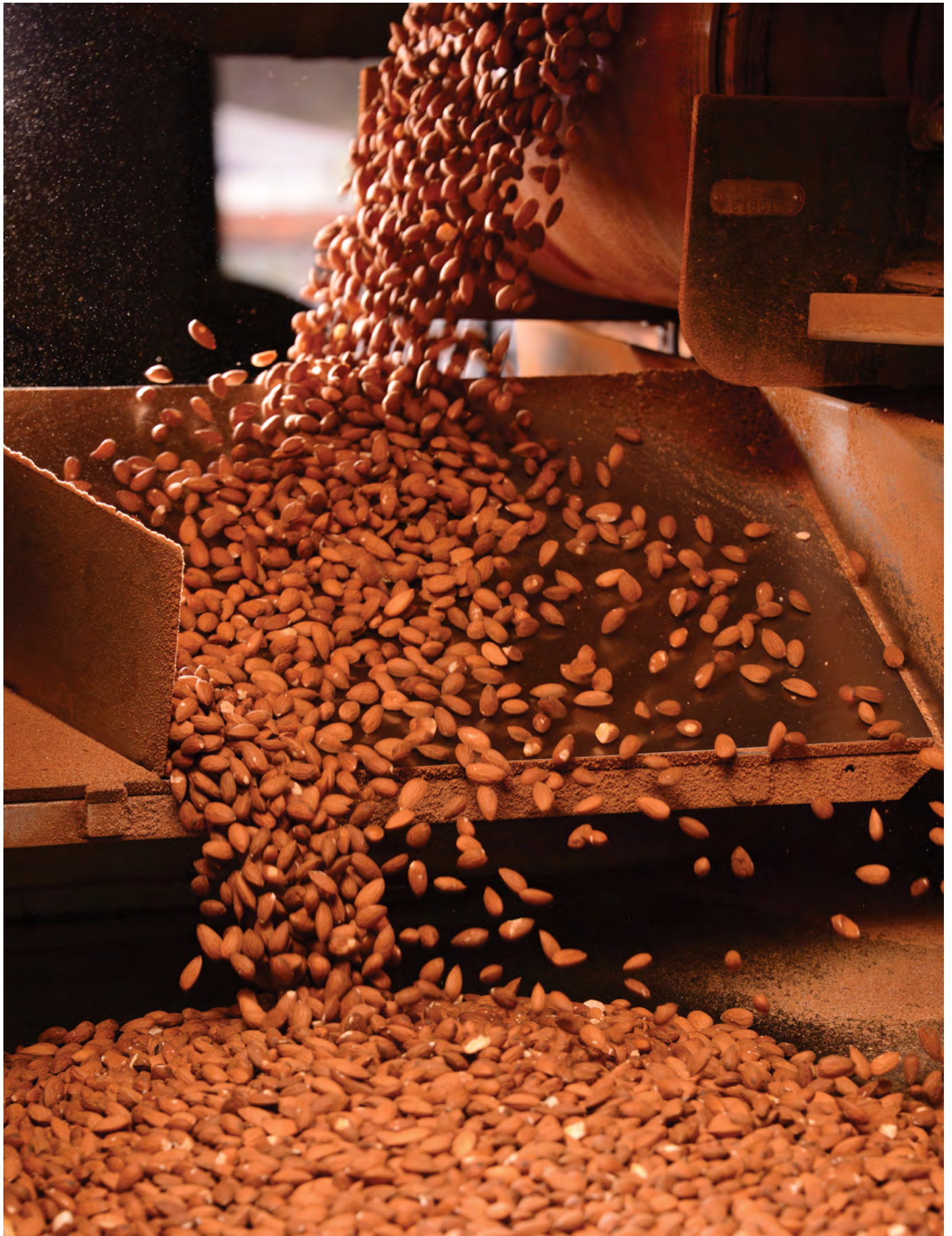
From a commercial perspective, we have increased our social engagement, and our new packaging boosts shelf impact and conversion while strengthening brand equity. We are also expanding our portfolio to reach younger consumers.

Even though the category still faces headwinds, *Almond Breeze®* here in the United States is seeing strong growth, most notably in the 96-ounce size. We are most excited about the recent launch of our new *Blue Diamond* Almondmilk which is now in stores, with over twenty key accounts, and counting, accepting it nationally. This new product is made with more almonds per serving than the leading almondmilk brand and will complement our product lines and attract new consumers.

We are also revitalizing our Nut-Thins® line and are excited to be launching Dill Pickle flavor in April. On the snack nut front, we have shown up in big ways online with the Nutty Cruiser™ and with new marketing to ensure our audiences notice us. Keep an eye out for more starting in mid-April.

It is clear that our work from the orchards to our facilities and our markets is building real momentum. The progress we are making reflects the strength of our teams and the power of our brand, and we are well positioned to keep growing and innovating. There is plenty to be excited about in the months ahead. With the weather changing and warmer days coming our way, I cannot wait to see the opportunities that are still left for us to uncover. ♦

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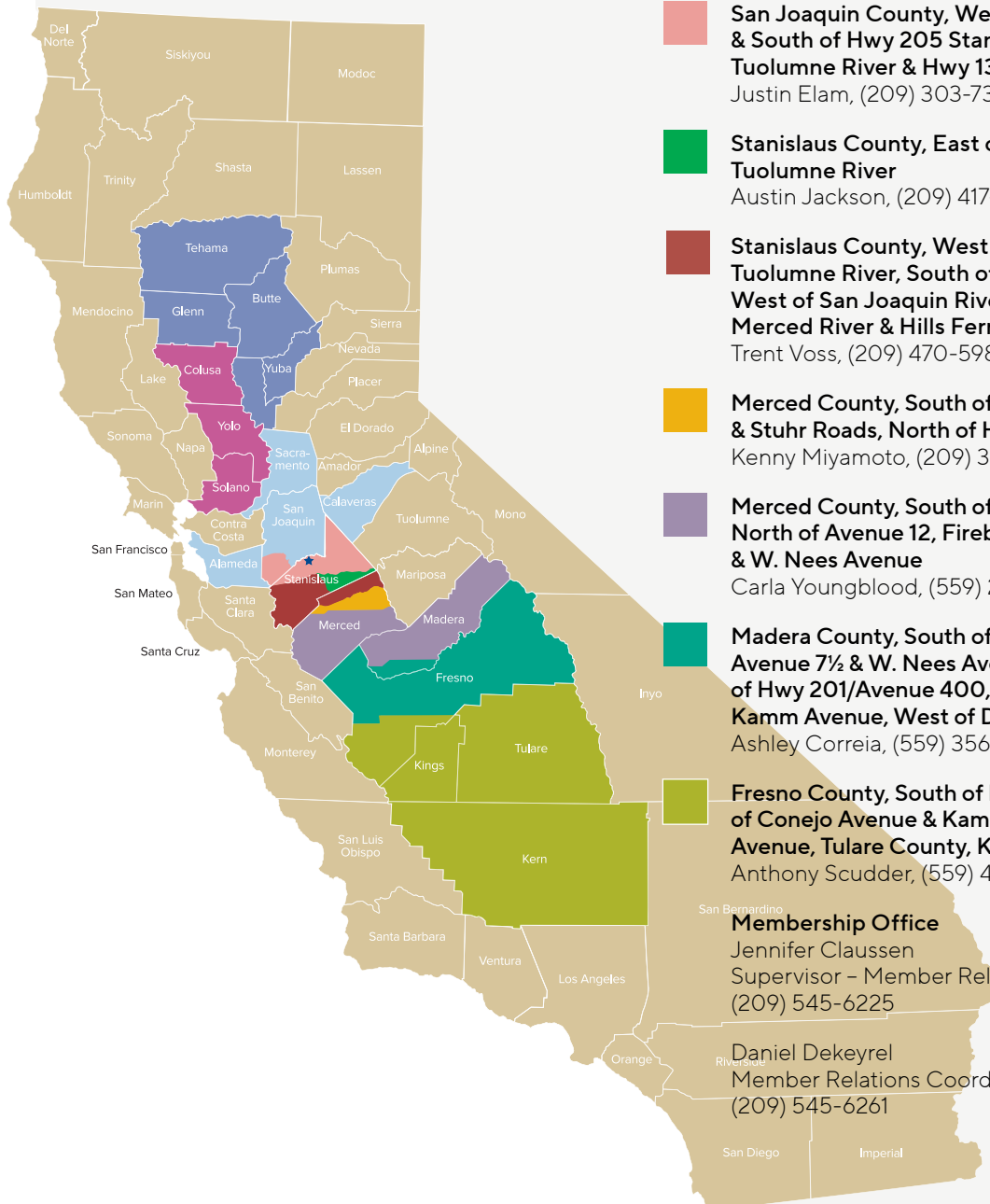
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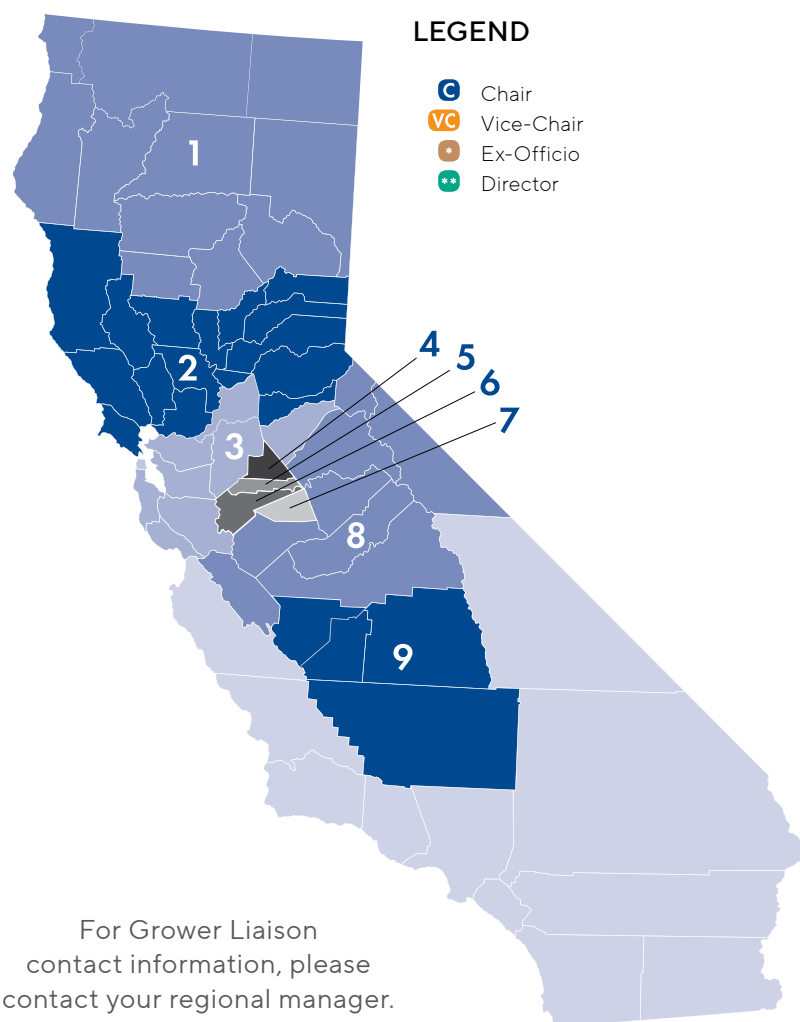
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America's Overlooked Economic Backbone

They may be the most economically significant institutions you rarely hear about. They operate power lines across rural America, finance farms, community businesses and households, insure homes and crops, supply groceries, hardware, and school systems, market the food and materials grown and raised by our producers and ranchers, and even connect households to broadband. What institution could be suited to do all that? Cooperatives!

Cooperatives are workhorse business structures organized under state statutes — like other U.S. corporations, publicly or privately held — but they differ on four critically important dimensions: they are user-controlled, user-owned, user-benefiting, and with a user-centric purpose.

What does this really mean? It means members sit on the board of directors and the most important decisions are still in the hands of the membership, not passive shareholders. It means members who use the cooperative's goods, services, and market access capitalize and own the company, not someone without a direct interest in the co-op's business lines. It means that when the co-op performs well, earnings in excess of what is needed to ensure the financial sustainability of the co-op



are returned to members based on their use. And it means that the co-op exists to strengthen its members' long-term economic position through better prices, fairer work conditions, dependable market access, shared risk, or investing in infrastructure that no outside investor would finance on the same terms.

Cooperatives are about discipline. They compete in open markets and are commonly referred to as the "competitive yardstick." They

must source capital for growth and sustainability, invest wisely in their members' and their futures, manage risks, and make hard strategic choices, all with their members' best interests in mind.

The difference in a nutshell: A cooperative business puts the people that use it — the members — first. Its purpose is driven by and for those people, and its profits serve them, not Wall Street.

-
1. NRECA Report, June 2025, electric.coop/our-mission/americas-electric-cooperatives, accessed March 2, 2026.
 2. National Credit Union Association, Sept 2025 Call Report Quarterly Summary ncua.gov/files/publications/analysis/quarterly-data-summary-2025-Q3.pdf, accessed March 2, 2026
 3. USDA Rural Development 2024 Ag Cooperative Statistics, issued January 20, 2026, rd.usda.gov/media/file/download/usda-rd-rbcs-agco-opstats-summary-01152026.pdf, accessed March 2, 2026
 4. National Association of Housing Cooperatives, ncbaclusa.coop/resources/co-op-sectors/housing-co-ops/, accessed March 2, 2026
 5. U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, usworker.coop/about/, accessed March 2, 2026

The cooperative business model is prolific and is embedded in nearly every corner of our U.S. economy:

- Nearly 900 electric cooperatives (RECs) power 22 million homes, businesses, farms, and schools across 48 states¹
- 4,300 credit unions saved consumers \$11.2 billion in lower interest rates alone in 2024²
- More than 1,600 producer-owned cooperatives generate roughly \$297 billion in business volume annually on behalf of their members³
- 65,000 housing co-ops make affordable and permanent housing possible for more than 1.5 million families, students, and seniors in this country⁴
- 15,000 workers own and control the nearly 1,300 worker-owned businesses in the U.S., ensuring that the business operates for the benefit of its employees⁵

Cooperatives are collectives of people working toward a common goal. And people show up collectively when markets tilt too far or leave gaps. When farmers faced concentrated buyers of their products, they organized to gain scale and bargaining power. When communities lacked access to affordable electricity, financial services, or broadband, they built it themselves. When independent businesses needed to compete with national chains, they formed purchasing cooperatives. Remove cooperatives from the American economy, and you would see entire systems strain.

Why has this model endured for more than a century? Because it solves real problems in real markets. It works.

In agriculture, this structure has shaped entire supply chains for more than a century. From dairy and grain to specialty crops and tree nuts, producer-owned cooperatives help to improve the prices farmers and ranchers receive from their supply and value chains, and they create value through processing capacity, branding, aggregation, and risk management. They have allowed farmers to move beyond being price takers and into being value creators.

Cooperatives are not an alternative to capitalism. They are its purest form, built around use, not outside investment. Built around people and purpose over exported profitability.

Cooperatives are an integral part of America's economic backbone, and agriculture is one of the places where that backbone is strongest. In the next article, we will focus on producer-owned cooperatives: how they emerged, why they became so prevalent, and how their value proposition has evolved in today's global, capital-intensive marketplace.

About Dr. Keri Jacobs

Dr. Keri L. Jacobs is executive director of the Graduate Institute of Cooperative Leadership (GICL), associate professor of agricultural and applied economics, and Partridge Chair in Cooperative Leadership at the University of Missouri. She works with cooperative CEOs, management teams, and boards across the agricultural sector on governance, financial oversight, and the board's role in strategy development. Through GICL, she designs and facilitates director and leadership development programs and regularly engages with cooperative boards on complex organizational issues.

Her research and outreach are grounded in sustained collaboration with cooperatives and industry partners and focus on how collective action and cooperative structures can strengthen producers' position within agricultural supply chains. Dr. Jacobs serves on the NCBA CLUSA Cooperative Economics Council and the Nationwide Board Council and is North Central Director for the Extension Section of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. Raised on her family's hog and row-crop farm in eastern Iowa, she holds a B.A. in economics from Coe College and a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from North Carolina State University. ♦

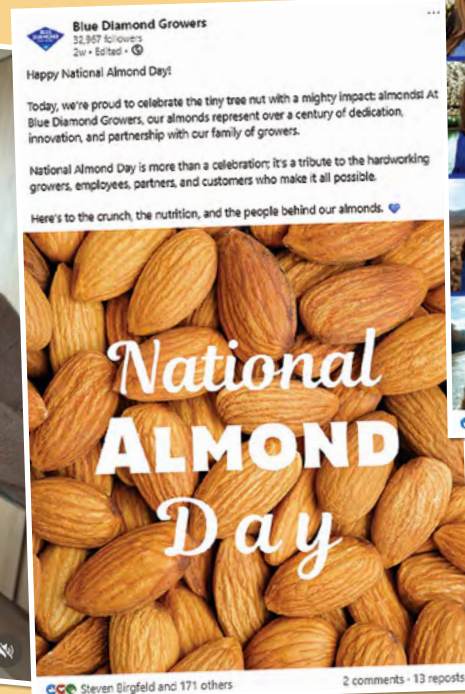


Dr. Keri Jacobs,
Executive Director,
Graduate Institute of Cooperative
Leadership, and Partridge Chair
in Cooperative Learning,
University of Missouri

#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity



Last month we celebrated National Almond Day, and shared more details on the cruciality of cooperatives in the U.S. We had a lot of fun partnering with some excellent influencers to get the word out about our new Almondmilk line. These influencers are true believers! One of our youngest fans gushed over *Banana Almond Breeze®* while getting her cup filled right in the store parking lot; she couldn't wait to get home to enjoy it! And finally, 2026 is International Year of the Woman Farmer (with March being Women's History Month) and we celebrated the incredible women who advance the future of agriculture in the almond industry and beyond. ♦





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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 January 1, 2026, 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	\$10,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	4.00%	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.

Marinated Flank Steak

Cook Time: 180 minutes Difficulty: Medium Serves up to: 24

Ingredients

Marinade:

- 3 Medjool dates pitted and softened if necessary, by soaking in very hot water
- 2 Tablespoons water
- ½ cup *Almond Breeze®* Unsweetened Original Almondmilk Coconutmilk
- 1 Tablespoon spicy brown mustard
- 1 Tablespoon raw apple cider vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- Black pepper or crushed red pepper flakes for spice
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ cup olive oil or avocado oil

Flank Steak:

- 1.5 lbs. flank steak
- Fresh chives chopped for garnish

Directions

Marinade:

1. Combine all marinade ingredients in a high-speed blender except for the olive oil.
2. Puree ingredients and then add the olive oil with the blender running on low speed.

Flank Steak:

1. Score the steak all over with a knife, place in a large bowl and pour all the marinade over the steak, turning to completely coat.
2. Cover tightly in plastic wrap and marinate for at least 2 hours, or overnight if desired.
3. Once ready to grill, preheat grill to medium-high heat.
4. Remove most of the marinade from the steak, leaving a very thin coating.

5. The rest of the marinade can either be discarded or boiled into a sauce for the steak.
6. Place the steak on the hot grill and turn after the first side is browned with visible grill lines, repeat on the second side.
7. Lower the heat to medium, cover the grill and continue to cook until steak is done to preference, turning once. You may use a meat thermometer for temperature precision.

Assembly:

1. Once done, remove the steak from the grill and place on a large platter.
2. Cover loosely with aluminum foil for 5-10 minutes to rest.
3. Using a fork and long, sharp knife cut the steak against the grain into ½ inch slices on a slight angle and serve.





Glazed Pantry Cookies

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 15 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serves up to: 15

Ingredients

Cookies:

- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup softened butter
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cardamom
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 Tablespoons *Almond Breeze*® Shelf Stable Unsweetened Original Almondmilk
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour
- 2 cups quick cooking oats
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup diced dried apricots

Cream Cheese Glaze:

- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 7 ounces marshmallow fluff
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup *Almond Breeze*® Shelf Stable Unsweetened Original Almondmilk
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. With a hand mixer, cream butter with the brown sugar for 5-7 minutes or until light and fluffy and the sugar has dissolved.
3. Add the eggs and mix with the hand mixer again until fluffy.
4. Next, add *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Original Almondmilk. Mix with the hand mixer just until combined.
5. Lastly, add the oats, raisins and apricots to the mixture and stir in with a spoon just until incorporated. Cover and chill dough in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
6. Use an ice cream scooper to scoop out cookie dough and roll into a ball. Place cookie dough balls on the baking sheet at least 3 inches apart. Bake at 350° F for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Cool cookies on a cooling rack for at least 20 minutes before glazing.



Celebrate National Almond Day with the Jonas Brothers and *Almond Breeze*®

The Jonas Brothers may be fresh off their Hometown Tour, but they are right in the middle of their *Almond Breeze*®: “It’s Really Good!” Tour!

EXTRA TV caught up with Jonas Brothers this spring to talk about their tour, Golden Globes and, of course, *Almond Breeze*®! The segment aired on National Almond Day, February 16, and you can view it here: bit.ly/ExtraJB. Shortly following, EXTRA shared the clip on their Instagram feed and in their Instagram story to their over 1 million followers.

This segment is in addition to the 82 earned media placements with approximately 146.1M+ year-to-date impressions secured. We’re so pleased that this partnership has been such a great success and that the Jonas Brothers really love our *Almond Breeze*®. It was exhilarating to celebrate National Almond Day in a whole new way!

If you missed the long-form Jonas Brothers x *Almond Breeze*® commercial, view it here: bit.ly/JBAmondBreeze ♦



New Blue Diamond Almondmilk Line Rooted in Simplicity and Real Almond Taste

It's official: *Blue Diamond Growers* has expanded its beverage portfolio with the launch of *Blue Diamond Almondmilk*, a new line designed with today's ingredient-conscious consumer in mind and built on the strength of the almond itself.

As consumers look more closely at how their almondmilk is made, this new lineup answers with a clear message: almonds first. The result is a collection of almondmilk that delivers authentic flavor and the kind of simplicity growers and consumers can stand behind.

Available in 48-ounce bottles, the new line includes four distinct varieties:

- **Unsweetened Simple** — Developed with just three ingredients: water, almonds and sea salt.
- **Sweetened Simple** — Four straightforward ingredients: water, almonds, cane sugar and sea salt.
- **Signature Creamy** — Crafted for a richer almond taste and a luxuriously smooth texture.
- **Chocolate Protein** — A bold, indulgent chocolate option featuring 8 grams of plant protein per serving.

"*Blue Diamond Almondmilk* delivers what the brand promises: real almond taste," said Maya Erwin, group marketing manager, innovation at *Blue Diamond*

Growers. "It doesn't need over-explaining and that's easy to trust. We focused on what our customers care about most — just a simple idea done with intention."

A Grower's Perspective in Every Pour

For *Blue Diamond* growers, this launch reflects more than a product extension, it underscores the value of a quality product in a competitive plant-based marketplace. By highlighting minimal ingredient lists and elevating almond-forward flavor, *Blue Diamond* is reinforcing California almonds' premium stance in the retail environment.

From iced coffee and matcha to cereal, smoothies and overnight oats, the line was designed for everyday versatility. *Blue Diamond Almondmilk* is the almondmilk you'd make if you grew almonds yourself.

Blue Diamond Almondmilk is now available at retailers nationwide. For store locations and more information, visit BlueDiamond.com.

This launch signals continued opportunity in value-added almond products with simplicity and transparency leading the way. ♦

Almond Breeze® & NuTrail: A Sweet Partnership

Blue Diamond Almond Breeze® has teamed up with NuTrail, one of the fastest-growing granola brands in the United States, for an exciting new partnership that unites two fan favorites. Known for its flavorful, no sugar added granola options, NuTrail has rapidly gained momentum in the market—selling more per store, expanding into additional retailers nationwide, and becoming the number one fastest growing no sugar added granola brand.

As of March 31, this collaboration has introduced a new promotion designed to make breakfast and snacking even tastier. Shoppers who purchase any NuTrail granola can receive a **free** carton of Almond Breeze®, including the popular 64-ounce jug option. The savings are simple:



select your favorite NuTrail granola and Almond Breeze®, head to checkout, and once your qualifying items are scanned, the sticker on the package will provide instant savings at the register.

The promotion is currently available in 1,200 Kroger stores across the United States, giving shoppers an easy opportunity to pair NuTrail's crunchy, low-sugar granola with the smooth, creamy taste of Almond Breeze®. Even



more exciting, the partnership is expected to expand into additional retailers this summer, introducing the offer to even more fans.

Blue Diamond is proud to partner with a brand that shares a commitment to quality and better-for-you options. Together, NuTrail and Almond Breeze® are giving loyal fans, and new customers, an even better reason to enjoy their favorite breakfast and snack combinations at a fantastic value. ♦



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Limited Edition Sour Cream & Onion Snack Almonds Launching this May

Sour cream and onion fans, this is for you! *Blue Diamond* is launching a limited-edition Sour Cream & Onion snack almond flavor which will be available in Walmart stores this May. This flavor combination has been a cross-generational favorite, successfully joined with chips, crackers, puffed snacks and many more. That's why it's the perfect time for almonds to dive into this tangy pairing.

Each bite delivers the creamy, savory tang of sour cream perfectly balanced with a punch of onion flavor, all wrapped around the satisfying crunch of premium California almonds. It's a bold twist on a classic taste. Whether you're stocking up for road trips or leveling up your "pantry game," this limited-time flavor brings big flavor in a better-for-you snack.

They're as delicious as they sound and we can't wait for you to try them! ♦

Coming Soon: Sacramento Pop-Up Nut & Gift Shop

To continue supporting our growers following the closure of the Sacramento Nut & Gift Shop at the end of this April, we are excited to announce a once-a-month *Blue Diamond* Sacramento Pop-Up Shop!

2026 *Blue Diamond* Pop-Up Shop Hours:

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Pop-Up Shop Schedule:

May 6	September 3
June 10	October 7
June 30	November 4
August 5	December 2

Pop-Up Shop Details:

- Located in the current Sacramento Nut & Gift Shop space
- Offers *Blue Diamond* almond products only, including gift boxes containing six-ounce cans
- Outside vendor products, gift baskets or trays containing non-*Blue Diamond* items, and taxable items will not be available at the pop-up shop



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Want to send *Blue Diamond* gifts this holiday season?

Growers who enjoy giving *Blue Diamond* products as holiday gifts are encouraged to shop the Salida Nut & Gift Shop while in Modesto for the annual meeting this fall. For special orders to be shipped or picked up at the December pop-up shop, an order deadline of November 9 will apply. A flyer with available products and current pricing will be distributed ahead of the holiday season.

Happy shopping! ♦

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Celebrating Women Farmers and Industry Professionals for International Women's Day & Women's History Month

As International Women's Day and Women's History Month are celebrated in the U.S. and beyond, it is an important moment to recognize the extraordinary contributions of women across industries, especially in agriculture. At Blue Diamond Growers, this year's celebration also aligns with the Year of the Woman Farmer, highlighting the leadership, strength, and innovative spirit women bring to farming.

Women have long played a vital role in agriculture, managing farms, stewarding land, and strengthening rural economies. Today, more women than ever are leading agricultural operations, introducing new technologies, and shaping the future of food production.

Within *Blue Diamond* and across the global agricultural community, women farmers, researchers, and industry professionals are helping ensure that agriculture is stewarded well while remaining productive and resilient for generations to come. Their work spans everything from orchard management and crop science to marketing, commercial, innovation, government affairs, global supply chains and much more.

Recognizing women in agriculture is not just about celebrating achievements, it is about continuing to create opportunities for leadership, mentorship, and innovation. By investing in women farmers and agricultural professionals, the industry strengthens its ability to feed a growing world while

protecting the land and communities that make farming possible.

This International Women's Day and throughout Women's History Month, *Blue Diamond Growers* proudly honors the women farmers and agricultural leaders who cultivate not only crops, but also progress, sustainability, and opportunity. ♦





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The Work Ahead: Trade, Policy, and Orchard Pressures in 2026

As we move deeper into the 2026 crop year, the almond industry is still contending with the same forces that have shaped the last few seasons: high costs, regulatory pressure, and an export environment that can change quickly. What's different now is that several decisions are moving from debate to implementation, and the next round of policy decisions is already taking shape. What happens in Washington and Sacramento can quickly affect the operating environment, and these are the developments to keep on your radar in the months ahead.

Farm Bill

The House Agriculture Committee is set to mark up Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson’s Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567) on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. That’s a meaningful step in the process, but it does not guarantee smooth passage. The Farm Bill is pulling in a wide range of issues, and the political path remains narrow.

The biggest fault line continues to be nutrition policy. The bill updates commodity and conservation programs and includes efforts aimed at strengthening disaster assistance and other agricultural tools. At the same time, SNAP remains the core point of contention, and that dispute is spilling over into other debates around hemp, pesticides, and animal welfare. Producers have been clear that they need a workable safety net and disaster tools, especially with thin margins and continually high input costs.

For almond growers and other specialty crop producers, the priority is keeping permanent crops visible in a Farm Bill that is often driven by program-crop dynamics. That means continuing to press for practical program access, workable disaster tools, and policies that reflect the realities of long-term orchard investments.



Trade and Tariffs

Trade remains one of the biggest drivers of almond prices and demand, and the landscape shifted in a meaningful way this winter: on February 20, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) does not authorize the President to impose tariffs, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) stopped collecting IEEPA-based tariffs effective February 24. In practical terms, that removes a major legal uncertainty, but it doesn’t eliminate volatility. Trade policy can pivot quickly to other authorities, and early signals suggest the administration is already exploring alternative tariff mechanisms. At the same time, the calendar adds pressure: the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) six-year review in July 2026 is a key milestone for North American trade flows. And for several priority markets, including India, we’re still awaiting updated trade terms and implementation details, as nothing has been released yet.

Separately, we continue to request that USDA allocate a meaningful share of the \$1 billion Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF) funding to almonds at the highest feasible per-acre payment rate. After several years of weak prices, trade-related market losses, and sustained

input-cost inflation, many growers are operating at or below breakeven. Our goal is to ensure the assistance provides real, grower-level relief, scaled to documented cost and margin pressure, so it serves as a true bridge rather than being diluted across too many commodities to make a difference.

Advocating in Sacramento

In California, we are tracking an active legislative and regulatory environment that touches nearly every part of almond production and processing. Groundwater adjudication and recharge debates will continue as basins work toward SGMA compliance. Energy policy will remain front and center as lawmakers grapple with grid reliability, rising utility costs, and climate mandates that directly affect both farm operations and processing facilities. Labor policy is also expected to stay active, with ongoing conversations around wage standards, compliance obligations, and workforce availability. Air quality and invasive species management continue to surface as well.

One bill we are closely tracking is the Nitrogen Pollution Reduction Act (AB 2447). We began engaging policymakers early to reinforce two realities: nitrogen management is essential to orchard productivity, and growers have made meaningful progress in improving efficiency and stewardship under existing frameworks. We are working with an agricultural coalition to combat approaches that would create new, duplicative mandates without producing workable outcomes on the ground.

Overlaying many Sacramento debates is a broader focus on affordability and state budget pressure. When policymakers search for solutions, proposals often show up as new fees, new reporting requirements, or new compliance burdens. Our role is to ensure lawmakers understand the operational realities and cost impacts before those ideas become policy.

Pests and Abandoned Orchards

Rodent pressure continues to intensify across the Central Valley, and it's being amplified by unmanaged and abandoned acreage that becomes a dependable "safe harbor" and creates pest hotspots for entire areas. When blocks are left unattended, the impacts spread quickly, driving up control costs and damaging infrastructure in surrounding producing orchards.

That's why we're focused on practical, regional solutions: continued engagement with state agencies on mitigation strategies and long-term land management expectations, with particular attention to public lands and other properties that aren't being responsibly managed. The objective is to reduce spillover impacts on neighboring growers and avoid rodent pressure becoming a permanent, region-wide cost of doing business.

What Comes Next

Almonds are a long-term crop, and the decisions being made right now—on trade rules, water policy, nitrogen, energy, and pest tools—will shape the viability of family farms for years to come. Our commitment is to stay engaged where those decisions are made and keep the industry's needs front and center, with a clear focus on practical, science-based solutions. With consistent advocacy and strong coordination across the supply chain, we can protect what growers have built and keep California almonds competitive. ♦



Alexi Rodriguez,
President & CEO,
Almond Alliance

ALMOND MARKET UPDATE



Blue Diamond Almond Market Report – March 13 , 2026

OVERVIEW

February's position report reflected industry shipments meeting industry expectations, totaling 241 million pounds, up 12.2% year over year. February exports reached 196.1 million pounds, an increase of 23.5% compared to last year. Export shipments have now surpassed last year's pace by 0.39% at 1.179 billion pounds. Domestic shipments for the month fell 19.9% behind prior year, resulting in year-to-date shipments of 339 million pounds, down 18.1%. Total industry shipments through February stand at 1.518 billion pounds, down 4.4% versus last year. With another month of strong sales, commitments continue to pace 2.8% ahead of last year.

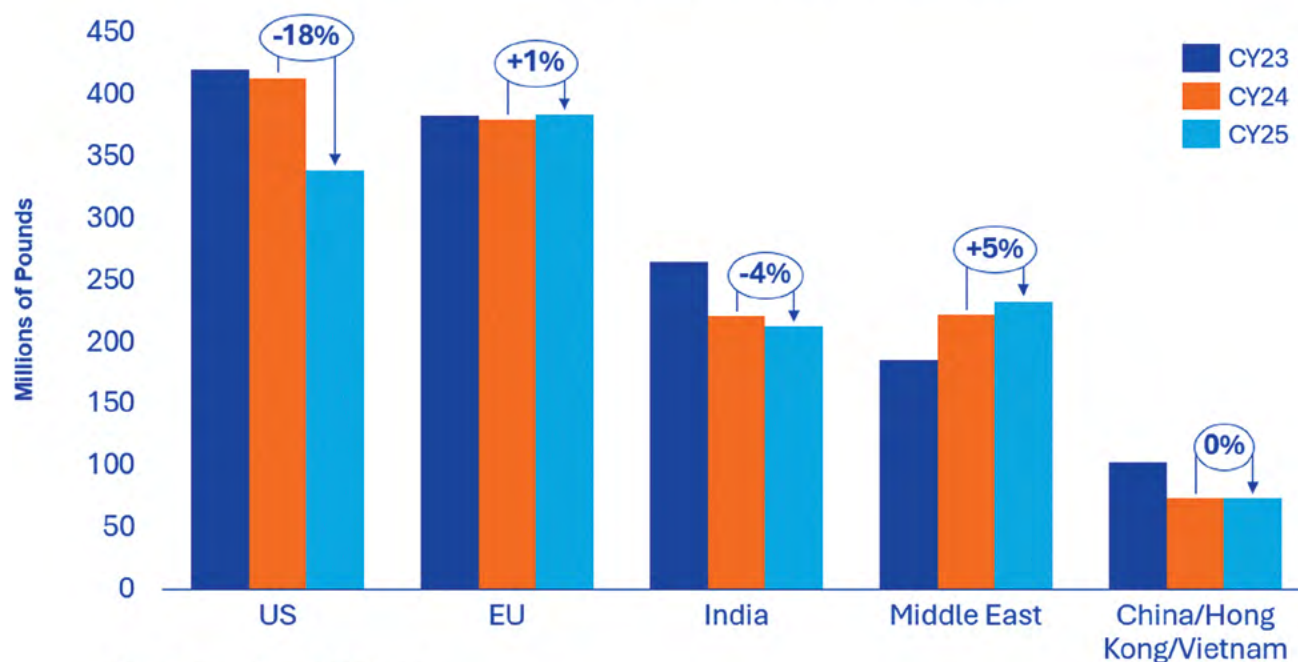
Recent geopolitical developments in the Middle East have introduced uncertainty into global trade flows. While underlying consumer demand across the region remains generally intact, disruptions to shipping routes and vessel schedules are creating widespread logistical disruptions across the GCC. Market participants are closely monitoring the situation and adjusting freight planning where necessary as alternative route options are evaluated.

SHIPMENTS

India:

India shipped 41.3 million pounds in February, bringing year-to-date shipments to 213.1 million pounds, compared to 221.4 million pounds at the same time last year. This is a decline of roughly 4% year over year. Despite pacing being slightly behind last year, demand fundamentals in India remain generally supportive. Local inventories are believed to be relatively manageable, and retail prices have remained firm in several major trading hubs. However, buying activity has been somewhat inconsistent in recent weeks as importers monitor global price direction and broader macroeconomic conditions. Market participants are also closely watching currency movements and potential policy developments surrounding import duties, both of which can influence purchasing behavior.

Year-To-Date Shipments (February)



China/Hong Kong/Vietnam:

February shipments to China and Hong Kong totaled 3.3 million pounds, representing a 144% increase compared to the prior year. Shipments to Vietnam reached 6.0 million pounds, rising 155% for the month and delivering an impressive 72% year-over-year gain. Combined shipments to these regions increased 151% year over year in February, driving the year-to-date total into positive territory at 0.34% for the first time this 2025 crop year. This result is an encouraging sign of strengthening demand and continued momentum in these key markets.

Europe:

Europe delivered another solid month of demand with shipments totaling 74.2 million pounds, keeping a flat trajectory for the year. Buyers continue to execute a hand-to-mouth purchasing strategy which should lead to continued demand for the remainder of the year. Spain and Italy continue to show strong growth, up 16% and 18%, respectively. Germany is down 2% year over year but continues to provide steady demand levels. While some markets on the continent remain cautious in their approach, the overall demand out of Europe continues to provide stability for the export markets.

Middle East:

Shipments to the Middle East totaled 28.1 million pounds in February, bringing year-to-date shipments to 233.1 million pounds, an increase of approximately 5% year over year. The region continues to represent an important destination for California almonds, supported by strong consumer demand and well-established trade channels. Turkey, Israel, and Lebanon are outperforming relative to last year, while Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq are all down double digits year over year. Ramadan restocking would typically be expected in the next one to two weeks as buyers return to market, but with recent geopolitical developments in the region introducing additional uncertainty surrounding logistics and trade flows, some of this demand could come off the table. While underlying demand across the Middle East remains generally firm, disruptions to shipping routes and vessel schedules have created some near-term delays and required adjustments to freight planning and execution. Market participants are closely monitoring developments as both sides of the trade evaluate alternative routing options where necessary.

Domestic:

February shipments reached 45 million pounds, down 19.9% from the same period last year. The domestic market continues to experience softer demand with year-to-date results down 18.1% in total. New sales were healthy, with a year-over-year increase of 72% resulting in forward commitments down only 1.1%. This market continues to experience multifactorial headwinds, culminating in categories such as snack almonds being down double digits over the last quarter. Recent booking activity has allowed buyers to be patient in making decisions on when to cover the back end of this crop year.

COMMITMENTS

Total commitments currently stand at 593 million pounds, surpassing last year by 2.77%. New sales for the month totaled 246.3 million pounds with the domestic market securing an additional 50.6 million pounds up from the prior year's 29.4 million pounds. Exports added 195.7 million pounds of new coverage, modestly up from 191.4 million pounds exported the prior year. Total commitments for the domestic market are now at 220 million pounds while exports have reached 374 million pounds, to support upcoming shipments. Uncommitted inventory is up 3.5% from last year, sitting at 999 million pounds versus 965 million pounds.

CROP

Crop receipts were surprisingly strong in February, having now reached 2.68 billion pounds, indicating an updated final crop size of approximately 2.71 billion pounds. This puts the final 2025 industry crop at a similar level to the 2024 crop. February weather across California's growing regions brought a mix of varied temperatures and intermittent storms during the critical bloom period. Bloom progressed rapidly from early February through the end of the month, with some rain and wind events that limited bee flight and pollination activity. However, warmer and drier conditions toward the end of the month helped move orchards through bloom and into petal fall, supporting early nut development. At this early stage, it is still too soon to draw firm conclusions about crop size. Over the next two months, trees will shed nonviable nuts, better informing crop potential. As nutlets are beginning to mature, weather will be a key factor for crop development. Growers will keep an eye on water availability as we enter the warmer months of the year and adjust operations accordingly. ♦

Market Perspective

The February Position Report provided an encouraging signal for the market, with total shipments reaching 241.1 million pounds, a 12% increase year over year, driven primarily by strong export demand. The shipment performance demonstrates that global buyers remain responsive when pricing aligns with market expectations, particularly across key export destinations. Export markets continue to serve as the primary driver of industry movement, offsetting weaker domestic demand and reinforcing the importance of international trade channels for California almonds.

The fundamentals of this last report should provide stability in pricing.

Since bloom has concluded across California's growing regions, the industry's focus will increasingly turn toward early crop development and initial nut set assessments in the coming weeks. Combined with shipment pace and global demand conditions, the progression of the 2026 crop will continue to shape market sentiment as the industry moves into the second half of the marketing year.



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THE ALMOND BOARD

New Nitrogen and Potassium Tool to Improve Nutrient Efficiency

As input costs continue to rise and regulatory pressure around nutrient management intensifies, almond growers are looking for tools that help them apply fertilizers more precisely without sacrificing yield or tree health. A new Nitrogen and Potassium Calculator: bit.ly/NKcalc developed through a partnership between the Almond Board of California and UC Davis' Fruit and Nut Center, is designed to do exactly that.

Hosted by the Fruit and Nut Center and available through Almonds.org, the calculator helps growers estimate how much nitrogen and potassium to apply, and when to apply it, based on orchard-specific information and expected yield. The goal is straightforward: **improve nutrient use efficiency, reduce unnecessary applications, and limit money spent on product the crop doesn't need.**

Built on Efficiency and Economics

Nitrogen and potassium are among the largest input costs in almond production, accounting for a significant share of annual expenses. They are also essential to kernel development and protein formation, making precise management critical.

"Kernels are full of protein," said Sebastian Saa, associate director of agricultural research at the Almond Board of California. "That also means they demand a significant amount of nitrogen."

But applying more fertilizer than necessary doesn't improve outcomes. Instead, it can reduce efficiency, increase costs, and create additional challenges. "If you have too much nitrogen, it could leach into groundwater aquifers" Saa said, "but you are also making your trees more susceptible to diseases like hull rot."

The new calculator is designed to help growers avoid both sides of the problem, deficiency and excess, by matching nutrient applications more closely to actual crop demand.

From Research to a Practical Tool

The calculator reflects more than a decade of almond production research and builds on guidance already familiar to many growers, including the Almond Board's Nitrogen Management Guide: bit.ly/Nbmp. "We have been working on this topic for about 20 years," Saa explained. "This calculator reflects the latest of our thinking and includes potassium calculations, which we had not done before."

Rather than requiring users to answer every possible question up front, the calculator uses a stepwise process. Growers can enter basic information, such as orchard

The screenshot shows the 'Nitrogen & Potassium Budgeting Calculator for Almonds' web application. The header includes the 'Fruit & Nut Research & Information Center' logo and navigation links. The main title is 'Nitrogen & Potassium Budgeting Calculator for Almonds'. Below the title, there are tabs for '1. Pre-season' and '2. Mid-Spring Adjustment'. The 'Pre-season' tab is active, showing input fields for 'Orchard Age' (set to 0), 'Predicted Yield' (set to 70 lbs. of kernel), and 'Efficiency (%)' (set to 70). A note states: 'For pressurized irrigation systems, the current recommendation is 70%; however, your specific orchard may have higher or lower efficiency depending on management and site conditions.' There is a checkbox for 'Do you have a nitrogen analysis from your irrigation water?'. On the right side, it says 'SUPPORTED BY Almond Board of California' and 'UC DAVIS'. At the bottom right, a box displays 'Total Nitrogen and Potassium Demand' with 'Nitrogen (N): 0.0 lbs/ac' and 'Potassium (K): 0.0 lbs/ac'.

Nitrogen and Potassium Calculator



ABC's irrigation & technology adviser, Tom Devol at an irrigation pump

age and expected yield, to generate a preseason nutrient plan. As the season progresses and more data becomes available, the same plan can be revisited and refined.

Yield plays a central role in the calculation, but the tool also accounts for nutrient contributions from other sources, such as irrigation water or organic amendments, helping growers avoid double counting nutrients they already have. "How much to apply doesn't only depend on yield," Saa noted. "If you use soil amendments, some of those amendments contain nitrogen and thus reduce the need for fertilizer. All this is included in the calculator."

Adjust as the Season Unfolds

As previously mentioned, one of the key advantages of the new calculator is its ability to adapt as the season progresses. Growers can save a unique link to their initial plan, return mid-season (end of April/beginning of May), and update inputs as yield estimates improve or new information, such as leaf tissue analysis, becomes available. "This allows the user to fine tune their former fertilization budget even further," Saa noted.

The calculator is hosted by UC Davis' Fruit and Nut Center, which already supports a range of decision-support tools used by California growers. Growers can access the calculator here: bit.ly/NKcalc or by visiting the Grower Tools page on Almonds.org, where tools can be filtered by focus area, resource type, or host organization.

Getting Nutrient Management Right

Ultimately, the calculator is about helping growers make confident, informed decisions — balancing productivity, environmental stewardship and cost control.

"Getting it right is fundamental," Saa said. "From an economic point of view, from an environmental point of view, and from an efficiency and productivity point of view."

With the new Nitrogen and Potassium Calculator, growers now have a practical, research-based tool to help do just that. "The sooner you make your fertilization plan, like at the beginning of the season, the higher the ROI is going to be," Saa said.

Article Contributed by the Almond Board of California ◆

THE BEE BOX

The “when?” and “how?” of cover crop termination is one of the most frequently asked questions by growers using cover crops in almonds in late winter. Terminate too soon and you may not accomplish your soil health goals, but terminate too late, and you may have to deal with excess plant residues at harvest. Discovering the happy medium comes with experience. Termination timing can rarely be determined by the calendar as no two growing seasons are alike. Deciding how you will terminate your cover crop can also affect timing as well. The most common method of cover crop termination is mowing, but there are alternative approaches, like crimping, that are showing great promise in improving soil health while not interfering with almond harvest.

One successful long time cover crop user who is enrolled in the *Blue Diamond Growers Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP)* grant terminates their cover crop with a multiprong plan: crimp the cover crop first, possibly crimping again or utilizing a high mowing then short mowing the dry residue multiple times over the summer to minimize the particle size at harvest. This has resulted in improved soil structure, increased water holding capacity, improved tree resiliency, and hasn't interfered with harvest. View a Project *Apis m.* video describing termination practices here: bit.ly/4ckvo8o.

The decision on when to terminate cover crops is a balancing act between maximizing soil health benefits and minimizing risks to the cash crop. You can terminate your cover crop at any time of the season, but when is

the best time? This decision should be based on an intersection of several factors, including the goals of using that cover crop mix, your termination method, and how much plant residue you can stand at harvest.

When using a cover crop for a specific reason like the Seeds For Bees™ Pollinator Brassica Mix for honey bee support, we'd recommend terminating after rented hives have been removed. The brassica flowers supported the honey bees while they were on site, and the orchard has achieved maximum biomass while the plants are still green enough to readily break down. In a more diverse cover crop, like the Seeds For Bees™ Nitro builder mix, we recommend waiting to start termination until small grain seed heads appear. This will allow the legumes and other plants in the mix to reach maximum biomass while



Mowing once in April



Residue in August



Roller Crimper in action

still readily breaking down on the orchard floor after being mown repeatedly.

Mowing is the most common method used for cover crop termination, and there are several mowing choices. Most growers will mow it once, short enough to kill the plants, and that's it. This choice can limit the biomass soil health benefits by mowing too soon or increase costs through wear and tear on the equipment from mowing slower while going through older, tougher plant matter. An alternative schedule is to terminate in stages, a tall mowing first with a follow up shorter mowing height a few weeks later. A crimping operation may substitute for the early season mowing. This termination schedule can maximize biomass and soil health yet minimizes potential residue.

Using crimping as the initial cover crop termination operation can result in multiple soil health benefits, while reducing the costs of termination. Crimpers operate faster with a lower horsepower requirement than a flail mower but still begin the process of reducing the above ground biomass for later operations. You can imitate the action of a crimper using a flat roller, a ring roller or an improvised or manufactured roller crimper. The primary benefit is longer soil surface coverage, helping reduce evaporation and spring weed germination.

If you are just beginning with cover crops, and you are nervous about all that extra growth, it doesn't hurt to err on the side of terminating early but consider the goals for your cover crop plan before you do. For example, if you were growing your cover crop to benefit honey bees, allow the bees to forage in the cover crop before you terminate it.

Blue Diamond Growers can experiment with cover crops and get technical support at no cost through the *Blue Diamond Growers Advancing Markets for Producers Grant* program. This is an ongoing federal USDA grant. To qualify, growers need to meet the following criteria: have and maintain a current contract with *Blue Diamond*, be a participant in the *Blue Diamond Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program* (OSIP) with a completed CASP progress report, and an orchard map and associated paperwork from the USDA Farm Service Agency. The details can be found at bluediamondgrowers.com. ♦



Tom Johnson,
Seeds for Bees,
Grower Relations Manager,
Project Apis m.
tom@projectapisism.org

TIME TO CONSIDER

Updated Nutrition Strategies for Yield, Tree Health & Resource Efficiency

According to the World Health Organization, “Nutrition is a critical part of health and development.” As growers, we know this applies just as much to ourselves as it does to the trees in our orchards. Nutrition directly influences growth, development, resilience, and ultimately, yield. This year brought several storm systems across the state, and bloom came and went. If you feel behind in your nutrient plan, you’re not alone — and the good news is, there’s still time to get back on track.

In this Time to Consider article, I’ll walk through the key nutrients that support almond production and highlight new insights and tools released in 2026 that may help guide your nutrition program as we move into summer.

Start With Orchard Specific Information (Tissue & Soil Testing)

Before applying any nutrient, I always recommend starting with orchard-specific data. No two orchards are the same. What works in one block may be completely wrong for another. Tissue and soil samples give you a baseline of what nutrients are present, which ones may be deficient, and which may be tied up or unavailable. This is the foundation for any successful nutrient plan and helps prevent overapplying or underapplying the nutrients your trees need most.

Macronutrients: 2026 Considerations

The base of any nutrition program begins with the macronutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. These three are the foundations on which the house is built.

Nitrogen continues to be the driver of tree growth. It supports stem, shoot and leaf development, ultimately helping build that full canopy needed to maximize photosynthesis. However, the same warning is as relevant now as in past years; you can apply too much! Overapplication of nitrogen can lead to loss via leaching.

It can also increase disease pressure later in the year with hull rot. As with all fertilizer applications, follow the Four R’s of Nutrient Stewardship, and if you don’t know what those are, keep reading.

Phosphorus plays a major role in root development and energy movement within the plant. Many California soils test high in phosphorus, but as many of you know, those numbers can be misleading. High soil phosphorus doesn’t always mean it’s plant available. Young orchards especially benefit from phosphorus applications to support strong establishment. Mature orchards may require less, depending on test results.

Potassium could easily make a case for being just as important as nitrogen. Potassium is critical for carbohydrate (sugar) movement, photosynthesis and fruiting bud formation. Potassium can be applied via the soil or through fertigation. I still like to think of soil potassium as a savings account and fertigated potassium as a checking account — both serve important roles. Soil potassium is available as it breaks down throughout the growing season. On the other hand, fertigated potassium can be applied and is available the moment the plant needs it.

Micronutrients: 2026 Priorities

If macronutrients are the foundation, micronutrients are the house built on the foundation. Those critical for almond production continue to be calcium, boron and zinc.

Calcium strengthens cell walls and supports new root growth. Calcium is very important especially during periods of root flush, making it a popular material in the spring.



Fertigation Setup in Merced County by Trent Voss



Fertilizer Application in Stanislaus County by Trent Voss

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BUILT BY FARMERS FOR FARMERS...WE UNDERSTAND!

Boron is essential for flower quality and nut set. The best way to check boron levels is through a hull sample at harvest since boron accumulates in the hull itself. During the growing season, keep an eye out for “rat tail” symptoms — normal shoot growth followed by a blank section and then a tuft of new growth. Boron deficiency can also represent itself on the nuts as well. Gumming excreting from the suture or early nut drop are both symptoms of boron deficiency. At harvest time, it represents itself as dried gum on the end of the kernel without any sign of a puncture strike from leaffooted plant bug/stink bug. Just be careful not to overcorrect, as boron toxicity can occur quickly in certain soil types.



A split in the hull with gumming due to boron deficiency. Photo credit: Mel Machado



Boron deficiency creates hull breakdown followed by gumming. In severe cases it may lead to gummy nuts that may become rejects. Photo credit: Mel Machado

Zinc supports shoot growth and internode spacing. Deficiencies often show up as stacked, shortened nodes — sometimes looking like a “Chia Pet” at the end of a shoot. Foliar applications are still one of the fastest ways to correct zinc deficiency, but fertigation and soil applications are also options.



Unlike boron deficiency, plant bug damage is accompanied by puncture wounds where the bug pierced the nut. This also causes gumming. Photo credit: Mel Machado



Four R's of Nutrient Stewardship

Since nutrition is so vital to the overall success of a grower's operation, every consideration should be viewed through the lens of the Four R's of Nutrient Stewardship. The Four R's provide a clear framework for applying fertilizers efficiently and responsibly by ensuring growers use the **right source**, selecting fertilizer types that match crop needs based on soil and tissue tests; the **right rate**, applying nutrients in amounts that align with crop demand, soil supply, and yield goals; the **right time**, delivering nutrients when crops can absorb them most effectively to reduce losses; and the **right place**, positioning nutrients in the root zone where plants can readily access them for optimal uptake.

Health and nutrition matter — both for us and for the orchards we manage. When the nutritional balance of an orchard is off, trees become more susceptible to disease, pests, and stress, which can ultimately reduce yield. There is still plenty of time this season to support healthy growth, improve resilience, and set your orchard up for a productive harvest. ♦



*Trent Voss,
Sr. Regional
Manager,
Blue Diamond
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- Adjustable 9 foot rear push brush rake: \$700

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Call (209) 986-2409. Manteca

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- Pruning tower, older model Jackrabbit with 3 cylinder Kubota diesel. \$8,500 Includes hydraulic lopper shears and chain saw, both very little use.

Call Tim, (209) 648-3724

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- KCI Elevator/Honda Engine. Very good condition: \$7,000
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Call (209) 631-3160. LeGrand

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- 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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