



JULY-AUGUST 2026

almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS, AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

July Crop Estimate

Almond Hulls Gain
GRAS Status

Building a Stronger
Blue Diamond for
the Long Haul

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The *Blue Diamond Growers Foundation* is supporting the next generation of ag professionals (page 28).

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Now available: a revised 2026 almond crop estimate to 2.67 billion pounds based on continued orchard observations, grower feedback and evolving seasonal conditions, while noting variability and ongoing factors that could influence final yields.

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ON THE COVER:

Cool off this summer with a tropical, *Almond Breeze®*-based smoothie or two!



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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



Now that summer is in full swing and the heat is on, there's no denying that harvest season is fast approaching. It's also a good time to reflect on where we are and how far we've come.

I was glad to see many of you at this year's District Meetings to hear your perspectives firsthand and answer your questions. Those conversations are an important reminder that everything we do begins with the trust and partnership we share with our growers.

One thing those meetings reinforced for me is just how much *Blue Diamond's* longevity matters right now. For more than a century, this cooperative has adapted to changing markets, new opportunities and industry challenges. That level of resiliency and experience takes time to build, and it's what allows us to be here for our growers today, especially during times when market conditions are constantly changing.

Building that stability requires making decisions with the long term in mind, and our plant exit from Sacramento is a great example of that. While the sale itself is significant, the real value lies in the permanent savings we will achieve by consolidating our operations. When I first joined *Blue Diamond*, I was told this couldn't be done. It hasn't been easy, but thanks to the hard work of our team, we've built a stronger and more efficient business that will benefit growers for decades to come.

Those decisions, along with others we've made over the last few years, have strengthened our balance sheet and improved our overall position. While last year was undoubtedly disappointing in terms of returns, some of the changes we have made will help better protect the cooperative during tough market

conditions. Our balance sheet today gives us the flexibility to navigate market volatility, invest in our brands and continue creating value for growers.

While there is always some risk, we are encouraged by what we're seeing as our fiscal year approaches closure. We went through some short-term pain for long-term gain. The decisions we made at the beginning of this journey are helping us deliver a stronger business and position us for an overall stronger performance over the long term.

Global markets will continue to be volatile, but our supply chain actions have helped us to leverage a more dynamic sales strategy, allowing us to be more agile and sell when market conditions are most favorable for growers. At the same time, our balance sheet continues to strengthen, and we're looking forward to seeing those efforts translate into stronger outcomes for growers.

This year we also released our own crop estimate report, drawing on grower surveys and field observations across California's almond-growing regions. As Mel is quick to remind us, it remains an estimate, and the picture may change once crop receipts arrive. As it stands, our estimate is in the range of 2.6 to 2.7 billion pounds with a midpoint of 2.65 billion pounds. It is still early, but most of the industry is focusing around a similar number, and we are optimistic that this crop will command a strong price for growers.



In summary, *Blue Diamond* is in a much stronger position today because of the actions we've taken over the last few years. We've built a stronger, more efficient cooperative, and there are exciting times ahead. It has always been about the long haul, and I continue to believe there is no greater value proposition for almond growers than being part of this cooperative.

The future of *Blue Diamond* remains bright because of the strength and commitment of our growers. Enjoy the rest of the summer, and I look forward to meeting with many of you over the coming weeks. ♦

Kai

Kai Bockmann
President & CEO

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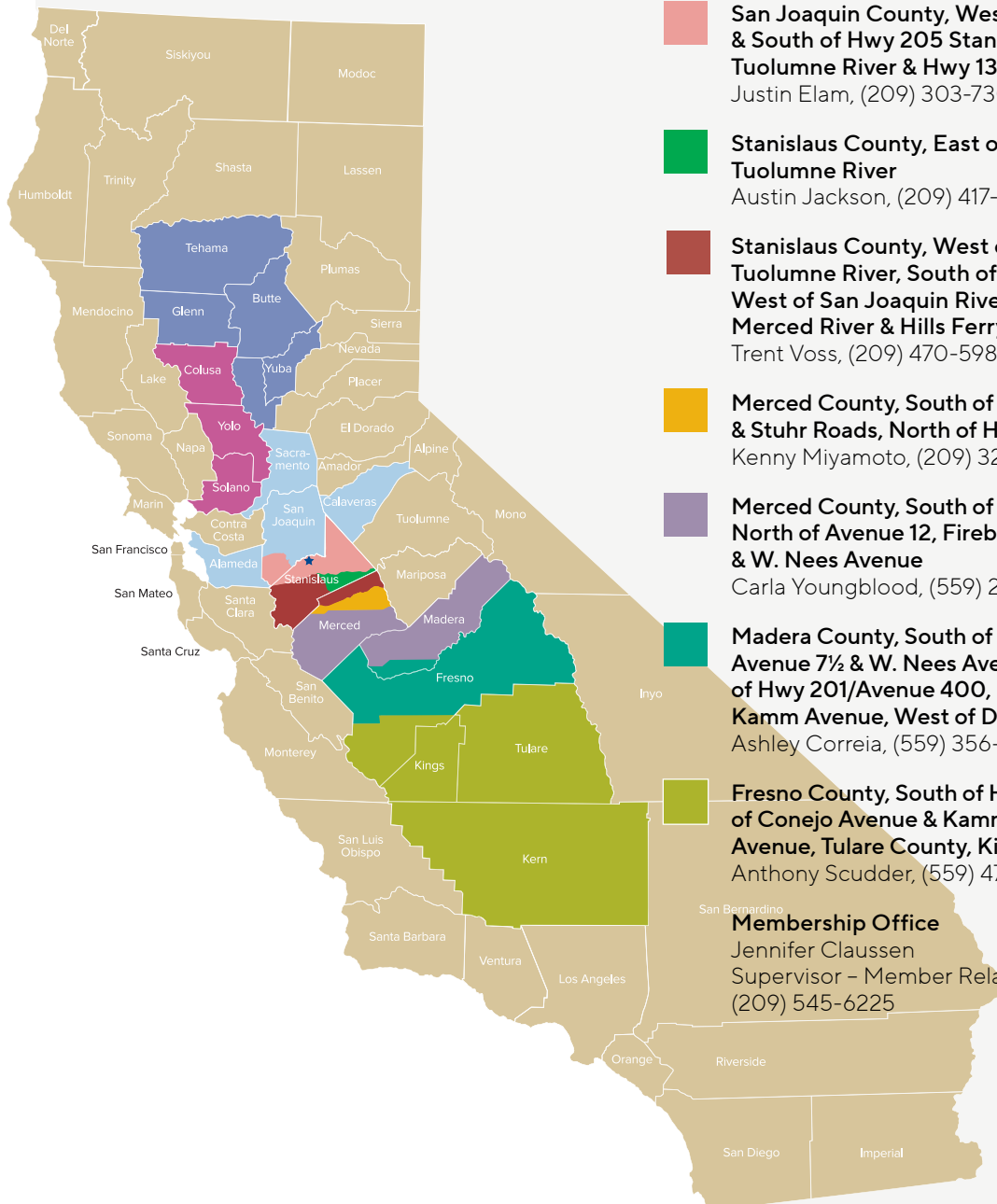
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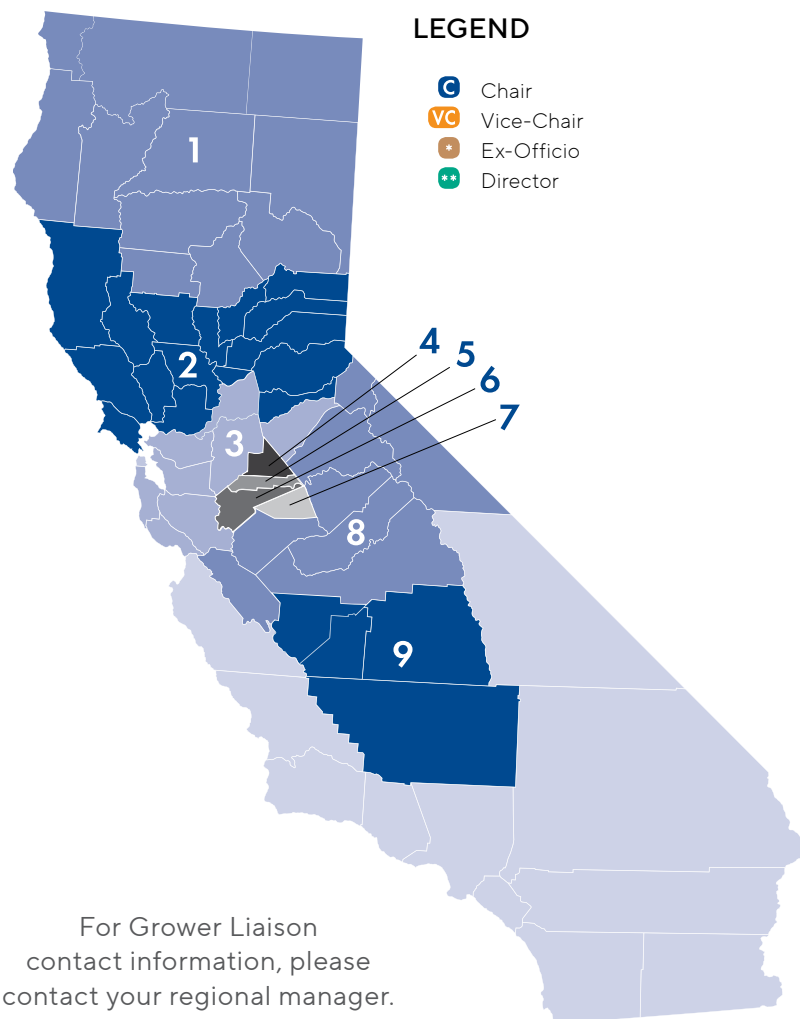
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Harvesting The Principles

If you spend much time learning, teaching, or writing about cooperatives, eventually you arrive at the Cooperative Principles. It would be shameful not to! An educational piece on cooperatives worth its page space should explain not only what cooperatives do, but what makes them different. The Principles are one of the clearest ways to do that. For our purposes, I'm borrowing a graphic from the National Cooperative Business Association ncbaclusa.coop (thank you, NCBA CLUSA).

Over the next few issues, The Cooperative Edge will look at these Cooperative Principles through the lens of *Blue Diamond Growers'* grower-members – maybe you are one! The principles “live” with the International Cooperative Alliance ica.coop/en (ICA), the global steward of the cooperative identity. The ICA's current Statement on the Cooperative Identity, adopted in 1995, includes the definition of a cooperative, cooperative values, and the Cooperative Principles. Fun nugget: We – me included – often refer to them as the “Seven Cooperative Principles,” but they are, officially, the “Cooperative Principles,” with perennial discussions by the ICA membership about amending or adding to them.

These Principles reflect our current understanding and cooperative values, but they are rooted in a deep history, back to the Rochdale Pioneers, who opened their cooperative store in Rochdale, England, in 1844 and helped shape what became the modern cooperative movement. That history matters: The Principles were never meant to be decorative. They

are practical, living guidelines, and they describe how cooperatives put their values into action.

Now, if order matters to you, this may be mildly irritating: we are not starting with Principle 1. Principle 1: Voluntary and Open Membership deserves due treatment, especially for a cooperative like *Blue Diamond Growers*, where grower participation is voluntary, yet *Blue Diamond Growers* also operates with longer-term grower commitments. For *Blue Diamond* and its marketing cooperative peers in dairy, citrus, livestock and a host of other commodities, supply planning matters when marketing output on behalf of its members. We will come back to that in the next issue. For now, harvest season gives us a better, albeit less obvious, place to begin: Principle 5: Education, Training and Information.

The ICA's guidance on the Cooperative Principles explains that Principle 5 calls on cooperatives to provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. But cooperatives go beyond that, also informing the general public, especially young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation. Almond harvest is approaching, and it would be easy to think of harvest as the point when *Blue Diamond Growers'* role begins in earnest. After all, *Blue Diamond Growers* is a marketing cooperative. Growers produce the almonds; the cooperative markets them.

But that misses something important.

A strong marketing cooperative is involved in the life of the crop long before almonds leave the orchard.

THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

- 1 Voluntary and Open Membership
- 2 Democratic Member Control
- 3 Members' Economic Participation
- 4 Autonomy and Independence
- 5 Education, Training and Information
- 6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- 7 Concern for Community

Source: ncbaclusa.coop/resources/7-cooperative-principles/

Through information on orchard health, growing season conditions, regulatory updates, compliance expectations, and world almond markets, *Blue Diamond* helps growers make better decisions in a complex production and marketing environment. That is Principle 5 in a very practical form.

Principle 5 reminds us that education, training, and information have never been merely an add on or a newsletter function. They have been at the cooperative movement's core since the Principles were first formulated. Early cooperators believed education was central to improving people's lives and recognized a responsibility to help educate their members and their families, even setting aside part of their cooperative's surplus for education. That history helps explain why cooperatives have long viewed education as part of their responsibility to members, not simply as a service when time allows. The guidance also distinguishes education, training and information: education builds understanding of cooperative values and principles; training develops practical skills for grower-members, employees, managers and directors; and information helps members produce more effectively while helping the broader public understand the nature and benefits of cooperation.

Harvest time also gives us a natural bridge to Principle 3: Members' Economic Participation. Harvest is when this principle becomes actionable. When growers deliver almonds to their cooperative, they are not simply "using a marketing outlet." They are participating in a use-based

organization they own, and one in which they elect directors to represent them — more on ownership and governance in later articles. Cooperative participation begins with use, but it does not end there. Principle 3 also speaks to member capital, democratic control of that capital, the allocation of profits, and how members benefit in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative.

In other words, your almond crop is more than product moving through a supply chain. At *Blue Diamond*, your crop activates and demonstrates the grower-member relationship: use, ownership, investment, benefit and collective responsibilities.

The Cooperative Principles are not just a graphic to display in our lobbies, though we should display them. They are how cooperative values are lived and put into action. And in this season, as growers prepare for harvest and *Blue Diamond* prepares to turn individual production into collective market strength, the Principles offer a useful lens for understanding the value of collective action. ♦



***Dr. Keri Jacobs,
Executive Director,
Graduate Institute of Cooperative
Leadership, and Partridge Chair
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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.

#WeAreBlueDiamond Social Media Activity



In July, *Blue Diamond* celebrated 250 years of freedom on the Fourth of July. We also celebrated our Mike's Hot Honey flavored almonds winning Good Housekeeping's Best Almonds. We enjoyed sharing more of our Sour Cream & Onion almonds and we applauded the continuous hard work our grower families put in every day to ensure they produce the best almonds! ♦





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ANNUAL MEETING

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BLUE DIAMOND INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

Current Investment Rates available as of July 1, 2026

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 July 1, 2026, for the program are listed here:

	Short-Term Investment Certificate (STIC)	Long-Term Investment Certificate (LTIC) (Maturity Date of 6/30/2029)
Initial Investment Required	\$10,000	\$50,000
Interest Rate	4.00%	2.25%
	(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.

Banana Piña Colada Smoothie

Cook Time: 5 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serves up to: 1



Ingredients

- ½ medium ripe frozen banana
- 6 oz. *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Original Almondmilk Coconutmilk
- ½ cup fresh pineapple
- ⅔ cup ice
- 1 Tablespoon sweetened shredded coconut
- 1 Tablespoon chia seeds (*optional*)

Directions

1. Place all the ingredients in the blender except for the coconut and blend until smooth. Mix in coconut and pour over a glass of ice.

Mango Coconut Smoothie

Cook Time: 5 minutes Difficulty: Easy Serves up to: 2

Ingredients

- 1 cup *Almond Breeze*® Unsweetened Original Almondmilk Coconutmilk
- 1 cup fresh or frozen mango cubes
- 1 cup fresh or frozen or juice packed pineapple chunks
- 1 Tablespoon slivered or sliced toasted almonds (*optional*)
- 1 teaspoon ground flax or chia seeds (*optional*)

Directions

1. Puree all ingredients in a blender until smooth, pour into a glass and enjoy!



Green Goddess Burgers

Cook Time: 60 minutes Difficulty: Medium Serves up to: 4

Ingredients

Green Goddess Sauce:

- ⅓ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 cup spinach, packed
- 1 cup arugula, packed
- ½ cup basil, packed
- ¼ cup tarragon, destemmed
- ⅓ cup green onions, cut into 1-inch segments
- 1½ teaspoons garlic, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour
- 2 Tablespoons *Almond Breeze*® Original Almondmilk
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil

Turkey Burgers:

- 1 pound ground turkey
- ½ cup yellow onion, finely minced
- 1 Tablespoon garlic, minced
- 2 Tablespoons *Blue Diamond* Almond Flour
- 1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- Burger buns of choice, toasted
- Mayonnaise
- Sweet yellow onion, thinly sliced
- Avocado, sliced
- Butter lettuce leaves



Directions

Green Goddess Sauce

1. Put the ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth.
2. Transfer to a bowl.

Turkey Burgers

1. In a medium bowl, add the ground turkey, onion, garlic, almond flour, Dijon mustard, paprika, salt and pepper. Mix well.
2. Divide the meat into four equal parts and form them into 1/2-inch-thick patties that are slightly wider than the buns. (The burgers will shrink as they cook.)
3. Cook the patties for 3 to 4 minutes. Flip them and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, or until their internal temperature registers 165 degrees.
4. Assemble the burgers by spreading mayonnaise on the bottom half of each bun. Top with a patty, then the green goddess sauce, onion, avocado and lettuce. Place more green goddess sauce on the top half of the bun and combine the two halves.

Blue Diamond Growers: July 2026 Almond Crop Estimate Revised to 2.67 Billion Pounds

Since releasing our initial May 2026 estimate, Blue Diamond Growers has continued to monitor orchard conditions across all growing regions. Our observations continue to indicate a crop size in the range of 2.65 to 2.70 billion pounds. Our initial estimate had an upper range of 2.72 billion pounds, which we now believe peaks at 2.70 billion pounds because of growing downward pressure on crop potential, suggesting a slightly lower midpoint of 2.67 billion pounds. As it remains very early in the season, the range indicates both downside risk and variability of the 2026 crop.

Over the past several weeks, in-field managers have continued to survey orchards across the valley, noting additional observations related to nut progression, irrigation patterns, and early-season stress indicators. These insights combined with updated grower feedback reinforce our assessment.

Key factors informing this follow-up include:

- Continued orchard-to-orchard evaluations and comparisons to identify variations in quality and crop performance
- Updated monthly grower survey responses reflecting expectations across season-to-date performance
- Ongoing evaluation of economic, water, and weather pressures that may influence yield outcomes

Blue Diamond Growers will continue to monitor crop conditions and provide updates as conditions evolve. At this stage, indicators support a modestly lower estimate, with variability driven largely by input levels.



*Aerial view of an almond orchard in Stanislaus County.
Photo credit: Mel Machado*

Crop Influences

The 2026 almond season to date reflects a mix of moderate weather conditions and ongoing operational and economic challenges for growers. While temperatures have remained warm without any critical heat wave conditions, several factors may still impact the crop before harvest.

Growers continue to face high production costs, resulting in measured resource management. Fertilizer and fuel costs, cash flow pressures, and overall market prices have led many growers to reduce inputs. Growers have had ample water for irrigation, supporting orchards without major challenges. However, the cost of electricity required to pressurize water for irrigation remains a budgetary challenge.

Current Crop Development Observations

Orchard conditions are varying widely this season, shaped largely by differences in nutrition and input management.

Lower input orchards are showing lighter crop loads and weaker conditions, while a notable number of orchards with heavier crop loads are showing signs of weak spur development. This points to fertility concerns that could carry over into next year's crop.

By contrast, many well-nourished orchards are showing overly vigorous growth, a potential indicator of poor crop loads. Growers and in-field teams have also reported

thicker hulls and shells in several varieties, which could adversely affect turnout percentages and lead to reduced final crop weights beyond what may be apparent through pre-harvest observations.

Forward Outlook

Conditions will continue to evolve across the regions over the coming weeks, and the impact of crop stressors will become clearer. Ongoing monitoring will ensure that any significant changes are factored into future outlooks.

Further insights will be shared in subsequent Market Reports, with later reports refining the forecast once harvest is underway.

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



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Blue Diamond's Presence at the 2026 World Cup Digital Village

Blue Diamond had the opportunity to participate in the 2026 World Cup Digital Village activations in Mexico City on June 17, following an invitation from the FAS (Foreign Agricultural Service) office. Recognizing the strong alignment between the global event and Blue Diamond's premium snack offerings, the cooperative applied to take part in this unique international showcase.

Blue Diamond worked alongside partners in Mexico, Sinax, who led the on-the-ground execution, supporting sampling activities and engaging pavilion visitors through interactive games where they could win branded swag. The activation created a dynamic and welcoming space for attendees to discover *Blue Diamond* products while experiencing the energy of the World Cup pavilion environment. The event delivered strong visibility for *Blue Diamond* among a diverse international audience.

We are especially grateful to the FAS Mexico City team for their invitation, guidance and continued support. Their partnership made this possible, and we value the opportunity to partner on initiatives that help bring *Blue Diamond* to new audiences around the globe. We look forward to building on this relationship in the future.



Consumer Response and Activation Feedback

The activation was a hit with attendees, many of whom were introduced to *Blue Diamond* for the first time. Consumers engaged positively with the brand, sampling a variety



of flavors and sharing feedback following the tasting experience.

Several key themes emerged from attendee comments:

- **Strong flavor experience:** Consumers responded positively to the taste profile, noting the products as a distinctive snacking option with a satisfying crunch and a more premium feel compared to other snacks.
- **Positive health association:** Many participants appreciated that the product is almond-based, associating it with a healthier, higher-quality snacking choice.
- **Convenient format:** The packaging, particularly the cans, was highlighted as practical and portable—well suited for office use, travel, lunch, or between-meal snacking.
- **Flavor variety appeal:** Honey Roasted stood out for its sweet-and-salty balance, Smokehouse for its smoky notes, and Habanero/Chile 'n Lime for the bold, spicy profile that closely aligned with local taste preferences.

- **Packaging design:** The modern, easy-to-recognize packaging design attracted attention and supported strong brand visibility on shelf and at the event.

Many consumers were unaware of the full range of *Blue Diamond* flavors prior to the event, making the activation an effective platform for increasing brand awareness and introducing product variety to new audiences. Feedback also reflected positive perceptions of freshness, texture, and overall product quality.

The successful event enabled meaningful, direct engagement with consumers, encouraged product trial, strengthened awareness of *Blue Diamond's* variety and generated positive sentiment toward both flavor experience and their plans to purchase *Blue Diamond* almonds. ♦





Good Housekeeping Names *Blue Diamond's* Mike's Hot Honey Almonds the 2026 Winner for "Best Almonds"

Sweetness meets heat in this *Blue Diamond* Almonds x Mike's Hot Honey collaboration, in which roasted almonds get glazed in 100% pure honey infused with chili peppers for a bold, craveable bite.

TEST RESULTS: Testers loved the balance of bold taste and crunchy texture, saying the layered flavor kept them reaching for more. Several noted that the spiciness built up gradually without overpowering the honey flavor. "Perfect blend of sweet, heat, and crunch," one tester said. ♦

7

BEST ALMONDS

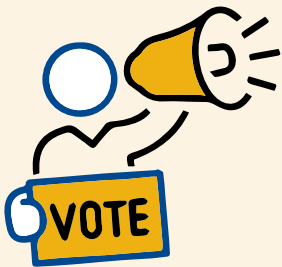
Blue Diamond Almonds Mike's Hot Honey Flavored Almonds

\$13 FOR 12-PACK, AMAZON [↗](#)

Blue Diamond Growers Annual Meeting Voting

What is a Proxy & Why is a Quorum Needed at Annual Meeting?

The Blue Diamond Annual Meeting is more than a luncheon or a social gathering; it is a required business meeting that is defined in the Cooperative's bylaws. To be valid, a quorum of the membership must be present, either in person or by proxy. Since it is a business meeting, the quorum is required if a motion is made from the floor and a vote of the membership is required.



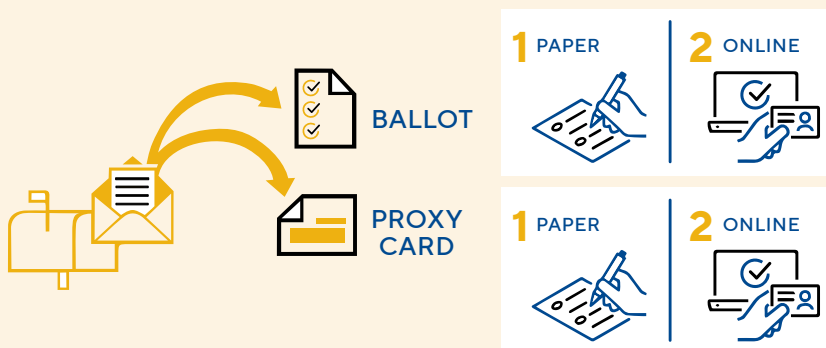
Annual General Election

It is time for the *Blue Diamond* annual general elections. This is a great opportunity for you to exercise one of your fundamental rights as a voting member to shape the future of your *Blue Diamond Growers* cooperative: electing members of the Board of Directors and Grower Liaison Committees. This year, you can vote for District Directors in Districts 3, 5 and 7. You also have the chance to vote for Grower Liaisons in each of the nine districts. Ballots will be mailed the first week of October. The

General Election opens October 5, 2026. Only ballots received by this date will be counted. Your vote matters! Be sure to submit your ballot in plenty of time so your vote is received before this deadline.

How to Vote

This year, there are two ways to vote: by paper ballot and online. Your election packet will include the paper ballot, return envelope, and instructions for online voting. If you choose to vote by proxy, you will be able to return the proxy card by mail or assign a proxy online.



This year, you will be able to vote by paper ballot, or online.

You will be able to return the proxy card by mail or assign a proxy online.

Make Sure You Are Represented — Return the Proxy Card!

Not sure if you can attend the annual meeting? You may assign your vote to a proxy—another voting member—to vote on your behalf. This year, you will be able to return the proxy card by mail or assign a proxy online. Mail in your proxy card (separate from the ballot) and rest assured that you are represented in the election and annual meeting, even if you can't directly participate. If you do decide to attend the meeting yourself, know that your presence always comes first. The proxy card is a backup plan for if you can't attend. ♦

Almond Breeze® x Fruity Pebbles, a Match Made for Mornings

Do you remember those lazy Saturday mornings as a kid where bedhead, cartoons and a heaping bowl of cereal welcomed the day? We sure do. That's why we insisted on developing a special partnership between *Almond Breeze®* and Fruity Pebbles™ that will take you back to when sleeping in was the norm. In essence, we've created a match made for mornings.



The colorful, tasty crunch of Fruity Pebbles™ paired with the creaminess of *Almond Breeze®* is sure to transport you back to a simpler time when wearing pajamas past 10:00 a.m. was acceptable. Just remember, you sat down on the floral-patterned sofa with a bowl of your favorite cereal topped with *Almond Breeze®* while your little brother tweaked the rabbit ear antennae so Saturday morning cartoons would show up clearly on the screen. Those were good times. So now, we're giving customers a chance to relive them, if only with a bowl of cereal.

From June 16 through August 17, 2026, over 6,000 Kroger, Albsco, ADUSA and Wakefern grocery stores are participating in the offer where customers can receive free *Almond Breeze®* with the purchase of any Pebbles™ cereal. We anticipate 600,000 coupons to be distributed (100 per store) with an approximate 30,000 redeemed.

So, grab your bowl, spoon, Pebbles™ and *Almond Breeze®* and settle into your favorite spot on the couch to enjoy being a kid again. Just for a moment. ♦

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STRONG TREES. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS.



ALMONDS
FRESNO
COUNTY

Sierra Gold offers more than 40 tree nut varieties, including EARLYBIRD™, a new self-fertile, early-maturing almond variety. That selection is matched with a trusted team that will help you choose what is best for your farm.



Blue Diamond Growers does not endorse or verify statements made by advertisers within this publication.



Success at the *Blue Diamond* Farmers Market Tour

This summer, *Blue Diamond* Produce Almonds made quite a stir amongst a brand-new audience: farmers market shoppers. The 2026 Farmers Market Summer Tour, running from June through July appeared in key markets in Chicago, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh and the Washington, D.C./Baltimore region. Chosen for their buzzing market traffic and nearness to retail partners, these cities helped turn browsers into buyers.

The tour showed shoppers how *Blue Diamond* Produce Almonds fit perfectly into fresh, wholesome foods and everyday snacking. By meeting shoppers where they pick out their favorite produce, *Blue Diamond* is creating more demand for almonds in this natural setting.

At each stop, sampling teams showed ingredients-focused consumers how *Blue Diamond* almonds could fit into their better-for-you eating habits. The program encouraged immediate trial and follow-through purchasing at retail stores through coupons, QR code engagement, tote bag giveaways and neighboring store support.

The tour delivered strong engagement through thousands of product samples, fun interactions with brand ambassadors, coupon activity and valuable market insights. The success of the activation will help shape future programs as *Blue Diamond* continues investing in events and programs that grow awareness, increase demand and create value for our grower-owners.

Tour Overview

Tour Details

- The tour placed *Blue Diamond* products directly in front of shoppers in a high-traffic, fresh-food setting.
- The program ran for five weeks and included nearly 10 activation days, distributing approximately 55,000 samples.
- Each activation was designed to connect product trial with nearby retail opportunities, helping strengthen the path from first taste to purchase.

The Tour's Path

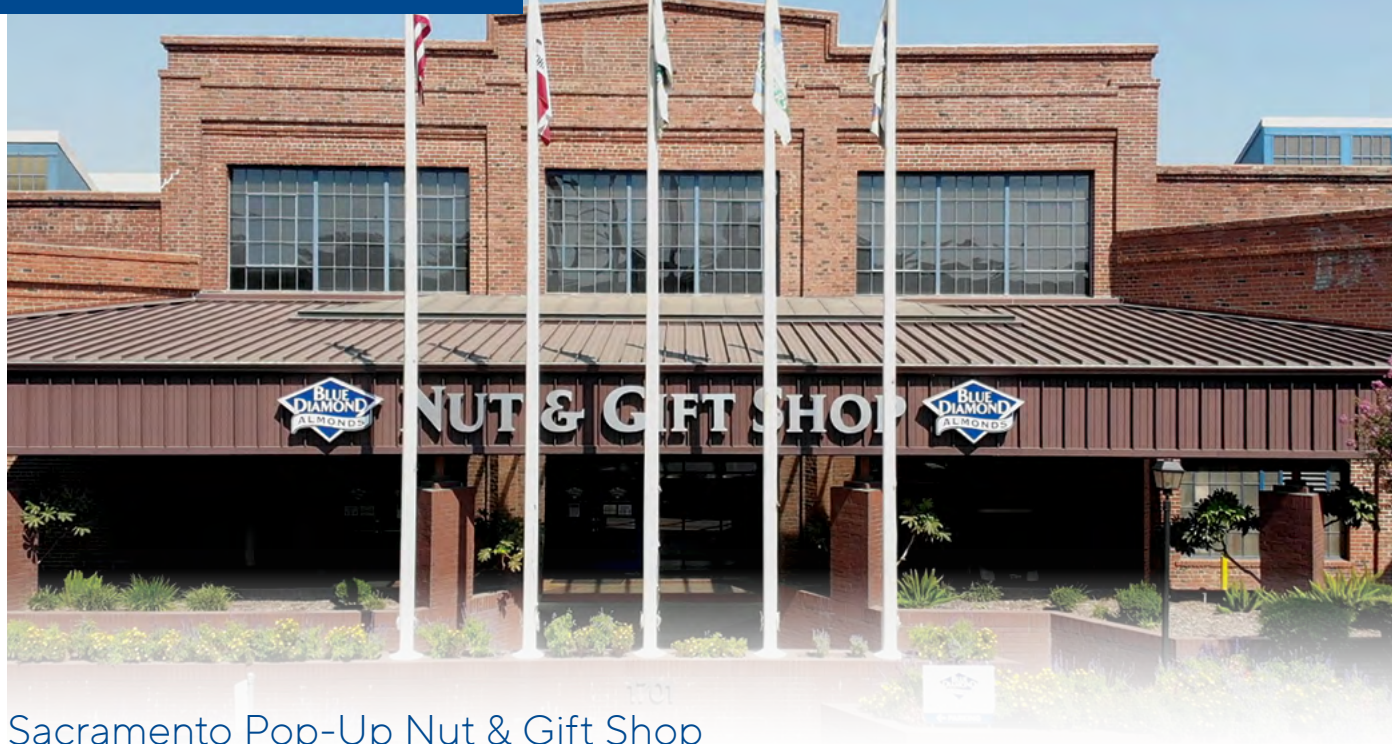
- **Chicago:** Daley Plaza & River North, with support for nearby Jewel-Osco & Mariano's stores.
- **Milwaukee:** Tosa & West Allis, with retail ties to Pick 'n Save, Roundy's & Piggly Wiggly.
- **Pittsburgh:** Lawrenceville & Market Square, with Giant Eagle as the key retail partner.
- **Washington, D.C./Baltimore:** Rose Park & Broadway Market, with nearby ACME & Safeway locations.



A Natural Fit

Farmers markets give *Blue Diamond* a chance to reach consumers who are already focused on fresh foods, ingredients and healthy choices. These markets are an important venue for *Blue Diamond* to emphasize the almond's rightful place in everyday food choices. ♦





Sacramento Pop-Up Nut & Gift Shop

To continue supporting our growers following the closure of the Sacramento Nut & Gift Shop please enjoy our once-a-month *Blue Diamond* Sacramento Pop-Up Shop!

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

Need to place a special order?

- Contact the Salida Nut & Gift Shop via phone (209) 545-3222 or email orders@bdgrowers.com for special orders. Please note there will be a 15-day lead time plus ground shipping.
- **Subject to product availability**

Happy shopping! ♦

2026 *Blue Diamond* Pop-Up Shop Hours:
9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Pop-Up Shop Schedule:

September 3
October 7

November 4
December 2

Blue Diamond Growers Leadership Program

The 2026 Leadership Program participants joined together this June for the second half of the program, the summer session. Participants received invaluable lessons from *Blue Diamond* leaders and external partners. Day one was a full day, where students toured the *Blue Diamond* Salida plant, learned from the Salida site director, Victor Gomez-Terres and senior regional managers, Trent Voss and Christine Ivory, followed by small group discussions centered on leadership. Bryce Spycher from Almond Board of California also shared the pathway to his career before the group prepared for the graduation dinner. *Blue Diamond* board director, Nick Blom served as host of the graduation dinner where Christine Ivory and Trent Voss emceed. *Blue Diamond*'s president and CEO, Kai Bockmann and John Duarte addressed the students before the dinner buffet. During the dinner each participant shared what they most enjoyed about the program before they received a certificate of completion from the board director from their districts.

On day two of the session, students toured Roos Nursery and Duarte Nursery then returned to the *Blue Diamond* Salida campus for a message on Almond Board involvement from Rebecca Bailey with the Almond Board of California. Lunch was served before the session's conclusion. The program was robust and educational and filled with wonderful conversations. Congratulations to the 2026 *Blue Diamond* Leadership Program graduating class! ♦





Blue Diamond Growers Foundation Selects 26 Scholarship Recipients for 2026-2027 School Year

The future of agriculture depends on a new generation of leaders who are driven by hard work, innovation and a commitment to strengthening the industry. To help support these future changemakers, the Blue Diamond Growers Foundation awarded scholarships to 26 outstanding students for the 2026-2027 academic year. Each recipient is pursuing higher education with a passion for agriculture and a desire to make a meaningful difference in their communities and beyond. Meet this year's scholarship recipients and read excerpts from their essays to learn more about the goals, values and aspirations that fuel their journeys.

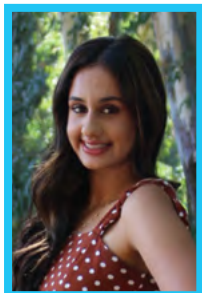


Lauren Anson

Hometown: **Patterson**
College: **Cal Poly SLO**
Major: **Ag Science**

Agriculture is my heritage, shaped by generations of family farming in Patterson and the lessons of

hard work, responsibility, and service taught by my grandfather. I plan to become an agriculture teacher, mentoring students while helping them understand both agricultural traditions and innovation. My goal is to inspire future generations to work hard, serve others and take pride in their roots.

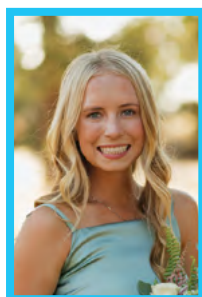


Sehaj Aulakh

Hometown: **Livingston**
College: **UC Irvine**
Major: **Biology**

I hope to work in agricultural pharmacology, developing safer plant nutrients, biological pest

controls and crop protection treatments that reduce chemical overuse and environmental impact. My goal is to support farmers, advance plant health research and create sustainable agricultural solutions that improve crop health while contributing to a safer, more sustainable food system.



Jillian Baptista

Hometown: **Livingston**
College: **UC Irvine**
Major: **Biology**

I plan to pursue a career in agricultural sales or financing, helping farmers purchase equipment

or secure funding to sustain their operations. I also hope to continue my family's almond farming legacy by owning a farm of my own. My goal is to help farmers grow, thrive and continue providing for their families.



Brooke Berrett

Hometown: **Sanger**
College: **Brigham Young Univ. - Hawaii**
Major: **Agribusiness**

Growing up near the *Blue Diamond* plant sparked my interest in agriculture and eventually led me

to study plant science and agribusiness. I hope to work in sales and marketing, connecting consumers directly to farmers' stories. By helping people understand the importance of water and agriculture, I want to bridge the gap between consumers and the farming communities that feed them.

**Baylor Bloom**

Hometown: [Gustine](#)

College: [Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln](#)

Major: [Ag Systems Technology](#)

I plan to design, market and improve modern agricultural technology that increases efficiency and sustainability

nationwide. My goals include creating a sound-wave tree shaker, autonomous spray drone and electric remote-control yard truck. Through innovation and education, I hope to reduce tree harm, lower emissions, improve farm productivity, and help build a better agricultural future.

**John Borges**

Hometown: [Fresno](#)

College: [Fresno State](#)

Major: [Ag Systems Management](#)

I plan to earn a degree in Agricultural Systems Management to strengthen the agriculture industry through

innovation, technology and sustainability. Whether improving business operations or developing advanced equipment and irrigation systems, my goal is to increase efficiency while conserving resources. I hope to support food security, rural communities and sustainable agricultural practices that benefit society.

**Miranda Calderon**

Hometown: [Sacramento](#)

College: [Sacramento State](#)

Major: [Health Science](#)

I enrolled in college to pursue my goal of becoming a labor and delivery nurse. I hope to provide

compassionate, patient-centered care that supports mothers, newborns and families during one of life's most important moments. By promoting health equity, reducing parental anxiety, and educating families on lifelong wellness, I aim to positively impact future generations and underserved communities.

**Kate Cooper**

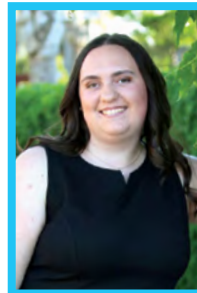
Hometown: [Denair](#)

College: [Oklahoma State](#)

Major: [Ag Communications](#)

Through FFA and livestock judging, I developed a passion for agricultural advocacy and educating others

about California agriculture. I plan to earn degrees in Agricultural Communications and Agricultural Business before attending law school to become an agricultural lawyer. My goal is to improve agricultural literacy, influence policy and advocate for farmers while helping the public better understand where their food comes from.

**Madison Dutto**

Hometown: [Tulare](#)

College: [UC Davis](#)

Major: [Environmental Studies](#)

Although I did not grow up on a farm, my experience in Tulare FFA inspired my passion for leadership,

sustainability and agricultural advocacy. I plan to study environmental science and attend law school to focus on agricultural law and environmental regulations. My goal is to ensure government policies support California agriculture while promoting long-term sustainability and protecting the industry's future.

**Matthew Dyk**

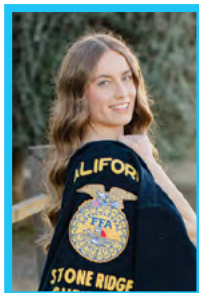
Hometown: [Escalon](#)

College: [Oklahoma State](#)

Major: [Ag Systems Technology](#)

Since childhood, I have loved building things and understanding how they work. By majoring in

Agricultural Systems Technology, I hope to expand my knowledge of advanced equipment, design and construction. I want to provide high-quality work with integrity and passion while building products that are durable, dependable and beneficial to the agricultural community for years to come.



Ella Fredriks

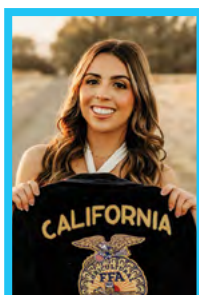
Hometown: [Chowchilla](#)

College: [Fresno State](#)

Major: [Ag Communications](#)

I am pursuing a degree in Agricultural Communications to become an advocate for agriculture

and educate others about the importance of the industry. Inspired by my involvement in FFA, I hope to work with organizations like the California Farm Bureau or Almond Alliance to support farmers, bridge the gap between urban and rural communities and ensure agriculture continues to thrive for generations.



Emilia Galindo

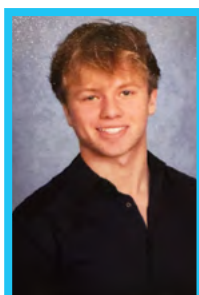
Hometown: [Gustine](#)

College: [Cal Poly SLO](#)

Major: [Agribusiness](#)

I plan to earn a degree in Agricultural Business, combining my passion for business and agriculture. Through

hands-on learning and internships, I hope to develop skills in marketing, sales, finance and leadership. My goal is to help businesses grow, strengthen connections between consumers and producers, and contribute to a more sustainable business landscape.



Henry Garcia

Hometown: [Atwater](#)

College: [Cornell University](#)

Major: [Ag Science](#)

I plan to earn degrees in Agricultural Business, Spanish, and Agricultural Law before returning to the Central

Valley to practice law and farm almonds or pistachios. My goal is to help vulnerable individuals navigate the legal system, especially Spanish-speaking communities. Through bilingual educational seminars and community outreach, I hope to make a lasting impact while advocating for underserved agricultural families.



Seyeon Ha

Hometown: [Turlock](#)

College: [UC Davis](#)

Major: [Biochemistry](#)

Witnessing food insecurity despite agricultural abundance inspired my interest in plant science and genetics.

I plan to focus on crop resilience, nutritional quality, and sustainability by developing crops that require fewer inputs and tolerate environmental stress. My goal is to work with researchers and growers to improve food accessibility, strengthen agricultural sustainability, and help communities facing food insecurity.



Shayan Khan

Hometown: [Merced](#)

College: [UC Merced](#)

Major: [Mechanical Engineering](#)

I am pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering with an aerospace emphasis to develop safe,

efficient, and sustainable transportation technologies, particularly electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft. Through hands-on projects, research and industry experience, I hope to create innovative mobility solutions that improve quality of life, reduce environmental impact, and inspire future engineers through mentorship and community involvement.



Julia Lee

Hometown: [Turlock](#)

College: [Cornell University](#)

Major: [Ag Science](#)

I plan to study Agricultural Science to explore how biological research and innovation can address modern agricultural challenges. I am especially

interested in improving plant health, disease detection, production efficiency and sustainability through emerging technologies. My goal is to help develop practical solutions that support producers, strengthen environmental stewardship, and improve the resilience of communities facing future resource challenges.

**Won Jung Lee**

Hometown: [Rancho Cordova](#)
College: [Chico State](#)
Major: [Environmental Economics](#)

As I complete my MBA at Chico State, I remain committed to academic excellence, leadership and

applying business knowledge to real-world challenges. I hope to use the skills gained through this program to create long-term value and innovation while continuing to contribute strategically to *Blue Diamond Growers* and its future organizational success.

**Chasey Miller**

Hometown: [Arbuckle](#)
College: [Chico State](#)
Major: [Agribusiness](#)

I plan to earn a degree in Agricultural Business before attending law school to specialize in California water

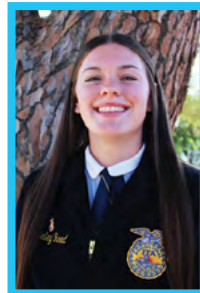
law. My goal is to advocate for farmers and ranchers by helping them secure the water rights necessary to sustain agriculture and rural communities. Through continued learning and service, I hope to support the industry that provides essential resources.

**Emilio Machado Perez**

Hometown: [Manteca](#)
College: [Cornell University](#)
Major: [Ag Science](#)

The collapse of U.S. bee populations inspired me to study entomology and develop solutions for commercial

beekeepers facing threats like the Varroa mite. I hope to advance research in hygienic bee genetics that naturally reduce mite infestations and strengthen hive health. By protecting bee populations, I aim to support agriculture, food production and society.

**Haley Reed**

Hometown: [Bakersfield](#)
College: [Fresno State](#)
Major: [Ag Education](#)

I plan to attend Fresno State to earn a degree in Agricultural Education and inspire students through

agriculture, just as my teachers inspired me. Coming from a non-agriculture background, I understand the challenges of starting from the ground up. My goal is to help students discover opportunities in agriculture while developing future leaders who will positively impact their communities.

**Madison McNair**

Hometown: [Chico](#)
College: [Chico State](#)
Major: [Agribusiness](#)

I plan to earn my degree in Agricultural Business and use it to support the Farm Credit

industry and local farmers. Discovering my passion for the financial side of agriculture inspired me to give back through education, scholarships and community involvement. My goal is to support future agricultural students while promoting the importance and sustainability of agriculture.

**Kasey Ribeiro**

Hometown: [Riverdale](#)
College: [Fresno State](#)
Major: [Ag Education](#)

My goal is to earn a degree in Agricultural Education and become a high school agriculture teacher

and FFA advisor. Agriculture and FFA have shaped my life, and I hope to create a supportive classroom where students build leadership, confidence and responsibility. I want to mentor students, help them discover their strengths, and make a lasting impact on their success.



Arjan Sohal

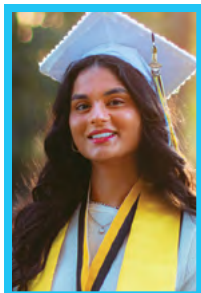
Hometown: [Yuba City](#)

College: [Texas A&M](#)

Major: [Agribusiness](#)

I hope to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in an agricultural field and return to my community

to work in agricultural business, possibly agricultural appraisal. By studying finance, real estate valuation and law, I aim to become a productive professional while encouraging local youth to pursue higher education and stay involved in agriculture and community leadership.



Areesha Tariq

Hometown: [Merced](#)

College: [UC Merced](#)

Major: [Biochemistry](#)

Growing up in California's Central Valley inspired my passion for biochemistry and improving

cardiovascular health outcomes in underserved communities. I plan to pursue an MD/PhD to combine research, clinical medicine and community outreach. My goal is to develop better treatments for cardiovascular disease, reduce health disparities and improve long-term health and resilience within vulnerable populations.



Addison Tenente

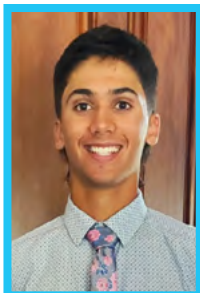
Hometown: [Escalon](#)

College: [Oklahoma State](#) or [Cal Poly SLO](#)

Major: [Agribusiness](#)

I plan to earn a degree in Agribusiness before potentially

pursuing agricultural law. Growing up immersed in farming, custom operations, and raising cattle gave me firsthand experience with the challenges farmers face. As an agricultural attorney, I hope to help farmers and ranchers navigate labor issues, water rights, and regulations while defending their livelihoods and supporting California agriculture's future.



Tarun Thiara

Hometown: [Merced](#)

College: [Cal Poly SLO](#)

Major: [Agribusiness](#)

After overcoming stage three Hodgkin lymphoma, I gained a new perspective on resilience,

perseverance and creating a meaningful future. Having worked in agriculture since childhood, I plan to return to my family farm after earning my degree to improve efficiency, support long-term planning and help ensure the sustainability of our farming operation for future generations.

About the *Blue Diamond Growers* Foundation

The *Blue Diamond Growers* Foundation Scholarship has been established for promising young students from California who plan to attend, or are attending, a university offering a four-year degree. Students transferring from a community or junior college to a four-year university program are also eligible. ♦

**If you wish to donate to the
Blue Diamond Growers Foundation
to support next year's students,
please make checks payable to
"Blue Diamond Growers Foundation"
and send to:**

**Attn: Finance Dept./Scholarships
Blue Diamond Growers
1802 C Street
Sacramento, CA 95811**

**Thank you for your
contributions and support!**



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Federal State of Play

Congress concluded a busy July session before departing Washington for the August recess, during which lawmakers will spend much of the next month meeting with constituents and campaigning ahead of the November midterm elections. July was marked by an unusually challenging Senate landscape following the sudden death of Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and the extended absence of Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) due to health issues, complicating efforts to advance several major legislative priorities before the recess.

In late June, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman (R-AR) released the *Agricultural Act of 2026*, marking the Senate's first comprehensive Farm Bill proposal since the House passed its version of the Farm Bill, the *Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026*. The Senate version includes several specialty crop

provisions important to the almond industry, including language establishing a Specialty Crop Emergency Assistance Framework to streamline delivery of future aid to specialty crop growers. It would also make investments in key trade programs at USDA by increasing funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) to \$437 million by fiscal year 2028. However, the Farm Bill's path through the Senate remains uncertain, as it does not include a key Democratic priority to delay state cost-share requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These provisions were enacted under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) and are scheduled to take effect next year. Although OBBBA reauthorized some Farm Bill programs like row crop safety net programs through 2031, the authority for many other trade, horticultural, and marketing programs is set to expire on September 30, 2026, unless Congress acts.

When Congress returns to Washington after Labor Day, lawmakers will face an ambitious September agenda. In addition to must-pass annual defense legislation, lawmakers must come to an agreement to fund the government before the end of the federal fiscal year on September 30 or risk a shutdown just a month before the midterm elections. Also on the legislative docket is President Trump's late June request to Congress for a supplemental funding package to cover the cost of U.S. military operations involving Iran, as well as \$11 billion in additional farmer aid. Efforts continue to advocate for a meaningful set-aside for specialty crop assistance within any farmer aid package that Congress considers.

Trade State of Play

The Trump Administration continued advancing its trade agenda this summer, with significant developments in bilateral trade relations. On July 1, the United States-European trade agreement went into effect following EU ratification of the deal, almost a year after the deal was first announced. Meanwhile, North American bilateral trade negotiations are ongoing after the U.S. announced that it will not renew the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), opting instead for annual reviews of the agreement which will remain in force through 2036.

The Administration also continues issuing refunds to importers following this spring's Supreme Court decision finding that tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) exceeded the President's statutory authority.

Beyond tariff policy, geopolitical developments continue to influence the global trade environment. As U.S.-Iranian tensions continue, policymakers and agricultural stakeholders are closely monitoring impacts to the Strait of Hormuz, which remains a strategically important shipping corridor for energy and fertilizer products. ♦



***Lynn Jacquez,
Of Counsel,
JPH Law Firm***



***Ken Barbic,
D.C. Federal
Affairs Team***



***Alexis Bass,
D.C. Federal
Affairs Team***

ALMOND MARKET UPDATE



Blue Diamond Almond Market Report – July 10, 2026

OVERVIEW

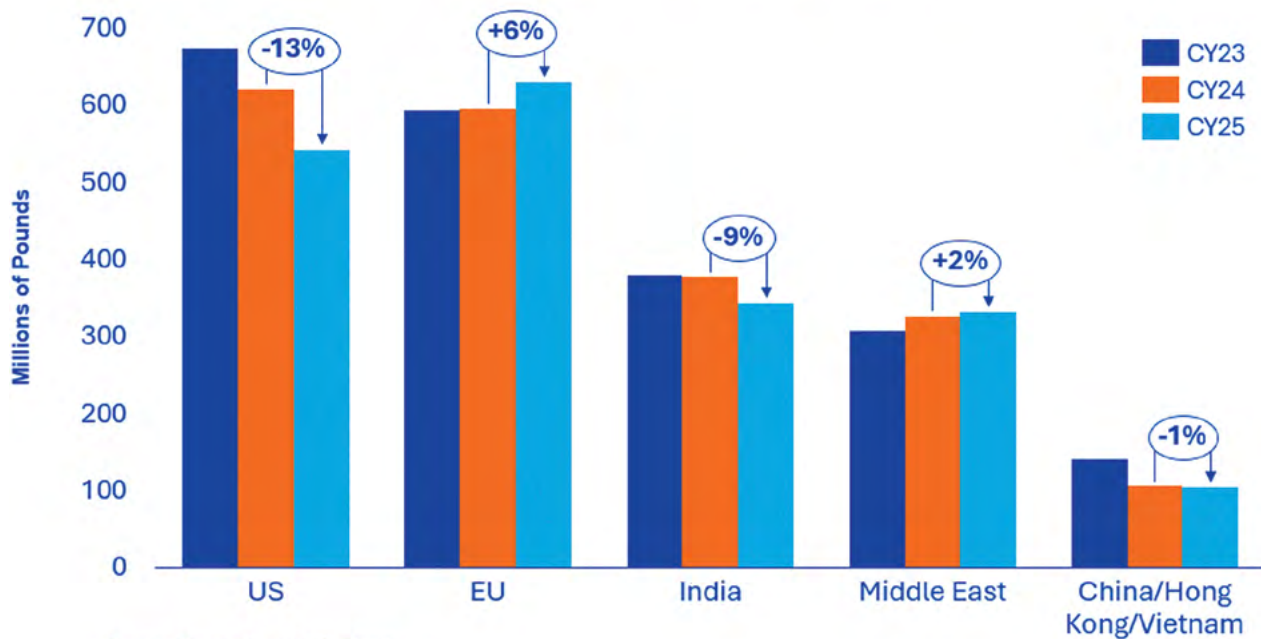
June shipments totaled 213 million pounds, meeting industry expectations at a 14% increase versus prior year. Exports reached 163.3 million pounds for the month, up 20.6% from prior year, and have now advanced the lead over last year's pace by 3%, totaling 1.88 billion pounds. Domestic shipments for June reflected a decline of 3.1% compared to the previous year. Domestic year-to-date shipments now stand at 542 million pounds, down 12.7%. Total industry shipments through June have now reached 2.43 billion pounds and narrowed the gap to last year to less than 1%. The June position report has reiterated underlying firmness in the market with all the fundamentals signaling strong global demand, active sales, healthy commitments, and reduced supply heading into the new crop.

SHIPMENTS

India:

India remains one of the industry's most closely watched markets. June shipments totaled 34.1 million pounds (1,078 containers), bringing crop-year shipments to 344.1 million pounds (10,896 containers), down 9.0% from last season. Buyers continue to purchase on a disciplined hand-to-mouth basis as they balance higher replacement costs, currency pressures, and elevated inshell values. With Diwali occurring later this year, attention is increasingly shifting toward new crop arrivals. Recent Chinese demand for California inshell almonds, driven in part by Australia's quality challenges, has introduced additional competition for available Nonpareil supplies and continues to support firm inshell pricing.

Year-To-Date Shipments (June)



China/Hong Kong/SE Asia:

The broader Asia-Pacific region continues to post encouraging results despite uneven performance across individual markets. Southeast Asia remains a bright spot, with shipments increasing 27% year to date. Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia all recorded meaningful growth, reflecting continued expansion in both food manufacturing and consumer snack demand.

China and Hong Kong remain below prior-year levels, but when looking at both North and Southeast Asia, the combined region is down only 2.3%. Market sentiment has improved in recent months as reduced Australian crop quality has encouraged renewed Chinese interest in California almonds, particularly inshell product. While it remains early, this dynamic could provide additional support to California inshell demand during the upcoming marketing year.

Looking ahead, market participants will be closely watching the next round of U.S.-China trade discussions between President Trump and President Xi. Any meaningful progress on tariff negotiations could improve buyer confidence, reduce trade-related uncertainty, and provide an additional tailwind for almond demand in China as importers become more comfortable extending coverage and rebuilding inventories ahead of Chinese New Year.

Europe:

European demand remains one of the most consistent drivers of California almond exports. Year-to-date shipments are now up 6% ahead of last year, with growth extending across much of the region. Spain, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, Italy and Germany all have posted year-over-year gains during the crop year. Although shipments to the Netherlands remain below last year's pace, overall regional demand has remained resilient as buying activity continues to be supported by a diversified customer base spanning retail, confectionery, bakery, and ingredient channels. A noteworthy development that must be mentioned is the new tariff arrangement which took effect on July 1. Almonds and other tree nuts may now enter the EU duty free so long as volumes remain under a 500,000 metric tons quota. This should increase the competitiveness of California almonds in Europe.

Middle East:

Despite continued geopolitical uncertainty throughout portions of the region, Middle East demand remains remarkably resilient. Overall shipments are now in positive territory again, up 2% year to date, driven primarily by another exceptional performance from Turkey. Turkey continues to be the standout market, increasing shipments 42% year-over-year to nearly 146 million pounds. Saudi Arabia remains one of California's largest individual destinations despite a modest year-over-year decline, while the UAE continues to find its footing following exceptionally strong purchases last season and the fallout from the Iran conflict. Overall, regional demand remains healthy, with the trade working around logistical challenges presented by the on again, off again nature of transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

Domestic:

Domestic shipments totaled 49.7 million pounds in June, bringing year-to-date domestic shipments to 12.7% below last season. While shipments remain below previous year's levels, the June performance was generally in line with expectations, with the decline driven primarily by softer manufactured product shipments.

As the industry enters the final month of the crop year, we expect domestic demand to remain steady. Buyers continue to maintain a hand-to-mouth purchasing strategy, supported by adequate nearby availability and limited urgency to extend coverage. However, as harvest approaches and confidence in the new crop improves, purchasing activity is expected to gradually shift toward securing longer-term coverage. With a healthy pipeline of committed business already in place, July domestic shipments are positioned to perform similarly to last year's pace, helping close the crop year on stable footing. Overall, balanced supply fundamentals and disciplined buying behavior should support a stable to firming pricing environment heading into the new crop season.

COMMITMENTS

Total commitments continue to be strong at 368.5 million pounds, pacing ahead of last year by 17.9%. New monthly sales for current crop were 143.2 million pounds, up from 96.8 million pounds last year. The domestic market secured 22.8 million pounds, while exports added 120.4 million pounds of new coverage. Total current crop commitments for the domestic market are now at 145 million pounds while exports have reached 223 million pounds. Another strong month of sales has reduced uncommitted inventory, now down 17.8% at 328.2 million pounds versus 399.2 million pounds prior year.

New crop sales were reported at 56 million pounds, up from the prior year's 45.9 million pounds. The domestic market new crop commitments now stand at 33.6 million pounds, while export commitments have now reached 114.3 million pounds bringing total new crop commitments up to 147.9 million pounds.

CROP

Significant variability in orchard conditions remain evident across the state, reflecting differences in nutrition, crop load, and management. Thicker hulls and shells suggest lower percentage of kernel weight versus in-hull weight and abandoned and low care orchards present pest management challenges. These variables influence downward pressure on crop size as indicated by our updated crop estimate. Harvest is expected to begin in mid- to late July.

Blue Diamond's July 2026 Almond Crop Estimate has been revised to 2.67 billion pounds with a range of 2.65 to 2.70 billion pounds. This range reflects the downside risk and variability of the 2026 crop. We will continue to share crop updates in our monthly Market Reports, with later updates providing a more precise forecast as we progress through harvest. ♦

Market Perspective

The June Position Report reinforces the constructive tone that has developed over the past several months. Export demand continues to outperform expectations, helping offset ongoing softness in domestic consumption. With shipments remaining strong and commitments comfortably ahead of last year, current crop inventories continue to tighten heading into harvest.

The most encouraging metric in this report is the continued decline in uncommitted inventory. Sellers have considerably less unsold product available than at this time last year, reducing the likelihood of widespread harvest pressure as new crop becomes available. At the same time, current crop receipts have effectively concluded near 2.69 billion pounds, confirming a crop modestly smaller than last season.

As attention shifts toward the 2026 crop, market participants are generally aligned on crop size. Greater attention will likely shift toward harvest timing, kernel sizing, quality and early yield results as the industry begins receiving new crop deliveries.

Overall, market fundamentals continue to support a firm tone. The arrival of the new crop should improve availability on the heels of harvest. However, tightening current crop inventories, healthy export demand, and a second crop near 2.70 billion pounds suggest downside price risk remains limited. This perspective assumes we do not have a materially larger-than-expected harvest or meaningful deterioration in global demand.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

July 2026 *Blue Diamond* Growers Crop Estimate

bit.ly/julycropest

***Blue Diamond* Growers Bloom Reports**

<https://bluediamondgrowers.com/crop-progress-report/>

Almond Board of California Full Position Report

https://www.almonds.org/sites/default/files/2026-07/2026.06_PosRpt_9402.pdf

THE ALMOND BOARD

Almond Hulls Get GRAS Status: What Does That Mean?

For decades, almond hulls have had a specific job — to be a dependable, low-cost animal feed ingredient. But a recent milestone could open the door to a very different future for this familiar byproduct. Based on an extensive evaluation, Almond Hull Powder (AHP) has been confirmed as *Generally Recognized as Safe* (GRAS) for use in human food, following a review by an independent expert panel.

That may sound technical, but for almond growers, this decision has the potential to reshape the conversation around almond hull value.

First, What Does “GRAS” Actually Mean?

In plain terms, GRAS status means that qualified experts agree that a food ingredient is safe for people to eat, based on scientific evidence and a long list of safety data. It’s a designation recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and is a key factor for any ingredient that wants to enter the human food supply.

In this case, an independent expert panel reviewed a comprehensive dossier, more than 180 pages, covering how AHP is made, safety for human consumption, how much people might eat, and what happens when they do. The panel concluded that AHP is safe for its intended uses in food. Just as important: the dossier and expert panel findings are finalized and submitted to the FDA.

Why Almond Hulls?

Almond hulls make up a significant share of the almond fruit by weight, yet historically they’ve delivered relatively modest returns to growers. Most hulls end up in livestock rations, where they’re valued for fiber and energy, but prices can be volatile, and demand is tied closely to dairy and feed markets.



Almond Hull Powder. Photo Credit Almond Board of California

GRAS status changes the playing field by allowing almond hulls, when processed into Almond Hull Powder, to be used in human food products. According to the expert panel review, AHP can be used in a wide range of foods, including baked goods, cereals, beverages, bars and nutritional products. That doesn’t mean hulls suddenly replace almonds on the grocery shelf. But it does mean there is a pathway where hulls can move beyond feed and into higher-value food ingredient markets.

Almond Hull Powder can deliver a strong nutritional profile anchored by high levels of dietary fiber, naturally occurring sugars and antioxidant compounds. This combination supports digestive health, satiety and overall wellness while also enabling formulators to build products with reduced added sugars and a more balanced nutritional profile. As consumers increasingly seek fiber-forward, plant-based and clean-label ingredients with recognizable origins, Almond Hull Powder aligns well with sustainability, functional and better-for-you positioning.

What the Science Says

The expert panel looked closely at several key questions growers often hear from buyers and regulators:

- **Is it safe?**

Yes. Toxicology, genotoxicity and environmental contaminant exposure assessments found no safety concerns at intended use levels.

- **How much would people actually consume?**

Even high-end consumption estimates were well below levels associated with any adverse effects, providing wide safety margins.

- **How is it made?**

AHP is produced using the same well established industrial equipment and processes already used commercially for almond and food industry, including sorting, cleaning, thermal drying and milling.

In short, the science supports what growers already suspected: almond hulls are a natural, well-understood agricultural product with untapped potential.

What This Could Mean for the Hull Market

GRAS status doesn't instantly create new demand, but it removes a major barrier. The expert review means food companies can now seriously explore AHP as an ingredient without having to clear safety hurdles themselves. That opens the door to:

- New markets beyond traditional feed channels
- Higher-value applications tied to human nutrition and functional foods
- More diversified demand, reducing reliance on any single end use

The announcement also points to the next steps already underway, including finalizing processing parameters and external engagement with food manufacturers and partners.

For growers, this matters because diversified demand is often the first step toward improved and more stable byproduct economics.

A Stewardship Story Buyers Want to Hear

There's another angle that resonates well beyond the orchard: sustainability.

Almonds are already "zero waste" – everything coming out of the orchard is used. Expanding the option to use almond hulls as a food ingredient supports a more circular use of the crop, finding value in parts of the almond fruit that were previously limited to low-return outlets. The GRAS determination explicitly notes the opportunity to unlock new, high-value food applications for almond hulls while supporting broader sustainability and innovation goals.

That story aligns closely with what many food companies are looking for today, ingredients that are natural, safe, functional and responsibly sourced.

The Bottom Line for Growers

Almond Hull Powder earning GRAS status doesn't change the hull market overnight. But it does something just as important; it expands what's possible.

By clearing the scientific and regulatory considerations for human food use, almond hulls move from being only a feed ingredient to becoming a potential food ingredient as well. Over time, that shift could translate into new demand streams, new partnerships and a stronger value proposition for growers.

For an industry always looking to make the most of every pound harvested, this milestone is worth paying attention to.

Article Contributed by the Almond Board of California ♦

THE BEE BOX

Plan Now for Cover Crop Success

As the old adage says, “Proper planning results in better outcomes,” and planning for a cover crop in an almond orchard is no different. The benefits of cover cropping are well documented and include results like improved water infiltration, increased soil water holding capacity and improved soil quality. In most cases, the advantages of including a cover crop in your orchard operation far outweigh the drawbacks.

The time to start planning for fall cover crop planting is prior to harvest. A little forward thinking in early summer helps avoid the stress of last-minute decisions and delays.

Part of your initial planning process should be to outline the soil problems you want to address with a cover crop, whether it is poor water infiltration, aggressive weeds, declining soil function or other issues. Once your problems are identified, you can match the types of cover crop seeds that can best alleviate your issues. Cover crop seed mixes can be tailored to fulfill multiple outcomes, including pollinator support.

Once you have determined what cover crop you want, summer is a good time to start sourcing your seed, just like other inputs you will need later. You can purchase seed, often through your regular suppliers, or apply for subsidized cover crop seed. For subsidized seed you'll need to plan even further ahead, since most application

periods begin months before many growers think about ordering seed and they close before almond harvest.

Blue Diamond Growers can experiment with cover crops and get technical support at no cost through the *Blue Diamond Growers* Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) Grant program. This is an ongoing Federal USDA grant.

To qualify, growers need to meet the following criteria:

1. Have and maintain a current contract with *Blue Diamond*,
2. Be a participant in the *Blue Diamond* Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP) with a completed CASP progress report, and
3. Have an orchard map and associated paperwork from the USDA Farm Service Agency. The details can be found at www.bluediamondgrowers.com.

The Seeds for Bees Program® offers subsidized cover crop seed each year. To be notified of our offerings and upcoming application times, subscribe to the Seeds for Bees® Cover Crop Chronicle newsletter www.projectapism.org/sign-up-for-seeds-for-bees-program

Just like spraying or irrigating, timing your cover crop planting is critical. Prior planning helps you fit planting into your other post-harvest activities. We advocate planting your cover crop seed as soon after harvest as you can, even into dry soil. The seeds won't germinate until they get enough moisture, so why wait for the first rain if you have an opportunity to plant before then. For the best results, your cover crop should be planted by Thanksgiving. Generally, the fall rains are what germinates your cover crop seed, but your final post-harvest irrigation could also be used to germinate the seed if it's planted early enough. We have found that brassica plants that germinate by November 1 consistently result in flowers for honeybee support in February.



And the last thing to consider before the demands of harvest is how you plan to plant the cover crop. If you are planting it yourself, it's time to inventory what machinery you have to plant seeds in an orchard. Small seeds like the Pollinator Brassica mix can often be planted with an ant bait applicator or a relatively inexpensive broadcaster and a light drag, while larger seeds like the Nitro Builder are better planted with a seed drill. Small seeds can be planted with a seed drill as well with some calibration. Now is also the time to locate machinery or a custom planter in your area if you decide to hire someone to plant your cover crop. Locating and scheduling a custom planter now is easier than setting up a last-minute appointment in October or November. Your neighbors or your consultant may know custom planters or have planting machinery, so now is the time to ask around. Whether you are just beginning to use a cover crop or you are a veteran practitioner, taking a few minutes this summer to plan ahead could save you hours of stress this fall. ♦



*Tom Johnson,
Grower Relations Manager,
Project Apis m.*

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TIME TO CONSIDER

Harvest is supposed to be the payoff—the culmination of a year’s work. But when the forecast turns wet, the excitement quickly shifts to concern. Rain during almond harvest isn’t just an inconvenience, it’s a test of judgment, timing and field discipline. The good news is that with the right approach, you can move through a wet harvest without sacrificing quality or efficiency. The secret is understanding how almonds respond to moisture and making decisions that keep drying potential alive in the orchard.

Moisture changes everything. Once almonds get wet, orchard management practices must change to match the conditions in the orchard. As the moisture works its way through the nut, hulls absorb water first and dry out first. Kernels absorb water last and dry out last. If mismanaged, microbes begin to activate, drying slows dramatically, and nuts can deteriorate while waiting for conditions to improve. The problem compounds when wet nuts meet wet soil. They stick, they pick up debris, and they resist drying. In windrows packed with leaves and organic material, heat can build up quickly from microbial activity. This creates conditions that compromise kernel quality.



Wet windrow. Photo Credit: Mel Machado

Not all orchards behave the same way in wet conditions. Before you make any move, evaluate the variables that matter most:

- **Variety:** Some cultivars, like Monterey, are slower to dry due to thicker hulls.
- **Soil type:** Heavy soils hold water longer and delay entry into the orchard.
- **Tree size and canopy density:** Dense orchards trap moisture and block sunlight.
- **Row orientation:** East-west plantings tend to dry slower than north-south rows.
- **Stage of crop:** Nuts still in the tree are far safer than nuts on wet ground.
- **Weather Forecast:** When is the rain coming and how much is expected?

If there’s one guiding principle to remember, it’s this:

Your goal is to move the driest nuts first and create the best possible drying environment in the field for the rest. This approach reduces dryer time at the processor, preserves quality, maximizes throughput, and keeps harvest steady even when conditions aren’t ideal.

If Nuts Are Still in the Tree, Leave Them There: It may sound counterintuitive, but one of the safest places for almonds during a storm is still attached to the tree. If rain is approaching and the crop isn’t ready, hold off on shaking. Trees offer protection from soil moisture and allow the nuts to wait out short-term weather without absorbing additional water.

When Nuts Are on the Ground: This is where decisions become critical. If almonds are lying flat on wet soil, resist the urge to rake immediately. Moving them too soon only spreads moisture and pushes soil and organic matter (leaves) into the mix.

Instead:

- Wait for the **soil surface to dry slightly** before sweeping.
- Avoid creating windrows on wet ground.
- Recognize that patience here pays off later in reduced drying time and cleaner product.

Once nuts are in a windrow, you're dealing with the most sensitive stage of wet harvest management. Wet windrows packed with leaves and soil create a perfect environment for elevated temperatures due to microbial activity. Left alone, they rarely dry effectively and can quickly turn from manageable to a total crop loss.

The fix is active management:

- Wet nuts should never be left in a tight windrow.
- **Condition the windrow** to remove trash and improve airflow.
- Use a **pickup machine** to lift, clean and re-drop nuts.
- If needed, use a **spring tine or mechanical stirring** to break up compact, wet material.

The goal is to keep the windrow loose, exposed and breathable. Drying requires air movement, and dense, wet piles block it completely.

Wet harvests aren't solo operations; they're coordinated efforts. We have a saying at *Blue Diamond* that once it is picked up, wet product must stay in motion if it is going to be saved. If wet product sits, that is when microbial activity starts, and the crop can be lost. Communication is key to keeping that product moving.



Wet Fritz almonds. Photo Credit: Mel Machado



Steaming wet piles of almonds. Photo Credit: Mel Machado

Stay connected with:

- Harvest crews
- Field and equipment operators
- Huller/sheller
- Regional manager

Clear communication ensures everyone understands the plan, adapts quickly and avoids costly missteps.

Wet harvest conditions demand discipline, but they don't have to derail your season. The most successful growers don't fight the weather, they adapt to it. They understand that almonds dry best in the orchard, not in transit or storage, and they adjust their strategy accordingly. In the end, handling a wet crop is about one thing: **Protecting drying potential while maintaining control of the process.** With the right decisions, even a challenging harvest can end with clean, high-quality almonds. ♦



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

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