



# almond **FACTS**

MARCH | APRIL 2015

News, Views & Industry Insights

## **Almond Flour Cookbook Debuts**

**Olympian Signs on  
as Almond Breeze  
Ambassador**

**New 'Krunchy'  
Product Hits Europe**





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*Blue Diamond* got its good going at Ripon's annual Almond Blossom Parade, where spectators were treated to two floats from the cooperative and many packets of almonds.

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Cover Photo:

Raspberry Linzer Torte Bars made with Blue Diamond's extra fine natural almond flour.  
Recipe available at [www.bdingredients.com/recipes](http://www.bdingredients.com/recipes)



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*Blue Diamond*, the world's largest processor and marketer of almonds, exports to 90 countries. The cooperative marketing corporation also markets hazelnuts.

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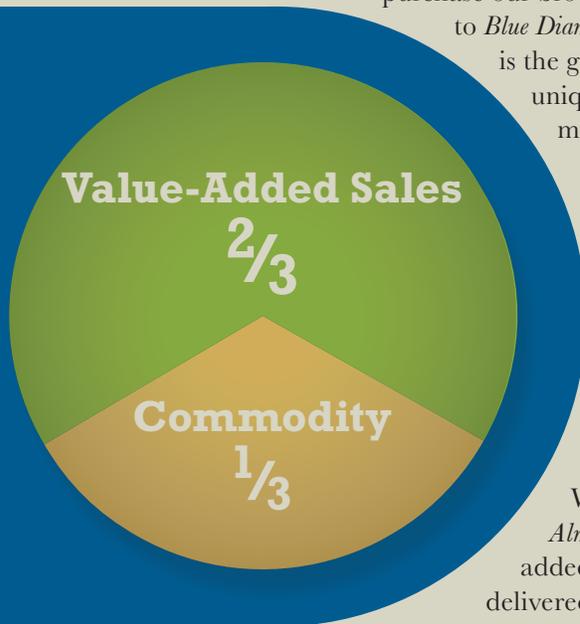
## President's Corner

Mark Jansen  
President and CEO



# Blue Diamond's business model is unique from most other California almond handlers and here's why...

We are still the world's largest and best seller of Nonpareil almonds with market expertise in the 93 countries which purchase our brown almonds. This heritage business remains very important to *Blue Diamond's* customers and our growers. The *Blue Diamond* brand is the gold standard of quality; our 105 years of experience and unique, personal customer access position our co-op for continued market leadership.



In 2010, *Blue Diamond's* executive team, with the support of our board of directors, determined that the co-op would deliver the greatest return to its growers by transitioning into a global branded manufacturer of almonds. Manufacturing, marketing and selling value-added products is now our core business. Fully two-thirds of our 2013 crop revenue came from value-added products. With the 2015 crop, we will reach 70 percent of value-added sales.

We have been so successful in growing your *Snack Almond*, *Almond Breeze*, *Nut\*Thins* and ingredients businesses that value-added products consume nearly every pollinizer almond variety delivered. This is important to grower return as value-added

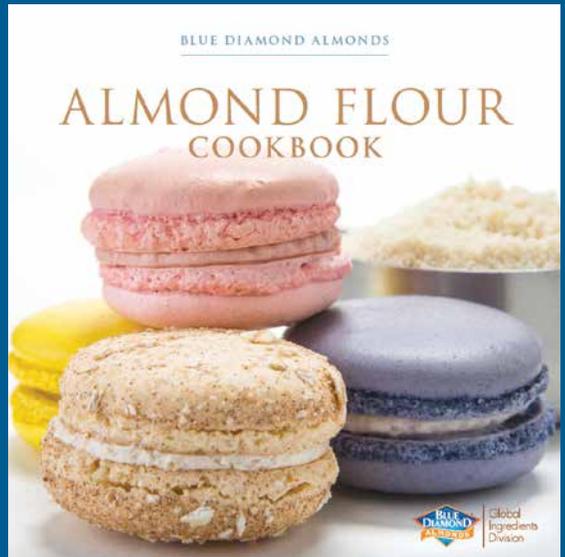
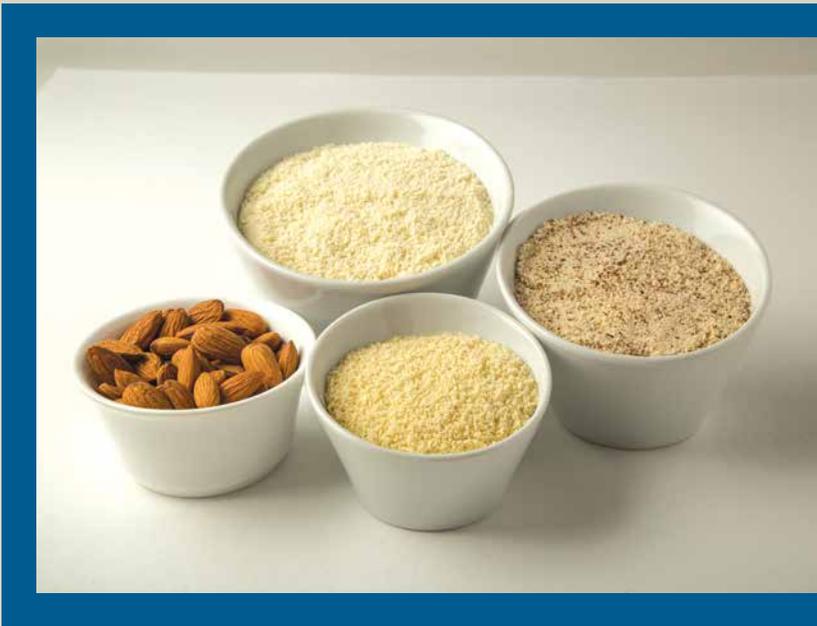
sales are higher margin and pollinizers sell at a discount to Nonpareil (typically about \$.50 less). The other 100-plus handlers in California mostly

sell their pollinizers in the commodity brown almond space. As a result, there is a substantial advantage in *Blue Diamond's* grower returns for Carmel, Monterey, Butte, Padre and California-type varieties.

Innovation is one of our four core values at *Blue Diamond*. In fact, every major product innovation in the history of California almonds has come from *Blue Diamond*, a tradition key to our continued growth.

*Blue Diamond Snack Almonds* represent 21 unique items in the average U.S. grocery store. This variety has driven snack almond consumption in the U.S. There is a clear correlation between a retailer expanding their *Blue Diamond Snack Almond* assortment and the growth of their category sales throughout all snack nuts. In supporting this growth, we are launching our spiciest almond ever, Sriracha, joining one of the hottest flavor trends in the U.S. Our R&D team has once again demonstrated their expertise in capturing the essence of flavor in a roasted almond. Look for it in grocery stores this spring.





*Barista Blend* is a special formulation of *Almond Breeze* that performs especially well in coffee drinks requiring creamer or frothing milk. We determined that Australia, due to its deep coffee house culture, was the ideal first market in which to launch. The food service customers named it "new product of the year" and are making *Barista Blend* a huge success. In 2016, we expect it will be the country's second largest selling *Blue Diamond* item. Building on the Australian success, we will be expanding this product throughout our *Almond Breeze* worldwide markets.

In this high-price almond environment our innovation efforts are increasingly targeted at stretching the value of the almond

further. Almond flour is a great example of finding the highest and best use for every almond including the almond pieces generated as by-products of our value-added processing. The growing consumer interest in gluten-free cooking and paleo diets makes this a highly demanded ingredient. Our innovative marketing materials and new cook book are supporting an energetic March launch by our ingredient sales team.

The growing strength of the *Blue Diamond* brand and our portfolio of product innovation represent tremendous value creation for our growers. The nature of the co-op financial structure is that this value is not recognized on our balance sheet, but is seen in grower returns. Our returns of the last three years testify to the positive impact of value-added sales.

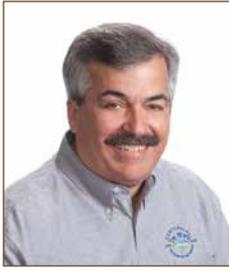
What many may not understand is in an environment of rapidly rising almond prices, this value is partially obscured. The *Blue Diamond* management team has rallied to maintain margins on value-added products with cost savings, product adjustments and price increase to our customers. There is a lag between recognition of rising market prices

and our ability to pass these increases through to the market. This places a "squeeze" on the margins we realize on our growers' almonds. It is a testament to our *Blue Diamond* team that they have successfully navigated through these challenges without impacting our competitive position, thereby protecting the returns for our growers who struggle with water shortages and smaller crops.

The full benefit of our value-added product strategy will be recognized when commodity almond prices moderate. We do not know when this will occur and likely not in the next year. However, eventually, it will rain and snow in sufficient quantities that will allow almond orchards to return to more normal yields. With expanded plantings, when this happens, we will surely see new record crops and moderating prices. This is when the stickiness of value-added pricing works in the favor of our co-op. The majority of *Blue Diamonds* sales will be insulated from the immediate downward prices of the commodity brown almond market. The competitive advantage of *Blue Diamond* returns in this period will testify to the full benefit of our value-added model.

Looking toward a fifth consecutive year of rising almond prices, value-added sales act as an insurance policy for *Blue Diamond* growers. This unique approach makes us a different business model. In time, I believe that second only to their orchards, *Blue Diamond* growers will recognize that our brand and product innovation represent their most valuable assets.

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## Smokehouse Almonds Aboard Air Force One

In January, Sacramento County Congressman Ami Bera was invited to join President Obama on a visit to India. His Facebook post provided assurance that *Blue Diamond* almonds were represented both in brand and as an ingredient in the Almond Joy candy bar peaking from behind our snack nuts.



“It’s incredibly humbling to join the President on Air Force One and help represent the United States and Sacramento County abroad in India. I was glad to see that they were serving locally grown *Blue Diamond* Almonds aboard our flight!” Bera wrote.

The presidential visit to India in supports two great democracies and promises to enhance a long-standing strategic partnership. The India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship states a commitment to elevate the strategic dialogue to a strategic and commercial dialogue. This reflects the U.S. and India’s commitment to strengthen commercial and economic ties to advance mutual prosperity, regional economic growth and stability.

*Blue Diamond’s* vision is to deliver the benefits of almonds to the world. The cooperative looks forward to opportunities to continue to bring *Blue Diamond* almonds into India and support Indian commerce.

## Blue Diamond Almonds Travel to the South Pole

Nat Greene, a *Blue Diamond* contractor and avid almond consumer, took an adventure of a lifetime when he traveled to the South Pole. “It was an amazing trip that pushed me right to my limits,” he said. He was sure to bring along his favorite snack, *Blue Diamond Almonds*, along for the trip!





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\* The Scoop, UC Publication March 2014 Volume 19.2 by Roger Duncan

† Results from UC rootstock trial in Turlock, California



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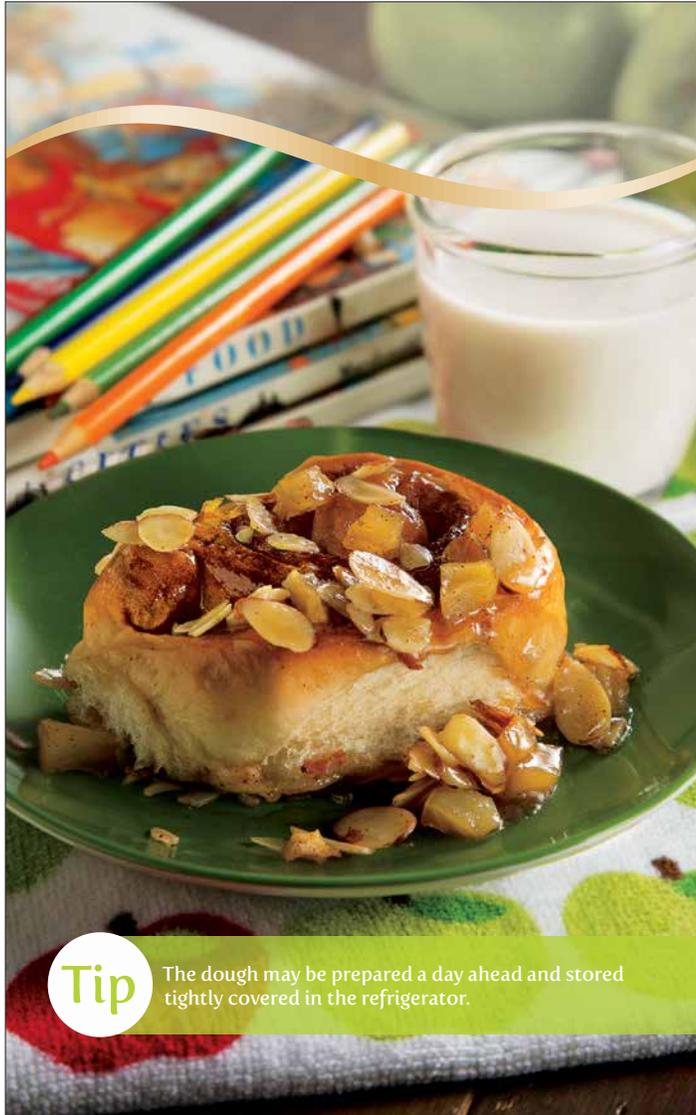


# Board Members Beat Competition at NCFC Golf Tournament

Each year the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives hosts a golf tournament in conjunction with its annual meeting and this year, *Blue Diamond* brought home the tournament trophy! Congratulations to board members Steve Van Duyn and Don Yee, and Gail Yee for winning first place!



## Recipe of the Month



**Tip**

The dough may be prepared a day ahead and stored tightly covered in the refrigerator.

### Apple Almond Cinnamon Rolls

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Rise time: 1-1/2 hours  
Cook time: about 30 minutes

#### DOUGH:

- 1/4 c. lukewarm water
- 1 packet quick-rise yeast
- 1-1/4 c. **Blue Diamond® Vanilla Almond Breeze®**
- 1/4 c. Splenda Brown Sugar Blend
- 2 Tbsp. buttery spread or butter, melted
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 4 to 4-1/4 c. flour

#### FILLING:

- 2 Tbsp. buttery spread or butter, softened
- 1/3 c. Splenda Brown Sugar Blend
- 2 tsp. cinnamon

#### TOPPING:

- 1/3 c. Splenda Brown Sugar Blend
- 1/4 c. buttery spread or butter
- 3 Tbsp. apple juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 2/3 c. sliced almonds
- 1 green apple, peeled, cored and chopped



**Place** water in a mixer bowl; sprinkle yeast over the top and let stand until foamy. Slowly beat in remaining dough ingredients. **Knead** until smooth and elastic. **Transfer** to a lightly oiled bowl and let stand for 1 hour or until doubled in size. **Punch** down and knead once or twice on a lightly floured board. **Roll** into a 16-inch rectangle and sprinkle with filling ingredients. **Roll** up tightly, pinching seams to seal. **Cut** into 12 equal slices. **Boil** Splenda, butter, juice concentrate and cinnamon in a small saucepan until sugar has dissolved. **Spread** in a 13 x 9-inch baking dish and sprinkle with almonds and apple. **Top** with dough slices and let rise for 30 minutes or until rolls have doubled in size. **Bake** at 350°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until cooked through. Let stand for 5 minutes before inverting onto a serving platter. **Serve** immediately.



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# "McFarland, U.S.A." Features *Blue Diamond* Connections

In the Disney sports drama "McFarland, USA," Kevin Costner portrays track coach Jim White, a newcomer to a predominantly Latino high school located in the small farming community of McFarland, California, near Bakersfield. Based on the true story of a 1987 cross-country team, the film follows White and his high school athletes as they run their way to a state championship.

The town of McFarland is also home to many almond growers. Board member Clinton Shick and his wife Debbie reside there, and so does the Diaz family, seven of whom participated on the high school cross country team over the years. In fact, three of the boys are portrayed as characters in the movie, along with their parents. The oldest sibling, David Diaz, is a *Blue Diamond* member!

The filmmakers approached the Shicks to see if they could shoot in their orchards. "Three different shots involving the runners in almond orchards were shot on our property and a couple scenes of almond stockpiles were shot at Central Valley Almond Association," Clinton Shick said.

Debbie Shick even had a stand-in role! According to Clinton, she appears early in the movie as the White family arrives in McFarland and is driving around looking for their new home – she plays the stand-in for Coach White's wife. The other scene is of a football game where Debbie is part of the crowd cheering for the opposing team.

"The movie is really well done and it was fun to be a part of," he said.

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# Spreading Almond Goodness at Ripon Almond Blossom Parade

Photos by David Nichols, *Blue Diamond Salida Plant*



Continued on page 20 »



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# More Scenes from the Ripon Almond Blossom Parade



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## Almond Breeze Achieves Gold-Medal Status with Olympian Kerri Walsh Jennings

Olympian Kerri Walsh Jennings is used to making good choices. The three-time women's volleyball gold medalist is a busy athlete, wife, mom and role model on and off the court. Her most recent role is serving as an ambassador for *Blue Diamond Almond Breeze*. The non-dairy beverage is key to her family's diet and helps provide good nutritional balance, she said.

Walsh Jennings is touting the benefits of *Almond Breeze*. She believes better nutrition is simple and she's on a mission to help people achieve their personal health goals by providing simple but highly effective tips and strategies.

### Kerri Walsh Jennings's Nutrition Secrets Include:

- Plan for small exchanges: trade some good things to make other things you love healthier
- Make better sweet choices and satisfy your sweet cravings
- Partner up with someone to keep you on track

One easy switch that Walsh Jennings recommends is swapping out skim milk for *Almond Breeze*. There were a number of

reasons she made the switch. "When you replace skim milk with *Unsweetened Vanilla Almond Breeze* you reduce your caloric intake by 50 calories per serving. As a woman who lives her life in a bikini, that's a big deal," she explained on a recent media tour that landed her on 30 television stations, generating more than 6.6 million audience impressions for *Almond Breeze*. She also noted that swapping in *Almond Breeze* results in a 50 percent increase in calcium over skim milk and that it's a good source for vitamins D, E and A.

"There are so many lifestyle benefits from incorporating *Almond Breeze* into your routine," she explained.

During the segments Walsh Jennings referenced several recipes showcasing the versatility of *Almond Breeze* including steel cut oats that she starts her mornings with, a smoothie made with *Unsweetened Vanilla Almond Breeze* and honey oat biscuits, each available at [www.AlmondBreeze.com](http://www.AlmondBreeze.com). "My kids love *Almond Breeze*. It's delicious!" she told *San Diego Living*.

For more exciting *Almond Breeze* recipes, visit [www.AlmondBreeze.com](http://www.AlmondBreeze.com) or [www.Facebook.com/AlmondBreeze](http://www.Facebook.com/AlmondBreeze).



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## Blue Diamond Cookbook Showcases Versatility of Almond Flour

With the launch of a new almond flourmill in February, *Blue Diamond* needed a way to illustrate the many applications for almond flour as an ingredient. As such, food scientists and marketers put their heads together and decided upon a brand new cookbook as the perfect vehicle for showcasing the versatility of almond flour. The *Blue Diamond Almonds - Almond Flour Cookbook* marries stunning food photography with exciting recipes, each featuring the cooperative's almond flour as the star ingredient.

The cookbook will serve as a valuable marketing and sales tool for global ingredient customers. "Almond Flour expands our product offerings for both new and existing customers," said Bill Morecraft, General Manager of Global Ingredients. "We

needed a way to show customers that they can substitute our almond flour for plain white flour and produce a tastier, more nutritious end product for the consumer. These recipes are the perfect tools to achieve that goal!"

The recipes, which are also available on the Global Ingredients website at <http://bdingredients.com/recipes>, range from sweet to savory and span from breakfast dishes, through snacks and meals, all the way to indulgent desserts. Consultant Patty Mastracco of Patty Mastracco Food, Inc. and Angie Raimondi, Marketing Product Manager for Global Ingredients, developed the recipes. Mastracco is an award-winning food stylist with 20 years of working with food under her belt, and food editor for *Something Extra* magazine, a publication of Raley's/Bel Air supermarket. Raimondi's passion for cooking stems from being an avid fan of the Food Network and having a desire to test out recipes in her kitchen. Each recipe was then carefully checked by the *Blue Diamond* team.

Raimondi tested several recipes at home using both blanched and natural almond flour. "I definitely use almond flour a lot more in my home cooking now than I thought I would," she said. "Everything I bake turns out really moist and recipes for things like cake don't dry out like they would with white flour."

Of all the recipes Raimondi tested, the savory ones appealed to her most. "I made the almond chicken parmesan using almond flour instead of breadcrumbs for frying," she explained. "Normally when I make this dish using regular flour, the breading gets soggy under the sauce and cheese, but not with the almond flour 'breading' – it stays crispy!"



# MONEY

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Food Scientist Amrita Basra helped prepare some of the sweet and savory recipes for the cookbook using the test kitchen in the Almond Innovation Center. “My favorite recipe to make was the Almond Streusel Coffee Cake because it incorporates both the natural and blanched almond flour — the blanched almond flour is used in the batter, while the natural almond flour is used in the streusel,” she explained. “The use of the two types of flour in alternating layers gave the cake a great look while illustrating how both flour types can be used interchangeably in the recipes.”

Both Raimondi and Basra agree on their favorite recipe to eat – the Irish Potato Cheese Waffles, which we’ve included here. For more almond flour recipes, visit [www.bdingredients.com/recipes](http://www.bdingredients.com/recipes).

## Irish Potato Cheese Waffles



### Makes 6 Servings

2 eggs + 2 egg whites, beaten  
 1/3 cup Blue Diamond Extra Fine Blanched Almond Flour  
 1/3 cup Blue Diamond Unsweetened Almond Breeze  
 2 tablespoons butter, melted  
 3/4 teaspoon garlic salt  
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
 1/4 teaspoon baking soda  
 2 cups frozen hashed brown potatoes, thawed  
 1 cup grated Kerrygold Dubliner or Blarney Castle Cheese  
 3 tablespoons finely chopped ham or crumbled bacon  
 Nonstick cooking spray

### Directions

1. Stir together eggs, almond flour, Almond Breeze, butter, garlic salt, baking powder and baking soda in a large bowl.
2. Stir in potatoes, cheese and ham or bacon and let stand for 5 minutes.
3. Spoon into the center of a pre-heated waffle iron coated with cooking spray and cook for 5 minutes or until waffles are golden brown, coating waffle iron with cooking spray for each batch.
4. Serve immediately with your favorite topping—butter, syrup, sour cream or fried egg.



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# Almond *Krunchies* Attract Snack Fans Across Europe

Snack lovers across Europe are set to experience a new taste sensation with the launch of *Blue Diamond Almond Krunchies*. These crispy coated almonds launched February in supermarkets in France and March in the United Kingdom and Finland. Available in two BOLD flavors, *Spicy BBQ* and *Salt & Vinegar*, *Krunchies* are sure to excite consumers seeking an extra crunchy snack.

Currently, the only coated nut product in the snack category is the peanut – *Blue Diamond* is the first brand to bring this innovation to almonds. *Blue Diamond* and a local partner have created an innovative blend of starches that creates a thin shell around the almond—roasting provides extra crunchiness and the coating acts as a canvas for the seasonings. *Krunchies* is the healthier, tastier coated nut option—it provides the unique crunch experience while delivering the goodness of almonds. “These combine for an extra crunchy and tasty almond snack experience,” said John Beadle, *Blue Diamond’s* European Managing Director. “Snack almonds are hugely popular in the UK and we’ve introduced a new product that combines great flavor with the benefits of the healthy almond at the core.”

The initial three-country launch builds on *Blue Diamond’s* thriving *Snack Almond* and *Almond Breeze* business in the United Kingdom and its growing popularity in France and Finland. Currently, consumers in France enjoy three flavors of *Blue Diamond* almonds – *Honey Roasted*, *Roasted with Sea Salt* and *Smokehouse*. Finnish consumers enjoy a wider selection of products, including *Original* and *Unsweetened Almond Breeze*, *Smokehouse*, *Roasted with Sea Salt*, *Honey Roasted* and *Wasabi & Soy Sauce* almonds.

“We are utilizing established business partnerships with our strong retail customers and consumers who are already familiar with



our *Blue Diamond* brand and the quality of snack almonds that only we can provide. In addition, *Krunchies* has enabled *Blue Diamond* to enter into business with new customers,” Beadle said.

Consumers in the UK can find *Krunchies* in Tesco, Sainsbury’s and Waitrose supermarkets. In Finland, S-Market and Prisma will carry the new item. And in France, *Krunchies* was featured as an “innovation of the week” product in February at Groupe Casino, and will also be available in Carrefour markets.

The branded product growth across Europe builds on *Blue Diamond’s* vision, “to deliver the benefits of almonds to the world.” Though it represents a small segment of the cooperative’s overall sales efforts, international retail has experienced double-digit percentage growth for four consecutive years. Through a calculated expansion strategy, more and more international consumers will soon enjoy delicious *Blue Diamond Almonds* and almond products.

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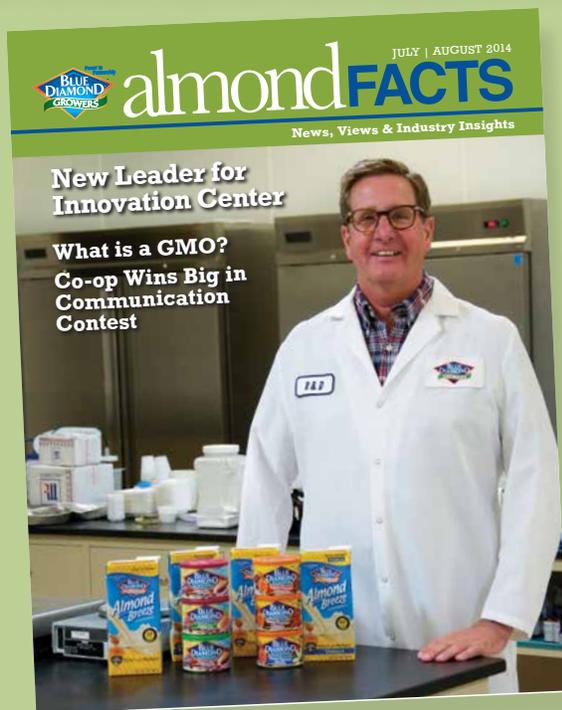
# Blue Diamond Communication and Advertising Achieves Award Excellence

For the fifth year running, *Blue Diamond's* entries into the National Council of Farmer Cooperative's (NCFC) Information Fair earned the cooperative a standing ovation. The contest, open to NCFC members throughout the country, encourages cooperatives to improve techniques used to promote their businesses, inform their members and share information with the general public.

With 26 total awards, *Blue Diamond* dominated the winners showcase at the NCFC Annual Meeting in San Diego in February. Here are all of the cooperative's prize winning entries:

## Membership Magazine – Almond Facts

This is the fourth consecutive win for Almond Facts in this category!



Almond Facts July/August 2014



Almond Facts May/June 2014

## TV Spot: Get Your Good Going Winter Commercial



## Advertising Leaflet: Honey Nut Thins Sell Sheet

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Daniel V., Dixon, CA

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## Package Design: Honey Roasted Chipotle Almonds



## Marketing Campaign: Winter Olympics Campaign



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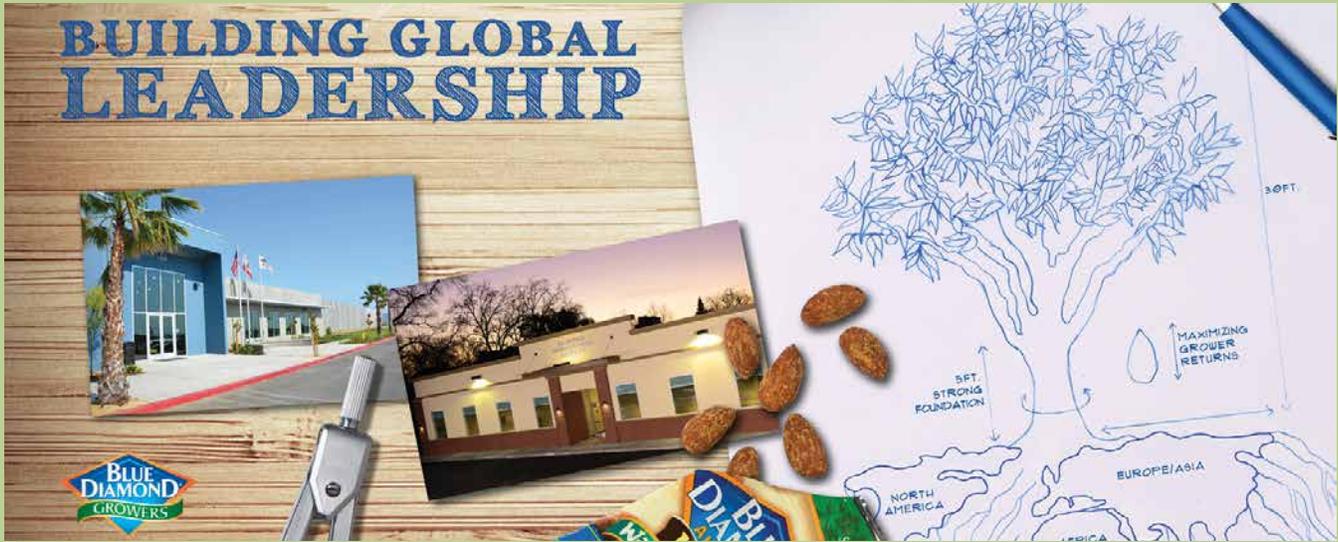
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Continued on next page »

# More NCFC Prize Winning Entries...

## Speech – “Building Global Leadership” 2013 Annual Meeting Speech



## Membership Newsletter – Update

**Update**  
THE LATEST ALMOND BUSINESS NEWS | March 2014

**Contents**

- 2014 Bloom
- Changes in Your Acreage
- Blue Diamond Delivery Bins
- 2013 Accelerated Payment Rate Increase
- Blue Diamond Growers Member Services and Programs
- 4 Call Us...

**Market Status**  
Almond Board Industry Position Report: February 2014

	Million Pounds Kernel Weight
Carry-In August 1, 2013	317.2
Receipts: 2013 Crop (Net)	1393.6
Total Supply	2,247.8
Shipments 8/1/13 - 2/28/14	
Domestic	372.4
Export	846.9
TOTAL	1,219.3
Completed Inventory	1,028.3
Commitments: Gold, Not Delivered	
Domestic	182.2
Export	205.6
TOTAL	387.8
Uncommitted Inventory	640.7

Shipments on a year-to-date basis now stand at 1,219.3 million pounds, 1.6% above the level shipped last year against a supply that is up a similar amount. While the U.S. market continues to lead the industry's growth, up 26.1% for the month and 13.5% year-to-date, the Asia/Pacific markets are down 18.4% year-to-date, driven by both China and India, down 30.6% and 26.5% respectively. This is offset by demand in Europe, up 19.4%, with consumption in Western Europe up by 21.8% over the same time one year ago. Shipments into the Middle East are also up from last year's level, running 12.5% above the total shipped year-to-date.

Commitments of the 2013 crop supply are up by 1.7% year-to-date through February, with relatively light new bookings of 83 million pounds in the past month.

The current pace of shipments and commitments indicate a potential carryover of 350 million pounds at the end of the marketing campaign. Looking ahead into the second half of the marketing year, we expect the domestic market to moderate from its current rate of growth, with China

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**NEWS**

Get the latest news affecting Blue Diamond and the almond industry with Almond Facts magazine. Almond Facts is dedicated to providing growers with the information they need to succeed in the market.

**Almond Facts, January/February 2015**  
Blue Diamond announces the key political issues for 2015 in the January/February issue.

[VIEW THE FILM BOOK](#) [DOWNLOAD THE PDF](#)

What's Inside

- Key Issues**  
Learn about the key issues facing growers in 2015 from Agricultural Council of California President, Tony Thomas and Blue Diamond's long-time lobbyist, Julian Nelson. Read Story.
- Almond Facts**  
Great ingredients encourage three new almond flour products perfect for boosting the nutritional value.

## Advertising Campaign: UK Almond Breeze Newspaper and Social Media Campaign



Continued on page 34 »



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### *Eighth Leaf*

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**Modesto**

**3,100** pounds/acre  
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### *Fifth Leaf*

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**Arbuckle**

**2,800** pounds/acre  
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### *Sixth Leaf*

San Joaquin County  
**Ripon**

**3,100** pounds/acre  
136 trees per acre

### *Sixth Leaf*

Stanislaus County  
**Hughson**

**4,300** pounds/acre  
156 trees per acre

### *Eighth Leaf*

Merced County  
**Ballico**

**3,300** pounds/acre  
110 trees per acre

### *Fifth Leaf*

San Joaquin County  
**Vernalis**

**2,100** pounds/acre  
121 trees per acre

### *Seventh Leaf*

Stanislaus County  
**Westley**

**3,500** pounds/acre  
124 trees per acre

### *Fifth Leaf*

Fresno County  
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## Agricultural Council of California

EMILY ROONEY, President

# Working Together for Success

More than 160 agricultural business leaders met in San Francisco in early March to discuss key issues impacting California's number one industry during Ag Council's 96th Annual Meeting, which was held in conjunction with CoBank's Pacific West Customer conference.

This is our annual opportunity to have all of the cooperatives and farmer-owned businesses that make up our membership come together to recognize our accomplishments from the past year, but also to strategize for the coming year's challenges.

Ag Council has enjoyed three years of consecutive membership growth, which has allowed for an increase in our staff. Strength truly does come in numbers when it comes to politics, and that is part of agriculture's challenge. As an industry, we are grossly outnumbered in the voting populace; thus Ag Council has focused on a strategy of creating relationships with moderate lawmakers, no matter which side of the aisle they sit on, in order to make sure our message is heard.

During my annual address, I offered attendees a summary of California's current voter registration makeup. The Democratic Party has continued to remain steady at approximately 43 percent of voter registrations. The Republican Party has continued to decline in registrations from 35 percent to 28 percent in the last 15 years. The "Decline to State" category has essentially replaced that number and has risen to approximately 23 percent of voter registrations in 2014.

These demographics are what Ag Council is basing its strategy on—the days are gone whereby we could rely on the historical relationships with conservative lawmakers that carried us in the past. We have to be innovative and begin to reach out to legislators who at least understand the importance of agriculture to job growth, food security and prosperity for all of the state's inhabitants.

Assembly Republican Leader Kristin Olsen (R-Modesto) spoke to Ag Council members during our Annual Dinner,

and expressed similar sentiments. She is part of a newly formed Central Valley Caucus representing bipartisan interests from districts encompassing the area between Lodi and Bakersfield. It will be these sorts of alliances where lawmakers come to consensus on the issues they can agree on — in this instance long-term water solutions — that will allow us to make progress.

Our success at Ag Council is sometimes difficult to measure as our metrics revolve around our ability to educate legislators and regulators. Oftentimes a win is simply avoiding an adverse outcome.

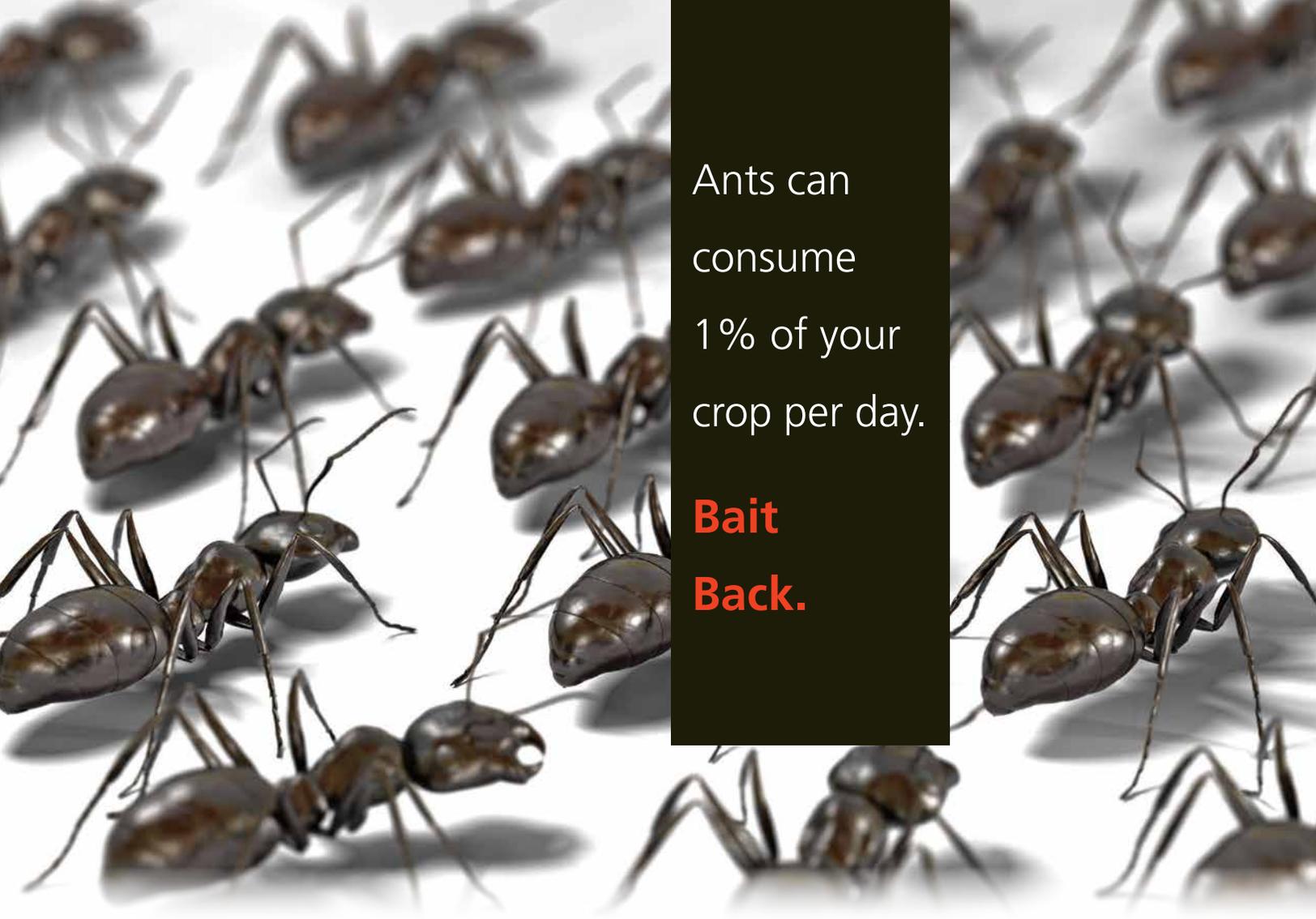
In 2014, we had some wins, including the passage of Proposition 1 and 2 — the water bond and rainy day fund measures. But, we also face some challenges, most notably the precedent-setting groundwater legislation that was signed by Governor Brown during the last session.

As I told attendees at our Annual Meeting, we know we need to protect this precious resource that our entire industry relies on, but the manner in which this legislation passed was just unacceptable. The experience highlights just how small agriculture's voice is in the Capitol, and how we have to be creative in engaging with policy makers, so we continue to be heard.

Other challenges for 2015 include the fee structure of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB); however, a new stakeholder process is being implemented to hopefully provide some relief.

Proposition 65 and increased liability issues for labor contracting will be ongoing issues for Ag Council's members. In addition, the state budget and climate change will continue to be on Governor Brown's watch list as he concludes his term.

More information about Ag Council's advocacy efforts can be found on our web site ([www.agcouncil.org](http://www.agcouncil.org)), including a more detailed summary of the Annual Meeting, as well as a copy of our 2014 Impact Report.



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## The Bee Box

CHRISTI HEINTZ  
& TARA MCCALL

Project Apis m.'s main objective is to facilitate beekeepers' ability to provide a sustainable and healthy supply of honey bees for almond pollination. To that end, Project Apis m. (PAM) has infused over \$3 million into research and programs focusing on pests, diseases, nutrition, pesticides and long-term stock improvement. PAM has also developed Best Management Practices (BMPs) and programs to build forage partnerships with other companies, organizations and non-profits. Yet, we keep coming back to the No. 1 problem that has been around and causing problems with honey bees for too long — and that is a pesky little mite.

“While many factors contribute to honey bee declines, there is consensus that the single most important contributing factor is Varroa mites,” said Dr. Dennis vanEngelsdorp, University of Maryland entomologist. The Varroa destructor is a blood sucking parasitic mite that feeds on adult and pupal bees. Though first reported in 1904 in Indonesia, it wasn't discovered in the United States until 1987 in a migratory beekeeper's colonies in Wisconsin. Since then, Varroa has been documented in all 50 states in the U.S. and is recognized as the biggest pest to honeybees worldwide, most likely the largest contributing factor in the recent decline of honeybees, causing the devastating effects of colony collapse.



⤴ Varroa mite on honey bee pupae (Photo by Kathy Keatley Garvey)

Varroa mites attack honey bee colonies by attaching themselves to the adults and larvae, transmitting diseases, affecting the immune response of honey bees and reducing their lifespan. Mites are about the size

of a pin head, and levels are routinely monitored by beekeepers. At a threshold of three mites per one hundred bees, beekeepers need to treat the colony with a miticide — and there are too few legal options available for the seriousness of the pest. As mite populations explode, often in late summer, colonies will begin to suffer. “If you have greater than six mites per hundred bees, your colonies are dead; they just don't know it yet,” said Dr. vanEngelsdorp.

In September 2017, the Varroa will have been in the U.S. for 30 years — that's 30 years too long for this vital link in the pollination of over 90 different crops! PAM and our partners are committed to NOT having a 30-year anniversary party for the Varroa mite. PAM currently supports several research efforts to detect and control the Varroa mite.

Bee breeding efforts to develop resistance against Varroa is being conducted at universities in Washington, Minnesota



⤴ Varroa mite piggy-backing on the a foraging honey bee (photo by Christi Heintz)

and North Carolina and with the USDA in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A partnership with *Blue Diamond Growers* has secured funding for in-field diagnostic testing of bee viruses with Dr. Michele Flenniken, Montana State University, and for colony strength evaluations with Robert Seccomb and Dr. Jerry Bromenshenk of Bee Alert, Inc. Recently, CoBank and American Ag Credit matched *Blue Diamond Growers'* donation and that funding will specifically target the Varroa mite. In addition, PAM has asked bee brokers to match the \$100,000 contribution because we expect to receive several innovative proposals, including several from disciplines outside the normal bee scientist community. There will be NO anniversary celebration for the Varroa!

A sneak preview of just a few of the latest novel approaches for Varroa control involve an appreciation for biochemical, environmental and even some electrical approaches that decrease or eliminate the chemical Varroa controls currently used.

PAM has funded Dr. James Ellis, University of Florida, in using RNA interference, or RNAi for Varroa control.

Using RNAi involves biochemically altering the susceptibility of the mites to miticides, allowing the miticides to work again, possibly at even lesser concentrations. Now that both the Varroa and the honey bee genomes have been sequenced, RNAi technology may provide one useful tool for Varroa control.

Washington State beekeeper Eric Olson lost 56 percent of his colonies or 9,000 colonies in the winter of 2010 - 2011. His bees, and his almond pollination contracts,



⤴ Varroa mite scraped onto a hive tool (photo by Christi Heintz)

# Project Apis m.



suffered. The next year, he made the decision to put his bees in cold storage prior to almonds. At first worried about the natural buildup of carbon dioxide by the millions of bees, he found his bees the next year to be of excellent quality, with fewer losses. Olson has now enlisted the help of Drs. Steve Sheppard and Brandon Hopkins, Washington State University (WSU) to manipulate the colony storage environment with CO2 in an effort to identify the optimum level to possibly kill Varroa mites, while not otherwise affecting the honey bee.

Also at WSU, Sheppard and Hopkins are experimenting with mushroom extracts and their ability to impact viruses vectored by the Varroa mite. One particular fungus, *Metarhizium anisopliae*, possesses the ability to kill insects. With some careful work, it may be possible this fungus will kill the Varroa mite, but leave the honey bee alive and healthy.



Relative size of Varroa mite compared to a human (photo by Christi Heintz at Bayer Bee Care Center, Raleigh, NC)

At the University of Minnesota, Dr. Marla Spivak is working with Eltopia, an agricultural innovations firm, on “MiteNot,” a pesticide-free method to remove Varroa from honey bee colonies using a circuit board that applies heat at a specific temperature and time to sterilize mites. The “MiteNot” circuit board is placed on a hive frame and covered in wax, appearing like a standard frame of honeycomb. Beekeepers would replace one frame within a bee hive with this reusable wax covered compostable circuit

board. With more testing to be performed in the near term, this product is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2015.

Prior to the introduction of Varroa mite into the U.S., average beekeeper colony losses were about 10 percent. With the advent of Varroa, colony losses quickly became 15 percent. Since 2006, colony losses have averaged 30 percent. “Suppose you have the flu, you’re starving, you have to walk two miles for food, and there’s a tick the size of a rabbit batted onto your neck” said Dr. Marla Spivak, in describing the presence of mites to already stressed bees.

With a lot of hard work, we can decrease these colony losses and get the nation’s bees healthy again. Combating Varroa is a logical target. Project Apis m., our many partners, the USDA and our scientists in the bee community, other disciplines and around the world will solve this problem — hopefully before September, 2017! We don’t want a Varroa anniversary party here!

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## Time To Consider

DAVID DOLL

The spring time months of March and April present many challenges in managing almonds. Irrigation, nutrient applications, disease management, and weed and insect control begin during this period and are critical for developing a successful crop.

### Drought Management Of Almonds

Many farmers across the state will be impacted by the fourth year of severe drought. Within almonds, there has been a lot of research conducted to determine better strategies to apply water. The University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources has recently published an article titled "Drought Management for California Almonds" (Publication #8515, downloadable for free at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/>) which goes into further detail about the two recommended strategies, which are relatively easy to adopt and produce consistent outcomes. These strategies, as well as other considerations, are highlighted below.

The best strategy for your orchard depends on how much water is available. If 15 percent or less than full ETc is available, Hull Split Strategic Deficit Irrigation (SDI) could be considered. If greater, the Proportional Deficit Irrigation (PDI) strategy should be considered. An example of a 55 percent of water availability applied using PDI for the month of May is given in Table 1.

### Hull Split SDI

Hull Split SDI maintains full irrigation until the completion of kernel fill. After kernel fill and until 90 percent hull-split, irrigation is applied only when trees reach SWP values of -14 to -18 bars. Field research has shown that this technique will decrease water use by as much as 34 percent during this period, reducing total seasonal water use by about 15 percent, while having minimal impacts on current and next season's crop.

In practice, it can be difficult to fine-tune the irrigation schedule to this SWP threshold. Many growers will initially reduce water applications by 50 percent around mid-June and will adjust the amount of subsequent irrigations once stress levels increase and soil moisture depletion occurs. Water should be applied prior to harvest to improve hull-split and reduce hull tights. Hull Split SDI is a particularly effective method for reducing hull rot, if that is a problem, but it also improves harvest-ability by reducing the force and time required for shaking, which can benefit the long-term health of the orchard.

### PDI

If a pressure chamber is unavailable, or the anticipated seasonal water deficit is greater than 15 percent for the seasonal evapotranspiration (ETc), then reduced water

TIME TO CONSIDER

Week	Merced's ETo (CIMIS Station 148) for the week of May 2014 <sup>1</sup>	Almond Kc for the month of May <sup>2</sup>	ET <sup>2</sup> required to fully irrigate orchard for the week	Water applied in order to achieve a 55 percent proportional seasonal deficit <sup>4</sup>
May 1st-3rd	0.74	0.94	0.70	0.38
4th-10th	1.47	0.94	1.38	0.76
11th-17th	1.95	0.94	1.83	1.01
18th-24th	1.67	0.94	1.57	0.86
25th-31st	2.11	0.94	1.98	1.09
Total	7.94	N/A	7.46	4.10

<sup>1</sup> Evapotranspiration of the reference crop (ETo) is sourced from CIMIS. Real time data for the current week/year can be found at <http://www.cimis.water.ca.gov/>.  
<sup>2</sup> Referenced crop coefficient (Kc) (unpublished data)

<sup>3</sup> Evapotranspiration rates for almonds were calculated by multiplying ETo by the crop coefficient (Kc).  
<sup>4</sup> Proportional deficits are calculated by multiplying the target deficit by the fully irrigated ETc.

applications can be made by applying a fixed proportion of ETc. In this method, the amount of water available for the season should be calculated as a percentage of full ETc. This percentage should be applied to spread the deficit evenly across the season.

In other words, if it is determined that enough water is available to supply only 55 percent of ETc for the whole season, then each irrigation would match 55 percent of the determined ETc for that irrigation period. Current season and future yield loss should be expected when using this strategy, but research has shown this to be the most effective strategy in minimizing losses when available irrigation water is substantially reduced.

There are many other orchard practices that should be considered when managing drought. They include:

## Removal Of Old Blocks

Orchards will take two years of full irrigation to bring back to near-normal production. If water is short for the entire orchard operation, it could be diverted from older blocks in order to save or reduce the recovery time of younger orchard blocks.

## Not Thinning Of Crop Load

Research in peaches suggests that crop removal has little, if any, impact on water use and is not recommended. In some cases, crop removal may increase vegetative growth, which may increase total water use.

## Severe Pruning Is Not Recommended

Stumping or "dehorning" of trees will increase vegetative growth, which may increase water demand. Furthermore, studies have shown that more wood is removed from the pruning treatments than what is killed by severe water stress.

## Managing Increasing Soil Salinity

Reduction of water applications or reliance on low quality groundwater may increase soil salinity, negatively impacting yields. Almond trees are relatively sensitive to sodium, chloride, and boron. Yields are impacted when average root system salinity increases above 1.5 dS/m, with research indicating a 19 percent decrease in potential yield with every 1.0 dS/m



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Continued on page 42 »

increase. This yield reduction is due to the osmotic effects of the salts, which basically makes the tree “work harder” to uptake water, reducing growth and vigor. If excess salts continue to accumulate within the rooting zone, trees will ultimately uptake the salts (mainly sodium, chloride and boron) and cause tissue toxicity. A leaching program should be implemented when EC of the entire rooting depth exceeds 1.5 dS/m or sodium, chloride and boron exceed an exchange saturation percentage of 5 percent, 5 meq/l and 0.5 mg/l, respectively.

## Remove Cover Crop

When managing severe drought, vegetation on the orchard floor should be eliminated. Depending on the coverage, cover crops may increase water usage by as much as 30 percent. Keep in mind that cover crops do provide soil health benefits and should be replanted when water is available.

Maintaining micro-irrigation systems and application timing. Maintenance should be performed on systems to increase the distribution uniformity. This includes flushing and replacing of lines, irrigating in smaller sets to maintain pressures within the operating range, and matching water application rates with soil intake rates. Sets should be no less than 6 hours and should be completed in the cooler, calmer part of the day.

## Minimal Impacts of Anti-transpirants

University of California research has not been able to document water savings or reduction of plant stress with the application of anti-transpirants, or “plant coolants,” and thus they are not recommended. Many new products, however, enter the market annually, and there is always the possibility that some may prove to be of benefit. When applying these products, it is important to leave several untreated areas in the field in order to determine product’s effectiveness.

Continued on page 44 »

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## Reduce Nitrogen Applications

Nitrogen applications should be reduced during periods of drought. The reduction rate should be proportional to the expected reduction in yield from deficit irrigation. Nitrogen rates in the spring should be reduced to prevent growth, as excessive vegetative growth increases tree water demand. Most data suggest that long-term yield reductions generally follow a 1:1 relationship with long-term water reductions, meaning that a 30 percent reduction in relative applied water leads to a 30 percent reduction in relative yield.

## Pest Management Considerations

Periods of drought influence insect pest populations. Mites flare on stressed trees, and increased miticide applications may be needed. Navel orangeworm (NOW) populations are impacted by drought as well. Reduced winter rains can make it difficult to remove mummies with winter shaking, leading to an increase in the overwintering population. Warmer temperatures common during drought years lead to faster insect development. Furthermore, hull split is generally accelerated in drought years, which changes the timing to apply a hull split NOW spray.

## Spring-time Nitrogen Management

Nitrogen applications tend to begin in mid to late March for many operations. New nitrogen regulations require

a crop estimate in order to determine the seasonal amount of nitrogen to apply. Crop removal studies have indicated that around 65 pounds of nitrogen are removed with every 1,000 kernel pounds of harvest. Taking into account nitrogen application inefficiencies, 85 pounds of nitrogen must be applied to replace the removed amount.

Further research has indicated that multiple applications of nitrogen should be made through the season with 80 percent of the total budget being applied prior to kernel fill with the remaining 20 percent applied in the postharvest. Spring applications should be split to reduce the potential of plant toxicity and leaching from spring rains or over-irrigation. A good plan for a sandy loam or finer soil would be 20-30-30-20 for mid-March, mid-April, mid-May, and the postharvest period, respectively. In coarser or soils with lower water holding capacities, smaller, more frequent applications should be applied. Keep in mind that if reducing water applications due to drought, nitrogen applications should also be reduced.

## Pest and disease considerations for March/April

Disease concerns tend to run high in the spring as rains may provide environmental conditions conducive for infection. Sprays for shot-hole, anthracnose, jacket rot and bacterial spot should be based on rainfall events. Summer diseases of rust and scab, however, may still be problematic and may require a treatment even in dry spring conditions. Treatment timings for scab is 2-5 weeks post petal fall, and 5 weeks post petal fall or later



⤴ Clear gumming exuding from the hull of the almond may indicate feeding by leaf footed plant bug. If scraped away, a small hole should be visible piercing through the hull into the developing kernel. Photo courtesy of S. Vasquez.

for rust. Orchard history, cultivar, and irrigation systems should be factors in determining the need for treatment.

Insect concerns include San Jose Scale (SJS), Peach Twig Borer (PTB), and Leaf-footed Plant Bug (LPB). With the warmer spring, male emergence for SJS and the biofix for PTB will be earlier. Therefore, the traditional "May Spray" timing may also be earlier. Timing of a growth regulator for SJS control should be 400 DD after the male flight. A spring treatment for PTB should be made 400-500 DD after the biofix. Keep in mind that the PTB timing often overlaps with the spring flight of NOW. If timed properly, this spray could provide early season control for both pests.

LPB is erratic and hard to predict. Research does suggest that over-wintering populations are reduced by below freezing temperatures. In years with mild winters, such as this past year, populations tend to be higher. Furthermore, lack of vegetation in the foothills or riparian areas reduces food, which drives populations into almond orchards for feeding. Sprays should be timed once adults are first detected, not once damage occurs. Damaged nuts do not show symptoms for several days to weeks after initial feeding.

Please keep in mind that there are more pests that affect almonds during this time period. More information can be found at [www.ucipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ucipm.ucdavis.edu).

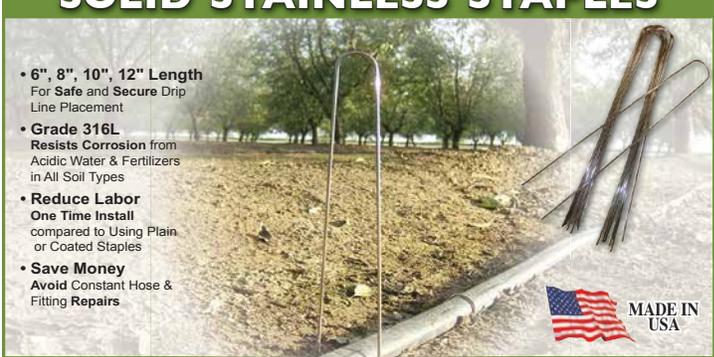
## The Final Thought

Unless the rain begins to fall, we will be experiencing another year of severe drought. The prolonging of

this natural disaster will lead to increased difficulty in finding resources for many farming operations across the state. During this time of hardship, it is important to keep an eye on your friends and family - especially if you become aware that a major problem has occurred (e.g. well going dry). If someone you know is enduring a particularly stressful situation, please don't be afraid to speak out, encourage them to find someone to talk to or get professional help. There are also some excellent resources available online which include "Making Decisions and Coping with Drought" (Colorado State University Extension) [www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10256.pdf](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10256.pdf) and the Disaster Distress Helpline available online (<http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/disasters/drought.aspx>) by phone (1-800-985-5990) or text (Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746).

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