



almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2017

Global Day
of Giving

Salida Plant
Recognized

Annual Growers
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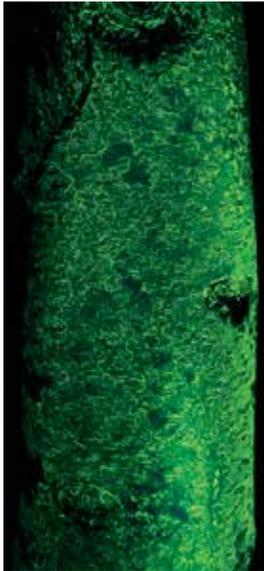
BARK COVERAGE STUDY

OIL ALONE

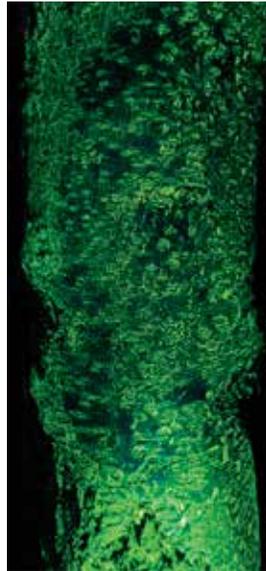
440 Crop Oil
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+
Phosphorescent Dye

Spray Volume
(100g/a)

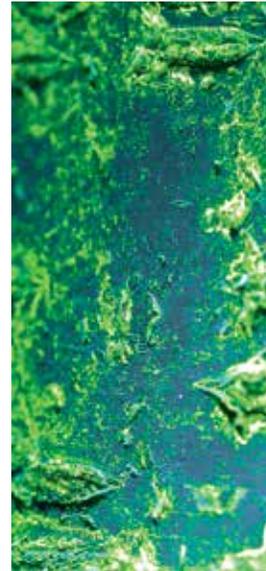
RESULTS
Incomplete coverage allows hiding places for pests



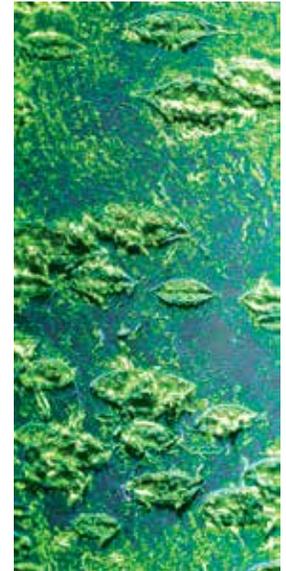
ALMOND BARK



ALMOND BARK



ALMOND BARK CLOSEUP



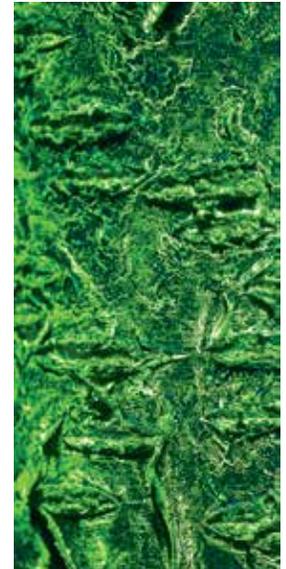
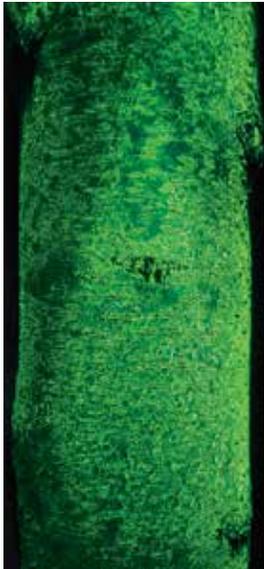
ALMOND BARK CLOSEUP

VINTRE + OIL

440 Crop Oil
(1.5 g/a)
+
VINTRE
(1qt/100g)
+
Phosphorescent Dye

Spray Volume
(100g/a)

RESULTS
Complete coverage gives superior pest control



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GROW WITH CONFIDENCE



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Blue Diamond Growers' Salida manufacturing plant received the Million Work Hours Award from the National Safety Council for achieving two million safe working hours.

ON THE COVER:

Blue Diamond wishes all our readers a happy and safe holiday season.



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Blue Diamond, the world's largest processor and marketer of almonds, exports to 90 countries.

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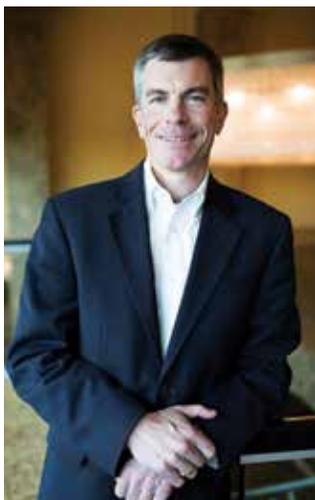
Mark Jansen
President & CEO

Partnering for Growth, Leading the Way

Blue Diamond is an incredibly valuable business and our grower-owners know that second only to their land and trees is their ownership stake in the cooperative. Grower-owners have a responsibility to ensure the business is well run and the most important action is to elect a strong board of directors. I am pleased that in this responsibility, our cooperative has done well. In 2017, for governance, Private Board Magazine awarded Blue Diamond Growers Board of the Year and we honor Chairman Dan Cummings and the entire board for their excellence in governing Blue Diamond.



Every year growing and marketing almonds is an adventure: two billion pound crops, monsoonal weather during bloom, record summer heat, late season navel orange worm infestation, resulting reject kernels, and market premiums for high quality almonds. Frankly, that every crop and each day presents new challenges and opportunities is part of what makes the work fun.



Jeff Kaneb, HP Hood

I have never been more honored to serve as *Blue Diamond's* President and CEO. The cooperative is always innovating and looking for new ideas. At our annual grower meeting last month, we welcomed HP Hood Executive Vice President Jeff Kaneb. Ten years ago HP Hood, the second largest dairy processor in the U.S. and a family-owned company, entered into a licensing

partnership with *Blue Diamond* that took a small shelf-stable *Almond Breeze* business into the refrigerated section. At first, the biggest concern was producing small enough quantities to avoid throwing away old-age product. At

that time, soy milk represented 75 percent of the non-dairy category with Silk the dominate brand. Today, *Blue Diamond Almond Breeze* is the share leader and almondmilk dominates the non-dairy category with 70 percent share. From the beginning, the son of the owner was *Almond Breeze's* champion at HP Hood. His leadership and partnership in building a \$400 million retail business is helping to grow *Blue Diamond*.

When I came to *Blue Diamond*, I always asked growers, "What do you need from me?" They always responded with the same three answers, "Return, return, return." At the time, *Blue Diamond* was arguably the best in the almond industry. The 10-year return average had beaten the competition by \$.01 per pound. However, to get noticed, it was clear that we needed to set the bar higher. So, we set the audacious goal of consistently beating the competition by \$.10 a pound.

In the first three years with *Blue Diamond*, the average beat improved to \$.05 a pound. In the next three years, *Blue Diamond* better navigated the turmoil of the drought pricing bubble and subsequent price correction that destroyed the returns of handlers with less credit-worthy customers.



Last year, the cooperative's great return was in part due to unusual challenges experienced by competitors. We said that if we exclude the unusual market conditions, *Blue Diamond* performance was responsible for achieving a \$.10 beat. For the 2016 crop year, pricing was remarkably stable, so returns better reflected the performance of the cooperative. For this reason, the \$.11 advantage may represent *Blue Diamond's* best-ever performance, and our stretch goal of \$.10 competitive beat is now becoming our expectation. For this accomplishment, we should thank the employees of *Blue Diamond*. We will continue to raise the bar. Each year, it is our intention to increase this competitive advantage by another \$.01 per pound.

California almond crops are getting larger and new plantings can be seen throughout the state. Yield will also improve with normal rainfall and bloom conditions. By 2020, our existing *Blue Diamond* growers will deliver an additional 120 million pounds. To put this in context, it is like adding the second largest almond handler on top of our existing co-op business. For this reason, in addition to return, we are chanting, "Growth, growth, growth." Preparing *Blue Diamond* for profitable growth is our key strategic imperative.

The massive price increases at the end of the drought were good for growers' balance sheets, but bad for market demand. Last year, with the return to historical pricing, we committed to reinvigorating almond sales growth and we delivered in a big way with growth of 8 percent. The business press is reporting that most food companies are struggling to grow. *Blue Diamond* will continue to defy this trend. By investing in our brands, opening new global markets and innovating new almond products, we are working toward an annual growth rate of 10 percent.

Every year, I ask our grower-owners to rise together and take positive action on behalf of *Blue Diamond*. Last year, we successfully persuaded Costco that Spanish almondmilk was not a substitute for locally owned, grown and produced *Almond Breeze*. Thanks to our grower-owners, we are back on the shelf in Northern California and selling very well! With 3,000 farm families and 1,500 employees we are powerful when we stand together.

Last year we took on Costco, this year I ask that we take on Congress. Our voice is needed in the political arena. We come from all ethnic, economic and political backgrounds, but we are all united by one mission: maximizing the returns for each grower who entrusts their almonds to *Blue Diamond*. Any benefit to the cooperative is ultimately passed down to our grower-owners.

Tax reform started out as a noble effort. The original proposal to reduce taxes on U.S. manufacturers and exporters, like *Blue Diamond Growers*, was to encourage job creation and growth. This was to be funded by a border adjustment tax on importers, who in many cases, were taking U.S. jobs overseas. We thought it was a sound proposal that enhanced the economic health of the farm families that own this co-op.

Unfortunately, special interests in Washington are speaking louder than us. The current House tax bill will increase taxes on *Blue Diamond* farm families. Instead of taxing imports to fund reductions elsewhere, tax incentives on exporters — including agriculture — are being eliminated. The benefits received from *Blue Diamond's* manufacturing incentives, like DPAD, would be eliminated. The benefits from *Blue Diamond's* export incentives, like IC-DISC, would be eliminated. Most of us agree that taxes in California are already too high and the elimination of the deduction on state and local tax, or SALT, means that you will get taxed

again on this amount at the federal level; double taxation is particularly painful.

There are some good components to the current proposal, but it is not clear that these will offset the loss of current deductions. There is still time to improve this bill. Please write or call your California Senators and, especially, your Congressmen and encourage them to better represent California agriculture, farm families and the *Blue Diamond* cooperative. This needs to be done right away! Of course, we have tools that can make this easy for you. Please visit our website, www.bluediamondgrowers.com, and sign up to receive our emails encouraging you to take action.

Politics may not be your personal passion. Most of us would prefer to get to work on what we do best, whether it is farming, running a business or leading a family. Candidly, I am so passionate for *Blue Diamond* that each day I wake up excited to go to work. I have been given the best job in the world and I am so thankful that our grower-owners entrust me with their almonds. Together, we will work through challenges in the political and regulatory arena.

On behalf of the amazing team members of *Blue Diamond*, I can confidently state, "The Best is Yet to Come!" ♦



Blue Diamond Can Help You Contact Congress

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Pictured from left to right: Warren Cohen, Maya Erwin, Jeff Smith, President and CEO Mark Jansen, Suzanne Hagener, and Dale Tipple.

How will *Blue Diamond* Grow?

Meet the five sales and marketing experts who are leading *Blue Diamond* to future growth.

"We've done a superb job communicating *Blue Diamond* as a healthy snack. It's a big part of why we've grown to the success we now enjoy. *Blue Diamond* Snack Almonds are the perfect snacking experience for people who have cravings. We make enticing, tantalizing, unexpected flavors. Bite by bite, every salty, sweet, tangy or spicy almond is another burst of deliciousness in a crunchy little superfood package. At *Blue Diamond*, we are passionate about people answering whatever their snack cravings might be. To us, life is too short to deny yourself. Food is made to be enjoyed — not resented. This is how we want consumers to think about us. With *Blue Diamond* Almonds, you can Embrace Your Snack Cravings."

— **MAYA ERWIN**, *Snack Almond Marketing Director*

"*Almond Breeze* is blazing into the future because it is on trend with what consumers want. Consumers are demanding more from their food than ever before. They want to know where their food comes from and how it is grown. They want to know the face behind the food they are feeding their family. Consumers don't know they can use *Almond Breeze* for more than drinking or having it with cereal. *Almond Breeze* is a versatile product and can be used in recipes just like dairy. Not only do we entice consumers with delicious recipes, but we also tell the story of how "The Best Almonds Makes the Best Almondmilk."

— **SUZANNE HAGENER**, *Almond Breeze Marketing Director*

"We have a responsibility to bring the *Blue Diamond* brand to the world. We invest our time, talent and resources, with a balanced approach to growth and return for our grower-owners. Our objective is to develop a strong, aggressively growing, profitable and sustainable *Blue Diamond* branded business. Our aggressive approach includes exporting U.S. produced branded products to many markets as we remain focused on leveraging our valued international partners. Following in the approach taken in the U.S., we build consumer relevant communication and advertising, allowing us to develop the *Blue Diamond* brand."

— **DALE TIPPLE**, *International Consumer Managing Director*

"To understand our ingredient sales, you would have to walk into a grocery store and walk down each aisle. Pick up the chocolates, bakery goods, yogurts, sport bars, cereals and turn over the packaging. Carefully read the small print on the ingredient labels. When you read "almonds," that's where you see our efforts. With thousands of products in over 90 countries, increasing global demand will come from the innovation of new products and growth in specific markets. There is no other packer that knows the customers on a direct basis like *Blue Diamond*. Major food manufacturers worldwide turn to us for their almond requirements and ideas for new products."

— **WARREN COHEN**, *Global Ingredients Sales Director*

"When we develop new products for our customers, often it is the success we've had with our food manufacturing customers that leads them to work with *Blue Diamond* early in the new product development process. We started a project to squeeze every ounce out of an almond. Almond oil is widely used in personal care products such as lotions, shampoos and cosmetics. Consumers' passion for almond products is being recognized by personal care product manufacturers and they are including almond oil for the benefits it lends to the product, as well as being able to feature almonds on the package."

— **JEFF SMITH**, *Global Ingredients Marketing Director*



Dan Cummings
Chairman of the Board

Growing Our Community with Leadership and Partnership

I can't help but take notice at how fortunate we are to be part of a century old tradition that celebrates what *Blue Diamond Growers* does so well: almond farming. This cooperative community was built on democratic governance and integrity more than one hundred years ago. We stand in honor of our nation and armed services during the pledge of allegiance. We show commitment to building future generations of farmers with the skill and passion to protect the food and families we grow through organizations like Future Farmers of America. This honor and commitment demonstrated by *Blue Diamond* is noticeably lacking in many public forums these days. I am proud to be part of an organization created to benefit the community of almond farmers with a common interest. For all this and more, we should all be *Blue Diamond* proud!

We owe a great debt to those with the vision for creating and sustaining *Blue Diamond*. We are proud of our current accomplishments, and the cooperative's leading position in the almond industry. With this pride comes a deep responsibility to advance the successes of the past and continue to realize our mission. We accomplish this by electing board directors, by a truly exceptional management team, in great partnerships domestically and globally, and most importantly with the incredible support of the grower-owners who enable us to address and embrace the future!

Now if only the weather would cooperate! After four years of drought, this was one of those years where you had to be "careful what you wished for." It is somewhat easy to forget what miserable wet conditions we had throughout much of bloom with the near

record almond crop now in the barn. Bigger crops are sure to come, and likely soon. *Blue Diamond* is ready — armed with the strength of its brand, infrastructure, and people. The cooperative will continue leading the way with superior, consistent, and secure returns.

Blue Diamond's straight forward discussion with grower-owners regarding the Independence almond variety is a good example of how the cooperative is leading the way. The Independence variety is in a state of transition in the marketplace, growing from a newly planted emerging player, to a mainstream large volume variety in a very short period. The marketplace is still sorting out how to value this variety. I remain confident that the price returned to grower-owners reflects the marketplace value of each variety. It is as simple as that! I would also like to thank our field management team for being on the front lines in direct communication with our growers and industry on this issue and others.

Another important area of leadership is sustainability. There's been lots of talk about "sustainability" in recent years, but as farmers we have been practicing it for generations. Quite simply, it means maintaining economic viability to enable succeeding generations. It means continuously improving yields and quality, procurement practices, strategic diversification and regulatory compliance management. It means minimizing waste, documenting best farm practices, and making the most efficient use of energy, water, and other inputs. In short, sustainability is being good stewards of the environment and protecting natural resources.



It also means contributing to a healthy community. The cooperative does this in part by supporting organizations like Future Farmers of America and with the *Blue Diamond* Scholarship Foundation. We invite and host members of the community, industry, and political representatives to farm tours and demonstrations. We also engage our membership through the Young Leaders program, district meetings, and our annual meeting to name a few.



The leadership and partnership provided by your Board of Directors is a valued and vital part of *Blue Diamond*. It's with gratitude that we recognize Bob Weimer's retirement after 13 years of dedicated, engaged service. His contributions as chairman of the Governance committee and champion of the Scholarship Foundation as chairman have

been invaluable. We thank Bob for his service and will greatly miss him.

“For thirteen years it was a privilege to be a member of Blue Diamond’s Board of Directors and I am proud of the changes we made in the last decade, especially with the new Leadership Team. Our collaboration has resulted in real sustainable success! As parting counsel, I encourage the board to continue sharing their wisdom and retain an uncompromised level of integrity for years to come.” — Bob Weimer



I am pleased to announce the new director from District 7. As a third generation *Blue Diamond* grower, Dan Mendenhall brings over 20 years' experience and valuable accounting expertise as a CPA to the board.

Many *Blue Diamond* members take time to provide industry leadership. Several of our growers have made a significant contribution of time and energy to the Almond Board of California. I know my experience there, and that of directors George Goshgarian and Kent Stenderup, have made us better board members representing you. There are two

multi-decade representatives that deserve special recognition for their service on behalf of *Blue Diamond* to the Almond Board of California. It is a privilege to recognize John Thoming and Tony Ramos.

These examples of committed cooperative and industry leadership must be cultivated in each generation. *Blue Diamond's* young leader program has inspired many young growers to stand up for their industry. I would like to recognize both the outgoing 20th class of the Young Leadership program and welcome the incoming 21st class. Let's continue to inspire and encourage our young cooperative growers.

As we conclude this year, we appreciate the partnerships leading to our year-over-year growth and success. Our industry associations help protect the *Blue Diamond* brand while fighting against overburdensome legislation and regulation; the Almond Board provides research, expertise, and education to protect the reputation of our industry; and most importantly, our partnerships. By staying involved through leadership, advocacy, and as champions for the brand, all of you help build the cooperative's success.

But, without our most vital partner — our *Blue Diamond* Team Members — the cooperative would not be what it is today. They are working hard and driving outstanding achievement through the co-op's values. These five core values — Act with Integrity; Work as Partners; Delivery Quality Everyday; Innovate!; and Play to Win — create a unique partnership between our growers and team members that shape the cooperative and connect us as family.

Over seven years ago, we made the wise decision to hire Mark Jansen as our President and CEO. We've experienced unprecedented growth and superior returns under his leadership, and our co-op is stronger than ever. One of his best qualities is his ability to build a terrific team. At the annual grower meeting last month, he invited a few of them to join him in sharing what the future has in store for *Blue Diamond*.

On behalf of the board of directors, I applaud the amazing individuals who make up this cooperative. ♦

Dan Mendenhall

YOUR ALARM CLOCK HAS FEATHERS.

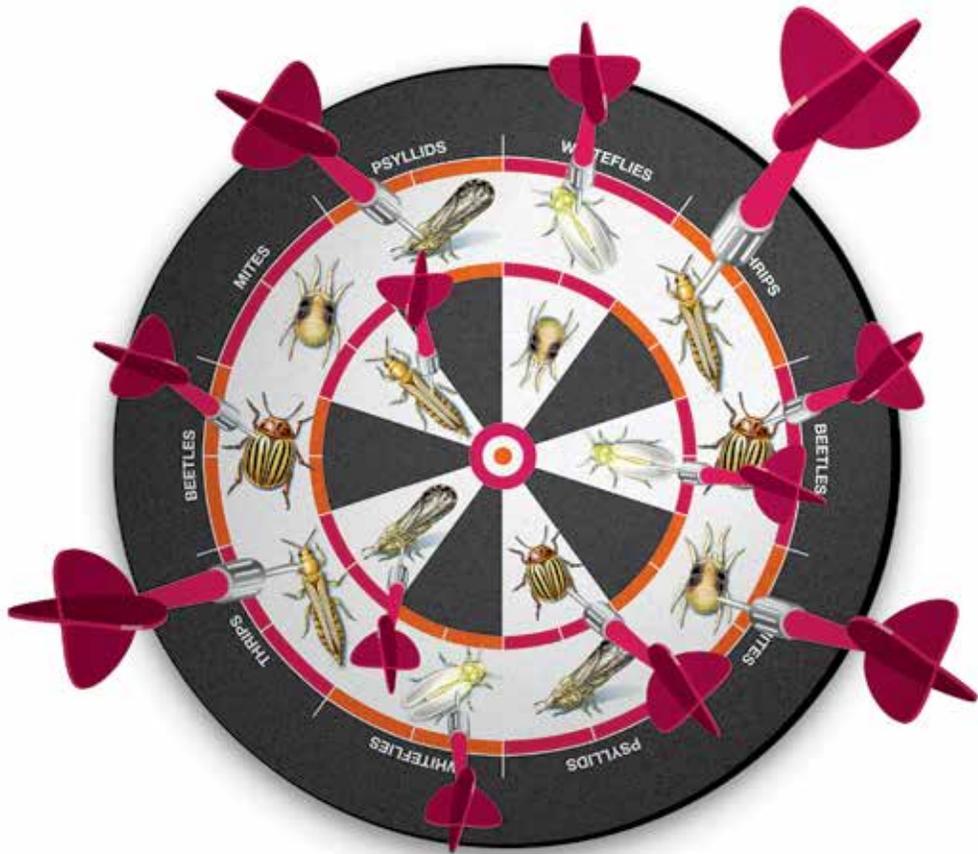


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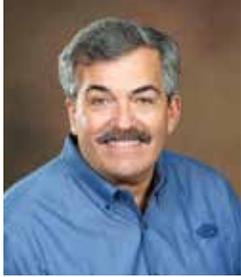
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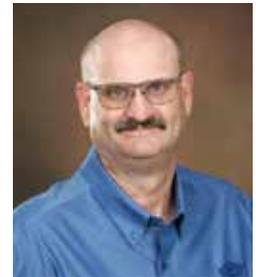
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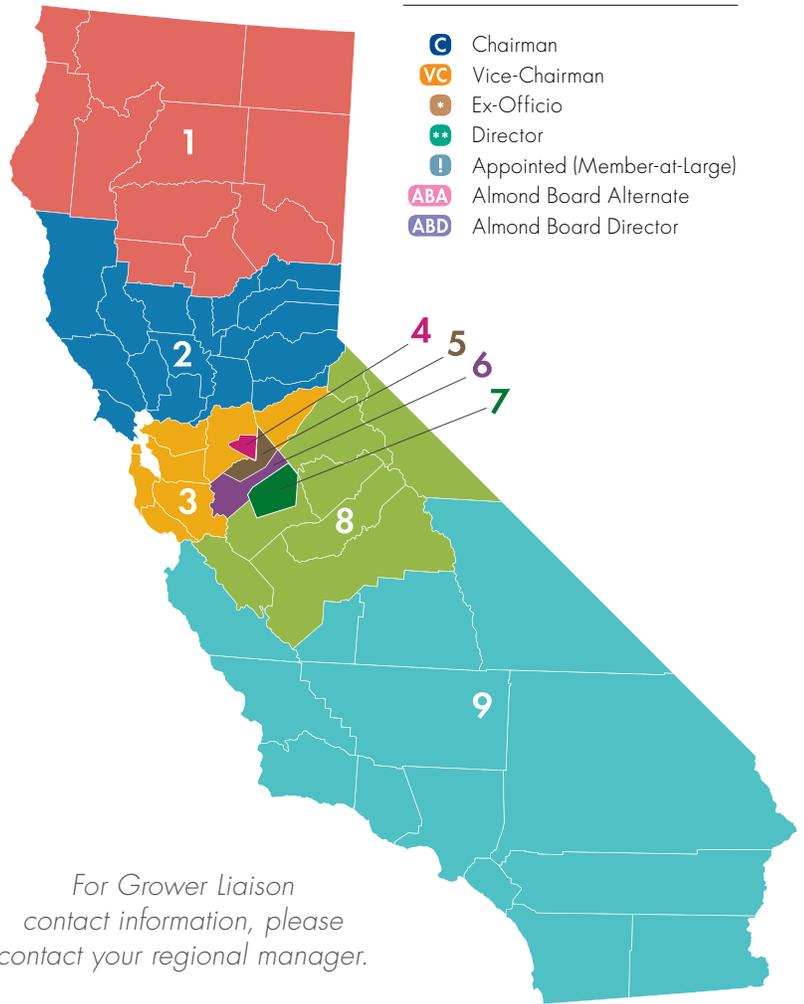
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- VC** Vice-Chairman
- *** Ex-Officio
- **** Director
- !** Appointed (Member-at-Large)
- ABA** Almond Board Alternate
- ABD** Almond Board Director



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contact information, please
contact your regional manager.*

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Rick Scoto
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Steve Moeller
Tim Lohman **C**
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Scott Abraham
Galen K. Miyamoto **VC**
Joe Sansoni **!**
Robert J. Weimer ******
David L. Zollinger *****

DISTRICT 8

Dan Wattenbarger
Curtis Bettencourt
David Massaro
Rusty Nonini **!**
Ranbir Grewal
Nayiri Saghdejian **C**
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David Tolmosoff **! VC**
George Goshgarian Jr. **ABD**
Paramjit Singh
Joey Biscay
Norman Pretzer **!**
George Goshgarian ******
Aldo Sansoni *****

DISTRICT 9

David Snell
Carl Nikkel
Mark J. Fanucchi
Sean Shick
Kyle Balakian **C**
Chris Vandborg **!**
Thom Gruber
Craig Fulwyler **VC**
Jeff Parsons
Gurcharan Dhillon **!**
Kent Stenderup ******
Clinton Schick *****



Blue Diamond Growers Partners with California FFA for Global Day of Giving

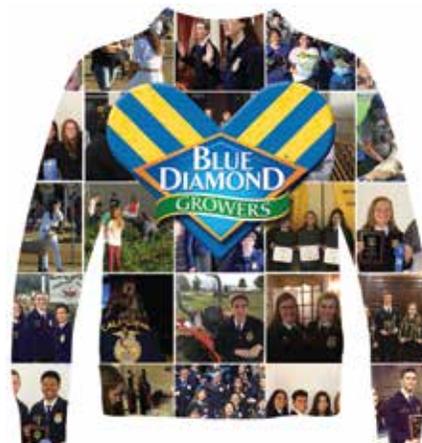
On Tuesday, November 28, *Blue Diamond Growers* partnered with the California FFA Foundation to celebrate Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving. *Blue Diamond* matched every FFA jacket donation up to 230 jackets, significantly aiding the California FFA Foundation in reaching their 400 jacket goal. This investment helps the future of the agriculture industry and the 88,000 members of the California FFA.

"Blue Diamond Growers is excited to partner with the California FFA Foundation to help provide FFA members with jackets," said Dan Cummings, Chairman of the Board for *Blue Diamond Growers*.

"Ensuring the future of agriculture in California is more important than ever and this partnership helps build the next generation of leaders in our agriculture industry."

The iconic blue corduroy jacket is FFA's most recognized symbol. It provides unity among the FFA members in California's 330 high school chapters, and reminds them they are a part of something bigger. FFA provides students with opportunities for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Through their experiences in agricultural education and FFA, they are exposed to the breadth of career opportunities available to them within the agriculture industry.

Giving Tuesday proved a success for the *Blue Diamond* and California FFA Foundation partnership as nearly \$45,000 — or 600 jackets — was raised. ♦



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Blue Diamond Supports Annual Salvation Army Event



Team members from *Blue Diamond's* Turlock plant joined the Salvation Army for its 22nd annual signature event, the Kettle Kick Off. Each year, this event is held to promote the opening of the Bell-Ringing Season. The Christmas Kettle effort is one of the largest and most vital fundraising activities sponsored by the Army. ♦

Blue Diamond Team Wins Pumpkin Contest

Blue Diamond team members celebrated the Fall season with a second annual pumpkin carving and decorating contest. This year's winner was decorated to showcase the importance of bees during bloom. Congratulations! ♦



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Blue Diamond Growers' Salida Plant Recognized for Safety Excellence

Blue Diamond Growers' Salida manufacturing plant received the **Million Work Hours Award** from the National Safety Council for achieving two million safe working hours. The plant was also awarded a *Blue Diamond* Safety Excellence Award.

The National Safety Council award recognizes organizations that have completed a period of at least one million consecutive work hours without an occupational injury or illness resulting in days away from work. Counting toward the milestone began June 2015 and was achieved September 2017.

"These accomplishments demonstrate the dedication of hundreds of Salida team members," said Brian Barczak, Senior Vice President of Global Manufacturing Operations for *Blue Diamond Growers*. "These awards recognize the hard work and successful efforts by our *Blue Diamond* team members to support and drive a Zero Harm culture."

Contributing to *Blue Diamond's* success is the cooperative's focus on increasing training efforts to help members better identify and prevent risks in their work areas.

"Ensuring the safety of our more than 1,500 employees is the highest priority in all *Blue Diamond's* operations," said Mark Jansen, President and CEO of *Blue Diamond Growers*. "Less than half a percent of manufacturing facilities this size have achieved this milestone."

The plant, which employs 558 employees, is the largest almond receiving station in the world with the ability to receive 5.5 million pounds of both almond inshell and meats per day. The warehouse was also engineered to store up to 230 million pounds of brown almonds.

At the beginning of November, the awards were presented to Salida team members by OSHA Outreach representative Cari Elofson and *Blue Diamond* team members. ♦



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Huller-Shellers Consider Post FSMA Regulations

Nearly every seat was filled at the annual huller/sheller breakfast preceding the *Blue Diamond Growers* Annual Meeting. The buzz around the tables focused on a big crop, unusual pest damage and other challenges facing hullers/shellers working around the clock to process a record crop.

With a full house listening, Kelly Covello, president of the Almond Alliance, detailed the evolving array of regulations and requirements for huller/sheller operators, both non-farm commercial and on-farm. The focus of the new regulations is on both produce safety and preventive controls. Farm-based operations need observe only the produce safety regulations, Covello noted, while non-farm commercial operators must also comply with an array of preventive controls.

The regulations are highly technical, requiring most operators to attend workshops to learn the details. In January 2018, the Almond Alliance is conducting sessions on Produce Safety and Preventive Controls for Human Food. For more information on the workshops, visit www.almondalliance.org. ♦



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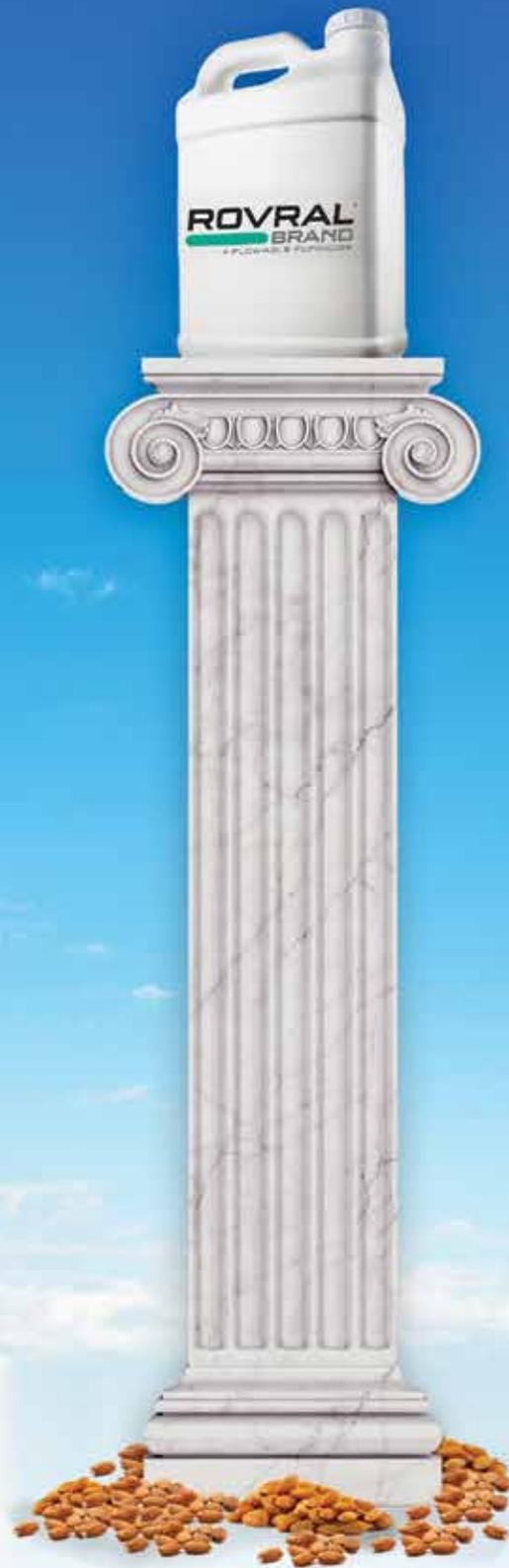
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NOW Control Critical

2017 Crop Sees Worst Outbreak Ever

"I've never seen this kind of pressure," Mel Machado, director of member relations for *Blue Diamond Growers*, observed in introducing the cultural seminar on "NOW in 2017" at the annual growers meeting. "At these levels, a grower cannot afford to neglect prevention." This cultural seminar examined changing conditions that have produced higher numbers of navel orangeworm (NOW) and recommendations for minimizing crop damage.

Joel Siegel, research entomologist, USDA Agricultural Research Service, agreed with Machado's comments about prevention, adding, "Sanitation alone, however, will not control NOW, nor will sanitation plus one spray. What you need to do is a thorough job of sanitation plus two or more spray interventions to prevent costly worm damage. Listen to your PCA and do as he recommends."

Changing Conditions

Siegel described a changing "almond landscape" that is producing higher numbers of NOW and more flights than in the past.

- **HEAT** — Five years of hotter weather has encouraged NOW reproduction. Today California is experiencing an extra generation of NOW.
- **ACREAGE** — The rapid expansion of almond acreage has produced a monoculture that NOW is following as plantings spread. With two million acres of nuts in the state — almonds, walnuts and pistachios — conditions are ripe for a NOW explosion.

Control

NOW flies around all year but growers need to pay attention to waves of activity by monitoring pheromone traps. Siegel noted, however, that mating disruption programs compromise pheromone traps, so be aware of what your neighbors are doing.

Remove mummies. Siegel notes that moths lay eggs on mummies and the adults that emerge come out when

Nonpareil begins to split — early April, beginning of May, at 1,100 degree days. Another flight occurs at 700 additional degree days, resulting in overlapping flights. Siegel recommends getting all of the mummy nuts off the trees and on the ground and shredded so that NOW has nothing to lay eggs on. Doing so eliminates the first early flight.

NOW also moves into later varieties of almonds from pistachios, therefore growers need to stay on top of the waves of flights by careful monitoring, listening to their PCAs and prompt application of controls.

Spray

Siegel observed that the overlapping flights, waves of activity and more favorable conditions for NOW requires more control than ever before, "We need four to five well-timed sprays to prevent economic damage to our crops." Timing is also critical, "Early is better than late." He suggests first spray at April 11, at hull split, then May 5, June 2, June 30, July 28 and September 22 to deal effectively with NOW.

Siegel pointed out that in addition to timing, coverage is critical, "Spray that does not enter the suture is a loss." Most spray rigs do not reach the top third of the tree and 99 percent of the spray fails to reach the sutures. For optimum control and minimum economic loss, Siegel recommends a rigorous sanitation, monitoring and spray program that includes maximizing the effectiveness of the spray rig for full coverage.

The Science of Spraying

Matt Strmiska, engineer with Adaptiv, offered insights on spray effectiveness. According to Strmiska, the standard loss at the canopy, some 90 percent, is not from drift, but from the product not getting to the target — the suture.

Many factors affect coverage, Strmiska said, including timing, environmental conditions, rate of application, canopy, machine, laws of physics. "Spraying is, in fact,



a science,” Strmiska said. In his practice, he applies engineering principles to adapting and tweaking spray rigs to optimize effectiveness:

Nozzles – The condition of the nozzles is critical, he said, “Change the nozzles at least once per year.” Nozzles wear quickly, especially aluminum, brass and steel, he noted. The size and shape of the droplets matter and are critical to control of insects.

Droplet size – Spray rigs typically emit a range of droplet sizes from any given nozzle, he explained, and the relative span of droplet size matters. A narrow span is best.

Adjustment – Adjust your spray rig to reach the top of the trees. Most do not without some tweaking.

Speed – Numerous tests have proven beyond doubt that spray rigs are most effective at 2 mph, no slower, no faster.

Engine vs PTO – Tests also have shown conclusively that engine-driven spray rigs perform better than pto-driven machines.

Spray every row – Tests also show conclusively that spraying every other row is not nearly as effective as spraying every row, which data shows doubles the kill rate.

Full dose – Do not skimp on material. Use a full dose.

Focus on every detail of the application. According to Strmiska, spray application is the weakest link in the almond farming operation. ♦



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Sustainability: Not Just A Buzzword

Sustainability in its many forms has become an integral component of farming, and food processing and marketing operations. That was the conclusion of a panel of professionals representing farm co-ops, food processors, food retailers and the Almond Board of California speaking to a packed house at the *Blue Diamond Growers* annual growers meeting.

With Alicia Rockwell, Director of Public Affairs for *Blue Diamond Growers*, leading the session, the panelists responded to questions about “What do people want from you regarding sustainability?”, “What business outcomes have you experienced from such programs?”, “How do you manage risk?”, and much more.

The panelists: Gabrielle Ludwig, Almond Board of California; Adrienne Moller, Ocean Spray; Tina Owens, Kashi Supply Chain; Darcie Renn, Albertsons/Safeway.

What do people want?

Darcie: “People want to feel good about what they are buying.”

Tina agreed, adding: “They want to know what you are doing for the good of the environment, what farming practices you are using.”

Gabrielle noted that the Almond Board has an environmental committee devoted to promoting almond growing practices that have less environmental impact.

What business outcomes have you seen from your sustainability programs?

Adrienne: “We include economic viability as a component of our program. We emphasize community involvement and outreach, and do the necessary assessments to develop information about our practices and impacts before people ask for it.”



Tina: “Seventy percent of our consumers say that some aspect of sustainability drives their purchase decisions. Our employees are also engaged. They want to work for a brand that has a mission that is important to them.”

Darcie: “People ask about our products, how they are grown, what the environmental and health impacts are. It is good to have the information in advance. That way we shape the story, not someone else.”

What have you heard from your growers about sustainability?

Tina: “If we are asking our growers to do something, we help them find the information they need to do it.”

Adrienne: “Our growers see a return on investment (ROI) in sustainability. As a co-op, Ocean Spray controls the product from field to consumer, so we have an opportunity to achieve an ROI on our inputs. Our employees also have ownership in the process.”

Alicia: “*Blue Diamond Growers* has hard data on water use for growing and processing almonds as well as on water use reductions that almond growers achieved before and during the drought. When the media came calling during the drought, we were able to answer their questions and show them how sustainable our growers’ practices are. Our experience shows that it is worth the time and effort to gather sustainability data and do the self-assessments necessary to answer to the public and to our global customers who want to know what we are doing on the farm and in our factories to protect the environment and deliver healthy food.”

How do you manage risk?

Tina: "As a marketer of pre-packaged foods as well as fresh, we have to develop information on every commodity that we use in one of our blended products. In fact, during the drought, we had to defend the use of almonds in our products. Consequently, we depend on you to inform us, so we can defend our use of your products."

Darcie: "We need information from you on sustainability issues, so we can show that we are a responsible business."

Alicia: "I need the information to use with legislators who make policies that affect our businesses on the farm and in the marketplace."

Adrienne: We use the data that we develop with our legislators as well, also retailers. There is a lot of misinformation out there, especially on social media."

Gabrielle: "We have to also show that we are trying, even if the results are not in yet."

How do we get our message to legislators and regulators?

Alicia: "Blue Diamond Growers has been an advocate for almond growers for many decades, primarily in Washington, D.C. on trade policy and other issues that affect our industry. But in California, where the legislature has swung hard to the liberal side, we have only recently employed an advocacy firm to help us tell our story there. Our message resonates with the liberal legislature because almonds fit their narrative of what is good and sustainable. Almonds are a plant protein and we have lots of data on the good things that almond growers do for the environment and human health."

Adrienne: "You have to make public outreach and legislative advocacy part of your farm business plan. You need to shape the public perception of what you do to push back against legislative and regulatory overreach." ◆

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Power of Partnerships Inspires Young Leaders

Keying on the 2017 Annual Meeting theme of *Partnering for Growth, Leading the Way*, guests attending the Young Leader Graduation dinner for the 2017 class drew inspiration from stories of *Blue Diamond's* successful partnership with HP Hood in building the *Almond Breeze* brand and those that led to *Blue Diamond* member John Stenderup conquering both Mt. Everest and Mt. Lhotse in a single expedition.

Thirty-four young leaders representing various segments of the industry completed the 2017 Young Leader training that included tours of *Blue Diamond* facilities, meetings with management and visiting their representatives at the State Capitol in Sacramento. Comments from participants described the multiple experiences as eye-opening, informative and very effective in building their understanding of the almond industry and how *Blue Diamond* serves their interests in both the marketplace and government arenas.

This year's program included a warm welcome by Chairman of the Board Dan Cummings, presentation by District 9 Board Member Kent Stenderup, and comments from President and CEO Mark Jansen who emphasized the importance of partnerships — between growers and their cooperative and with suppliers and customers around the world. Mark singled out the partnership with HP Hood, a family-owned dairy processing company on the East Coast that helped launch *Almond Breeze* and power it to a \$400 million business in a decade. His guest, Executive Vice President of HP Hood Jeff Kaneb, noted that the venture was a risk for both Hood and *Blue Diamond* and “we had no idea how big the business would become, but it has been good for both parties.” He added, “We are involved with many other businesses and use the *Blue Diamond* model in all of our partnerships. When I mention that we are involved with *Blue Diamond*, there is a lot of admiration for *Blue Diamond*, you need to know that.”



Lessons from the Mountain

John Stenderup, son of Kent and Patty Stenderup, shared his story of inspiration, overcoming extreme challenges and the power of partnerships in achieving difficult goals. He along with three close friends set out to climb Mt. Everest, the tallest and one of the deadliest mountains in the world, and its neighbor, Mt. Lhotse, the fourth highest peak. He told of months of preparation, the weeks on the flanks of Mt. Everest becoming acclimated for the final push in the extreme cold and oxygen-thin air of the summit. John began his adventure, unknowingly, by hiking with his father. He found he was “good at it,” and moved on to higher and steeper challenges. He climbed Denali in Alaska, one of the more challenging mountains, several times when Kent suggested to his son that he take on Everest. Kent climbed to base camp with John and his team.

The story of the climb was told in the July/August issue of *Almond Facts*. What John wanted to convey to this group of *Blue Diamond* Young Leaders were a few lessons learned from his life-changing adventure. In summary, they are:

- Trust Each Other — We have to do that in agriculture, since we are such a small segment of the population and not well understood by those who make policy.
- Make It Fun — Merriment and good humor relieve stress.
- Confront Your Fears — Do not allow your fears to prevent you from chasing your dreams.

- Overcome Failure — Failure is inevitable and okay; it's important how you respond to it.
- Show Compassion — Do not let your ego prevent you from helping others in need when they need you the most.
- Embrace Teamwork — Teamwork is much more satisfying than anything you can do on your own.
- Celebrate Victory — Celebrate what you achieve together, and also how you conducted yourselves.
- Lead by Example — Always. ♦



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RECIPES OF THE MONTH

Featured recipes from *Blue Diamond's Annual Meeting* food demonstrations.



Honey Almond Granola Bars

Ingredients

- 1 cup chopped *Blue Diamond* Honey Roasted Almonds
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup crispy rice cereal
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 3 tablespoons melted coconut oil
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup

Directions

Chop up a 1/2 cup of *Blue Diamond* Honey Roasted almonds. Spread 1 cup of rolled oats onto a parchment lined baking pan. Bake rolled oats at 350 degrees for 8 minutes. Pour almonds and rolled oats into a bowl. Add in 1/2 cup crispy rice cereal, 1/2 cup shredded coconut, 1/2 cup dried cranberries, and 1/2 cup dried apricots. Stir mixture all together. Add 3 tablespoons of melted coconut oil, and 3 tablespoons of maple syrup. Stir mixture again. Line 8x8 pan with parchment paper. Pour entire mixture into pan. Press down firmly. Bake at 325 degrees for 28-30 minutes. Cool for 1-2 hours. Cut into bars.



Flat Belly Blueberry Basil Smoothie

Ingredients

- 2 cups frozen blueberries
- 1 frozen banana
- 1/2 cup *Almond Breeze* Unsweetened Vanilla
- 1/2 cup or 5-6 leaves of fresh basil
- 3 tablespoons 2% plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
- 1 tablespoon almond butter

Directions

Place all ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until smooth. Start with 1/2 cup of almondmilk and add more if needed to reach the desired consistency.



Smokehouse Cheese Balls

Ingredients

- 16 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup *Blue Diamond* Smokehouse Almonds, chopped
- Nut-Thins or pretzel sticks

Directions

Add the cream cheese to a large bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat the cream cheese until smooth. Add the cheddar cheese, crumbled bacon, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic powder and mix until fully combined.

Using a spoon, scoop out pieces of the mixture, about one tablespoon in size, roll into balls, then transfer to a large plate.

Add the chopped *Blue Diamond* Smokehouse Almonds to a bowl. Toss each cheese ball into the chopped almonds, making sure to gently press the almonds into them so they will stick well.

Transfer the cheese balls back to a plate, cover, and refrigerate for at least 20-30 minutes or until firm.

If using the pretzel sticks, insert one into each cheese ball just before serving.

Serve with crackers and enjoy!



Good Morning Smoothie

Ingredients

- 2 cups *Almond Breeze* Coconut Original
- 2 frozen bananas; peeled and chopped
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 cup mango; chopped
- 1 cup carrot; chopped

Directions

Pop the ingredients in a blender, and go from mix to liquify in steps. Let it blend on liquify (or the highest setting) for 30 seconds. The trick to this smoothie is REALLY blending it. Taste and add more almond/coconut milk if you like a thinner consistency.

Notes — For an extra cold smoothie, pour a cup of the almond coconut milk into an ice cube tray to make ice cubes. This way, your smoothie will be ice cold, without watering it down. Just add the ice cubes and a cup of almond coconut milk instead of 2 cups of almond coconut milk when you blend everything together.



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California has a Drinking Water Crisis and Agriculture is Working to Help Solve It

Over one million Californians are exposed to unsafe drinking water every year. Roughly 300 communities are out of compliance with federal drinking water standards and are unable to consistently provide safe drinking water, according to the State Water Resources Control Board (the Board). Many communities simply cannot afford the cost of water treatment, particularly those areas with small systems and lower income ratepayer bases.

To further complicate matters, the Board is using existing law to threaten farmers with enforcement actions due to the use or management of nitrates leading to the contamination of drinking water in some areas. Discussions with the Board are very serious and threaten farmers' livelihoods in various areas of the state.

The dire situation led to the creation of a coalition of unlikely partners comprising a small group of environmental justice advocates and agricultural leaders, including Ag Council, who worked to develop a solution to address these difficult water issues. After months of negotiations, the outcome is an historic agreement establishing a drinking water fund for communities desperately in need of safe drinking water along with a path for farmers to achieve regulatory compliance with the Board, while in the short-term protecting farmers from certain nitrate-related enforcement actions.

The solution does come with a cost. Under the proposal, in order to assist with the cost of water systems with nitrate problems, agriculture would contribute to the drinking water fund through a minimal fee of less than \$0.01 per dollar spent on fertilizers and a separate assessment on dairy production. In turn, farmers receive liability protection from specific Board enforcement actions for a period of time. Since the problem is statewide, and includes a lengthy list of other contaminants unrelated to agriculture, a modest fee of

less than \$1 per month would be included on residential households to contribute to the fund. Due to the fees, the legislative solution requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.

Negotiations were contentious and it was particularly tough negotiating with others who often oppose agriculture on many issues inside the State Capitol. However, despite the challenges, we were able to create a solution that seems to work for those at the negotiating table.

The solution does have opposition. Water districts oppose the concept of a water tax. However, after considering several alternatives, our coalition landed on this one as the best option. We even entertained a solution similar to the water districts' suggestion of utilizing general fund dollars. Unfortunately, none of the other options generate enough funds to address the magnitude of drinking water issues confronting California, or the options were unrealistic for the political realities in Sacramento.

Even with extremely different views on policy matters within the Capitol, both the agricultural community and environmental justice groups agree our current proposal is the most comprehensive of the alternatives and has the best chance of passing the Legislature.

The bill developed by the coalition, SB 623 (Monning), did not move forward prior to the Legislature's 2017 adjournment due to a crowded legislative calendar and other obstacles. Election year dynamics in 2018 present new challenges, but these are surmountable, and Ag Council remains committed to moving this solution forward.

At this time, we are maximizing the legislative recess to focus on our strategic goals. Drinking water is not just a problem in the San Joaquin Valley — each and every

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World Ag Expo Breakfast Hosted by Ag Council

February 14, 2018
World Ag Expo, Tulare

**Ag Council's 99th Annual Meeting
- held in conjunction with CoBank**

March 7-9, 2018
The Meritage Resort & Spa, Napa

**Ag Council's Golf Tournament
and PAC Fundraiser**

March 7, 2018
Silverado Resort Golf Course, Napa

Ag Council's Legislative Conference

May 15, 2018
Hyatt Regency, Sacramento

Please go to www.agcouncil.org for further details about these events
and to read more about our public policy advocacy work.

county in California has drinking water problems. As result, we are meeting with legislators on this issue to educate them about the drinking water issues in their respective districts.

We ask for your support as we work to resolve this decades-old drinking water problem, once and for all. In particular, as you interact with members of the Legislature in the coming months, we encourage you to raise this issue and urge their support. It will take our collective efforts to get this measure across the finish line, and we ask for your help. ♦

“At this time, we are maximizing the legislative recess to focus on our strategic goals.”



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Agricultural
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THE BEE BOX

The second most asked question our Bee Informed Partnership research lab and staff hears from the public, after “What is killing the bees?”, is “What can I do?” Both are usually asked in earnest, with sincere hope that things are getting better for the first and with humbleness in the asking of the second. The world is a big place and for most of us, we have a difficult time fathoming that the actions of a single person can make a difference. But they can.

When we get this question, we respond with the following 5 simple steps. And we try to reassure them that they can, in fact, set in motion the opportunity for discussion, for movement and for change.

Step 1: Get to know a local beekeeper. Support her (or him). Buy local honey. Go to a local beekeeping meeting (hint, these are not closed or private meetings and they will welcome you with open arms and likely talk your ear off and answer all of your questions). Even if you don't feel inclined to keep bees yourself, join the club and get educated on what challenges beekeepers are facing. Once you become educated, you can spread that knowledge to coworkers, family and friends.

Step 2: Pay attention to what is blooming in your area and what insects you see visiting those blooms. We are located in Maryland and the public here is often shocked to learn that our two most prolific nectar sources come from trees (the Tulip Poplar and the Black Locust). If flowers are not blooming in your area and you think they should be, find out why. Talk to your local extension office or Master Gardening group. Is there something you can do to promote honey bee (and native bee) forage?

Step 3: Reduce pesticides on your yard and lawn. Homeowners generally use up to 10 times more pesticides to combat rodents, insects, weeds, etc. than farmers do on a per acre basis. Do you really need to use pesticides on ornamental plants? Think about fostering clover and dandelions in your lawn instead of



Honey bee foraging in a meadow. Photo courtesy of the Bee Informed Partnership.

spraying them. Talk to your neighbors and homeowners' association about not spraying or reducing their use of pesticides.

Step 4: Reduce (or eliminate) your lawn. Lawns are green deserts. Wouldn't a meadow filled with blooming, native plants that attract all kinds of pollinators be much more interesting to look at and cultivate? If you don't know what pollinator plants will grow well in your area, consult your local nursery or some online maps such as this one: <http://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/>

Step 5: If you have the resources, make a financial contribution to your favorite pollinator or honey bee research organization. Even small amounts make a difference. Your contributions to any of three below are a step towards helping us solve the “why are bees dying” question. And, in light of the recent tragedies in Puerto Rico, you will truly be saving bees who currently have no forage. They are starving. No pollen, no nectar, means no bees.

Some choices of research organizations to contribute to:

- *Project Apis m.*
- *The Bee Informed Partnership*

Help Contribute to the Beekeepers and Honey Bees in Puerto Rico

As the U.S. moves into winter with some beekeepers feeding heavily to make sure their bees have enough stores until spring, imagine trying to maintain active colonies with no forage — no nectar and no pollen in sight for months with no resources to bring in supplementary food for their colonies. Imagine viewing your apiary with boxes torn apart and bees swarming in open homes. This is what is happening to the beekeepers and honey bee colonies in Puerto Rico.



Honey bee landing on a dandelion. Photo courtesy of the Bee Informed Partnership.

There are over 4,000 colonies on this US Territory and approximately 130 beekeepers trying to manage on an island where most of the plants were ripped out or mowed down by Hurricane Maria.

Much of the island has no basic necessities such as water, electricity and the infrastructure has been devastated making recovery that much worse. Nearly \$780 million in crop losses have been recorded and these beekeepers provide pollination services that are critical to all fruits and vegetables in addition to coffee. These bees, more than ever, are vital to the recovery of Puerto Rican agriculture.

Beekeepers are trying to keep them alive in the short term by providing sugar water; but without a floral resource to provide essential proteins through pollen, surviving colonies are at risk of collapsing. In the continental U.S., beekeepers have access to commercially produced protein sources, in powdered form and patties. These commercial sources have been critical to beekeepers in Florida and Texas: however, these sources are unavailable in Puerto Rico.

Hurricane Maria also destroyed many of the Langstroth wooden hives used by beekeepers to house their bees. Bees that survived the destruction of their hives have swarmed, taking up residence in people's homes and other structures. The beekeepers have reached out to USDA, APHIS and the private sector seeking help.

Beekeepers in the U.S. Virgin Islands are facing similar challenges, and we are working to learn more about their situation.

“California almond growers count on healthy bee populations for healthy crops,” said Alicia Rockwell, Director of Public Affairs for Blue Diamond Growers. “By investing in the Caribbean Bee Rescue Campaign, Blue Diamond extends its commitment to help bees all over the world survive and thrive.”

Unless we take immediate action to help them recover, both honey bees and production agriculture in Puerto Rico will remain at risk. Please help by contributing online at:

www.gofundme.com/fund-for-puerto-rico039s-pollinators

Finally, so, maybe the 2nd question shouldn't be “What can I do”, is “Why aren't you?” ♦



To help drive momentum for the Caribbean Bee Rescue Campaign, *Blue Diamond Growers* pledged to match \$5,000 in GoFundMe donations, doubling the contributions of future supporters.

“California almond growers count on healthy bee populations for healthy crops,” said Alicia Rockwell, Director of Public Affairs for Blue Diamond Growers. “By investing in the Caribbean Bee Rescue Campaign, Blue Diamond extends its commitment to help bees all over the world survive and thrive.”



**Karen Rennich,
Executive
Director of the
Bee Informed
Partnership, Inc.**

TIME TO CONSIDER

Winter is here. Doesn't the year go fast? The days are shorter, the nights are cooler, and things are a little bit less hectic around the farm. Even as operations shift more to the end-of-year bookwork, there are plenty of tasks that must be planned and completed now in order to maximize the return on our orchard operations next year. Below are a few considerations for your operation.

Equipment Maintenance

Performing annual maintenance on equipment will help maintain longevity and performance. Working on rigs now will provide the opportunity to test equipment with the dormant spray applications. Rig pumps should be checked to determine if they are able to maintain proper pressure. Nozzles should be checked to confirm that the size and gallonage rate are to specifications. Plugged orifices should be cleared or replaced. If wear is evident on orifices, nozzles, and swirl plates, they should be replaced. Worn nozzles will reduce spray coverage and increase pesticide usage, leading to lost money from disease and insect infestation and off targeted pesticides. Both spray and herbicide rigs should be checked.

Spur Sampling

Spur sampling should occur during the winter to determine if delayed dormant treatments for scab or scale are needed. With increasing scale pressures observed, this practice is recommended for all mature orchards. More information can be found at <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/C003/m003dcdmtspursmpl.html> or web search "UC IPM Almond Spur Sampling."

Winter Sanitation for Navel Orangeworm (NOW) Control

NOW damage levels were very high in 2017. This was due to the inability for many operations to sanitize in the winter of 2016-2017 due to rain, the expanding footprint of almonds and pistachios and the hot temperatures experienced after hull split.



Mummies should be removed to reduce the overwintering population of navel orangeworm. Mummies are the only food source for larvae until hull-split next year. Pupae and larvae can survive on kernels and hulls.

The most effective way to reduce over-wintering NOW populations is sanitation. By removing the 'mummy' nuts from the tree and destroying them by the end of February (when moths begin to emerge), NOW damage at harvest can be reduced. These nuts serve as the overwintering point for the pupae and developing larvae, and are the ONLY in-season food source for adults and second flight larvae.

The recommended industry practice is to reduce the average mummy nut count to less than two per tree. This recommendation was developed by performing research and reviewing the data collected from plots throughout the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valley. The research showed that for every mummy nut left in the tree, 1 percent damage from NOW should be expected. In other words, 5 mummies per tree equals 5 percent NOW damage. Therefore, in order to meet the industry standard of 2 percent NOW damage levels, there should be 2 or less mummies per tree. Recent research, however, conducted by Brad Higbee (Paramount Farms) and Joel Siegel (USDA-ARS) has shown that a greater reduction of mummy nuts is needed in areas with higher NOW pressure. In Kern County, they have found that the standard for sanitation has to be less than 0.7 mummy nuts per tree in order to keep NOW damage below the industry standard of 2 percent. They also found that the quantity of mummies on the ground influences NOW damage; having more than 8.9 ground mummies per tree increased NOW damage above the 2 percent industry standard. These results were drawn from research conducted over a 5-year period reviewing data from plots established on fifty orchards.

By reviewing this data, does that mean everyone across the state needs to sanitize to less than 0.7 mummy nuts per tree? The short answer is "it depends." Insect pressure will vary by location due to more degree days and lower rainfall that is generally characteristic of the southern San Joaquin Valley and some micro-climates in the Sacramento Valley. Regardless of location, all of the research indicates that the fewer mummies within the orchard (both tree and ground), the less NOW damage to expect at harvest. Therefore, higher standards of tree and ground sanitation are recommended for orchards in high pressure, higher heat unit/degree day areas. Growers in cooler, low pressure areas should still reduce average mummy nut counts to 2 or less per tree and destroy any mummies that are on the ground.

Pruning: Should I Throw Away the Shears?

Pruning of mature and young trees often occurs during the winter months. Research has shown that reduced pruning on younger trees can lead to larger, earlier yields. This is mostly due to increase canopy that is able to produce crop. Nevertheless, some structuring of first and second leaf trees may be needed to address tight branch angles and close proximity of scaffolds, which leads to included wood and weak branches. These branches will split when the crop load begins to increase, typically around year four or five. Prune only when rain is not in the forecast to avoid wound infections by pathogenic fungi that disperse spores during rain events. Wounds can be susceptible up to two weeks after pruning, with larger

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wounds taking the longest to heal. Even with this healing time, pruning paints are not recommended as they can slow the healing process. Pruning as late as leaf out will have no impact on tree growth.

Mature tree pruning may also be needed. Many are aware of the multiple research trials that have shown no yield benefit from pruning mature trees. There are, however, other reasons to prune mature trees, including: easier access, worker safety, increasing the amount of light to

the orchard floor to assist with drying, and to remove broken, dead, and diseased limbs. Another reason that is often not discussed is to reduce pest and disease pressure. UCCE research out of the Sacramento Valley has shown a 6 percent decrease in NOW infestation in the upper canopy in pruned trees due to better insecticide spray distribution in the upper canopy.

Soil Sampling for Managing Water Infiltration

Soil should be sampled regularly from orchards to determine nutrient and mineral levels. Samples should be taken from multiple depths and areas within a field. If the management of the block are the same, then samples from the same depths can be pooled to help save on expenses. Cores should be sampled in 12" increments to a minimal depth of 36," and in the cases of salinity management, down to 60." Nutrients within the soil, the calcium to magnesium balance, soil pH and salinity should be discussed with a consultant, certified crop adviser, or the local UC Farm Advisor.

If water run-off has occurred from increasing water infiltration issues, soil sampling of the top few inches should occur and analyzed differently. Due to the amount of water applied through irrigation, it is easy for minerals to be leached out of the surface soil, leading to the formation of soil crusts from the loss of soil aggregate stability. Once sampled and analyzed, use these results to determine the rates of calcium, magnesium or other soil amendments.

Calcium is the most widely applied soil amendment within California. It is sourced through a variety of products, but the cheapest are either lime or gypsum. Lime should only be used when pH is below 7, while gypsum can be used at any pH. If the soil is alkaline (high pH) and has high amounts of calcium, acidifying the soil will free up calcium. If deficient on magnesium, dolomite could be soil applied during the dormant period. Other products are available that can be surface applied or water-ran — contact your local UCCE farm advisor or agronomist for products and rates.



Maintenance on spray rigs should be performed. With herbicide rigs, check pumps and pressure, nozzles for wear and the spray pattern for the proper percentage of overlap. Applications out of specifications will increase pesticide use and expense.

The Final Thought

The dormant period is a good time to review changes in management practices and determine if they have had a positive impact on the profitability of the operation. Consider the perceived or realized benefits of tree health, the amount and expense of products applied and irrigation practices. What should be improved next year? What inputs should be increased or decreased? If changes need to occur, be careful about changing too much as this makes it hard to pinpoint the practice responsible for the response. ◆



Once trees are defoliated, dormant practices should begin. This includes spur sampling and mummy removal.



**David Doll, UCCE
Nut Crop Pomology
Farm Advisor,
Merced County**



Scholarship 2018

The *Blue Diamond Growers Foundation*, a scholarship fund established in 2010, is now accepting applications for the 2018-2019 school year.

The scholarship is open to students living in the almond producing regions of California who plan to pursue a four-year degree in plant sciences, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics or subjects with relevance to almond production.

Completed applications must be received by **March 31, 2018**, in order to be eligible for consideration.

Applications can be downloaded.

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Scholarship Recipient: Jacob Amsler



Scholarship Recipient: Savannah Southam

Use Sustainability to Connect with Consumers

Almond grower, Jennifer Dickey, encourages others in the industry to use sustainability as a tool to share her family's farming story with consumers.

On an average day during the almond harvest, Jennifer Dickey can be seen lining up harvest crews, ordering parts for a downed sweeper or fixing a hydraulic line on a box scraper. Dickey knows every square inch of the 200 acres of almonds and walnuts she manages for the family's CR Orchards in Stanislaus County near Turlock, California.

Her parents, Caroline and Randy Dickey are still involved in the farming business, but Jennifer in recent years has taken over most of the daily operations, along with 35 acres she farms on her own nearby and custom farming operations on an additional 200 outside acres. In that time, Dickey has enrolled much of the acreage in the Almond Board's California Almond Sustainability Program¹, and plans to enroll her newly planted 20-acre block of almonds on double line drip. Having an intimate understanding of the day-to-day farming operations made entering data into the program's nine modules relatively easy.

A graduate of *Blue Diamond* and ABC's Leadership Programs, Dickey said she enjoys sharing her farming story with others, particularly the urban audience who is not connected to agriculture.

"I love learning and I love public speaking; I think it's fun," she said. "But mostly I like telling the story about agriculture. These are your consumers and if you want people to be passionate about what you do, you have to explain it to them."



A new pump, well and double-line drip irrigation system will help Dickey continue to improve sustainability on the newly planted 20-acre block of Independence almonds.

Participation in CASP, she said, helps the almond industry collectively tell its story.

"It's an easy way for farmers to educate people without dealing directly with those people, because the Almond Board can take that information out and educate them for you."

The recent drought helped illustrate the importance of having data in a time of crisis.

"ABC had proof during that water crisis about what almond growers were doing to implement water conservation," she said. "The Almond Board has to have facts to back that up and CASP gives those facts to them."

The California Almond Sustainability Program documents the almond community's efforts to adopt cost-effective environmentally and socially responsible practices. Confidential information through grower and handler self-assessments of current practices is aggregated for use in communications, education and continuous improvement.

¹ Sustainable almond farming utilizes production practices that are economically viable and are based upon scientific research, common sense and a respect for the environment, neighbors and employees. The result is a plentiful, nutritious and safe food product.



Dickey says she enjoys sharing the agriculture story, especially with consumers, and says CASP helps the almond industry tell its story collectively.



Jennifer Dickey checks in on new almond trees at CR Orchards near Turlock.

Dickey estimates it recently took less than half a day to do all nine self-assessment modules on her 15-acre block. The process, she said, helped her reflect on her current practices, compare to other growers in her area and around the state, and find potential areas of improvement.

"I like to read the questions and see what I am doing in comparison to other growers," Dickey said.

The online CASP system also offers interactive tools, including a nitrogen calculator and mapping tool to develop nitrogen budgets and help meet Nitrogen Management Plan requirements of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. An irrigation calculator also helps develop irrigation schedules on individual blocks.

Dickey regularly relies on pressure chamber readings, collected by a seasonally hired college student, along with flow meters and CIMIS station readings to establish irrigation set timing and duration. Filling out the Energy Use module also helped her better grasp the timing of irrigating during off-peak hours so she could more efficiently run her irrigation pumps.

“These are your consumers and if you want people to be passionate about what you do, you have to explain it to them.”

Completing the Nitrogen Management module on that 15-acre block helped Dickey understand that she could better account for nitrogen inputs by testing her water source and actually reduce the amount of applied N during the season.

"When I went back after filling out the module, I realized I almost over-fertilized on one block because I wasn't accounting for N in the water source," she said. "By participating in CASP I learned we could save money and keep excess nitrogen out of the groundwater in the process." ♦

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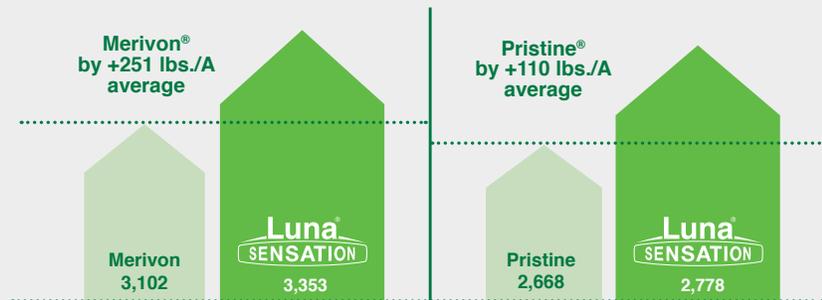
Luna Sensation[®] | Luna Experience[®]

From bloom to harvest Luna[®] fungicide protects almonds from **8 major diseases** to **improve plant health** and help ensure higher almond yields season after season.



SPRAY AT BLOOM FOR BEST RESULTS AT HARVEST.

LUNA[®] OUT-YIELDS IN PERFORMANCE TRIALS



SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER (AROUND BLOOM TIME) IS WHEN MOST DISEASES OCCUR.



8 DISEASES
THAT IMPACT
ALMOND TREE
HEALTH & YIELD

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW LUNA CAN HELP YIELD ABUNDANT HARVESTS AT CROPSCIENCE.BAYER.US.

How It Works

Luna[®] is a breakthrough systemic fungicide with uniform uptake after application, allowing it to effectively enter the buds, blooms and new tissue. Make Luna a cornerstone of your fungicide program to control eight almond diseases for long-term tree health.



Protection Means Profits

Luna[®] out-yields Merivon[®] by more than 251 lbs./A.
+251 lbs. = an additional \$800/A*

Luna out-yields Pristine[®] by more than 110 lbs./A.
+110 lbs. = an additional \$351/A*

*Source: Average yield gain in dollars per pound based on California Agricultural Statistics Review, 2014-2015, California Department of Food and Agriculture, page 81.





BLUE DIAMOND GROWERS

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*Bushnell
Farms*

Buttontwillow, CA

*“Being Almond growers for over 35 years, we’ve seen firsthand the difference in planting Sierra Gold trees. We now have over 500 acres of **quality** orchard trees - all from Sierra Gold! We recently planted this 78 acre block of Almond trees on Hansen 536 and its another good example of a quality orchard from Sierra Gold”*

-Ken Bushnell

*Left to Right: Ken, Heather & Julia Bushnell
Josiah & Kendra Bushnell*



**Sierra Gold
Nurseries**
sierragoldtrees.com

Contact your Sierra Gold
Field Representative today!

1-800-243-4653