



# almond facts

NEWS, VIEWS AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2018

Annual  
Growers Meeting

Giving Tuesday

100 Years of  
Partnership



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#### 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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A man in a plaid shirt and jeans stands on the bed of a pickup truck in a rural field at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple. In the background, there are trees and a barn.

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Mark Jansen  
President & CEO



## Delivering on Our Promises

*Blue Diamond* is celebrating success! We ended the year with terrific financial performance thanks to our grower-owners and *Blue Diamond* team members. We have an amazing future ahead of us.

I would like to share a personal reflection. Perhaps you agree that our politicians make promises lightly. Once elected, most genuinely try to deliver upon their commitments. However, as soon as they reach a roadblock, they fall back on the all too convenient excuse of blaming the other party. We know this, and that is why they seldom earn our trust.

In our personal lives, we treat promises very differently. For most of us, the promises we make to our neighbors, children, and spouses are sacred bonds. We don't let other opportunities or a little adversity stop us from delivering on our commitments.

Can you think of an important promise that you recently made and kept? How did it make you feel? I suspect you never doubted you would keep that promise. To do so would go against your nature and value system.

Twenty-six years ago, I was working at General Mills and my wife, Carolyn, and I were newlyweds. We fondly remember that we were very happy and also very poor. We were both excited when I ripped open an envelope and read, "Dear Mark, your MBA application has been accepted for the marketing program here at Northwestern University." The top marketing program in the country and my dream school had said, "Yes." The problem was that full tuition was shockingly expensive. My only option

was to ask my parents for help. You should understand that my parents had never been wealthy and were proud that their son had a good job at General Mills.

I recall my dad saying, "Mark, when you already have school loans, why would you leave a perfectly good job and go back to school?" I replied, "Dad, please trust me. This will be a great decision." With my promise, he said, "Mark, we are unable to pay for your tuition, but have enough equity in our house to co-sign for a loan." For my parents' trust in me, you can imagine my appreciation and commitment to pay that loan back! I also appreciate the ongoing support of my wife and children.

As *Blue Diamond's* President and CEO, I have felt a similar responsibility to pay back all the trust grower-owners have given me. It is with great pride, that once a year we share the many promises we have made and kept. I trust grower-owners agree, that with over eight years together, we are building a fantastic track record.

Each year, our grower-owners entrust us with their year's work in the form of the almond crop. And, it is our mission to maximize your short and long-term returns. We have 20 years of good records tracking the return performance of *Blue Diamond* versus other almond handlers. During this time, *Blue Diamond* has not only been the safest and most trusted source. It has been the best! From the millennial in 2000 to our own Centennial in 2010, *Blue Diamond* beat the competition by an average of \$.01 per pound.

Early in my tenure here, I started the vision that *Blue Diamond* should achieve improved performance that makes competitive return comparisons irrelevant. To quantify that vision, grower-owners will remember the goal of consistently achieving a \$.10 per pound advantage. For the 2017 crop, once again, we delivered. We beat all the competitors and did so with an amazing \$.13 average! Most importantly, *Blue Diamond* continued to establish the expectation that we are consistently the best. The *Blue Diamond* team understand that competitive returns are the most important promise we make to our grower-owners. It is how we repay the incredible trust put in us.

We also recognize *Blue Diamond's* leadership role within the almond industry. We serve the 3,000-plus farm families that represent our co-op (and indirectly all California almond growers) in ways that never show up in our *Blue Diamond* performance measures. Favorable outcomes on tax reform and almond industry tariff relief were only realized due to the collective efforts of our regional managers, government relations and executive teams powered by the active involvement of our grower-owners. Along with the co-op, the Almond Board of California is a continuing source of strength for our industry. There's comfort in knowing that 40 percent of almond board seats and committee assignments benefit by the unique experience of our team members and grower-owners. The industry will never show *Blue Diamond* the appreciation that these efforts deserve, but that does not deter our efforts, as serving all almond growers is sometimes the best way to serve *Blue Diamond* growers.

*Blue Diamond* is rapidly adapting to the changing retail landscape, finding new ways to build consumer loyalty for our brands and creating the product innovations that address the changing preferences for plant-based nutrition. Staying nimble is what allows us to continue growing our sales and those of our customer partners. Keeping this promise is what allows us to compete against the biggest and best food companies in the world. And, win!



The newest addition to our executive team comes to us with significant international experience: 12 years at Coca-Cola and a general management perspective gained as managing legal counsel for Coke's Glaceau division. *Blue*

*Diamond* would like to welcome General Counsel Simone Denny to the team!

We are blessed with so many loyal, long-term team members and every year, among my favorite events, are the anniversary celebrations that honor *Blue Diamond's* longest-serving team members. I get to hear the best stories. What pleases me most is the obvious pride our 1,500 team members have in being part of *Blue Diamond*. We keep our promises to them, and for 108 years they have been keeping their promises to us.

*Blue Diamond* team members are even better community members. Santa's Workshop with the Washington Elementary Head Start program, urban gardens, Loaves and Fishes, United Way, Ag in the Classroom, and FFA are all examples of where team members donate their time and dollars with matching support from the co-op. With a focus on ag education, health and wellness, and helping underprivileged children, *Blue Diamond* team members deliver on the promise to make our local communities better.

Most of you will remember the Paul Harvey radio show fondly. I have chosen to conclude my message the way we remember Paul Harvey always did, "Now the rest of the story..."

After earning my MBA from Northwestern, Carolyn and I fulfilled my promise to get those school loans paid off as soon as possible. It took us six years. As you can imagine, my parents were pleased but took even greater joy that I continued to be successful in my career. Ten years ago, and at far too young an age, my

father passed away. Fortunately, I am blessed with many great memories. Top of the list includes him beaming with pride saying, "Mark, I thought you were crazy, but you made a great decision." Now you know the rest of the story.

I am often asked what at *Blue Diamond* makes me the most proud. This question has always been difficult for me to answer. Succinctly. With so many fantastic people, products, and positive changes, the list can go on and on. The combination has certainly all contributed to our ever-improving financial performance. If forced to choose one single ingredient that makes me the most excited to come to work, it would simply be that we

keep our promises to our grower-owners, team members, customers, and communities.

If you attended this year's annual meeting, I hope you talked to your friends about the event and told them that amazing professionals continue to collaborate and innovate. And, we keep our promises.

My continuing promise remains, The Best is Yet to Come! ♦



## Q & A with Mark Jansen: Meet Your Dynamic *Blue Diamond* Team Members

If you follow the business press, you will have read how traditional food companies are struggling to grow. The marketplace is changing rapidly, and they are not keeping up. These food and beverage companies change out their management teams and buy more innovative companies in hopes of changing their culture and performance. Most of these efforts have failed.

By choice, *Blue Diamond* is a growth business. Not only is it more fun to grow a business, but it is also the best way to serve growers, team members, and customers. We are proud that based on volume growth, revenue growth and market share growth, *Blue Diamond* was named a fastest growing midsize company. Even better, for the second consecutive year!

Helping our customers grow, makes us a valuable and often essential partner. Just as we did last year, we want you to meet some of the dynamic *Blue Diamond* team members who make it possible to deliver on the promise to grow our customers' businesses profitably.



**Jonas Paretzkin,**  
Director of eCommerce

**Mark:** Three years ago, *Blue Diamond* recognized that Amazon was going to change the way our customers bought food, just as it had already

done for books and so many other categories. We knew we had to look outside of *Blue Diamond* to recruit the unique talent that would help us get ahead of this emerging trend. We are very fortunate that we were able to lure away the eCommerce sales leader of a \$8 billion company, Con Agra, to build our capability in this space. Most people are still buying groceries in a store, but know eCommerce is growing rapidly.

**Jonas:** Yes, in fact only four percent of groceries are purchased online. In the next few years it could get as high as ten percent.

**Mark:** Jonas, when you first started working at *Blue Diamond*, I gave you the challenge of making Amazon a top five customer in five years. How are we doing on that?

**Jonas:** Well, three years ago Amazon was our 86th biggest customer; two years ago they were number 38. Today, Amazon is our 12th biggest customer! We are on the right track to making this challenge a reality!

**Mark:** That's tremendous progress. How did you do it?

**Jonas:** As you know, today our eCommerce team is a robust team of ONE (me) and this growth would be not be possible without some help. Every functional group has played a key role in growing Amazon to what it is today, from IT to finance, marketing to supply chain, warehousing to manufacturing. In fact, in fiscal year 2018 we sold \$8.3 million worth of *Blue Diamond* almonds on Amazon. That is three times as many as we did last year.

**Mark:** eCommerce is changing rapidly. What sorts of innovations should we expect?

**Jonas:** Looking to the future of eCommerce, we are always preparing for what is coming next: delivery to you in 30 minutes or less, unmanned delivery vehicles, grocery delivery by air from drones, and ordering just with your voice.

**Mark:** I bet our grower-owners never would have imagined that one day their almonds would be delivered by drone. Jonas, thank you for bringing your talents to *Blue Diamond*! You do not need to be an e-commerce expert to help us grow sales on Amazon. Order a *Blue Diamond* product, then write a positive review. Whether that is as a grower-owner, team member or friend of our *Blue Diamond* family; your perspective is powerful. On Amazon, positive reviews are the best advertising!



**Kristen Arakaki, Brand Manager, Nut Thins and Culinary Products**

**Mark:** Ten years ago, our North American Retail business was fortunate to hire a young marketer who subsequently contributed

to the incredible growth of *Almond Breeze*, snack nuts and, most recently, Nut Thins. Kristen, as a *Blue Diamond* veteran, how has our business changed?

**Kristen:** In that 10 years' of growth that you just described, Mark, a lot has changed. Our group is roughly 10 times the people, and we have experienced 10 times the sales. Despite all these changes, we still have that entrepreneurial, roll-up-our sleeves, can-do attitude. I frequently tell people, I have a love affair! I love growing brands just as all of our farmers love growing almonds. It's a great feeling to love what you do, but what really helps is having delicious products that people — even famous people — can easily fall in love with. My latest love affair started three years ago when I took over responsibility of the Nut Thins cracker brand. I have really fallen in love with growing this particular brand — not just because it's delicious — but it's really helped us to be more innovative.

**Mark:** Our grower-owners will appreciate that even though you had a smaller brand with a smaller budget, you were still able to make a big impact!

**Kristen:** One example of this is our work on celebrity partnerships, which was truly quite intimidating at first. We have never worked with huge celebrities prior to this year and it is quite risky to work with them as they have their own voice and personalities while we're trying to drive home our own brand message. Essentially, we had to be strategic. Given our strong female consumer target for Nut Thins, we strategically selected strong female celebrities, who are not only successful and beautiful on the inside and outside, they are also very kind and wonderful to work with.

Now, I normally get starstruck anyway, but seeing a celebrity eat one of your products? I was in heaven! Our first strong female partner is probably the most famous of them all, Ellen Degeneres. Ellen has the #1 day time talk show and is the new Oprah of today. She does something called a "live commercial." Unlike normal TV commercials you might see, the commercial we did for Nut Thins was during her show. The segment reached five million people watching the show and Ellen liked it so much, she amplified it on her social media channels, reaching another 45 million people. The month that the Ellen commercial aired was Nut Thin's largest sales growth period.

**Mark:** Ellen was such a great success. Please share how we built on that learning.

**Kristen:** We approached another huge celebrity, Blake Lively. Blake Lively is a very popular actress who has starred in so many wonderful movies, like the Age of Adeline, Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, and more. She also happens to be married to Ryan Reynolds. As big of a superstar as Blake Lively is, she usually doesn't have the time to promote other brands or products that are not her movies. But, Blake happens to love Nut Thins and was willing to work with us. On July 9, she posted a picture of herself and her kids eating a box of Nut Thins. To show you what kind of person Blake is, all of the proceeds from that post went to her favorite charity. The results were phenomenal and it was our highest engaging social media post to date, reaching over 20 million people and garnering close to 1.3 million "Likes." The comments were amazing. Some never heard of Nut Thins before and went to the store to buy it just because Blake "told them to." That's the power of celebrities.

We didn't just stop there, just last month, we worked with Katie Holmes, who stopped by our first ever *Blue Diamond* Holiday House in New York City. This event was attended by every magazine and news publishing house you can think of and having someone

as beautiful as Katie attend was icing on the cake. She also happened to fall in love with our Wasabi and Soy Almonds. Her attendance generated over 85 million impressions in entertainment magazine and online sites like People and Star magazines.

As you can see, there's nothing quite traditional in advertising with these examples and that's what I love about growing small brands: finding these innovative and creative ways of reaching new consumers.

**Mark:** Who are the next celebrities we can expect to share their love of *Blue Diamond* products?

**Kristen:** We just finished taping a segment on Hollywood Game Night with Glee's Jane Lynch, featuring our snack almond flavors. It will air this summer on NBC. I know that our *Blue Diamond* almonds are going to be even more famous than these celebrities.

**Mark:** Kristen, thank you for enthusiasm in growing our *Blue Diamond* brands and helping us to fulfill the growth promises to our customers.



**Toby Stonelake,**  
Product Marketing  
Manager, Global  
Ingredients Division

**Mark:** In 2014, with the start-up of our Turlock plant, we hired a recent college graduate to work on the production

line. Four years and three promotions later, Toby is putting his marketing degree to work on our recent almond innovations. His rapid career progression matches the incredible growth in our almond flour.

**Toby:** I was fortunate enough to be selected to a small team of operators to help commission the first almond flour line. Knowing full well that almond flour was

going to be a great new avenue for *Blue Diamond*, I plunged myself into the inner workings of the process. In March 2015, the flour line was fully commercialized, and just a month later I was promoted to a Team Leader position, supervising the Flour Line team. The growth of flour was explosive. Today our flour business exceeds \$40 million in sales.

**Mark:** Please share how we so quickly created this business?

**Toby:** We set our sights to establish the “Gold Standard” for almond flour in the baking industry. Through market research and refinements in our production process we were able to achieve a very fine granulation that is used to make the light, fluffy, and smooth texture of a French Macaron. Fast forward to July 2017 and *Blue Diamond* commercializes a second Flour Line at our Salida facility. Since that time, *Blue Diamond’s* worldwide growth in almond flour continues to surpass our expectations.

**Mark:** As exciting as flour is, there’s more! Toby, it is now appropriate that we share our next big idea.

**Toby:** Almond protein is the biggest opportunity in our new product pipeline. You challenged the innovation team to prioritize and accelerate the launch of almond protein powder. Our target date was July 16, 2018. That specific date is important as it was the first day of IFT 2018.

IFT is the Institute of Food Technologists and once a year they host one of the world’s largest food shows. The show brings together over 23,000 attendees from the food industry around the globe comprised of food scientists, product marketers, ingredient buyers, and Research and Development teams. They are all looking for the latest and greatest in new food ingredients. This makes IFT a great place to tell a captive audience about Almond Protein Powder.

We designed a beautiful eye-catching booth and performed live baking demonstrations, as well as our Protein Taste Test challenge where we put an almond protein smoothie head-to-head against soy and pea proteins, two of the most commonly used today. Consumers loved the taste of the almond protein powder and it offers exactly what they are looking for: plant-based, clean taste, nutritious and delicious, gluten-free, and guilt-free. Almond Protein Powder has been one of our most well received innovative product launches.

**Mark:** When should our growers expect the first sales?

**Toby:** Sales are already happening, with bigger volume sales coming in 2019.

**Mark:** By 2023, we project that half of our *Blue Diamond’s* growth will come from new products. You have given us all confidence in achieving this big goal! Thank you, Toby. Keep up the good work! ♦



## Join the *Blue Diamond* Social Media Team

### ***Blue Diamond* is inviting you to participate on our social media team!**

All you need is an Instagram, Facebook or YouTube account, and the willingness to share postings with your families and friends. We understand that getting started is sometimes the hardest part and we are here to help. You do not need to work in marketing to market *Blue Diamond’s* products. Many of our grower-owners have a family member who has baked a delicious dessert with almond flour or created an appetizer using snack nuts or Nut Thins. Next time, take a picture, share the recipe and tell the story of how *Blue Diamond* products make your life better. Contact Ben Goudie at [bgoudie@bdgrows.com](mailto:bgoudie@bdgrows.com) to indicate your interest in learning more.

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Dan Cummings  
Chairman of the Board



## A Promise for Generations

*Three brothers from Kansas are helping to change perceptions about growing food. These young men took their passion and used the tools of their generation to create the fun, engaging, and inspiring YouTube video "California Farms." Welcome to farming in the digital media age! As our industry continues facing challenges on how and what we grow, we need to lean on our next generation to deliver on the promise to reconnect consumers with their food and how it's produced. Thank you to our District Four Director Kevin Fondse for sharing this.*

Almost eleven decades ago, the *Blue Diamond* cooperative was born from a group of growers who understood that by effectively promoting and protecting their crop better profits could be achieved. Even though growers gave up individual control on parts of the business, they remained faithful that the cooperative model *Blue Diamond* was built on would deliver. We have succeeded in keeping the promises our founders put forth 108 years ago. It is the commitment of the Board to continue delivering on our promises and ensure the cooperative thrives for generations to come.

The promise of stability for our grower families is one challenged during each growing season. But, against all odds this year, the cooperative and crop endured. An unpredictable mother nature subjected our orchards to rain, wind, and hail. The unusual weather persisted with overnight freezing conditions that kept many of us working hard through the night to protect our crops. Our industry also withstood an unpredictable political scene. Governments here and abroad presented barriers to the free trade of our product impeding our ability to bring the benefits of almonds to the world. I am happy to share that through the determination of our

grower-owners and the *Blue Diamond* team, we produced another quality crop and made ever-increasing sales.

Our commitment to delivering stability does not stop there. This year's investments in our facilities, which include the expansion of the Salida facility to support increased almond flour production capabilities and moves to state-of-the-art pasteurization technology to protect our brand reputation. As a result, the cooperative will discontinue other less effective pasteurization methods while achieving better quality.

Accelerating innovations is really helping to add value to our return each year. I want to briefly highlight the launch of yogurt in Spain, which the Board had an opportunity to see in retail stores while attending the International Dried Fruit and Nut Congress. The flavors were developed for unique European consumer taste preferences and are superb in quality. We learned that launching in a smaller global market provided a good test market for future expansion. Strategically this international market can help make a uniquely different and higher quality plant-based yogurt for U.S. consumers. I am confident we will continue to deliver on the promise of



stability through *Blue Diamond's* brand, infrastructure, and innovation pipeline.

Another important promise we deliver on is protecting growing practices and enriching the lives of those around us. Being good stewards of our land and involvement in the community play key roles in our commitment to sustainability across all aspects of our cooperative. During the last year, *Blue Diamond* held its first sustainability panel, which was met with strong, positive reviews. Growers engaged with the Almond Board of California through committee participation. I am also pleased to report that updates were made to the California Almond Sustainability Program (CASP). By allowing *Blue Diamond* to segment data from our growers and build independent reports, we will be able to share our sustainable practices with business partners and demonstrate our commitment to the environment. I urge our grower-owners to participate in CASP and reach out to your field management team for support.

Contributions to the community are an indispensable part of *Blue Diamond*. We continue to build a strong partnership with Future Farmers of America with our match effort for Giving Tuesday. Last year, this partnership provided nearly 600 jackets to FFA students and it is our hope that this year's investment helped many more. We also support the future of agriculture with the *Blue Diamond Growers* Scholarship Foundation. Sixteen aspiring young men and women were selected as award recipients for being positive influences for our industry. Annual fundraisers, like the golf tournament and the new BBs and Bocce tournament, make these scholarships possible. Participation from our grower-owners and industry affiliates in these events help us to deliver on our promise. I want to thank Charles Crivelli, Dale Van Groningen, Kevin Fondse, and George Goshgarian Sr. for their leadership of the foundation committee.

Good stewardship and citizenship start with grower engagement and education. Our ability to deliver on this promise means staying connected to the cooperative through emails and the grower website to learn about *Blue Diamond's* education programs and issues affecting the industry. Grower-owners build strong relationships with regional field managers. They are a valuable resource and direct link to the cooperative. Thank you to our field management team for your commitment and the benefits you bring to *Blue Diamond growers*.

Delivering on our promises requires that the members of this cooperative remain an engaged community. The leadership provided by your Board of Directors is a vital part of *Blue Diamond*. We also cultivate the future leaders of *Blue Diamond* through the Young Leader program. This program inspires our young growers to stand up for their industry and become involved with the cooperative. I would like to recognize both the outgoing 21st class of the Young Leader program and welcome the incoming 22nd class. Let's continue to engage and encourage our next generation of growers.

*Blue Diamond* is very fortunate to have so many growers who are involved in our cooperative and dedicated to our industry. This year, I am honored to present our very first Chairman's Grower Ambassador of the Year award.



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This award recognizes a *Blue Diamond* grower for their above and beyond engagement in support of the cooperative's success. This member is a role model of our core values, an influence in the community, and a person who makes a positive difference in the industry. I am pleased to present this award to Mike Doherty for his outstanding contributions to *Blue Diamond*. Congratulations, Mikel!



Another crop year is coming to an end, and we want to appreciate all those who have helped us deliver on our promises year over year. Grower-owners answered our calls to action and demanded attention from USDA, Congress and the President that almonds

matter. Our *Blue Diamond* team members demonstrate a dedication that helps us maintain our position as the world's leading almond marketer and processor. I would especially like to thank *Blue Diamond* team member Diane Manning for her role as Director of Internal Audit and Secretary to the Board of Directors. This year Diane decided to retire and, on behalf of the Board, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for her contributions to *Blue Diamond*.

*Blue Diamond's* leaders are Doing it Right all year and delivering on their promise to provide the best return. As growers, we too, are Doing it Right all year against unknown challenges. Delivering on our promises, today, tomorrow and in the future keeps the cooperative financially strong and ensures we can remain sustainable for our grower-owners, their families and their land for generations to come.

Ashley Reding, who farms nearly 30,000 acres in the great state of Kentucky, said, "To me it's a new word to an old practice — we called it conservation. We conserve the land and preserve our resources to pass to our children something better than what we have."

I want to thank *Blue Diamond's* President and CEO Mark Jansen for his leadership. I'm confident you agree the board's best decision in recent years was to hire Mark. Not only for his ability to strategize long-term, but also surround himself with a superb team of highly motivated professionals. *Blue Diamond* is delivering on our promise towards an exciting future! ♦



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### Other Inquiries

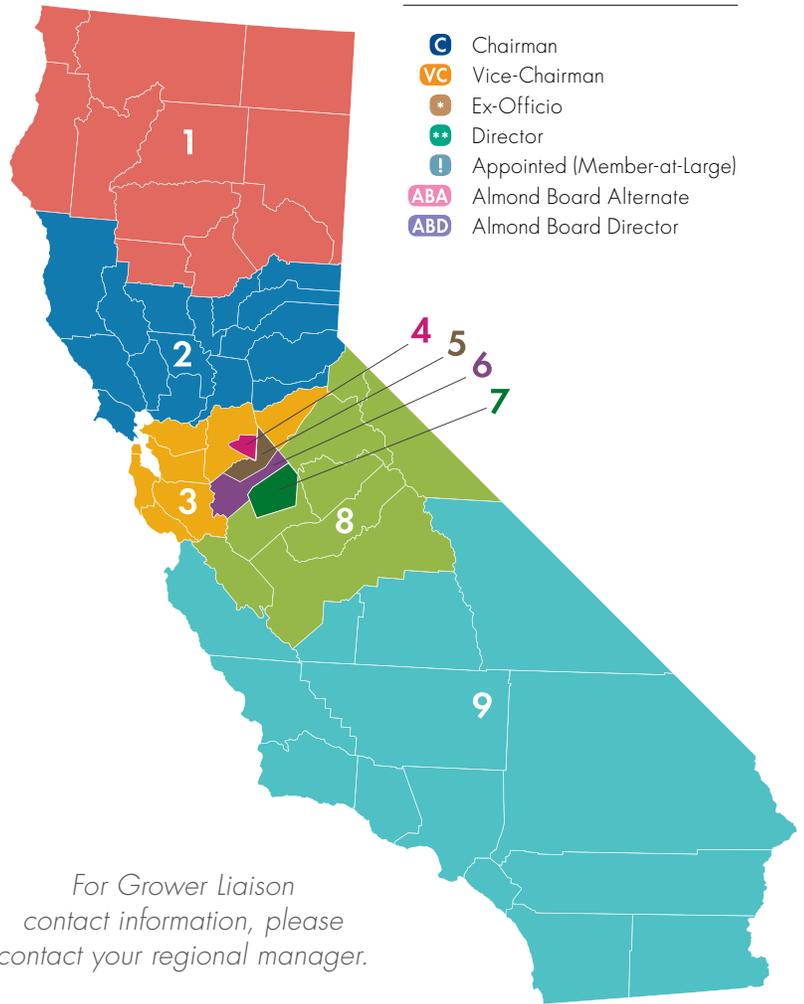
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 Fax: 209.545.6215

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 Phone: 916.446.8368

# 2018 Grower Liaison

## LEGEND

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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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- Garret Mussi **!**
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- Clayton Bogetti
- Jim Thoming Jr. **!**
- Dale Van Groningen **\*\***
- John Thoming **\***

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- Herman Doornenbal
- Tom Christensen
- Karen Javete
- Jason Dole **!**
- Kenneth Roos **\***

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- Garret Bowman
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- Nick Blom
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- Brum DeVisser **!**
- Brandon Riddle
- Mark Giannini
- Dennis Bowers
- Neil Jolliff **!**
- Stephen Van Dуйn **\*\***
- Neil Van Dуйn **\***
- Sonny Johns

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- Don Mailloux **!**
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- Rick Alvernaz **VC**
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- David Richmond
- John Hack
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- Charles Crivelli III **\*\***
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- Steve Moeller
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- Galen K. Miyamoto **VC**
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- Kent Stenderup **\*\*** **ABD**
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- David Snell

## Sunset Ceremony

Meet *Blue Diamond's* first Culture Change team in Sacramento — the Safety Squad. They celebrated the sunset of their Danger Zone project in a night full of great food and excellent company in October 2018. The team consisted of Training Coordinator Brandon McDaniel, Dock Coordinator Francisco Cuevas, Inventory Specialist Cesar Barron, and Warehouse Driver/Forklift Instructor Darian Cooper, as well as Main Production Line Operator Tracy Skates and Safety Department lead, Tony Toledo.

The Safety Squad's project kicked off in January 2017. At the event, the team spoke of the process, and their trials and tribulations across the 18-month long project. The inaugural team chose to rebrand the "8-foot rule," which was rolled out in order to stop serious forklift/pedestrian injuries by requiring all team members to stay a minimum of eight feet from an operating forklift. They chose the



Safety Squad Team Members: (left to right) Francisco Cuevas, Darian Cooper, Brandon McDaniel, Cesar Barron.

name "Danger Zone" and gave the process a command and hand signal to empower communication between the forklift driver and a pedestrian wishing to approach the lift. They employed several unconventional teaching tools, like using a remote-control forklift to teach team members about maneuverability and stopping distance during a safety gathering, and an engaging video featuring Sacramento Plant Director, Jeff Hatfield, putting himself in the Danger Zone while strolling through the Dock area.

"This is about trust", said Cesar Barron, the team leader of the Squad. "We wanted to show that anyone could walk up to anyone else, even the plant manager, and talk to them about how to be safe." ♦

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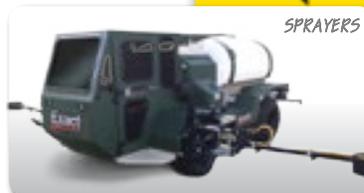
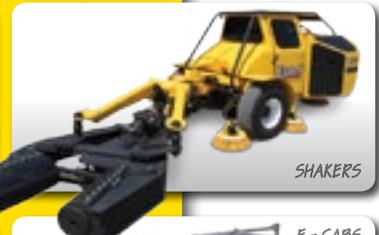
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## Blue Diamond's Salida Facility Celebrates Three Million Hours Award

Team members at the Salida manufacturing plant celebrated success of safety excellence by operating 3,000,000 employee hours without an injury or illness involving days away from work. The milestone was achieved on September 3, 2018 and the National Safety Council Million Work Hours Award was presented at the celebration in early November. The plant was also recognized for their outstanding commitment to worker safety by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Blue Diamond congratulates the more than 550 team members in Salida for their hard work and support of a Zero Harm culture. ♦

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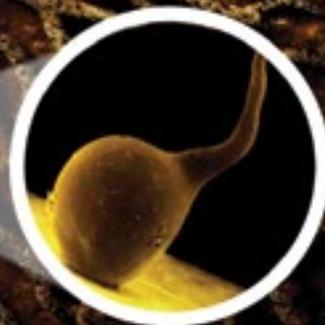


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<sup>2</sup> Velum One applied at 6.5 oz./A, spring 2017, via drip irrigation. Trees planted in January 2017. Increase in green canopy pixels based on an average of two rows of untreated trees compared to an average of two rows of Velum One-treated trees.

## Blue Diamond Honors Veterans

Veterans Day celebrations were held at *Blue Diamond's* facilities to honor those team members who have served our country. Team members gather together for a meal, share stories, and spend time with other veterans. The celebrations are a way for the cooperative to say thank you to our veterans for their service and sacrifice. ♦



Left to Right: Michael Flowers, Freddy Hernandez, Shea Harding, Ed Gray, Shawn Stamper, Chad Laughton, Jeff Garza, Zachary Daniels, and Clark Bohr.



## Giving Tuesday Reaches New Heights as California FFA Foundation and *Blue Diamond Growers* Donate FFA Jackets

While Giving Tuesday honors the spirit of philanthropy, for the California FFA Foundation, it's all about giving the gift of blue, blue corduroy that is. This year, the day will be just a bit sweeter as it's anticipated that the FFA will hit a milestone of raising enough to gift it's 1,000th jacket. The significant milestone is due in large part, to matching funds provided by *Blue Diamond Growers*. On Giving Tuesday, *Blue Diamond Growers* matched every jacket donation up to 200 jackets, significantly aiding the California FFA Foundation in reaching their jacket goal.

"*Blue Diamond Growers* is excited to continue building our partnership with FFA and support the next generation of leaders in our industry," said Dan Cummings, chairman of the board for *Blue Diamond Growers*. "We believe investing in the future of agriculture in

California is more important than ever."

On Tuesday, November 27, the California FFA Foundation celebrated Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving, fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. This is the third year the California FFA has participated in Giving Tuesday with a focus on providing jackets for FFA members. For every \$75 donated on Giving Tuesday, the California FFA Foundation provided a member with their very own FFA jacket, and a tie or scarf. For the second year in a row, *Blue Diamond Growers* generously matched that donation.

"We are proud of the lasting impact of this program, and excited to experience its growth over the last three years." said Emily Rooney, President, Agricultural Council of California, and California FFA

Foundation Board Treasurer. "We knew to have meaningful impact on FFA members, we needed a strong industry partner to take it to the next level. *Blue Diamond's* leadership has been ideal and thanks to their help, we will give away our 1,000th jacket this year to students in need. That's 1,000 California FFA members who will have a jacket with their name stitched on it, because of our donors, and *Blue Diamond Growers'* matching funds."

This year's Giving Tuesday provided over 672 jackets to California FFA members. Since the start of this program three years ago, more than 1,600 FFA members have a jacket of their very own.

To learn more about the California FFA Foundation's Giving Tuesday efforts, visit [www.calaged.org/givingtuesday](http://www.calaged.org/givingtuesday). ♦



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## Mating Disruption for NOW

A proven technology that achieves upwards of a 50 percent reduction in Navel Orange Worm (NOW) damage in almonds drew a large audience for the Emerging Technology Forum: Pheromone Mating Disruption for NOW at the *Blue Diamond Growers* annual members meeting.

Comments by Mel Machado, *Blue Diamond's* director of member relations, set the stage for the discussion by explaining the attraction: "2017 was a very bad year for Navel Orange Worm rejects, one of the worst ever. Growers lost hundreds of dollars per acre to the pest. While 2018 is better by nearly half, depending on region and variety, growers are still losing a lot of money to NOW."

Even an apparently good score on rejects can mask the damage, he continued. "If your reject report shows two percent you really had a four percent reject level because half of the rejects were eliminated by the harvester and huller equipment. Your dollar loss was far greater than you think."

### Declining Control Options

While NOW damage declined for the 2018 crop, Machado warned, "The improvement may be short-lived. The environment in which we operate is changing. There are some 2.5 million acres of habitat — almonds — for NOW. We are seeing a greater accumulation of heat which NOW enjoys. There's greater variability in rainfall which can affect orchard operations such as mummy removal."

Also, declining options for NOW control are a major concern. "We have limited chemistry to choose from," said Machado. "We have lost most of the better materials. What we have left are softer and less effective. So, we have to think out of the box and explore new measures, like the cotton industry did in eradicating the pink boll worm by developing and releasing sterile insects."

Machado explained that the sterile insect technology might have too many technical hurdles for application to NOW.



From left to right: Mel Machado, Kent Stenderup, Jeremy Siebert, and Bradley Higbee

However, other technologies can be added to an almond grower's arsenal of tools, chief among them, a proven, effective technology widely used in other crops and applications around the world but new to almonds: mating disruption (MD).

### Mating Disruption Works

Bradley Higbee, a leading innovator and researcher of mating disruption technology for NOW at USDA before joining Trece, Inc. as a field research and development manager, explained how it works and its proven effectiveness. "MD technologies interfere with the ability of males and females to find each other to mate," he said. "The NOW female emits a sex hormone that forms a scent plume that the males detect and follow back to her to mate. Isolating the components of that scent and developing synthetic versions involves complex chemistry, but we have been successful in developing compounds that are effective."

According to Higbee, MD products come in three types: deactivator, a central nervous system interrupter that interferes with the male sexual impulse; camouflage, where multiple scents confuse the male; and competitive attraction, which releases false attractants that send males chasing multiple plumes to no avail.

Higbee noted that the products in use in almond orchards today rely on one or more of these mechanisms, depending on the formulation and how they are dispensed. The materials are either sprayed on for targeted applications, released through dispensers hung in the trees or emitted from "puffer" aerosols that respond to temperatures and timers to release a precise amount at a precise time for maximum effect.

The first MD materials were approved by EPA in 1978. Over 200 products are registered in the U.S. to date. Most



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are used for coddling moth and oriental fruit moth. MD for NOW appeared in 2008. Higbee has conducted field trials with MD in Kern County in a variety of situations. He found MD in combination with a spray program achieved reject levels of two percent or less. In orchards with very low pressure, MD alone was effective.

His experience with a variety of field trials leads to these observations on how best to manage NOW:

### Sanitation

A thorough sanitation program is the foundation of any NOW management program. The only places you can find immature NOW — eggs or larvae — are in nuts or mummies. Shoot for zero mummies but leave no more than one mummy per five to ten trees. Females will lay eggs in mummies on the ground if they can't find them in the trees so do a good job of shredding. A good sanitation program gives the grower a tremendous opportunity to reset the population of NOW in the orchard over the winter for a fresh start the next year.

### Monitoring

Having good data on NOW populations is crucial to designing your management program.

### Insecticides

Spraying for NOW is very challenging due to the thick canopy and inability to get residue on every nut. Residue has to be on the nut to be effective. It's no good on the leaves. About 50 percent coverage is the best you can hope for, which supports having multiple sprays in your program. Sprays before the second flight (April-May) do not contribute much to NOW damage reduction but are useful for controlling PTB and plant bugs. Later sprays have the most impact. They reach tissues not previously exposed, leaving more residue for moths to land on. Make your first spray the day before nut split and, if you are doing only two sprays, the second one as close to harvest as possible. We have found that 60 to 80 percent of NOW discovered in nuts are young larvae which tell us that the eggs were laid not long before harvest. There are no new sprays on the horizon, not even in development.

### Mating Disruption (MD)

MD helps get NOW populations down. It has been shown to reduce damage by 50 to 80 percent when added to a control program. The best control program combines MD with insecticides. The most effective MD materials are those that impair the nervous system of the males. Use these in high-pressure situations for good results. It is highly unlikely that NOW will develop resistance to MD products.

### Grower Experience

Two *Blue Diamond* growers joined the panel to relate their experiences with MD.

Kent Stenderup, Blue Diamond director from Arvin, added MD to his NOW management program four years ago. "It has worked well for us. We had a flare-up in rejects that we had never before experienced. So, we ramped up our sanitation program. We poled before sweeping and introduced MD. We also got our neighbors involved. Our reject levels dropped to acceptable levels. MD is important in light of the Almond Board's goal of reducing pesticide use by 25 percent by 2025."

Jeremy Seibert grows almonds in Fresno and Merced counties. "I have a neighbor who is not good at orchard sanitation, which resulted in our reject level shooting up to eight percent. We added MD to our sanitation and spray program and dropped our rejects to two percent. One of the challenges we found is educating employees on how to place the MD products properly in the orchard and in the trees." ◆

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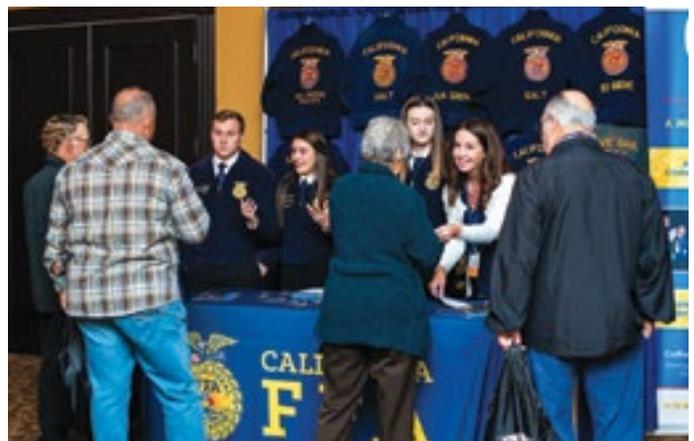
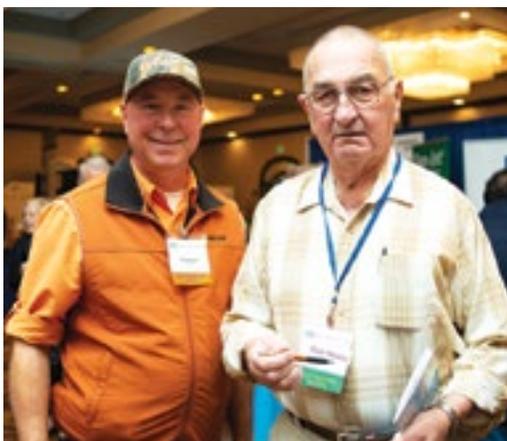
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The scholarship is open to students living in the almond producing regions of California who plan to pursue a four-year degree in plant sciences, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics or subjects with relevance to almond production.

Applications can be downloaded from *Blue Diamond's Grower* website at:  
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## Industry Advocate Highlights Issues for Huller/Shellers

Almond Alliance of California President and CEO Elaine Trevino described the scope of the association’s advocacy for almond growers, hullers and shellers, and processors at the Huller/Sheller Breakfast held during the annual *Blue Diamond Growers’* member meeting on November 14. Speaking to a full house, Trevino described the association’s activities and services since the Alliance replaced the Almond Hullers and Processors Association.

In addition to informing everyone she meets about the importance of almonds to the U.S., California and world economies, Trevino serves as the political voice of the almond industry. She and her team coordinate their advocacy with Blue Diamond, which maintains influential contacts in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. The Alliance also work closely with the Agricultural Council of California, Western Growers Association and other agricultural groups with similar concerns and interests.

The Alliance speaks for the almond industry on legislation and regulations that could have an impact on growers, huller/shellers or processors. To maximize her effectiveness in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., Trevino continues to build a power base of membership – “strength in numbers.” She supplements her advocacy with a steady stream of facts and information about the industry to those she seeks to influence, using articles, research and reports on the effects of regulations on growers and the industry.

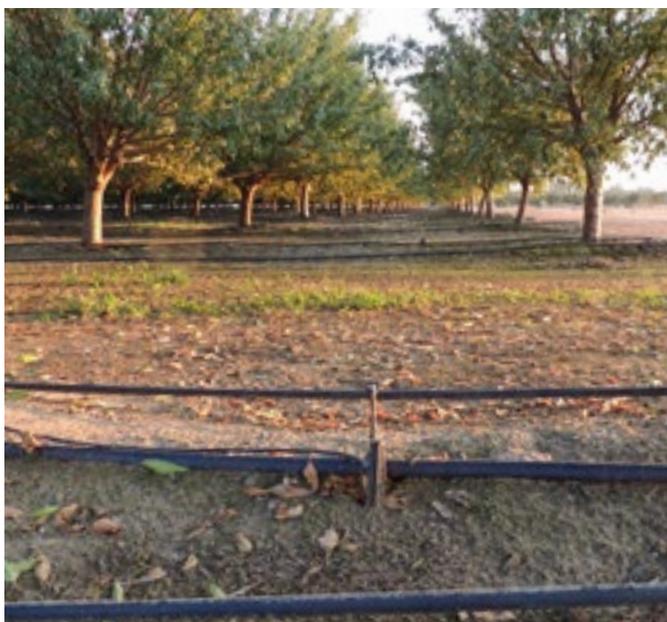
The Alliance also works closely with its members on strategies for complying with existing and new rules and regulations handed down by local, state and federal agencies. The Alliance conducts training and education programs to assist members with compliance.

### Hot Topics

With government impinging on nearly every aspect of growing, processing and marketing almonds, the Alliance has its hands full of issues and agencies that need to be addressed. A sampling of what Trevino dealt with this year include, food safety, water availability, biomass disposal, air quality, bees, trade and exports, truth in

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labeling, indoor heat-related illnesses, hull feed standards, and FSMA.

"We are engaged with all three agencies that will be involved in implementing FSMA," Trevino explained. "FDA, CDFA, and CDPH. In an attempt to ease the regulatory burden on our industry, we educated the regulators on how their rules would affect us."

Trevino noted that there would be no FDA inspections until January 2019, and advised every grower and huller/sheller to get training as soon as possible.

One of the Alliance's highest priorities is finding alternative uses for hulls, shells waste, and other woody biomass. "We are working with the Almond Board on research to find alternative uses and products from biomass and markets for those products," she pledged.

Harvest dust is a significant concern of the regional air control board, Trevino noted. "New harvest equipment has addressed the issue and made improvements, but dust will continue to be a target."

The Alliance is lobbying for increased state funding of border inspection stations to stop the importation of "dirty bees," which are thought to be a major source of disease that is decimating bees in California.

### Correcting the Record

Trevino pointed out what many elected officials and regulators confront her with regularly, "They are saying almonds use excessive amounts of water, create enormous amounts of waste, and that the industry is growing at the expense of California's natural resources, so why should they try to help us? Much of my work is setting the record straight or trying to counter these claims with examples of benefits that our industry provides the state and nation."



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The sheer number of issues that need to be addressed and the overwhelming urban bias of legislators and regulators make advocacy for agriculture, and almonds, in particular, a serious challenge, she noted, which illustrates the need for a strong Political Action Committee with ample funds to have a positive impact. She cited Blue Diamond's PAC as being an important one to support.

For more information on the Alliance and a copy of the 2018 Advocacy Report, go to [www.almondalliance.com](http://www.almondalliance.com). ◆

## Panel Addresses Trade Issues Facing Agriculture

With export markets accounting for over 70 percent of California growers' annual almond sales and trade wars between the U.S. and its major trading partners hurting sales, it came as no surprise that the trade seminar at *Blue Diamond Growers'* annual member meeting was well attended. Julian Heron, a partner at Tuttle, Taylor and Heron, and long-time *Blue Diamond* representative with federal agencies and administrations, hosted the Navigating Trade in 2019 panel. The trade experts addressed challenges and opportunities in the current turbulent export environment.

Heron put the discussion into context with an overview of the impact of the recent midterm election on agriculture's prospects over the next two years. "California lost big time," he declared. "With the Democrats retaking the House, we lost the speakership and many important committee chairmanships."

The impact of that change can best be seen in the House Agriculture Committee, Heron noted. "While the chairman is from Minnesota, understands agriculture and has experience as chairman, his committee is weighted with urban representatives with little knowledge about or interest in agriculture. We can expect them to focus on urban issues at the expense of agriculture."

### Complex, Challenging Issues

The political tilt will affect trade negotiations and deals as well. Brian Grunenfelder, president of Tuttle Taylor and Heron, has over three decades of experience in agricultural trade matters with the federal government. He declared, "The current trade landscape is extremely unusual. I have never seen anything like this in all the years I've been dealing with trade issues. It has become very challenging and complex on the trade front."

For example, Grunenfelder cited the Administration's withdrawal from several trade pacts which President Trump described as "bad deals," levying tariffs on steel and



From left to right: Julian Heron, Brian Grunenfelder, Daniel Whitley, and Jaime Johansson.

aluminum imports to "level the playing field," and saddling imports from China with tariffs in retaliation for the theft of intellectual property. All of these actions produced reactions from U.S. trading partners that "hit agriculture disproportionately," Grunenfelder said. "Our trading partners know that if they strike at U.S. agriculture, they will get the Administration to respond and resolve the issue."

### Positive Steps

The difficult present appears to be shifting to a brighter future. Grunenfelder cited a relaxing of tensions in talks with the EU, and the fact almonds have not yet been targeted, although chances of a good agreement remain remote: "Fundamental differences between the EU and U.S. on matters of science, food safety, and other matters will be difficult to overcome."

Grunenfelder noted that successful agreements with Korea, Canada, and Mexico, are bright spots, and a better agreement with Japan has good potential. Talks with India are going well which could be very good for almonds. China remains a big challenge, and both economies are being harmed. "China is the bad actor in several respects, but a satisfactory agreement is doable," he said. "We are also working with Israel on an updated agreement that we hope will provide better access for almonds."

"Trade agreements work for agriculture, so it is encouraging that the Administration is plowing new ground in new markets," Grunenfelder noted. "The middle class is expected to grow 50 percent by 2020 worldwide. We are working to capitalize on that opportunity. It is very important that the U.S. remains active in making trade deals because our competitors for those markets are working hard to capture them for themselves."

### Market Access Push

Associate Administrator for the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Daniel Whitley, who has over 20 years of experience

working on agricultural trade issues with the USDA, talked about the Administration's Market Access Program (MAP). *Blue Diamond* has been a participant in the program for over 50 years, using the funds granted to open and expand new markets for almonds. This year MAP provided \$1.9 million for almonds.

FAS also works hard to minimize tariffs on U.S. agricultural exports. "In China, for example, we are keeping the lines of communication open, assuring them that we in agriculture are different from other US representatives," Whitley explained.

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***“We are working to get back to business as usual. American agriculture is open for business!”***

---

Whitley believes China "is now focused on what they have to do to end the trade war with the U.S. The key issue for them is to stop stealing our stuff."

Retaliatory tariffs on U.S. agricultural exports total \$12 billion to date, according to Whitley. "We are coming up with mitigation measures that take the form of payments, purchases, and promotions. These won't make you whole but can help. In the promotions arena, we are looking for short-term measures that can help open markets," he said.

The agency is taking proposals for the application of these funds and is expected to announce awards early 2019.

A powerful tool for opening and expanding markets is the trade mission hosted by FAS. "We take American producers to foreign markets and partner them with buyers in those countries," said Whitley. "Blue Diamond recently participated in a trip to Korea which resulted in a lot of business done and deals made. We are ramping up for 2019 to promote agricultural products in high-potential markets."

### **Tell Our Story**

Citing "difficult times in California caused by the trade wars," President of the California Farm Bureau Federation Jamie Johansson stressed the importance of "telling our story, especially how important trade is to our industry and how important agricultural trade is to the American economy."

This is especially true in California, he noted, where the average Californian does not appreciate the positive impact local agriculture has on his or her well-being. "Half of what California produces has to go into export. Fourteen percent of manufacturing activity in California is food related, and that figure is growing."

Johansson pointed out that four of the top 10 metropolitan areas in the U.S. rated "most affected" by the retaliatory tariffs are in California: 1-Bakersfield, 2-Fresno, 3-Stockton and 6-Oxnard, and seven of the top 10 small metro areas are California: 2-El Centro, 3-Salinas, 5-Visalia, 6-Napa-7-Madera, 8-Hanford. "We must continue to tell people that story and stay engaged with our public officials at all levels," Johansson urged. ♦

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## Lessons from the Mountain: Climber Inspires Young Leaders on Risk Taking, Leadership

"I hope that when you leave here tonight, you will ask yourself, 'How can I best lead and have a positive impact in the world around me?'" said John Stenderup in concluding remarks to the Young Leaders graduating Class of 2018.

Stenderup was making his second appearance as the featured speaker to a graduating class. Last year, the son of *Blue Diamond* members Kent and Patty Stenderup of Arvin, spoke to the 2017 class about lessons learned from his successful climb of Mounts Everest and Lhotse. This year he shared wisdom gleaned from his most challenging climb yet, a hazardous trek to the summit of the world's second highest mountain, K2 in Pakistan.

### Deal with Your Fears

"Scaling K2, the scariest mountain on Earth, forced me to learn lessons critical for survival, but those lessons also apply to the everyday world where they can lead to a more fulfilling career and life," he said. "First of all, deal with your fears. The fears that we don't face become our limits. When you overcome your fears, you will be amazed at the doors that open in your life."

When Stenderup was invited to join the expedition to summit K2, he hesitated, knowing it has claimed many lives over the years. "But then I realized that I could not say no, because I knew that, if I turned it down, I might not have the opportunity again and that would haunt me. My greatest fear was to regret not giving myself the chance to succeed."

### Lead by Example

As the team encountered rock falls, avalanches, gale-force winds, driving snow, sub-zero temperatures and oxygen deprivation, life-saving qualities in each of the men kept them moving up the mountain. "On several occasions,



one of our Sherpas would take the lead when the rest of us hesitated, ready to turn back when faced with a treacherous situation. We might not have completed the climb without his leadership," said Stenderup.

### It's Okay to Be Wrong

In another incident, a gathering storm threatened the climb, despite weather forecasts of clearing skies. "Several of us proposed returning to base camp, but others disagreed saying we should continue the climb on schedule," he said. "We finally relented and moved on up without incident. This proved once more that it's okay to be wrong because sometimes others have good ideas."

### Call Your Mom

Stenderup became only the 21<sup>st</sup> American to conquer K2 when he reached the summit on July 22, 2018. "That was the proudest moment of my life," he said. He promptly called his mom, something he urges everyone to do often.

### Other Lessons Learned

In reflecting on his multiple summit treks, Stenderup offers these additional lessons from the mountain:

- Go out in the world and make your own experiences.
- Set a goal and achieve it. Being proud of your accomplishments is okay.
- Never cut corners, give your mission everything you have.
- Hold yourself accountable, to the mission, to yourself and those around you.
- Lead like a Sherpa, by example.
- Take every opportunity to make a difference in the world.

**And don't forget to call your mom! ♦**

## Graduates Honored

Three dozen young growers and bank representatives graduated in the Class of 2018. Many of them were present to receive their certificates at the Young Leader Recognition Dinner. Chairman of the Board Dan Cummings thanked the graduates for their participation, observing, "By participating in this program you have shown an interest in becoming a future leader of this co-op. We look forward to seeing you in that role."

Kent Stenderup, District 9 Board Director, and co-chairman of the Young Leader Committee, thanked the board for supporting the program which has conducted 21 classes and produced over 500 graduates, several of whom have become members of the *Blue Diamond* board of directors.

## Young Leader Reflections:

### Joe Ferrini, District 2:

"I was most interested in seeing the processing of our almonds and meeting great people in our class and at *Blue Diamond*."

### Ryan Valk, District 5:

"I enjoyed meeting members of the management team and seeing what *Blue Diamond* does to help us at the state capitol."

### Max Koetsier, District 3:

"Having grown up on an almond ranch and being familiar with how almonds are produced, it was interesting to see how *Blue Diamond* processes and markets our nuts and how all the departments work together on our behalf."

### Stefanie Rocha, Banker:

"I was pleased to see how proactive and innovative *Blue Diamond* is in marketing the grower's almonds."

### Davinder Mahil, District 8:

"What impressed me was seeing the value added that *Blue Diamond* provides for our almonds."

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### Matthew Salsedo, District 8:

"I appreciated seeing the inner workings of *Blue Diamond* operations, being exposed to the political process and learning how our co-op looks out for us."

### Connor Adams, District 3:

"I enjoyed meeting the managers and other growers and seeing the inner workings of the cooperative."

### Malin Petz, District 3:

"I am grateful for the opportunity to talk with legislators and tell them my side of the story."

## RECIPES OF THE MONTH

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



### Stuffed Goat Cheese and Almond Dates

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup *Blue Diamond* Gourmet Garlic, Herb, and Olive Oil Almonds
- 1/2 cup cream cheese
- 8 dates, sliced open and pitted
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Chopped parsley for garnish

#### Directions

Whip cream cheese in a bowl until creamy. Coarsely chop up almonds and mix into cream cheese. Spoon mix into open dates and place on a plate. Drizzle olive oil on top and sprinkle with chopped parsley.



### Black Truffle Almond Goat Cheese Log

#### Ingredients

- 1 log of Goat Cheese
- 1 cup *Blue Diamond* Gourmet Black Truffle Almonds
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 box Flax Artisan Nut Thins

#### Directions

Chop almonds into small pieces and spread on a plate wider than the log of goat cheese. Unwrap goat cheese log and roll over chopped almonds, gently pressing so the almonds coat the outside of the log. Place coated cheese log on cutting board and drizzle with honey. Serve with Flax Artisan Nut Thins or any choice of Nut Thins.

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- *Bag Drop* – Central Life Sciences; Bowsmith; FBsciences

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## 100 Years of Partnership

*It is not often a company in California turns 100 years old. Ag Council has been fortunate to celebrate the centennial of several of its members, including Blue Diamond Growers, Sun-Maid, Sunkist and Sunsweet. Land O'Lakes and others are just around the corner.*

The growers of that era were clearly visionaries. At the time, they probably could not envision the brands their companies would later become, but they had one thread in common then, which still exists today — the need for government affairs.

*Blue Diamond* was present nearly 100 years ago when Ag Council was formed at the first meeting held in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. The minutes from the very first board meeting in 1919 reveal that Ag Council was formed to address challenging regulations and as a mechanism to ensure a positive environment for cooperatives and farmer-owned businesses in California.

We are proud that *Blue Diamond* — known then as California Almond Growers Exchange — was one of our founding members and continues to be actively engaged in our membership 100 years later.

We have been through a lot together. And in many ways, our brands are stronger than ever. Watching the innovation at *Blue Diamond* serves as inspiration to our team when we consider the tough political challenges before us. Just through my lifetime, I have watched your brand turn “a can a week,” into a variety of products that consumers can snack on throughout the day all around the world.

At Ag Council, we have been successful in taking some of our toughest challenges and turning them into positive outcomes. As an example, we were successful in improving the only cap and trade regulation in the entire country by utilizing those funds to create \$600 million worth of grants for farmers and food processors. Additionally, when local schools were purchasing

foreign fruit to serve to students, we passed state legislation strengthening the “Buy American” provisions of the school lunch program in California. We continue to work steadfastly toward creating a pathway to compliance for groundwater impacts caused by farming through the development of a safe drinking water program.

Ag Council continues to innovate. Our newly formed Almond Committee comprises all of our almond members and will assist us in being on the forefront of issues impacting your industry for years to come.

It is no secret that California is a challenging place to do business. However, for agriculture, California offers more than other locations in terms of its Mediterranean climate, beneficial soil types, and access to foreign markets that create a promising environment for businesses that have a growth mindset.

For us, a State Legislature with an urban focus can create significant challenges, but we can find success in matching our needs with their priorities. This does not always work in every case, but an inventive perspective helps.

Our efforts in the Capitol and within regulatory agencies are consistent with any business in California — we find that hard work, flexibility and tenacity will

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**“ Through all the highs and lows, *Blue Diamond* has walked with us over the past 100 years, and we appreciate this strategic partnership. ”**

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help us endure the valleys to get to the peaks. ♦

To learn more about Ag Council, go to [www.agcouncil.org](http://www.agcouncil.org).



**Emily Rooney,**  
President,  
Agricultural  
Council of  
California

As we celebrate our centennial in 2019, Ag Council invites *Blue Diamond* members to join us at our upcoming events:

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## Winter Sanitation: The Foundation of Navel Orangeworm Control

*Halloween isn't the only time when mummies are dangerous; that is, mummy nuts in almond orchards. In fact, now is the time to break the link between mummy nuts – nuts remaining on the tree after harvest – and overwintering navel orangeworm (NOW).*

While winter sanitation is important every year, it is increasingly critical this year, with rejections from almonds harvested in 2017 reported at higher than two percent. These significant rejection rates were due to an overly wet winter that presented challenges for mummy nut removal and follow through of winter sanitation. Also, the wet winter was followed by a warmer-than-normal growing season in 2017 that resulted in higher and earlier NOW populations, with an additional late-season NOW generation that resulted in higher insect pressure.

### Keep Rejection Levels Below Two Percent

According to the Almond Board of California (ABC), the working goal is to keep almond harvest rejection levels below two percent and to strive for one percent, or less. If a grower's average damage is over two percent, it is critical they take a closer look at overall practices and

specifically adopt stronger winter sanitation measures, which are the foundation for any NOW control program.

- **Insight:** Reject numbers like two percent on the grade sheet translate to even higher losses for growers. Estimates are that actual losses are double what the grade shows because a good working assumption is half of the damaged kernels are blown out during harvest or removed at shelling, and these hidden losses are in addition to handler reject quality deductions shown on grade sheets.

Concerns over rejection rates span beyond direct crop damage and quality because NOW damage is also associated with aflatoxin. In addition to the direct damage NOW causes the kernel, the damage opens the door to fungal infections and contaminants, particularly to the fungi *Aspergillus* spp. and the aflatoxin contaminant it produces.

The stringent tolerances for aflatoxin contamination in key export markets like the EU and Japan raise the importance of this yearly integrated management practice.

### Mummy Nut Removal Key to Success

Winter sanitation, the cornerstone of NOW pest management, involves the removal and destruction of mummy nuts to prevent overwintering NOW

and prevent two-year mummy kernels being harvested the following year. It's also part of being a good neighbor, as NOW can travel to other almond orchards if many mummy nuts remain.

To reach the goal of two percent damage or less, growers should follow the guidelines below, which vary by growing region.

1. **Before January 15, and preferably earlier:** Count the mummy nuts and examine 20 trees per block. If an average of two or more mummy nuts per tree (and even lower in the southern San Joaquin Valley) are found on or before January 15, get out the shaker or poling sticks and remove mummies in the entire block.
  - For the northern and central growing areas, the guideline is to remove mummies down to an average of no more than two mummies in the canopy per tree. Cleaning both softshell and hardshell varieties is important as they are both overwintering sites for NOW. For hardshells, NOW readily overwinter in the hulls instead of infesting the kernels directly.
  - For the southern growing areas, the sanitation goal is much lower and averages 0.2 mummies per tree in the canopy. Furthermore, there should be no more than eight mummies per tree left on the ground that have not been destroyed.



Mummy nuts can be removed by hand poling or mechanically shaking – or both. Image courtesy of the Almond Board of California.



Winter is a key time to practice winter sanitation and prevent NOW outbreak later in the year. Image courtesy of the Almond Board of California.



Remove mummy nuts from trees before bud swell, typically before February 1. Image courtesy of the Almond Board of California.

**2. Before February 1:** Remove mummy nuts from trees before bud swell, typically before February 1, by mechanically shaking the tree or hand poling, or both.

- Wetter conditions — drizzly, wet and foggy weather — help nuts come off the trees more easily. Overly wet weather may discourage growers from completing sanitation because of access with shakers, as was the case in the 2016-17 winter. However, in that case, it is recommended that growers give serious consideration to hand poling. In the 2016-17 winter, reluctance to sanitize contributed to the high percentage of NOW damage — meaning bigger headaches in the long run.

**3. Before March 1:** Blow or sweep fallen mummy nuts to the row centers and destroy them by flail mowing, especially where ground cover is not present or in years with dry winters. This timing is critical as

mid-March is when the NOW flights begin.

Growers who have been implementing these cultural practices in their orchards and who still experience rejection levels greater than two percent should seriously consider other NOW management practices including more focus on timely harvest, in-season sprays and NOW mating disruption.

### Responsible Practices Maintain Open Markets

Mummy nuts have been identified as the link between one season to the next for overwintering NOW. It becomes an insidious cycle if mummies are left in the orchard, as they become a food of subsistence for NOW. Therefore, growers are strongly encouraged to minimize or break down this link to prevent continued pest damage and should continue practicing winter sanitation for years to come.

The European Union, one of the biggest importers of California

almonds, has tight regulations and a low threshold for aflatoxin levels. To maintain open market opportunities in Europe, the Almond Board of California created the Pre-Export Checks (PEC) program for handlers planning to ship almonds to Europe. The PEC program is a systems approach to aflatoxin mitigation, based on the handler using specified procedures to sample, test and ship almonds to Europe.

To maintain these market opportunities, growers must do their part and be intentional in practicing winter sanitation to ensure the best product is being produced for industry consumers.

To learn more about winter sanitation and minimizing navel orangeworm, visit [www.almonds.com/pests](http://www.almonds.com/pests). Also visit the UC IPM site, [www.ipm.ucanr.edu](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu), and click on 'Agricultural Pests,' then 'Almonds.' ♦

*Article contributed by Almond Board of California*

THE BEE BOX

California Colony Registration



Job Swap Team, with BIP Tech Team member, Ben Sallmann in the middle, from The Job Swap Experiment

With more than half the U.S. colonies going to California for the almond pollination event each year, a quick review of the California regulations about Bee Management and Honey Production may be useful. Although the registration law has been in place for quite some time in California, beginning in January 2019, the State of California will be enforcing it strictly including fines.

The law is designed to help protect pollinators as registration allows beekeepers who manage colonies within a mile of a spray application to be notified. A new online system for registration and communication has been designed and is named “Bee Where” and can be found at [beewherecalifornia.com](http://beewherecalifornia.com). Since 1987 and amended in 1993, beekeepers in possession of an apiary in the State of California, for any length of time, are mandated to register any and all apiaries with the county’s agricultural commissioner. This registration is accompanied by a \$10 fee and needs to be renewed every year. The registration application requires the beekeeper’s general contact information, the number of colonies, the location of the colonies and an option to request or decline advanced notification, with a minimum of 48 hours, of any pesticide application labeled ‘toxic to bees’

within a mile of the apiary location.

Unless an apiary is maintained at a place of residence, the State of California also requests that the apiary be identified with specific information, with minimal size and format. Some specifications may vary slightly by county. Along those lines, California also offers an apiary brand program which allows beekeepers to apply for a serial number brand for a \$25 fee. This serial number is transferable through a bill of sale and confers extra protection and recourse in case of colony theft.

U.S. States with Honey Bee Registration

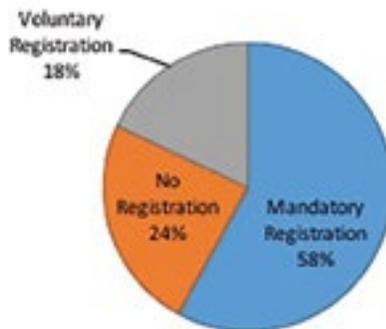


Chart showing percentage of states requiring apiary registration. Courtesy of Mary Kate Wheeler, Farm Business Management Specialist, Cornell Extension

Beekeeper/Grower Job Swap

It is all too easy for us to make judgments on how simple or difficult another person’s life or job may be but often those views are uninformed

and oversimplified. One of the more valuable projects to have an impact on beekeepers and growers is the Job Swap project. In 2016, the Bee Understanding project was created to bring together some of the parts that make up our agricultural system. The project focused on learning firsthand the daily challenges that both groups experience in doing their job. The Job Swap included a commercial beekeeper (Randy Verhoek), one of our Bee Informed Partnership team members (Katie Lee), a corn farmer (Carson Klosterman) and a Crop Consultant (Greg Laplante). This initial project was sponsored by the Honey Bee Health Coalition, a collaborative union of beekeeping organization and growers that brings together disparate and traditionally opposing groups to mediate a path forward for healthy bees and productive agricultural systems.

In 2018, Project Apis m., the California Honey Board and others sponsored a second outreach film called the Job Swap Experiment. In this film, the project has refined the scope to a few commercial beekeepers and almond growers. Whereas a corn grower and a beekeeper may never cross paths, certainly almonds and honey bees are intricately entwined in this modern day agricultural landscape. In this film, both sides of the issue get a feel for



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what is at stake and how difficult it is to get half of all the bees in the U.S. ready and in sufficient quality and quantity to pollinate almonds when it is winter in most of the U.S. regions. The beekeepers (Jason Miller and Russell Heitkam) are able to learn about what the almond growers and crop advisors worry about from bloom to harvest. Weather, pests, and fungi are all an issue for the grower. The introduction of cover crops that provide additional forage for bees in almonds is a recent benefit and one that really bridges the divide between the growers and beekeepers. Increasing communication between these two groups are vital if they are going to continue to be dependent on each other for success.



*Garett Slater, Midwest Team member inspecting fall colonies.  
Photo credit: Bee Informed Partnership*

### Bee Informed Partnership Annual Fundraiser

The Bee Informed Partnership is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose sole goal is to provide up-to-date honey bee health data to beekeepers so that they may better manage their bees. We also welcome and encourage the distribution of this information - as many of you have done - to educate others about the challenges facing honey bees and the ways that we can help solve them. We remain an independent and unbiased source of honey bee health data, providing up-to-date and regionally-specific information to beekeepers, researchers, and policymakers nationwide. We also aim to inform concerned citizens and industry leaders so they too may promote the protection of honey bees and other important plant pollinators. For December, we are raising funds to support our work.

**Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Bee Informed Partnership today by visiting [beeinformed.org/donate](https://beeinformed.org/donate).** We have also posted the Fundraiser on our Facebook page.

Funds raised will directly support the major pillars of BIP's research and outreach program: 1) Our interactive national **Colony Loss Map**; 2) Providing an early warning system to beekeepers regarding seasonal and regional threats to honey bee health through the **Sentinel Apiary Project**; 3) Evaluating annual colony mortality causes found in our interactive **National Management Survey Tool**; and 4) Providing the infrastructure to support and manage the **APHIS State National Honey Bee Pest and Disease survey**. You can also stay up to date on all that we are doing by subscribing to our blogs at [beeinformed.org/newsletter](https://beeinformed.org/newsletter).

We house and maintain the largest publicly available honey bee health database in the United States. As such, we need financial help from the community to help fund our efforts. Donations provide the necessary support that allows us to continue providing the research required to make informed, data-based decisions that will help beekeepers keep bees better. And as we have seen in the job swap experiments described here, better bees make better almonds. ♦



**Anne Marie Fauvel,  
Tech Transfer Team  
Coordinator,  
The Bee Informed  
Partnership, Inc.**



**Karen Rennich,  
Executive  
Director,  
The Bee Informed  
Partnership, Inc.**

# New for 2019!

## 4th Leaf Almond Freeze Coverage

- ▶ Application deadline = December 31, 2018
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# Growing With You

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### TIME TO CONSIDER

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? What practices had the greatest return on investment? This end-of-year review should also take into account the following considerations.

#### 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 or worn orifices, nozzles and swirl plates should be cleared or 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 by online by searching "UC IPM Almond Spur Sampling."

#### Winter Sanitation for Navel Orangeworm (NOW) Control

The most effective way to reduce overwintering 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



*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.*

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, one percent damage from NOW should be expected. In other words, five mummies per tree equals five percent NOW damage. Therefore, in order to meet the industry standard of two percent NOW damage levels, there should be two or less mummies per tree. Recent research 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 two 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 two 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



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.



Planted cover crops provide multiple benefits for orchards, including increasing soil organic matter, reducing compaction and run-off, and providing food for pollinizers. Consider adding them into orchard operations.

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 two or less per tree and destroy any mummies that are on the ground.

### Pruning

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 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 six percent decrease in NOW infestation in the upper canopy in pruned trees due to better insecticide spray distribution in the upper canopy.

### Consider Cover Crops

Many operations have moved away from planted cover crops and have relied on residual vegetation for ground cover. Establishing a cover crop has been shown to increase soil organic matter, reduce compaction from equipment, reduce

soil erosion and run-off as well as improving water infiltration and soil quality. Recent research has also found benefits to pollinators without competing with almond bloom. Further research is studying the effects of the cover crop on weed pressure, water use and frost risk. Although cover crops come with an expense and require mowing (around \$80 per acre, total expense including seed), the benefits should be compared to compost applications and other techniques to increase organic matter. For more information on cover crops, please visit [almondcovercrop.faculty.ucdavis.edu](http://almondcovercrop.faculty.ucdavis.edu) and Project ApisM.

### Soil Sampling for Managing Water Infiltration

Water infiltration issues are being observed at a higher frequency. This is due to a large amount of water being applied through a limited soil surface area, leaching the minerals responsible for maintaining soil aggregation, causing dispersion. Soil from the top few inches should be sampled to determine the appropriate soil amendments. If issues are not apparent, then limited sampling should suffice. If water run-off has been observed, samples should be pulled from multiple

## IN YOUR ORCHARD

areas within the orchard. 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 seven, 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.

Soil should also be sampled regularly from orchards to determine nutrient and mineral levels. This type of sampling



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

is different from sampling for water infiltration, as 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-inch increments to a minimal depth of 36 inches, and in the cases of salinity management, down to 60 inches. Nutrients within the soil, the calcium:magnesium balance, soil pH and salinity should be discussed with a consultant, certified crop adviser, or the local UC Farm Advisor.

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### The Final Thought

A bit of news on a personal side: I will be leaving extension to pursue a position in farm development. The past 10 years have been very rewarding, and I have enjoyed assisting California farmers with their operations. To all the farmers, pest control advisors and other industry members who have assisted me over the past 10 years: Thank you! As of now, I plan to maintain the "The Almond Doctor" blog ([www.thealmonddoctor.com](http://www.thealmonddoctor.com)) to provide further assistance to the industry and hope to "catch up" at the various industry events. ♦



**David Doll,**  
Tree Nut Pomology  
Farm Advisor,  
Merced County



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- Flory 850 with Flory transfer cart \$40,000.
- 2 Weimer super carts \$750 ea.
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## FOR SALE

Walnut stakes, 3/4", 10' long, used sucker rod, pallets of 10 or 200 up to 5600 available. \$2.50 each, Escalon area. Contact (209) 652-5164

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Flory Almond pickup machine 210, Ingels Sweeper, almond and peach trailers, almond roller, brush Fork, Lift for Bins, antique International truck and Case Tractor, camper shell long Bed, and hose pull with sled. Call Ann (209) 632-4346

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For more information, call Don at (209) 202-4184

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- 1977 OMC gas Almond shaker: \$7100 or b.o.
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- Heavy duty 3-pt wood splitter: \$1100 or b.o.
- 8' Brush rake: \$600 or b.o.
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- Model 1200/18 Sunrise wood stove: \$250 or b.o.
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- Springtooth 4 feet long, 8 feet width
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Contact Ian at (559) 286-5709

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### FOR SALE

Almond Orchard — Stanislaus County: \$1,950,000

43-acre Oakdale Ranch. Desirable young almond orchard planted in 2014 NP/Carmel/Aldrich

Oakdale Irrigation District Water + Ag Well. Multiple parcels with 2,361 sq. ft. ranch home.

Contact Century 21 MM Jeff Titus at (209) 844-1759. List #18052742.

### FOR SALE

Almond Orchard — San Joaquin County: \$1,200,000

24-acre Multi-Family Almond Ranch in Escalon. 22-acre planted in almonds 10-30 yrs. old NP/Carmel/Price/Monterey. 3 homes, 1 mobile home + outbuildings SSJID Irrigation water + Ag well. Contact Century 21 MM Jeff Titus at (209) 844-1759. List #18061002.

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**Editor: Blue Diamond Growers  
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*-Ken Bushnell*

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



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