

Feature Story



Almond harvest insights

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC, September 26, 2017 — As consumer appetite for almonds continues to grow, almond growers are going nuts this harvest season as a result of favorable growth conditions and increased acreage. Earlier this year, the USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service's (NASS) — Pacific Regional Office issued a report forecasting that the 2017 almond crop will reach 2.25 billion meat pounds. The forecast, administered annually by NASS, put this year's crop at a 5.1 percent increase over the 2016 crop production of 2.14 billion meat pounds.

"This is in part due to sufficient rain, which created favorable growing conditions for the crop to flourish," said Dr. Gabriele Ludwig, the Almond Board of California's Director of Sustainability and Environmental Affairs. "We also saw an uptick in overall almond acreage, further increasing production."

The increase in acreage is due to an increase in demand. According to Innova Market Insights' 2015 Global New Products Database, almonds are the number one nut used in new product introductions worldwide, and almonds became the number one nut used in Europe. As a result of this demand, "customers and consumers around the globe purchased more than 2 billion pounds of almonds, for the first time in history," said Dr. Ludwig.

Looking to next year

"Harvest is almost complete, which means it is time to start thinking about next year's crop," said Dr. Ludwig. "Key topics to keep in mind include irrigation, pollination and pest management."

>> Ensuring post-harvest irrigation is done at the right time is critical for bloom, fruit set and potential yield. The Almond Irrigation Improvement Continuum is a highly informative source to help growers understand irrigation management better, which provides a step-by-step explanation of irrigation management and scheduling practices.

>> Growers and beekeepers are establishing next year's **pollination** contracts. The Honey Bee Best Management Practices for California Almonds suggest they agree up front on a pesticide plan outlining which pest control materials may be used during bloom.

>> Growers can take additional **pest management** steps in their orchards. As the weather gets cooler, it's important to address the mummy nuts remaining on trees. Their removal and destruction is key to combatting pests, such as the navel orangeworm.

It's an exciting time for almond growers, but every year brings new challenges and decisions to consider. Planning ahead with Dr. Ludwig's suggestions on irrigation, pollination and pest management could help grow higher quality almonds.

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BASF offers a robust offering of crop protection products to help almond growers optimize their outputs by limiting pest pressure. Growers can learn more about BASF's offering by visiting www.agproducts.basf.us or by contacting their local BASF representative.

Always read and follow label directions.

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