

CALIFORNIA ALMONDS

A GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

In Brief:

- With its ideal growing conditions, rich soil and abundant sunshine, California supplies more than 80% of the global almond demand. U.S. almond growers and processors are committed to using farming practices that conserve the natural resources they depend on for their livelihood, serving their local communities by providing jobs and minimizing environmental impacts, and producing nutritious, sustainably-grown almonds to families around the world. Packed with powerful nutrition, almonds are not only good for the individual, but also good for local communities and the planet.

Environmental Stewardship: A commitment to continuous improvement

- Almond growers are continuously improving their practices and reducing impacts through nearly 50 years of Almond Board of California–funded research with a total investment of \$95 million. The industry has committed to achieve these four key sustainability goals by 2025:

- **WATER:** California almond growers use 33% less water to grow 0.45 kgs (1 pound) of almonds than they did twenty years ago. The California almond community commits to reduce the amount of water used to grow a kilogram of almonds by an additional 20%.
- **ZERO WASTE:** Almond hulls and shells are traditionally used for livestock bedding, dairy feed and electricity generation. Today, research is aimed at discovering even more sustainable uses for almond co-products. The California almond community commits to achieve zero waste in its orchards by recycling and putting everything grown to optimal use.
- **PEST MANAGEMENT:** To further protect its orchards, employees and communities, the almond industry commits to increase adoption of environmentally friendly pest management tools by 25%.
- **AIR QUALITY:** The harvesting of California almonds involves a process that creates dust in the local area. The almond community is taking steps to address this and improve air quality and has committed to reducing dust during harvest by 50%.



- The Almond Board of California (ABC) is committed to promoting **bee health**. It has led bee research efforts since 1995, funding 126 projects so growers can confidently provide safe habitats for bees before they move on to pollinate other crops.



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- The **2009 California Almond Sustainability Program (CASP)** helps to educate participants about continuous improvement as well as better understand the ongoing sustainability practices of growers. In 2020, more than 2,000 growers, field managers, applicators and others attended CASP events.
- In 2020, in response to increasing questions from buyers and retailers about how almonds are grown, ABC launched the **CASP Supply Chain Program**. The program will allow growers to share data on their growing practices anonymously, in aggregate, with processors, who can then provide that data to buyers.
- The **2015 Growing Almonds Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)** shows that almond trees accumulate and store significant amounts of greenhouse gas over the course of their 25-year lifecycle. Research shows that current almond growing practices offset about 50% of their carbon emissions and there is the potential to become carbon neutral or even negative.

Social Responsibility: A commitment to future generations

- Of the 7,600 almond farms in California, 91% are owned and operated by family growers who live on their land and plan to pass it on to their children and grandchildren.
- Nearly 70% of California almond farms are 40 hectares or less (100 acres).
- The California almond industry generates more than 110,000 jobs, contributing to the economic viability and stability of communities throughout the Central Valley of California where almonds are grown.
- 96% of California almond growers and processors give back by participating in organizations, programs or boards that support community well-being.

Economic Profitability: A commitment to long-term viability

- California produces **all** of the almonds grown in the United States.
- California crop acreage dedicated to almond orchards has continued to grow and in the 2017/18 crop year accounted for about 450,000 hectares (1.1 million acres) or around 14 percent of California’s 7.86 million acres (just over 3 million hectares) of harvested commercial crop acreage.
- Overseas exports are an important source of revenue for California’s almond industry. During the 2017/18 crop year, exports accounted for close to 70% of utilized California almond production.
- The almond community adds approximately €8 billion (\$9.2 billion) to California’s GDP, generating €16.9 billion (\$19.6 billion) in gross revenue.

Sources

[Growing Good: Almond Sustainability 2020](#)

[Almond Almanac 2020](#)

[Almond Board of California website: Growing Good](#)

Alissa Kendall, et al. “Life Cycle–Based Assessment of Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Almond Production. Part 1: Analytical Framework and Baseline Results.” *Journal of Industrial Ecology*. 2015.

[University of California Agricultural Issues Center. Contributions of the California Almond Industry to the California Economy. August 2020.](#)



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