

California ALMOND facts



Did you know?

Did you know that California is the only state in the United States that commercially produces almonds? And why you ask? California produces 80% of the world's almonds due to its Mediterranean climate. And like other specialty crops grown only in California – walnuts, kiwi and avocados to name a few – thrive off of the mild winters and dry, hot summers of California.

Production Facts

- There are more than 6,000 almond growers and 115 almond handlers (processors) in California.
- Almonds are grown on 550,000 bearing acres.
- The almond growing region stretches more than 500 miles between Red Bluff and Bakersfield in the fertile Central Valley of California.
- In 2004, California almond growers produced 998 million pounds of almonds. This follows two record-breaking years as the 3rd largest almond crop in history. The largest almond crop on record was produced in 2002 when 1.084 billion pounds was harvested.
- Each almond orchard has at least two varieties of almonds planted within its rows to allow honey bees to pollinate the crop during the early spring bloom.
- More than 1.2 million bee hives are required each year to pollinate California's 550,000 bearing acres of almonds. Almond growers rent two or more hives per acre to adequately pollinate the 75-120 trees found in each acre.

How We Rank

- Almonds are California's #1 agricultural export valued at \$1.081 billion dollars (2003).
- Almonds are the #1 horticultural export for the United States.
- Almonds are California's #6 leading agricultural commodity valued at \$1.5 billion dollars in farm value to California almond growers. (2003 Ag Commissioners report)

Statistics

- California ships 70% of its total crop to more than 80 countries throughout the world.
- During the 2003/04 crop year export shipments rose 3% over 2002/03 to 712,122,629 pounds.
- Domestic shipments during 2003/04 were up 7% over 2002/03 to 312,160,183 pounds.
- The United States represents the largest single market for California almonds utilizing 30% of the total crop within the 50 states.
- The top 10 markets for California almonds represent 80% of total crop shipments.
- The top ten markets for California almonds are: 1) United States, 2) Spain, 3) Germany, 4) India, 5) Japan, 6) Italy, 7) France, 8) Netherlands, 9) Canada, 10) UAE

Nutrition

- Almonds the most nutrient-dense tree-nut. One ounce of almonds (about 23) contains 160 calories and only 1 gram of saturated fat. The same handful is also an excellent source of vitamin E and magnesium, a good source of protein and potassium and has no cholesterol.
- On July 15, 2003, the FDA approved the first qualified health claim for conventional food, saying that "*Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.*" The claim is one of only six existing health claims relating to heart disease.

Consumer Appeal

- Consumers call almonds "the gourmet nut."
- Chef's laude almonds for their versatility, buttery flavor and one-of-a-kind crunch.
- California almonds offer a variety of menu applications for the foodservice industry. Moreover the nutritional benefits of almonds provide a "healthy halo" effect when making menu decisions.

Almond Growers – Good Stewards of the Land

- Thirty years of research funded by almond growers through the Almond Board has given the industry tools to become better stewards of the land. Today's almond farmers strive to continually improve their farming practices while maintaining a productive and healthy environment for future generations.
- The Almond Board of California Production Research program is considered by other agricultural commodities as a model research program, which includes studies in orchard management, insect and pest management, variety development, tree nutrition and irrigation, diseases, and pollination.
- The almond industry is continually challenged by air quality, water quality, and crop protection. The Board's Environmental Research Program develops partnerships with a variety of organizations and funds research to address these concerns.
- The environmental challenges of California almond growers are being met through the identification and funding of critical research, as well as gathering and disseminating this research to agricultural members, the general public, and policy influencers.
- The almond industry is fully aware of the importance of applying environmentally sound practices while ensuring long-term economic returns for growers.

Almond Board of California

- The Almond Board of California administers a grower-enacted Federal Marketing Order under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture. Established in 1950, the Board's charge is to promote the best quality almonds, California's largest tree nut crop.
- The Board is made up of ten members; five handlers and five growers.
- There are nine committees made up of growers and handlers who provide strategic direction and approval of the programs and activities conducted by the Almond Board of California.
- The Almond Board of California operates out of Modesto, California in the heart of the almond growing region.

Vision and Mission

- The ten member board of directors developed a vision, a mission, core values and a set of strategic priorities for the almond industry.
- Our vision is "to be the healthiest specialty crop in the world."

- Health is defined as financial (grower return) and physical well being, environmental, food safety, balanced demand/consumption, production, industry consensus, market access and research – as a trusted authority.
- Our mission is to create a rewarding environment for the production, processing and marketing of California almonds, the world's healthiest specialty crop.

For more information contact:

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