

# Impact the Almond Industry: Participate in the Board of Directors Election

**January 20, 2005 is the deadline** for filing nomination petitions for election to the Almond Board of California Board of Directors. All independent growers were mailed notices in early December. As a governing body for the industry, the Board of Directors is comprised of five handler and five grower representatives who set policy and recommend budgets in several major areas including: production research, public relations and advertising, nutrition research, statistical reporting, quality control, food quality and food safety.

**Independent almond growers interested** in seeking nomination to the 10-member Board must submit a petition signed by at least 15 independent almond growers by January 20. There is one independent grower member and one alternate grower member position available for election. The petition should state the specific position the candidate is seeking (member or alternate). Petitions must be filed at the Board office located at 1150 9th Street, Suite 1500, Modesto, California 95354-0845, by close of business on January 20.

**Also open for nomination** are two independent almond handler member and two alternate almond handler member positions. A handler must declare in writing his or her candidacy to the Board no later than January 20 to have his or her name appear on the ballot.

**Cooperative almond handler member** and alternate positions and cooperative grower member and alternate positions are also up for nomination. These positions will be selected through their cooperative association.

For more information contact: Merle Jacobs • (209) 343-3222 • mjacobs@almondboard.com



**Almond Board of California**  
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Modesto, CA 95354 USA

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# California Almonds

A publication of the Almond Board of California



## 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference “Strength in Numbers” Resounds with Industry Members



Retiring Chair Ned Ryan (right) was presented with an award by Doug Youngdahl (left) on behalf of the Board

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference in Modesto, California on December 1-2 was attended by approximately 1100 industry members, over 30 environmental and production researchers and more than fifty almond trade members who exhibited at the trade show. For industry members who were unable to attend the conference sessions, here are some of the highlights:

**Food safety, as the top priority** of the almond industry, was highlighted at two sessions of the conference. One session entitled “Lessons Learned” featured Dr. Michael Osterholm, the nation’s top epidemiologist, Chris Tuffli of Paramount Farms, and Dr. Jeff Farrar of the California Department of Health Services who spoke candidly about the financial and emotional costs of the recall, as well as the risks associated with the finding that 0.5%-1% of almonds arriving at handler facilities are potentially contaminated with *Salmonella*. The second food safety session updated attendees on the “Action Plan” approved by the Board of Directors and included videotaped messages from William Hawks, USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, and Dr. Robert Brackett, FDA Director of the Center for Food Safety and

Applied Nutrition. Their message was clear – the almond industry should be commended for taking a proactive action in implementing the “Action Plan” to reduce the level of *Salmonella* in almonds. However, it is critical that the industry stays on target and continues to move forward expeditiously; regulators and consumers will continue to watch developments.

**Environmental and Production Research session highlights** are included in the Environmental Stewardship section on page 5 of this newsletter.

**Marketing Strategies** and highlights were revealed on both days of the conference. For more information, please turn to pages 10-11 of this newsletter.

**Almond Board Publications:** Conference attendees also received complimentary copies of the 2004 *Conference Proceedings*, a collection of all research presented at the conference, and the 2004 *Almond Almanac*, containing the most recent almond statistics available. The *Years of Discovery: A Compendium of Production and Environmental Research Projects from 1972-2003* was also available for purchase for \$25. To receive any of these publications, please contact the Almond Board office at (209) 549-8262.

**Thank you to our sponsors!** The 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference was made possible by the support of many industry sponsors.

- **Platinum sponsor:** MPA and Associates
- **Gold sponsors:** Orchard Machinery Corporation, Satake USA, Yosemite Farm Credit, Xeltron
- **Silver sponsors:** Air-O-Fan, Bank of America, BASF, Farm Credit, Fowler Nursery, Grimbleby Coleman CPA's, Valent USA, and Winton, Ireland Storm & Green Insurance
- **Bronze sponsors:** Burchell Nursery, Dave Wilson Nursery, Valley Color Graphics, Western Fruit Grower Magazine

Don't miss the 33<sup>rd</sup> Almond Industry Conference scheduled for December 7-8, 2005!

For more information contact: Christy Quaresma • (209) 343-3218 • cquaresma@almondboard.com

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## A Farewell Message from the Chairman

As I approach the end of my term in March 2005 as an Almond Board Member and as Chair, it is a good time to reflect back on the last three years and look at what needs to be accomplished in the next three months to leave our work in good order for the next group of almond industry leaders.

The obvious change in the industry is the record growth in demand (shipments) from the 1999 crop to the present. When I first became a Board Member in 1995, and during the few years following, our concern was how to market the expected billion pound (lb.) crops when our previous record was 620 million lbs. In our 1998 strategic planning session, the Board set an objective of adding 175 million lbs to the shipments—to ship about 800 million by the 2002 crop year. We actually shipped 982 million. How did we get there? Many factors helped:

(1) Almond Board nutrition research and the associated publicity of the results; (2) the combined advertising

and promotion of the Board's generic marketing and handler credit-back programs; (3) lower prices encouraged more usage; (4) lower tariffs and more open trade under NAFTA and WTO rules opened new markets; (5) California's reputation as a reliable supplier of consistent quality almonds; and (6) no growth in competitive almond growing regions. Others in the industry can certainly name additional factors responsible for this growth.

For the 2003 and 2004 crops, we will ship over 1 billion lbs. and grower prices today exceed the record levels set in 1995 when we had a crop failure and shipped only 450 million lbs. Growers are responding by planting more trees, which will ease buyer's frustration with higher prices and limited availability. It is gratifying to view the recent success in our industry and to look into the future with the expectation of a healthy almond economy.

Our biggest challenge to emerge in the past three years is the food safety concern of *Salmonella* contamination on raw almonds. Our Board and the industry have responded with a bold plan to pasteurize almonds in order to minimize the albeit small occurrence of *Salmonella* in almonds. The Board has undertaken research to learn more about the risk factors and persistence of these bacteria in our orchards, and more importantly, how to kill 99.999% of them at the end of the processing line, without disturbing the good, natural qualities of raw almonds. I see several technologies coming together—chemical (PPO) fumigation and moist heat treatments primarily, but also radio wave, electron beam and others—that our industry will be using. It is our objective, at the Board, to direct this process so that there is a solution for all parts of the industry and all size handlers. I am confident that our “let's get the job done” spirit and our collective “Yankee ingenuity” will get us there in a relatively short time. We have the support of United States Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration in our Action Plan and are being watched by other industries as a model. Our work in the coming three months is critical to laying the groundwork for the 2005 crop plan.

My one regret these past three years as Almond Board Chair is that we did not have a more open discussion at the Committee and Board levels of issues about which we do not have consensus. I must say that in most areas of Board activity, we were able to find consensus and have unanimous votes. We all know that Blue Diamond Growers is a different type and size of organization than the many and diverse independent handlers, and therefore has different objectives about what jobs should be undertaken by the Almond Board on behalf of the industry as a whole and which jobs are best left to individual handlers. Our discussions at the Board and committee level on issues of difference have not always been pleasant. Our solution, as a Board, has been to keep certain advertising and public relations issues off the table, because we knew we could not come to a consensus. Unfortunately, our debates mirrored some of the acrimonious national debates

(Continued on Page 3)

## Upcoming Almond Meetings & Events

### February

- 1-3 Colusa Farm Show, Colusa, CA
- 3 Food Quality and Safety Committee – 9:30 a.m.
- 8-10 World Ag Expo, Tulare, CA
- 24 Production Research Committee – 9:00 a.m.

### March

- 2 International Committee – 9:30 a.m.
- 3 Environmental Committee – 9:30 a.m.

- 9 Nutrition Subcommittee – 8:30 a.m.
- 10 Board of Directors Meeting – 1:00 p.m.

### April

- 21 Production Research – 9:30 a.m.
- 26 Food Quality and Safety Committee – 10:00 a.m.

All meetings take place in the Almond Board of California Conference room unless otherwise noted.

For more information contact: Colleen Aguiar • (209) 343-3209 • caguiar@almondboard.com

## The Diet Riot!

The American Dietetic Association (ADA) tradeshow held October 2-5, 2004 in Anaheim, California is the largest annual meeting of dietitians in the country. This is an opportunity for the Board to speak directly with the health professionals that guide nutritional choices across the nation. The Board, throughout the past few years, has consistently increased its visibility and popularity at the conference. This year exceeded expectations.

A session on the relationship between almonds and weight maintenance was extremely well received with the participation of approximately 700 attendees, filling the room to capacity and resulting in an additional 200 attendees being turned away. The audience listened intently as Dr. Michelle Wien, City of Hope, and Dr. Richard Mattes, Purdue University presented their almond industry sponsored research.

The overwhelming response at the session demonstrated the high level of interest in the weight maintenance research. In order to further aid dietitians in responsibly recommending almonds to their patients, the Board created a one-ounce tin containing approximately 23 almonds, the suggested daily serving size. These attractive little tins can be carried in a briefcase or purse as easily as mints and serve as an excellent educational tool for health professionals. Attendees flocked to the booth to receive their tin and learn more about the research on almonds. Overall, the event was a tremendous launch of the weight-related research program that the Board has invested in over the last two years. This weight maintenance research is the next step in helping health professionals and consumers around the world understand the role of almonds in a heart-healthy, weight maintenance eating plan.

For more information contact: Linnea Trujillo • (209) 343-3208 • ltrujillo@almondboard.com



## Best of Both Worlds Campaign Expands

### New Male Target, Additional Ads Developed



The “Best of Both Worlds” advertising campaign launched in March 2004 with new full page ads that communicated almonds’ link to heart health, while reminding consumers about the great taste and versatility of this powerful nut. In order to further leverage the growing consumer awareness of almonds and their heart health benefits, and to push this message even more into the mainstream, the Board recently expanded efforts beyond the existing base target, which focused predominantly on women (“Jane” described on page 10), to a broader audience of men. As a result, the Board’s advertising will be featured in some new magazine titles such as *Men’s Health*, *Men’s Journal* and *TIME* in 2005.

The new ads maintain many of the same characteristics and messages as previous campaigns, which target lovers of food, who also value healthy eating. The campaign expansion is meant to communicate with those who may be a bit more skeptical that food can have a strong nutritional impact on their lives. Research conducted by the Board indicates that these men desire the energy and vitality provided by healthy eating, but primarily choose food according to taste and convenience.

Based upon this information, the Board’s two new ads strategically focus on nutritional needs and taste preferences, while also placing almonds in real-life on-the-go snacking situations. Look for the “Tame Hunger & Tackle Cholesterol” ad in *Men’s Journal* this March and see the “Snack Savvy & Heart Smart” ad in the March editions of *Good Housekeeping*, *People* and *Real Simple*.

For more information contact: Stacey Kollmeyer • (209) 343-3225 • skollmeyer@almondboard.com



# Meet Jane!

With back to back billion pound crops and more new plantings every year, the Board is striving to strategically position the almond industry through marketing efforts. The demand for almonds must dramatically increase in order to keep up with the future supply. In order to maximize the almond industry's investment, the Board of Directors chose to focus on a select audience. Instead of placing advertising in all types of magazines and developing different ads for many diverse audiences, which would dramatically increase the cost of advertising, the Board consciously focused on a specific demographic with a large sphere of influence, affectionately named, "Jane." Jane is a person that influences the nutritional choices of her family and cares about her own health and of those around her. The Board is also targeting the "health influencers" in Jane's life, such as her doctor or dietitian. By reaching the health influencers, the benefits of eating almonds will reach Jane and finally Jane's family and friends. Approximately 40% of the US population falls into the Board's target audience by having some, if not all, of the following characteristics:

**Meet Jane**  
35-50



**Health-and food-involved**

**Above-average income**

**Married with children**

**Belongs to fitness club**

**Eats almonds about four times a month**

**Occasional snacker**

**Cooks with almonds as an ingredient**

Utilizing the strong foundation of nutritional research funded by the almond industry, domestic ad campaigns focused on a heart-healthy message during the past few years. The combination of this advertising and marketing efforts by the almond industry, has contributed to Americans now eating almonds more often for snacking, baking, and garnishing purposes. Per capita consumption in the United States has doubled since 1997. Now the Board is building upon those efforts in America by reaching out to a worldwide audience of "Jane's." The same nutritional research and similar styles of communications can be used throughout the world to attract the attention of health-conscious women. Here are the faces and names of the Almond Board's international audience.



Germany  
**Katrin**



Taiwan  
**Jun-mei**



France  
**Sophie**



Russia  
**Tatiana**



China  
**Jing**



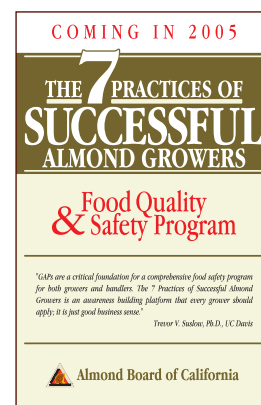
UK  
**Janet**



Japan  
**Junko**

For more information contact: Catherine Ogilvie • (209) 343-3231 • cogilvie@almondboard.com

## Fill in the GAP – Food Safety Hot Topics



### The 7 Practices of Successful Almond Growers

Food safety is the number one priority of the Board. As growers, you are the first step in furnishing a safe high quality almond to your handler and ultimately to consumers around the world. Food safety starts in the orchard where your almonds are produced. The Board recently published a brochure entitled, "The 7 Practices of Successful Almond Growers" to identify the minimum steps or basic principles necessary for implementing a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program in your operation. This brochure serves as an introduction to the comprehensive GAP program that will be available to all almond growers in 2005.

Below are the seven practices outlined in the brochure:

- Documentation
- Employee Training
- Fertilizer and Soil Amendment Practices
- Water Quality and Source
- Field Sanitation and Employee Hygiene
- Orchard Floor Management
- Pest Control



To request a copy of this brochure contact: Elaine Price • (209) 549-8262 • eprice@almondboard.com

## A Farewell Message from the Chairman (Cont.)

carried on by polarized points of view. As the Board goes forward, I would like to see a willingness to engage in discussion on any issue, whether it has the votes to pass or not. I would like to see each side of the issue try to "sell" the other side on the merit of their views. I would like to see Board and Committee members be patient in trying to understand each other's positions. Then we can vote up or down.

Most of all, at this point in my career as I leave the Almond Board in March and will soon after leave full-time responsibility at RPAC, I would like to thank the members of the industry for the long and satisfying work life you have provided me. I have worked with many of you in business, at the Almond Board and at the Almond Hullers & Processors Association. I can honestly say that our industry is made up of 10% almonds and 90% people.

Sincerely,

Ned T. Ryan  
Chair, Board of Directors



# AlmondBoard.com New and Improved!

The Board's new and improved industry website is now available online at [www.AlmondBoard.com](http://www.AlmondBoard.com)! Here are just some of the new options available online:



- **Pollination Directory** – Looking for beekeepers for this spring? Search over 100 listings of beekeepers waiting to hear from you.
- **International News** – Sign up online and receive the latest in almond related international developments.
- **Position Report** – Sign up online and be emailed the monthly position report, tracking the most recent almond trade statistics.
- **E-Learning Modules** - Have you ever had a friend ask you, “So what do you do all year when you aren’t harvesting?” Or “So, do almonds grow on trees or bushes?” Or “Why do you plant different types of varieties in the same orchard?” Well, now when you are asked those questions, you can send those almond industry newcomers online to our new e-learning course entitled, “The Lifecycle of Almonds.” This educational tool guides visitors through the basics of almond cycle, from dormancy to harvest and also highlights the superior quality of California almonds.



## Photo Opportunity!

The Board staff recognizes the dedication and commitment of almond growing families throughout the Central Valley. Visitors to [www.AlmondBoard.com](http://www.AlmondBoard.com) should be able see the people responsible for the high quality of almonds that are produced in California. All almond growers, huller/shellers, and handlers are invited to send pictures of themselves and/or their families to be displayed online. Every time an online visitor moves to a new page of the website, the pictures will change to another example of a hard-working almond industry member and the beautiful California landscape.

## Rules:

- **Non-Branded Pictures** - Due to the Board's commitment to representing ALL members of the industry, please refrain from displaying any almond handler logos or materials in the pictures.
- **Agriculturally Themed Picture** – Choose a picture that displays an aspect of the almond industry (i.e. next to an orchard, machinery, processing plant, etc).
- **Include your name, address, phone number, and email address (if applicable)** when submitting photos.
- Photos will not be returned.
- Photos may be mailed or emailed to the following address:

Christy Quaresma  
 Corporate Communications  
 Almond Board of California  
 1150 9th Street, Suite 1500  
 Modesto, CA 95354  
 Email: [cquaresma@almondboard.com](mailto:cquaresma@almondboard.com)  
 Phone: (209) 343-3218

# Board Staff Take To the Road

**Look for Board staff to visit you in 2005** starting with stops at the Colusa Farm Show and the World Ag Expo. A component of the industry's Action Plan to ensure food safety in almonds is to achieve 100% voluntary compliance of (GAPs) by all of California's 6,000 growers. To accomplish this goal an improved GAP program specifically for almond growers will be available to all growers through distribution by the Board and handlers, as well as at farm shows and field days throughout the state in the early months of 2005. These grassroots efforts will provide a face-to-face opportunity for growers to learn the critical importance of GAPs.

The improved GAP program guide being distributed to all growers includes the necessary tools to complete a self-audit of your current GAP program and a “Quick-Start” guide outlining steps that will assist you in implementing and improving your program. A similar program guide is also in the development stages for handlers and huller/shellers.

**Plan on attending one of the upcoming farm shows** to receive your copy of the improved GAP program. The Colusa Farm Show will take place February 1-3 at the Colusa Fairgrounds in Colusa. The Almond Board display will be located in the main exhibit hall in space 63. Show times and directions can be found at [www.thefarmshow.com](http://www.thefarmshow.com). The World Ag Expo will take place February 8-10 at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. You can visit the Almond Board Display in the California Crops Center (CCC) located along Median Street, just outside Pavilion C on the east end of the World Ag Expo show grounds. Additional information on the World Ag Expo can be found at [www.worldagexpo.com](http://www.worldagexpo.com).

As part of the Board's participation in the World Ag Expo, Richard Waycott, Board President and CEO will address CCC visitors on Wednesday, February 9 at 10am and discuss the almond industry's food safety priorities and the Action Plan. The discussion is part of a series of speakers scheduled to address issues effecting some of California's more than 340 crops.

For more information contact: Colleen Aguiar • (209) 343-3209 • [caguiar@almondboard.com](mailto:caguiar@almondboard.com)



# Action Plan Updates

**Every Monday afternoon**, handlers are receiving an update on food safety developments related to the industry's efforts to control pathogen contamination. In the Fall 2004 California Almonds newsletter, an overview was provided of the industry's food safety Action Plan to manage potential *Salmonella* contamination in almonds. Now, five months into the plan's voluntary implementation, considerable time and resources have been committed to technology research, further development of Good Agricultural and Manufacturing Practices, industry seminars and the development of a mandatory rule for pasteurization.

**In the past few months**, a Technical Expert Panel was established to review technologies, providing a consistent method for evaluating data against science-based criteria. The Panel is now evaluating thermal data (dry heat, blanching, oil roasting) and will soon be receiving information on the efficacy of

steam. By January, the Board should be in a position to provide handlers with information on several technologies, and the parameters to achieve a 5-log reduction of *Salmonella* contamination.

**During January and February**, the elements of a mandatory rule will be developed to require a pasteurization process for all almonds before they are sold into the market. The Board is working closely with USDA in the development of an outgoing rule; under discussion is the possibility of a phase-in of a mandatory program. It is important to note that USDA will not approve establishment of a mandatory rule unless the industry capacity and technology is in place for all industry members to comply. Options will be fully discussed with industry members and must be approved by the Board of Directors before consideration by USDA.

**While the May 2004 Salmonella incident** may have involved only one handler, the solution requires the entire industry's commitment to food safety. The overall success of the Action Plan begins with efforts at the grower level – where quality begins. Reduction of pathogen contamination in the orchard ensures that pasteurization practices at the handler level will be effective. Over the next few months, growers are encouraged to work closely with their handlers, to understand how the Action Plan will affect their operations, and what can be done in the orchard to ensure quality continues all the way through to the consumer.

For more information contact: Julie Adams • (209) 343-3238 • [jadams@almondboard.com](mailto:jadams@almondboard.com)

## Environmentally responsible pest management guide published for California almond growers

A guide to help almond growers make environmentally responsible pest management decisions year-round without decreasing their yields or increasing their reject levels has been published by the University of California.

*The Seasonal Guide to Environmentally Responsible Pest Management Practices in Almonds* summarizes practices demonstrated in a 5-year project funded with \$476,000 in Pest Management Alliance grants from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR). The Almond Pest Management Alliance, which coordinated the demonstrations, is a public/private partnership of University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) farm advisors and area Integrated Pest Management (UC Statewide IPM Program) advisors, the Almond Board of California, the Almond Hullers and Processors Association and DPR.

“We are pleased to make available to almond growers the results of five years of research into the pros and cons of a reduced-risk system of almond production,” said Chris Heintz, director of production research and the environment for the Almond Board of California. “Results show that extensive orchard monitoring is the key to success in controlling key pests and diseases. Reduced risk practices appear to be useful in controlling pests below economic damage levels. This *Seasonal Guide* contains color photographs and seasonal tips that will help growers carry out an effective reduced risk IPM program.”

Authored by UC Statewide IPM Program advisors in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and UCCE farm advisors in Butte, Stanislaus and Kern counties, the *Seasonal Guide* builds on many years of accumulated UC research directed at environmentally sound solutions to almond pest problems. Dr. Rick Roush, Director of the UC Statewide IPM Program, stated, “Pest management problems are not easily solved and continue to change. Many people have been involved in developing IPM programs for almonds, and we are delighted to have coordinated the production of this guide, which connects and summarizes all of this research.”

Added DPR Director Mary-Ann Warmerdam: “This guide is a tangible example of the benefits of public-private partnerships to advance the cause of reduced-risk pest management. DPR applauds almond growers who demonstrate that what’s good for business can also be good for the environment.”

The *Seasonal Guide* points out to growers that a seasonal approach is needed in managing pests in an environmentally friendly manner. Because it is important to monitor for pests in the dormant period or early in the year before pests reach thresholds that require treatment, the *Seasonal Guide* outlines steps growers can take in their orchard during each particular period of the year.

Publication of the *Seasonal Guide* was made possible by a grant provided by the U.S. EPA to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The \$40,000 grant was awarded in October 2003 to help growers understand new state regulations that protect waterways from pesticide impacts and to support the almond industry’s efforts to promote more environmentally sensitive methods of pest control.

“We appreciate the almond industry’s leadership in educating its growers about how to manage pests in an environmentally friendly manner,” said Kathy Taylor, Agriculture Program Director in EPA’s Pacific Southwest regional office. “This guide should be a great asset as the industry takes important voluntary efforts to address the potential impacts of pesticides on air and water quality.”

As part of the grant, DPR, in cooperation with UC Cooperative Extension, will sponsor a series of grower workshops to help growers understand the relationship between their pest management practices and the state’s dormant spray regulations and pollutant loads into waterways. “We look forward to working with the almond industry in our ongoing efforts to better understand dormant spray impacts and best management practices,” said DPR Director Warmerdam.

The 8-page *Seasonal Guide to Environmentally Responsible Pest Management in Almonds*, UC ANR Publication 21619 was distributed to growers attending the Board’s annual research conference Dec. 1-2 and will also be mailed to almond growers throughout the state. The guide is also available from the University of California for \$7.00 by calling 1-800-994-8849 or at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/21619.pdf>. Sales tax, shipping, and handling are added to the cost of each order. Quantity and reseller discounts are available. Further details on the Year-Round IPM Program for Almonds can also be found on the Pest Management Guidelines page of the UC Statewide IPM Program web site at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu).

# ALMOND

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

JANUARY, 2005 • VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

## 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference

### Environmental Stewardship Highlights

By Colleen Aguiar  
and Christine Demont

Almonds are the leading agricultural export from California and in this case, bigger is better. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference held December 1-2 at the Modesto Centre Plaza in Modesto, California highlighted the positive results that an industry of this size can accomplish. Of particular interest during the two-day event was the demonstrated leadership role the industry plays in environmental issues. “Being a large specialty crop makes it all the more important that we continue to improve our stewardship of the land,” stated Chris Heintz, director of production research and environment at the Board. “We are proud of our environmental leadership and will continue to stay at the forefront of these initiatives.”

Headlining the environmental stewardship agenda was AG Kawamura, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture who spoke on the environmental challenges the industry faces. “The almond industry is setting leadership action examples in so many different areas—air, dust issues, the Pest Management Alliance, and sustainable IPM solutions. They are out there making strides in these issues and making investments to find solutions,” commented Secretary Kawamura.

Proving that the industry is not afraid to tackle the tough environmental issues that face growers today, the conference included an air quality panel discussion that allowed growers to learn and understand new air regulations. Panel



photo by Mark Looker

AIR QUALITY. Dorene D'Adamo, California Air Resources Board member, moderates panel discussion on air quality at 32<sup>nd</sup> Almond Industry Conference Dec. 1, 2004 in Modesto.

moderator and Air Resources Board member Dorene D'Adamo commended the Board for giving environmental issues such high visibility at their conference.

Scientists and researchers from UC Davis presented cutting-edge research project summaries in the area of environmental stewardship. Results were presented on various topics including:

- Benefits of Chipping Almond Brush
- Evaluating Dust Generation Using In-Line Monitoring
- Improvement of PM10 Emission Factors for Almond Harvesting

- Management Alternatives to Current Harvest Procedures
- Reducing the Impact of Dormant Sprays
- Deposition Testing and Pattern Refinement for Spray Swath Analysis and Drift Management
- Can Air-Induction Nozzles Reduce Spray Drift Without Sacrificing Pesticide Coverage in California Almond Orchards?
- Minimizing Emissions from Chloropicrin Soil Fumigation
- IPM Survey of almond growers

continued on page six, 32<sup>nd</sup> CONFERENCE

## 32nd CONFERENCE

continued from page five

- Pest Management Alliance Year Six Project
- Environmental Stewardship Campaign
- Central Valley Watershed Coalitions

Also during the conference, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 representative Cindy Wire presented to the Board its second consecutive Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) Champion award. The EPA praised the almond industry for “its steadfast commitment to reducing the impact of agricultural pesticides and its willingness to take a leadership role in developing and facilitating sustainable agriculture techniques and practices.”

The almond industry has established itself as a leader in addressing environmental issues. Board members echoed the need for continued focus in the areas of land, water and air quality. The 32nd Almond Industry Conference affirmed the progress that has been made and the industry’s future commitment to this area.



photo by Mark Looker

EPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION award is presented by EPA Region 9 representative Cindy Wire, second from right, to Almond Board CEO Richard Waycott, left, and Almond Board Production Research and Environment Director Chris Heintz, along with A.G. Kawamura, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

## Putting the Farm Bill to Work For You Succeed with the EQIP Program



California almond growers understand better than most people the value of practices that conserve natural resources and protect the environment. They also face an increasing array of environmental and regulatory challenges from water quality to endangered species. However, implementing those practices can also be expensive for growers. Now there is a program that can provide financial assistance to growers who want support for the additional costs of using environmentally sound farming practices.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides payment to eligible growers for the use of a wide range of practices on their farm. Growers can receive incentive payments to implement practices such as integrated pest management and nutrient management. Cost-share payments are also available to assist with installation of other structural and vegetative practices such as irrigation system improvements. This past year more than \$47 million dollars were available for California farmers and ranchers through EQIP.

Some almond growers, such as Bud Keeney, have already taken advantage of EQIP in their operations. “The thing I really liked about EQIP was that it is a voluntary program,” said Keeney, a Butte County grower. EQIP gives growers an incentive to use practices such as chipping brush to address air pollution or IPM to reduce chemical problems, rather than through mandatory regulations.

## Here are the steps for the EQIP Program:

### Step One – Contact your local NRCS office and ask to begin applying for the EQIP Program.

The NRCS District Conservationist or a conservation planner will help you identify practices that are eligible for EQIP or other federal conservation programs. This consultant will help you list practices that make sense for your orchard and identify resource needs (such as air quality, pest management improvements, or water quality protection) and the practices that will address those needs.

### Here are some practices to consider for your operation. Other practices may be applicable as well.

- Pest management
- Nutrient management
- Irrigation water management
- Irrigation system improvements (to reduce water use)
- Hedgerows
- Field border
- Riparian buffers
- Filter Strips
- Chipping of prunings
- Dust control on farm roads
- Heavy use area protection
- Stream bank protection
- Agrochemical containment facility

Note: Not all listed practices may be available for cost share in every county.

Once you have decided what you want to do in your orchard and documented these decisions in a conservation plan you are ready to apply.

### Step Two – Work with NRCS to start your application.

You can schedule a time for you to meet with NRCS staff to start your application. The District Conservationist will guide you through the process of applying. When scheduling an appointment, it is important to ask which documents will be needed for the meeting to verify ownership, etc. For example, including pest management or nutrient management in your application requires a description of your current pest and/or nutrient management practices and a description of the practices used. This information is best collected prior to the application meeting.

### Step Three – Submit the application to NRCS.

Applications can be submitted at any time, but the selection of applications is usually done at specific times – check with your District Conservationist to determine the important deadlines for consideration of your application.

Applications are ranked, using state and local priorities, with other applications in your county based on the number of points assigned to the amount of environmental benefit associated with the practices you use on your farm. Applications that include multiple practices have higher priority for funding because they offer greater conservation benefits. All applications, within a given county and program priorities, are ranked using the same criteria to assure that everyone is treated fairly.

The NRCS District Conservationist will notify you as to whether or not your application is funded. If your application has been accepted, you will complete and sign a contract specifying the cost share and the work you will complete on your farm.

### Useful resources on the Internet

For more information about EQIP  
<http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html>.

Find the NRCS office in your county at: <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/about/>. Click “Find a service center” at the left, to access the directory.

For the latest information on how specialty crop producers can benefit from participation in the conservation programs authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill see: <http://www.agcenter.org/progfarmbill.html>.

For information on alternative pest management practices that apply to NRCS programs, contact the University of California Statewide IPM Program website at: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>.