

## Market Update:

February shipments were enticing but the "PERFECT BLOOM" weather and the 2007 crop continuing to grow in size seem to weigh heavy on buyers' minds and perspective. Growers with unsold 2007 crop are anxious (AKA panicky). The 2008 crop seems to be trading down as well, however the only primary players are the dealers/paper traders. California handlers and farmers don't seem keen to speculate on the 2008 crop YET.

The good news ?? The good news is that almonds are far cheaper currently than other nut crops. Walnuts and pecans are trading around \$4 per pound. Cashews are in the neighborhood of \$3 per pound and macadamias are about \$4.25 per pound. Many of our customers buy a variety of nuts; so logic suggests that they will be keen to buy additional almonds. Conversely, buyers need confidence in the price of what they are buying and almonds are currently on a downward trend. Buyers will be especially cautious until that trend line takes a turn. Our export partners in Europe are freaked out with unprecedented currency exchange rates. They are very, very anxious to not miss out on the cheap price of almonds combined with taking advantage of the currency rates.

## Grower's Corner: by Frank Roque

### *2007 Early Season Premiums*

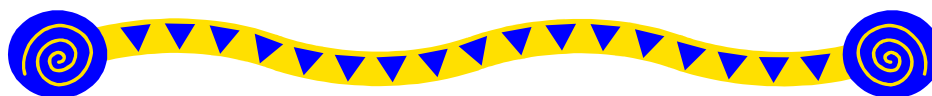
In the almond business, every year has its own unique twists. Last year was no different. At the end of the summer, there were very few California varieties left in storage. That made what was available, and soon to be available, more valuable. Given that information, we will pay the following premiums to the POOL growers for California Varieties that were delivered by the following dates:

2007 crop shelled and received by August 17, 2007 = 11 cents  
2007 crop shelled and received by August 24, 2007 = 6 cents

### *Bloom*

I have been talking to many people that have been in this industry a lot longer than I have and they have all said the same thing: "If this was not the best bloom, it was definitely right up there with the best". Consensus has Nonpareil, Sonora, and Price varieties as the largest concerns. These particular varieties have a history of being alternate bearing. We sure can't blame a lighter crop on the weather or lack of pollination this year.

We are continuing to renew pool contracts for the 2008 Seasonal Crop Pool. We would like to have all contracts completed by May 9, which is the day the Subjective Crop Estimate is released.



### *Dates to Remember*

May 2, 2008      Grower Appreciation Trap Shoot and Lunch  
May 9, 2008      Subjective Crop Estimate

## **Farming News: by Barry Watts**

### *Just a Reminder*

Given the weather lately, it doesn't seem possible that we would have to worry about a frost. But as our almonds progress from bloom into the nutlet stage they are especially sensitive to cold (sub 30°F) weather. Research has shown that moist, firm, bare ground is usually warmer than any other configuration. Moist, firm orchard floors conduct and store heat better than a dry and loose floor. When wetting your soils you should concentrate on the first foot. Monitor your soil moisture after strong winds as this is usually when soil dries out and could possibly be colder. If you must have a groundcover, make sure that it is mowed as close to the ground as possible. Cool air is not able to blow out of an orchard with groundcover as easily as one without.

### *Spider Mites*

We are seeing Twospotted Spider Mites on orchards in Fresno and Kern Counties. These mites were found on leaves that were just 1 – 2 inches long. Have your Pest Control Advisor check your orchards soon as the presence of mites will likely influence your cultural practices. Early infestation of mites can usually be found near the lower to central areas of the tree. Orchards with mites present this early will need to be monitored closely. Early mite populations can get out of control very easily and will be very hard to manage throughout the season.