



IN A NUTSHELL

Predictions and Trends for the California Almond Market

January 2009

Market news:

Shipping numbers for December 2008 were similar to December 2007 and they were considered disappointing by buyers and sellers alike. Our grower base took the numbers in stride and continued to stand on the sidelines with the idea that either the bloom or the water situation will bring stronger prices. Buyers are very anxious to contract some 2009 crop as current price levels combined with currency exchange ratios net historically low levels. There remain a few sellers of current crop but our brokers tell us that 2009 crop sellers are non-existent. This allows for some optimism as buyers will take some pre-bloom coverage of 2008 crop at higher levels if they can't get their 2009 positions covered.

Recent prices paid:

Nonpareil 27/30	\$1.27
Carmel 25/27	\$1.00
Carmel 27/30	\$0.94
Unsize California	\$0.87

Grower's Corner: by Frank Roque

February Pool Payment

Continuing with our reputation of trying to get as much money to the grower as soon as possible, we would like to announce our February payment.

We will be paying the following:

	<u>YTD</u>	<u>February</u>
Nonpareil	\$1.00	\$1.21
Others	\$0.65	\$0.75

Payment Timing: We will start sending checks on February 25, 2009.

Farming News: by Barry Watts

How many hives per acre do you think you will need?

Still trying to figure out how many hives you will need this year? You're not alone! Even growers that don't have water issues are facing this tough decision.

One thing is universal throughout all of the almond growing regions; we all are trying to cut costs this year. Pollination costs for the last few years have led most of us to experiment with using fewer hives and it has worked, for the most part. This has left most of us wondering if fewer hives really work or have we had such great conditions the last few years that it didn't matter. Regardless of how many hives you use, it is essential to get full production from each hive. (continued on back)

What can we do to maximize each hive? Placing bees on the outside of the orchard can help in many ways. Bees usually leave their hives to forage during daylight when temperatures are between 55 and 60°F. Spotting hives in early morning sunlight will help heat the hives. Colonies that get treated with orchard sprays have a higher mortality rate which lowers the overall strength of the hive. Usually, there is more room on the outside of the orchard. This allows for hives not to be stacked and allows for each hive to get more sunlight. Keeping the soil firm and weed free around the colonies will keep the area warmer, allowing the bees to forage earlier. Mowing flowering weeds will keep the bees in the trees instead of on the ground.