PANOCHE CREEK PACKING, INC.

IN A NUTSHELL

Predictions and Trends for the California Almond Market

April 2009

Market Update:

Last year at this time Terra Nova Trading, a very large almond exporter in the bay area, published their crop estimate of 1.3 billion pounds for a crop that ended up at 1.6 billion. This year their number is again, 1.3 billion pounds. I don't know of anybody that sees the 2009 crop as anywhere near as big as last year but it is still anybody's guess.

March shipments were above average but not quite as sexy as the February numbers. The carryin to next year will be about 475,000,000 pounds. All in all, the supply looks to be in balance for the next 12 months. Prices today are pretty much where they were last month when we published our newsletter:

Nonpareil	25/27	$1.57
Nonpareil	27/30	$1.45
California	25/27	$0.98
STD unsized		$0.80

Grower's Corner: by Frank Roque

2008 Crop Estimate Contest

We can officially congratulate Frank Zonneveld on winning the 2008 crop estimate contest and the $1,000 prize. Frank's guess of 1,585,500,000 was the closest to the receipts on the March position report of 1,606,372,490.

June Pool Payment

At this time we are happy to announce our June progress payment for the 2008 crop seasonal pool. We will start mailing checks on June 15.

	April Payment	June Payment
Nonpareil	$1.40	$1.58
Sonora/Carmel/Monterey	$1.00	$1.12
Others	$0.90	$1.01

UC Extension Drought Meeting

I want to take the time to thank Dr. Brent Holtz for organizing such an informative meeting. I have never attended a meeting that presented so much useful information in such a short period of time. For all of you who did not have a chance to attend or did attend and want more information, here is the link to Dr. Holtz's web newsletter- http://cemadera.ucdavis.edu/newsletterfiles/newsletter315.htm. It includes Dr. Goldhammer's data on drought irrigation timing.

Dates to Remember

April 24 – Panoche Creek Packing Grower Appreciation Trap Shoot
May 1 – 2009 Almond Acreage Report
May 8 – 2009 California Almond Subjective Estimate

2009 Crop Estimate Contest

This year's rules follow:

1. The closest guess to the receipts of the 2009 crop, as shown on the March 2010 position report published by the Almond Board of California, will be the winner. The winner will be rewarded with a $1,000 cash prize.
2. One entry per farm organization. Multiple entities or partners do not entitle you to multiple entries. In the event of a tie, the proceeds will be split. All guesses will be published in the May 2009 newsletter.
3. All entries must be received by May 4, 2009. Either e-mail to kristi@panochecreek.com or fax to 559-435-3481.

2009 Crop Estimate Contest Entry

GROWER NAME_____

CROP ESTIMATE_____

Farming News: by Barry Watts

Spring Diseases in Almonds

Years ago, diseases like Alternaria Leaf Spot, Rust and Scab only affected a few growers, located mostly in the low-lying or humid areas of the two valleys. I have noticed an increase in the prevalence of the diseases especially in areas that were not affected five years ago. As growers increase yields by irrigating more, using more nitrogen, and increasing orchard densities, we will continue to see these diseases in new areas. The trick is to know what to look for and treat it before it takes away our increase in yield.

Alternaria Leaf Spot (ALS) is a fungus that attacks almond leaves starting in April but develops most rapidly in June and July. It can completely defoliate the trees in severe cases. ALS loves high humidity, dews, and stagnant air. Carmel, Sonora, Monterey and Butte are some of the most susceptible varieties. ALS is a brown spot about ½ to ¾ inches in diameter. Growers and Pest Control Advisors should monitor for ALS from April through June. Orchards that have a reoccurrence of ALS should consider treatment in mid-to-late April with repeat applications.

Rust occurs hit and miss throughout the valley but usually develops in high humidity areas. Rust shows up on the upper leaf surface as small yellow spots and on the lower leaf surface as rust colored spores. As with ALS, Rust can defoliate trees quickly. Excessive nitrogen levels make almond trees more susceptible to Rust. Thorough monitoring is essential as most fungicide applications need to be applied prior to symptoms being visible. This means you will want to find it when it first appears in your orchard so that you can prevent it the following year.

Scab is another disease that appears in late spring and early summer. Scab shows up as grayish black spots on the leaves, twigs and fruit and will cause defoliation in severe cases. Scab usually appears in orchards after late spring or early summer rains, or in orchards that have sprinklers that reach the foliage.

It is important to scout your orchard and identify these diseases when they first arrive so that you can make the appropriate management decisions in subsequent years. As always, you should check with your Pest Control Advisor about materials and timings for control.