



# IN A NUTSHELL

Predictions and Trends for the California Almond Market

July 2010

## Grower's Corner: by Frank Roque

### 2009 Crop Final Pool Payments

This year like no other has been a roller coaster ride from a marketing standpoint. We have seen California varieties at sub 80 cents, 2 dollar plus pricing and then back to a dollar and change. We have seen shipment/demand numbers that were almost unbelievably high and the quietest market many old timers have ever seen for such an extended period of time. With all of this said, we are pleased with our performance of the 2009 seasonal crop pool. We continue with our tradition of being the first to announce our final payment and plan on making that payment on Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>.

<u>Varieties</u>	<u>Base Price</u>	<u>Average w/ all Premiums</u>	<u>Maximum w/ all Premiums</u>
Nonpareil	\$2.00	\$2.06	\$2.15
Sonora	\$1.90	\$1.91	\$1.93
Carmel	\$1.53	\$1.54	\$1.56
Monterey / Wood Colony	\$1.51	\$1.52	\$1.54
California	\$1.34	\$1.35	\$1.37
Mission / Mixed	\$1.30	\$1.31	\$1.33

### New Grower Representative

At this time I would like to introduce our newest team member, Bryan Wilson. Bryan will be joining us on August 9<sup>th</sup> and helping me in the Fresno/Madera areas covering grower communication and crop estimating. He graduated from Fresno State in 1994 with a degree in plant science and is a graduate of California Ag Leadership Class 36. I am sure his name sounds familiar to most of you wine grape growers as Bryan worked for Gallo Winery as a grower relations representative from 1994 to 2006. He was responsible for growers from Modesto to Bakersfield. He was most recently employed by Earthbound Farm Organic from 2006 to 2010 as Senior Manager of Fruit and Commodities managing an area that included British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Idaho, Mexico and Chile.

He is married and has two children. We welcome Bryan and look forward to a bright future. He will be working in our Fresno office and can be reached as follows: Cell phone: 559-281-2488, Fax number: 559-435-3481, Email: [bryan@panochecreek.com](mailto:bryan@panochecreek.com).

### Market Update:

The almond market tanked following the "ginormous" NASS estimate of 1.65 billion pounds. However, buyers fell all over themselves trying to gobble up cheap almonds and the prices quickly rebounded. Immediately after the NASS estimate, prices fell about 30-40 cents for California varieties and 20 cents for Nonpareil. Why the big distinction between Nonpareils and others, I don't know or care.

As we near harvest, which is typically when most of the crop is traded and shipped, prices are about 30 cents ahead of where we started last year on California varieties. Prices are roughly the same as they were last year on Nonpareils. NASS projects a HUGE Nonpareil crop so differentials between CALS and Nonpareil should be less this season than last. On paper, growers will make a lot more money this year than last. However, the almond market is quite fickle (as Frank points out above) and only time will tell.

"ALMOND MARKETING NONPAREIL"

## **Kerman Plant Receives Awards:**

Our packing plant in Kerman was recently awarded “Plant of the Year” by the American Council for Food Safety & Quality (DFA of California). By participating in the Food Safety Audit Program, our plant is audited three times a year. The audits are very comprehensive and include the following areas: buildings, grounds, equipment, sanitation, pest control, employee practices, personal hygiene, receiving, storage, warehousing, shipping, food defense and quality management systems. There are a total of 74 plants enrolled in the Food Safety Audit Program and 15 of these were candidates for the “Plant of the Year” award. There are many nut plants in the group but it also includes raisin, fig, prune and other fruit facilities. We were awarded this honor due to our excellent audit scores as we go above and beyond GMP requirements and because of our forward thinking attitude.

In addition, we are inspected annually by the American Institute of Baking (AIB). Scoring high on an AIB inspection is the benchmark set by major manufacturing and retailing corporations for doing business with them because it demonstrates commitment to the production and distribution of safe, high-quality foods. For the past six consecutive years, our plant has received a “Superior” rating, the highest rating granted. For the past four years, we have been receiving unannounced inspections, one of the only almond processors to do so. Typically, inspections are “announced” where the inspector makes an appointment with the plant. Obviously, we feel it is important to always produce quality, safe products; so we invite them on an “unannounced” basis.

All of this signifies that our plant personnel are working very hard each day at keeping the facility in excellent condition. We would like to commend and thank Denis Prosperi, Jason Baldwin and Justin Woods for their leadership and supervision. They, along with all of the plant employees, are dedicated to keeping our plant clean and safe.

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

### **Housekeeping**

**Hull Rot** – By now, most growers have started deficit irrigating their Nonpareil and Sonora almonds to prevent Hull Rot. It is important to remember that the Butte variety is very susceptible to Hull Rot as well and will begin splitting soon. All of the literature available suggests that using a pressure bomb is the most accurate way to deficit irrigate during hull split.

**Ants** – I see a lot of ants still around which is unusual for this time of year. If you still have ants present in your orchards, the type of ant will need to be identified by your Pest Control Advisor. Most baits usually have to be applied at least four weeks before harvest. For most of us, it is already too late. So growers will need to use liquid pesticides in their herbicide clean-up spray just prior to harvest. Ask your PCA for a recommendation if this is your situation.

**Navel Orange Worm** – This is a very interesting year for NOW! In some areas hull split is not progressing as quickly as it usually might. This extended hull split time is challenging some PCAs to keep the almonds “covered” and not spray too many times. This problem might be corrected on its own, but for now, it is making some PCAs and growers uncomfortable.

**Harvest Equipment** – Just a reminder to clean all of your harvest equipment. Details are available at <http://www.almondboard.com/Growers/Documents/GAP-Manual.pdf>