



PANOCHÉ CREEK
PACKING, INC.

IN A NUTSHELL

Predictions and Trends for the California Almond Market

March 2011

Market Update:

Bloom always brings with it some of the most exciting market stimulus and e-mails circulated by traders, farmers, handlers and even meteorologists. I say EVEN with respect to the weather man as the almond industry's self-appointed weather guru Tom Dunklee seems to be an expert on almond pollination as much as on cold fronts and rain clouds.

I have kept a diary of bloom conditions for nearly 20 years in the hopes that history might teach me something that may one day have a big pay day attached to it. Sadly I find myself sitting at my desk again during the 2011 crop bloom re-reading the archives looking for that trading edge that eludes me.

Almond Trading Rule: Between February 15 and March 10 prices go up when it rains or gets cold. Almond prices go down in that same period when the skies are clear and the temps exceed 55.

Grower's Corner: by Frank Roque

April Pool Payment

Continuing with our tradition of having an aggressive payment schedule, we are happy to announce your April payment.

	April Payment	YTD Total
Nonpareil	\$.40	\$1.65
Sonora/Carmel/Monterey/Wood Colony/Avalon	\$.30	\$1.25
All others	\$.25	\$1.20

We will start mailing checks April 29th. We are planning to make our next payment in late June. Please call me with any questions.

2010 Crop Pool Nonpareil Size Program Schedule

After reviewing our entire Nonpareil sales for the 2010 crop, we have calculated our premiums for the participants of the program. Average size this year was significantly larger which makes it no surprise that the premiums for larger kernels are less lucrative than in past years. However, still very nice.

Size	Premium
20 and Larger	\$.08
20/22	\$.04
22/25	\$.00
25/27	(\$0.04)
27 and smaller	(\$0.08)

“ALMOND MARKETING NONPAREIL”

Contract Change

After one of the most challenging harvests in history (due to late maturing almonds) we must address moisture issues. For many years our contracts have read that almonds must be dried over 7%. On all contracts from now forward, we will require drying at or above 6.5% moisture. In the past we have never had a problem; but in a year like this it is very difficult to merchandise almonds when our buyers require them to be under 6% moisture. We must protect the integrity of the almonds and excess moisture makes that almost impossible.

As many of you know we are in construction on the third phase of our Kerman plant. In that new building we will have two state of the art almond dryers. They will be more efficient and we will no longer have to transport the almonds off site. This will make the whole process more affordable for our growers.

2010 Crop Estimate Contest

The February position report was published this week and the year-to-date receipts were 1,609,841,945 pounds. The following growers are in the running to win the \$1000 prize:

Jamie Swanson	1,625,250,000
Darrell Vincent	1,610,000,000

Dates to Remember

Almond Acreage Report - April 28, 2011

2011 Almond Forecast and Panoche Grower Appreciation Day - May 5, 2011

Farming News: by Barry Watts

Spring Chores

With most Nonpareil orchards in some degree of petal fall and Butte/Padre orchards following close behind, we turn our attention to what is coming next.

Fertility – Most of us have started or we are going to begin applying nitrogen to make this year's crop. Make sure you have consulted with your agronomist in choosing which type of nitrogen fertilizer you are applying and when, as both soil texture and temperature play big roles in uptake efficiency. It has become standard practice to take tissue samples in April for early detection of fertilizer imbalances. Every orchard is different so it is important to have a history of tissue samples to compare. An early tissue sample along with a yield projection will help in determining how many units of nitrogen to apply this season.

Fungicides – If rain persists into the spring, we will begin the fight against the post-bloom diseases, all the while monitoring for Shot Hole, Brown Rot and Jacket Rot. Topping the list of post-bloom diseases are Anthracnose, Rust and Scab. I am seeing more and more Scab and Rust appear in the center of the valley floor where lack of wind and higher humidity prevail. If you have experienced either in the past, odds are you will see them again. Consult with your PCA for post-petal fall fungicide selection and timings.

Ground Squirrels – They breed once a year, averaging seven to eight per litter. In the central valley, they breed from February through April (earlier in the south and later in the north). The young emerge from the burrow at about six weeks of age. I haven't seen any little guys running around yet but it's only a matter of time. I prefer to start fumigating/baiting them right now as you get 7-8 times more bang for your buck.

Frost – I know the weather is nice now but we are still in jeopardy until the end of April. It's important to remember as almonds progress from bloom into the nutlet stage, they are especially sensitive to cold (sub 32°F) weather. Keeping the weeds mowed or sprayed and not discing or disturbing the soil prior to a cold spell will go a long way in retaining heat in your orchard.

Orchard Floors – Many orchards are tracked and rutted coming into this year. I have seen some growers fixing their floors already. For the folks in the south valley, mite season is right around the corner. Where mite pressure is high, it will be important to get your ground work done early to avoid an early season mite flare-up.