

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the current price of California Almonds?

The Almond Board of California is a Federal Marketing Order and as such we cannot comment or predict the market price of almonds. If you'd like to compare prices among different almond companies, here is a list of almond handlers, which is organized in a way that you can find which companies offer the products you need.

2. Are California Almonds genetically modified?

California Almonds are not a genetically modified food. Genetically modified almond varieties are not planted or available in California. At this time, the Almond Board of California does not anticipate future production of genetically modified almonds in California. Only traditional techniques such as selective breeding have been utilized to achieve California Almond varietal improvement goals.

3. What is a Federal Marketing Order?

A Federal Marketing Order is a type of agricultural promotion group. Different ag promotions groups work in different ways, but essentially they are founded and funded by industry members. In our case, the Almond Board of California is made up of almond growers and almond handlers. Ag promotion groups have been part of American tradition and are best known for campaigns such as "Got Milk?", "Incredible Edible Egg," "Pork: The Other White Meat" or "Beef: It's What's for Dinner".

4. Are almond growers family farmers?

More than 90 percent of almond farms are family farms, many owned and operated by third or fourth generation farmers who live on their land and plan to pass it down to their children.¹ Yes, farmers are business people, who make the same decisions based on the same factors as any business: supply and demand. But they understand that if they don't manage their land and resources responsibly, they risk their family's way of life.

¹ United States Department of Agriculture. 2012 Census of Agriculture. Typology Table.

5. What is the acreage of almonds in California?

In the 2015/16 crop year, California is estimated to have 890,000 bearing acres.²

6. Why are so many almonds grown in California?

California's Central Valley is one of the few places in the world, and the only place in the U.S. with an ideal almond-growing climate due to its rich soil, mild winters and abundant sunshine. In fact, California is one of the world's five Mediterranean climate zones.

7. How much water does it take to grow an almond?

All food takes water to grow and almond trees use about the same amount of water as other fruit and nut trees in California, and they use less than some other crops.³ What's more, almond trees actually grow three things – the kernels we eat, the hulls that are used as livestock feed, reducing the amount of water used to grow other feed crops, and the shells that are used to produce electricity and as livestock bedding.

8. How have almond growers improved their efficiency with water?

For decades, California almond growers have shown their adaptability by investing in scientific research and new technologies to drive sustainability, water efficiency, productivity and environmental responsibility. For example, almond farmers have been lead adapters of next-generation water-efficient irrigation systems and practices like micro-sprinklers and driplines, and demand-based watering instead of a predetermined schedule. In fact, 70 percent of almond growers use micro-irrigation systems, far above the average reported for California irrigation methods.^{4,5}

These efforts have helped growers cut the amount of water needed to grow a pound of almonds by 33 percent in since 1994.⁶

² USDA, NASS/PRO 2014 Acreage Report.

³ Larry Schwankl, et al. Understanding your Orchard's Water Requirements. University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Publication 8212. Feb. 2010.

⁴ California Almond Sustainability Program. Jan. 2014.

⁵ California Department of Water Resources. California Water Plan Update 2013. Oct. 2014.

⁶ University of California. UC Drought Management. Feb. 2010. Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. FAO Irrigation and Drainage Paper 66 – Crop yield in response to water. 2012. Almond Board of California. Almond Almanac 1990-94, 2000-14.

Frequently Asked Questions is a publication by the Almond Board of California. For more information, please contact the Almond Board at 209.549.8262 or media@almondboard.com. The information reported in this document is correct to the best of our knowledge.

9. What makes almonds from California sustainable?

Not only do almonds pack a serious nutritional punch⁷, almond growers have a solid track record in growing foods sustainably.⁸ California's almond growers have an established history of environmental stewardship, from promoting bee health to re-purposing orchard coproducts and continually improving irrigation and monitoring practices. The industry annually invests in research, this year funding over \$2.5 million, leading to innovations and responsible action.

Furthermore, the industry is committed to understanding the energy flows and the associated greenhouse gases over the average of 25 years of an almond orchard's life. In fact, recently published in the *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, the almond orchard Life Cycle Analysis developed by University of California, Davis experts shows progress by the industry toward becoming carbon neutral with respect to greenhouse gas emissions, or even carbon negative if policy and production advancements work hand in hand.

10. Why are almonds important to California's economy?

California's Mediterranean climate provides the only place in the U.S., and one of the few locations in the world to grow almonds. That creates a comparative advantage, which translates into more value, not just for farmers but for the state as a whole.

According to a recent study by the University of California Agricultural Issues Center, the California almond industry as a whole generates about 104,000 jobs statewide. To put that in perspective, that's about as many people as General Motors employs throughout all of North America. Also, the almond industry supports the economic well-being of California by generating jobs across multiple categories, resulting in more than \$21 billion of gross revenue in California and adding about \$11 billion dollars to the size of the state's total economy.⁹

That effect is especially strong in the Central Valley -- the heart of California's agricultural sector. In fact, the report finds that almonds contribute about 97,000 jobs to the Valley alone. "These jobs are vital in a region that has long had high unemployment," it notes.

⁷ <http://www.almonds.com/consumers/health-and-nutrition#nutrition>

⁸ California Almond Sustainability Program definition: Sustainable almond farming utilizes production practices that are economically viable and are based upon scientific research, common sense and a respect for the environment, neighbors and employees. The result is a plentiful, nutritious, safe food product.

⁹ University of California Agricultural Issues Center. The Economic Impacts of the California Almond Industry. December 2014.

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