



# CENTRAL CALIFORNIA ALMOND GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Post Office Box 338 ♦ Kerman, California 93630

CCAGA ♦ GROWING STRONGER EVERYDAY ♦ NEWSLETTER ♦ Fall 2022 ♦ Vol. 17, No. 4

## Shelling Operations Shutting Down

### November 15

No, we are not closing the co-operative. We are trying to use a grabber to make sure you read this article! Due to several factors, our shelling operations will conclude 48 days earlier than the prior season. Please know that the shellers at both our Kerman and Sanger locations will go silent on **Saturday, November 19**. Therefore, any deliveries from the field must arrive to us before that date so they can be processed, and your almond production dispatched to your packer. After this date we cannot restart the plants due to PG&E Demand Charges that could kick-in and the tearing down of plant equipment for repairs that would prohibit us from re-starting the equipment.

## Member Relations Coordinator



I have had a busy first few months working at the Association. Although I do not come from an almond background, I learn something new every day about production, harvest, and the industry. I have been managing our Ranch Stockpile Program and updating our stockpiles in the yard per grower requests.

Aside from staying busy with harvest, a major area of focus since I started has been the Communications for the Association. I re-designed the layout of the quarterly newsletter, actively update the website, and have created a foundation for CCAGA's social media presence.

If you frequent the website, you will now find the "Member Spotlight" sub-heading under the "News & Events" tab. With a membership as large as ours, it is important for the Association to recognize its members. I encourage you to visit our website and read the first spotlight about James McFarlane. If you are interested in having your background in farming and story told about becoming a member at CCAGA, please give me a call.

Social media has been a great way for me to connect our Association with our members and the public. Our membership covers several counties, and social media creates the opportunity for our members to stay updated with CCAGA, even outside of harvest season. My primary areas of focus for our Instagram and LinkedIn platforms, include promoting and providing updates about our facilities, almond industry news, featuring staff and membership.

Once season begins to settle down, I will be focusing a large portion of my time on connecting with the membership and mapping orchards. It is beneficial to the Association to track acreage as our members continue to expand their orchards and helping our plant's run product efficiently. Tracking acreage, variety, location, year planted and replants helps give Management a better idea in planning for the future of the Association. The data that comes with mapping fields not only helps the Association, but our members as well.

If you are active on social media, please give the Association a follow via Instagram: @ccaga1963 and LinkedIn: Central California Almond Growers Association. As always, you can contact me for any questions, comments or concerns.

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## Chief Operating Officer Report

In the Summer newsletter, I spoke about the successful installation of the Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) in Kerman Plant #3 (K-3). This upgrade to K-3 has paid dividends for the membership. The PLC has worked exactly as we designed and increased our efficiency. Currently, we are averaging close to 20,000 lbs. per hour in the plant while maintaining quality of your product versus 18,000 lbs. per hour in previous years. This has been accomplished by decreasing down time in the plant by increasing awareness to the operators of any deficiencies of the plant through the PLC.

We have also had an increase in throughput in Kerman Plant #1 (K-1) this season. When the newly modernized K-1 came online in 2020, we expected to produce 12,000 pounds per hour. This would create a 50% increase from the original K-1 built in 1983. The first two seasons we averaged a respectable 12,000 - 13,000 lbs. per hour while tuning in the newly built plant. It usually takes a few seasons for a new plant to reach peak operating levels. However, with the right personnel and minor changes in the product flows from the original design, we have reached that point. We have been able to maintain quality and average over 17,000 lbs. of meats per hour this season. This efficiency gain will cut down on our annual run time dramatically and help minimize production costs to the Association.

CCAGA has also been very successful in recruiting talented individuals from the Department of Industrial Technology at CSU, Fresno upon their graduation. Your Association has been instrumental with helping the new state of the art Tree Nut Hulling line at Fresno State backed by Western Agricultural Processors Association (WAPA) and is becoming a breeding ground for new sheller men into the industry.

Currently, CCAGA has two employees who came from this program, and they have become valuable assets to the team and keep your plants running efficiently.

Overall, 2022 will go down as a good hulling and shelling year for the industry. It has been a very dry year which is good for hullers/shellers, but it does bring other issues when processing the crop. Low moisture in almonds and sticktights or small in-hull almonds do make it tougher to run your product. We manage this accordingly, especially when producing in-shell for our members. Navel Orange Worm pressure showed up in the Nonpareil deliveries in the second half of August and has continued through the Monterey deliveries late in the season. We are 99.9% delivered from our members fields and we are now picking up the last loads in the Ranch Stockpile Program and shipping directly into the plants.



## President's Report

The 2022 hulling and shelling season is winding down at CCAGA. Many of our members will be happy to see it go. There were many variables that worked against almond production reaching the potential that they could have achieved. The effects of a freeze, water issues of quantity and quality, high input costs for fertilizers, a rain event in mid-September and Plant Bug/Naval Orange worm pressures all of which sucked yield out of the crop. Presently, it appears overall production in our area of operation will be off 12% compared with the 2021 season.

Conversely, as a cooperative huller/sheller working on your behalf, we had a very good year last season in consideration of the Patronage Dividend distributed to you last month.

Please take some comfort in the fact that the 2022 “Pool” period is shaping up to be quite profitable for your Association as well. Several factors have worked to our advantage this season that portends a very good return for our members when we close the books and pay a dividend to you next year. Some of these more noteworthy successes are as follows:

- Hull and shell pricing continues to be at historic levels and will portend a very good overall average when we close the books in 2023.
- Our hash clean-up line at K-1 has produced a good split meat product upon which we receive a return marginally below standard sheller run pricing. A very good value!
- Overall plant efficiency has improved substantially due to some modifications we have made in our processing plants.
- We have new leads in our plants that have worked with some of the finest crews we have ever had working for us this season.

This truly has been a stellar shelling season at CCAGA that is beyond compare and while every season is different, we seek to be on a path of constant improvement. It sure paid off last season and bodes well for this season as well!

As we approach a time of National Thanksgiving, we give thanks for what has transpired, for all of us, members and staff, this season.

## **2022 Final Settlement Concludes Another Successful Year**

A final payment on the 2021 crop was disbursed to the membership on October 7, 2022. It was the culmination of another very prosperous year for our members. The aggregate disbursement which was mailed or distributed electronically totaled 8,298,467.48 or 5.7738 cents per meat pound and was the second largest since the membership was formed in 1963.

The 2021 shelling season was the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest volume ever processed by your Association. A total of 143,725,417 lbs. were hulled or shelled on a meat equivalent basis. This was a decrease from the prior season’s volume of 155,265,958 lbs. in 2020, for a decrease of 6.8 percent.

It was also a very satisfying year on the sales front for the Association’s by-products of hull, shell and hash as prices for these commodities were sold at very high levels. This is reflected in the total payments disbursed to members on the 2021 “Pool” period. There was also a major improvement in the financial position of the Dairy industry as they enjoyed record pricing for their various milk products. The cost of competing commodity products used in the Dairy ration made almond hulls an excellent value in comparison and helped push down the overall value of the dairymen’s feed ration.

It is indeed a great pleasure to report that in 2022 a total of 3.7738 cents was paid out to the membership in the form of patronage. This exceeded our initial estimated payout of 3.3463 cents per meat pound as reported after the conclusion of the 2021 audit and announced at the Annual Meeting in June. The payment also included the repayment of the 2-cent operating retain.

## **Please Sign Up for Direct Deposit**

Do you still receive mail at your home and street address, instead of a utilizing Direct Deposit or the use of a P. O. Box? Direct Deposit is a secure alternative to ensure you receive payments from us without the worry of mail theft. Direct Deposit puts the money in your account the next business day after we disburse a payment. Mail theft has become an ever-increasing problem. The time to make a change is now! Please call our office at (559) 846-5377 and ask for Greg Lewis. He is our Chief Financial Officer, and he can ensure you get signed up to receive our checks quicker and securely.

Central California Almond Growers Association  
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### General Reminders

- Our Kerman and Sanger Facilities will close the 2022 season on November 19th.
- Samples from each membership's run are kept in storage for 30 days. If you are interested in viewing a sample from a run, please call Celeste at (559) 267-3071.
- The office will be closed **Thursday, November 24th** and **Friday, November 25th** for the *Thanksgiving* Holiday.
- The office will be closed **Monday, December 26th** and **Tuesday, December 27th** for the *Christmas* Holiday.
- The office will be closed on **Monday, January 2nd** for the *New Years* Holiday
- Kerman and Sanger office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday—Friday.



#### OUR CORE VALUE

ADDING THE GREATEST POTENTIAL  
VALUE TO MEMBERS' PRODUCT WITH  
THE HIGHEST QUALITY, SERVICE  
AND INTEGRITY.