

# PS:

## Dangerous mite must be stopped

Almondco is right behind an industry push to protect Australia's bee population from a dangerous mite known as Varroa Destructor.

The Varroa mite is the natural enemy of the bee and if it was to find its way into Australia, it could wipe out the wild bee population. The impact this would have on industries such as ours that rely on pollination would be quite severe. There are not enough commercial bee operations to meet the nation's pollination requirements.

A fresh report from Canberra that has looked at protecting our bee population has recommended far tighter biosecurity measures be implemented immediately. Our industry, along with many others, have formed a new alliance to be known as Pollinators Australia, which will attempt to lobby our cause and fight for the protection of bees.

The Varroa mite has had a devastating impact on bee populations around the world and Australia is the only remaining Varroa-free zone.



Sturt Highway  
PO Box 1744,  
Renmark, 5341  
South Australia  
Telephone: 08 8595 1770  
Fax: 08 8595 1559  
admin@almondco.com.au  
www.almondco.com.au

# Popular course highlights how growers work together



## TRAINING

How good does a management course have to be for someone to take it twice? Just ask Lyrup grower Nev Nattrass, who recently completed his second Grower Orchard and Management Course.

The highly successful course again attracted a good number of almond growers, and covered topics as diverse as finance, OH&S and water management.

Nev has managed his almond block in Lyrup since 1995 but did not want to refuse the opportunity to potentially improve his business.

"My daughter (Kylie, 26) did the course with me the second time so she had a better knowledge of the family business," Nev said.

"Basically, I thought I could learn more, not necessarily about the theory, but some of the practical side of things."

Nev said the course has already improved his business and said the course highlighted that each block needs to be treated differently.

This thought was backed up by Melissa Vause, who has a 50 acre almond grove at Lyrup Heights with husband Simon.

"I liked the holistic approach – every orchard is different and you need to know your orchard. There is no single solution for all orchards," she



Nev Nattrass has undertaken the Grower Orchard and Management Course twice.

said. "It made you look at the bigger picture, not just at the detail of getting more nuts."

Melissa also praised her fellow almond growers for their willingness to work together during the course.

"The people there were really happy to help each other – they were willing to share information," she said.

"It's really good that the almond industry is happy to be open and say 'let's all do the best we can'."

## Rachel takes on exporting role

Our new export co-ordinator Rachel Jamieson has been with the company since the opening of the processing plant at Renmark more than 14 years ago. Rachel started out as a sorter and has worked her way up through the ranks.

Rachel has previously been a Team Leader in the Quality Control division under Faye Sharp. The role in quality has provided Rachel with a sound understanding of export pre-shipment procedures and the transition to export documentation provides her with the opportunity to build on this knowledge base. "I enjoy the work and the people are pretty good as well," she said.

Away from Almondco, Rachel has five dobermanns and has enjoyed considerable success on the dog show circuit over the years.



New export co-ordinator Rachel Jamieson.

## Exports to be driving force in years ahead

Almond exports are predicted to be worth almost \$500 million more than they were last year by the year 2020. The latest figures released by the Australian Nut Industry Council show that the almond industry is set to experience massive growth in production and overseas sales. The ANIC figures show that almond

exports will be the driving force behind the industry's success, with exports to be worth \$346 million in four years. Last year they were valued at \$88 million. Developing nations like China and India have been identified as markets with the most potential.



# UPDATE

OFFICIAL GROWER NEWSLETTER OF ALMONDCO AUSTRALIA - Winter, 2008

## Almondco receives vice regal visit

South Australia's Governor, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, toured Almondco during his visit to the Riverland in April.

The Governor and his wife Elizabeth spent four days in the region, visiting towns and tourist sites throughout the Riverland and touring a handful of businesses.

Almondco was fortunate to host the Governor and Lady Scarce on the morning of Friday, April 18 and provided them with an extensive tour of the factory and facilities.

Management and staff found them to be friendly, down to earth people with a genuine interest in the region.



ABOVE: South Australian Governor Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce, during his visit to Almondco recently.



RIGHT: Almondco CEO Brenton Woolston with Rear Admiral Scarce and Lady Scarce about almond production during their tour of the Almondco facility.

# Smaller harvest than expected as market starts to firm



## Market Report

By Amos Weigall  
Marketing Manager

The Australian Crop is now fully harvested with hulling and shelling also nearing completion.

### Nonpareil

Nonpareil yields have been slightly below estimate and this is being attributed to the severe water restrictions affecting most growing regions during the Spring growth period.

Kernel shape is consistently flatter than last year which gives rise to kernels appearing larger than the designated count by weight. The sizing is smaller than in 2007 when record small sizing was experienced.

Quality is generally pleasing and has initially appeared similar to the 2007 crop. However additional losses during processing have been significantly higher than expected.

Losses during early processing were excessively high due to skin flaking caused by low moisture in the kernels.

These losses subsided as the main harvest followed. **The overall effect has been a reduction on estimated volume of 13%, which is below the intake level of 2007.**

### Carmel and Pollinators

These varieties have also followed a similar path to Nonpareil with respect to quality and tonnage. As in 2007 high levels of doubles are again concerning.

The severity varies between orchards and has affected count 23 and larger kernel in both Carmel and Price varieties. The occurrence of doubles has significantly impacted on the availability of larger sizes in Carmel.

Sizing of Carmel and Price is typically 2- 3 count sizes smaller than average, with peak sizing in Carmel being 24-27 kernels per ounce and Price 27-30 kernels per ounce.

The severe drought conditions have also accelerated removal of the less productive varieties as well as older orchards with varieties such as Fritz and Mission in rapid decline.



The latest graduates of the Almondco Orchard and Management Course were recently presented with their certificates, from left: Grant Stoneham, Brenton Woolston (Group General Manager), Peter Bartlett (Finance Manager), Sam Pearce, Kamal Grewal, Neville Natrass, Graham Johns (course presenter), Rod Stoeckel. Front: Melissa Vause, Simon Vause, Michael Bertling and Sharon Natrass (on behalf of Melissa Natrass).

### USA Crop/ Market Update

The subjective estimate seemed to be an "out of the box" total of 1.46 billion pounds to most, who had expected the 2007 total of 1.38 billion pounds to be similar in 2008.

The rippling effect, being mostly a reduction in price of processing material was shortlived. The market has been buoyed by continuing significant record total shipments in April and May. Sales within the US for May have fallen behind the stronger levels in 2007 however steady growth is still occurring over the year.

There is an anticipated shortening of the forecast almond carryout of 2007-08, to under 250 million pounds.

2007-2008 crop	Million pounds
Crop Receipts	1,380
Total Supply	1,472
Total Shipments	1,058
Computed Inventory	413
Committed Shipments	223
Uncommitted Inventory	190

The June 30, 2008 objective almond forecast for the 2008-2009 crop year is 1.50 billion pounds, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. This forecast is based on 660,000 bearing acres.

The forecast is up 3 percent from the May 7, 2008

subjective forecast and is up 9 percent from this year's crop to date of 1.380 billion pounds as of May 31, 2008.

The market, while characteristically tentative prior to the realization of the next crop, is a little surprised by the size of the objective estimate. Pricing of the current crop is unlikely to be affected greatly as most product is already committed. The average kernel weight reported in the objective estimate is down by 3 percent from last year. While this is a preliminary figure there is the underlying suggestion that kernel size will have a similar distribution to 2007.

Similarly when kernel weight is down a further increase on estimate is less likely.

The relative affordability of almonds within the rising prices of the nut category will only lead to heightened demand. This realization may take some time to eventuate and is subject to the whims of market confidence **however the mathematical equation suggests the market is set to firm.** While current pricing was thought to be sustainable the **input costs of growing have rapidly escalated.** Bee hive costs, fertilizer and weed control products have seen increases ranging up to 700%, with fuel also being a key input on farm and for transportation to market.

These pressures and the relative pricing of almonds in the nut category are keenly observed by the growers, with the general feeling being that prices have reached their floor.

## Californian Exports to Australia – Progressive Total

		Year			Year	
		2006-07			200708	
	%	lbs	Tonnes	%	lbs	Tonnes
Aug	n/a	101,050	45.83	34	134,950	61.21
Sept	-64.8	239,050	108.43	-8	220,950	100.22
Oct	-41.3	805,550	365.39	-51	395,075	179.2
Nov	11.2	2,257,300	1,023.89	-66	774,575	351.34
Dec	8.8	2,761,950	1,252.79	-64	998.825	453.05
Jan	8.2	3,043,950	1,380.71	-60	1,209,550	548.64
Feb	1	3,125,050	1,417.49	-56	1,369,050	620.99
March	0.7	3,205,050	1,453.78	-50	1,616,050	733.02
April	8	3,549,850	1,610.18	-50	7,765,550	800.84
May	6.5	3,710,350	1,682.98	-43	2,100,139	952.6
June	4.8	3,834,850	1,739.45			
July	7.4	4,063,850	1,843.33			



### National honours for GM

Almondco's Group General Manager, Brenton Woolston, has been fulfilling a number of national roles on behalf of the company this year, including chairman of the Almond Board of Australia and the Australian Nut Industry Council.



### Personally

## Who is the new man in purple tights?

Berri teenager Jake Langdon joined the Almondco staff earlier this year as a trainee marketer.

Jake has spent the first half of the year getting a solid understanding of the industry and how Almondco works. He has spent time working on the factory floor in most departments and has also been assigned a wide range of duties within administration, including logistics during the peak of the season.

It has been a steep learning curve for the former Glossop High School student but he says he has enjoyed the opportunity to finish school and get into a work environment.

Away from work, Jake is an up and coming footballer who plays A grade for Berri. He was named the Riverland Football League's Best First Year Player last season. Jake lost his mother Jan to cancer earlier in the year and the Berri Football Club held a Purple Night to pay tribute to her memory. It was a memorable occasion and one which explained why Jake made the once-in-a-lifetime decision to wear tights and dress like a superhero.



### Quality

#### Sizing smaller, but Nonpareil quality holds

Receivals are nearing completion for 2007-08 season and based on grading information, sizes are down on last year's results, but Nonpareil quality is similar with 94% qualifying as A grade. Carmel on the other hand will be a challenge as less than 50% has been rated as A grade. Excess chips is the common cause of product downgrades. Moisture average over all varieties is 4.8%

Supplier Profiles (form 10) are due to be upgraded by all growers.

This information is an insight into changes occurring to plantings and is a tool management uses to forecast information for future seasons. This form will be sent out shortly, so please fill it out and return as requested.

By Faye Sharp

#### Faye's retirement plans

Long serving Quality Assurance Manager Faye Sharp has plans to retire within the next 12 months. We have started the search for a replacement by advertising extensively.

Faye assures us that she will not be entirely leaving the company, but is keen to spend time travelling with her husband.