

Environmental Stewardship Campaign 2006

Project No.: 06-ENVIR1-Looker

Project Leaders: Mark Looker
717 El Vecino Ave.
Modesto, Ca 95350
(209) 575-2094
e-mail: mllooker@ainet.com

Cooperating Personnel: Christine DeMont and Anne Barney

Objectives:

In November of 2003, the Almond Board of California approved an Environmental Stewardship Public Relations program. Its goals are:

1. To keep almond growers informed about environmental issues and regulations of concern.
2. To promote the almond industry's environmental stewardship efforts by informing the general public, elected officials, regulatory officials, media, and key opinion leaders about the positive steps almond farmers are taking to continually improve their farming practices while maintaining a productive and healthy environment for future generations.

Key Message:

Thirty years of research, funded by almond growers through the Almond Board, has given the industry tools to become better stewards of the land. Today's almond farmers strive to continually improve their farming practices while maintaining a productive and healthy environment for future generations.

Campaign Elements:

The main elements of the campaign are:

1. Environmental Information on the Web – The Almond Board's website (www.almondboard.com) has an environmental issues section that provides up-to-date and accurate information on Almond Board-funded research into key environmental issues. The section offers information on air quality, water quality, crop protection, and endangered species issues, as well as a compilation of topical news items on environmental issues.

2. Public Relations Outreach – A proactive public relations program highlights almond growers as environmental stewards of the land by issuing press releases to trade and community media outlets.
3. Grower Outreach – Newsletters focused solely on environmental issues have informed growers about VOCs in almond pesticides, efforts to educate regulators, maximizing production with environmentally sound practices, Board-funded research into harvest dust, and incentive programs to replace diesel pumps.

Accomplishments:

- **July 8, 2006, Press Release** - Conditional Ag Waivers for Irrigated Lands: Program's Implications for Almond Growers.
- **March 3, 2006, Press Release** - Almond Environmental Stewardship Tour showcases industry's commitment to environmentally responsible production methods.
- **December 21, 2005, Press Release** - Environmental Stewardship, Maximizing Production Can Go Hand-In-Hand, Says IPM Award Winning Almond Grower.
- **November 8, 2005, Press Release** - Almond Dust Busters: Challenges of Harvest Dust Met on Several Fronts.
- **July 2006, Newsletter** - Volatile Organic Compounds in Almond Pesticides and Impact on Air Quality; Phase-out of Guthion.
- **April 2006, Newsletter** - Regulator tour, methyl bromide update, ag water waiver program.
- **January 2006, Newsletter** - Environmental Stewardship, Maximizing Production Can Go Hand-In-Hand, Says IPM Award Winning Almond Grower; Wrap-up on environmental projects at conference; Watershed coalition update.
- **October 2005, Newsletter** - Test device measures dust from almond harvesting; Almond growers find incentive to replace polluting diesel pumps.
- **Media Placements:** The newsletters and press releases have resulted in considerable coverage of the almond industry's environmental stewardship efforts. In particular, air and water quality have been high profile topics in the San Joaquin Valley. The outreach campaign has resulted in articles in the Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Los Angeles Times, Associated Press, Ag Alert, Capital Press, Almond Facts, California Country, and various other publications, as well as coverage by Valley television and radio stations.
- **February 2006** - A successful regulatory tour was organized at Hunter Farms, attended by approximately 20 representatives from California Department of

Pesticide Regulation, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Air Resources Board, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and State Water Resources Control Board.

- **Sustainability** - Four focus groups were held and led by a professional moderator on the meaning of sustainability for almond growers, in addition to drafting a preliminary definition of what sustainability means to the almond industry.