

California Almond Sustainability Program (CASP)

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Objectives:

- Collect self-assessment data to document sustainable practices (e.g., natural resource stewardship) used by growers and handlers
- Provide education to support the continued adoption of cost-effective, environmentally and socially responsible practices
- Communicate results to public policy makers, almond/food companies, and consumers
- Increase grower and handler participation and develop more self-assessment modules
- Develop an online assessment and reporting system and other value-added applications

Background and Discussion:

Since 2001, the Almond Board of California has championed the sustainability of the California almond growing community to public policy makers and in the marketplace. Now, major almond buyers, large retailers, and food service companies are asking suppliers to objectively demonstrate their sustainability. The Board's Sustainability Program, facilitated by SureHarvest, combines self-assessment and related educational processes to document growers' and handlers' thoughtfulness and achievements in adopting cost-effective, environmentally and socially responsible practices. Growers and handlers participate by attending

workshops and assessing their use of best practices from a workbook of modules designed by peer growers and handlers, university experts, and other experts. Current modules are irrigation management, nutrient management, air quality, energy efficiency, and pest management. Additional modules are being developed. The submission of assessment information is voluntary and individual responses are confidential.

Having real-performance information about the use and continual adoption of sustainable practices is crucial for telling the "almond growing story" to external stakeholders. Therefore, the Board is able to communicate sustainable almond production in terms of practices that make practical and economic sense for California almonds.

The program provides additional value to participating growers and handlers through personalized sustainability reports, enabling them to compare their use of practices to those for peers. The reports along with the increasing use of technical presentations at workshops are designed to help participants identify and implement site-specific sustainable practices. Moreover, a grower- and handler-friendly online assessment and reporting system will soon be available.

SureHarvest will work with the Board and partners to increase program participation and to ensure additional value for growers and handlers.

For More Details, Visit

- Poster location 50, Foyer-Bee Pavillion, Session 3; or on the web (after January 2012) at AlmondBoard.com/AICposters
- Information about the Almond Sustainability Program can be found at <http://almondboard.com/Growers/Sustainability>