

MEDIA RELEASE

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New report confirms Australian almonds booming

New figures have confirmed that almonds have become the fastest growing horticulture industry in Australia.

Statistics released by the Almond Board of Australia (ABA) this month revealed that almond plantings across the Murray Darling Basin have increased seven fold over the past eight years.

Production last year increased by 65% and is expected to increase by a further 300% by 2015. There are more than 26,000 hectares of almonds planted in Australia, with Victoria now poised to become the largest producer of almonds in the nation.

ABA chief executive officer Julie Haslett said today that the industry was on the brink of becoming the second biggest almond producer in the world.

Mrs. Haslett said the ABA's newly released Australian Almond Statistics report further highlighted the industry's significant growth over the past 10 years.

"The report clearly shows that global demand for almonds continues to increase and we are perfectly placed to take advantage of the trend," she said.

"Unlike many other commodities, there are not too many places in the world better suited to growing almonds than Australia's Murray Darling Basin."

Mrs. Haslett said the biggest challenge in the short term was the ongoing drought being faced by almond growers.

"Current plantings are worth \$1.2 billion and there is over \$65 million of purpose built processing infrastructure currently established.

"Keeping these plantings alive is the one of the major priorities for the almond industry until water restrictions ease.

"Almonds have become a major contributor to the economic and social wellbeing of regions like the Sunraysia and Riverland.

"Helping the industry plan for a sustainable future remains a very high priority."

The ABA's new report states that more than 58% of existing almond plantings are yet to reach bearing age. "We estimate that when today's plantings are fully matured the industry's value will go from \$180 million a year to more than \$500 million," Mrs. Haslett said.

She said the Australian Almond Statistics 2007 report provides the industry and associates with a valuable tool for research, planning, marketing as well as lobbying during the year.

The report can be downloaded from the ABA's website www.australianalmonds.com.au

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The Almond Board of Australia (ABA) is a non profit, membership based organisation representing the interests of Australian almond growers, processors and marketers.

As the Australian almond industry's peak industry body, the ABA facilitates further growth of the industry, seeks to maximise its profitability and ensure its sustainability, by providing a platform for industry members to collectively respond to industry-wide issues, invest in research and marketing, share knowledge and interact with government and other stakeholders.

The Australian Almond Industry currently produces 26,500 tonnes of almonds on an annual basis, with a related farm gate value of \$180 million dollars. Production is expected to triple by 2015 as new plantings reach full maturity, with a related value of \$500 million dollars.

Key almond growing areas are located in Sunraysia (Victoria), the Riverland and Adelaide (South Australia) and the Riverina region (New South Wales).

For more information visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or email: admin@australianalmonds.com.au