

AUSTRALIAN ALMONDS

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE AUSTRALIAN ALMOND INDUSTRY BLOSSOMS

With the almond blossom season well underway, the Australian almond industry continues to bloom with the latest figures revealing 60 per cent growth in the value of almond exports this year.

Julie Haslett, CEO of the Almond Board of Australia (ABA), said the increase in the global demand for almonds has contributed to the growth of Australia's horticultural exports.

"World almond consumption has been growing at an average rate of nine per cent per annum over the last 10 years. Assuming a reduced annual growth rate of five per cent, the world's demand for almonds is expected to exceed available supply within three years. The Australian almond industry is getting ready for this next surge in demand," she explained.

Currently, 60 per cent of the Australian almond crop is exported to more than 40 countries around the world, making it Australia's third largest horticultural export worth \$120 million in 2008-2009. Strong export demand for Australia's almonds is being driven by India and the Middle East, with the value of export sales to these regions having almost tripled since last year.

According to Haslett, domestic consumption of almonds has also increased in the last year.

"More than 90 per cent of almonds sold in Australia today are grown and produced by Australian farmers. Australians are eating more almonds, with domestic consumption having increased by over 10 per cent in the last 12 months," she stated.

Australia currently produces around 3 per cent of the world's almonds. Over the next three years, as existing plantings reach full maturity, it is forecast that Australia will surpass Spain (8 per cent) to become the world's second largest almond producer, behind California (82 per cent).

Australian almond plantings have increased from 3,750 hectares in 1999 to 27,300 hectares in 2008, making it one of Australia's fastest growing horticulture sectors.

Haslett said the industry is undergoing rapid expansion.

"Less than 20 per cent of all Australian almond plantings have reached full maturity so there will be a significant increase in our home grown production within the next decade," Haslett said.

The production of Australian almonds reached 36,000 tonnes (kernel) in 2009. It is expected to increase to 80,000 tonnes by 2015, more than doubling the current production.

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The key almond growing areas around Australia include Sunraysia in Victoria, the Riverland and Adelaide in SA and the Riverina region in NSW.

During the current almond blossom season, which finishes in late August, residents can notice the spectacular almond trees in full blossom and pollinating bees at work.

“It is a great time for Australian farmers to show off the natural beauty and goodness of the almond crop,” Haslett said.

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

For more information on the Australian almond industry, visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or call (08) 8582 2055.

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 36,000 tonnes of almonds on an annual basis, with a related farm gate value of \$250 million dollars. Production is expected to double 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