

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local almond farmers' harvest set to exceed 2009 crop



**Dean Dinicola,
Griffith Almond Grower.**

Photo Credit: Anthony Stipo
High Resolution image available on request.
Please contact the Almond Board of
Australia.

Almond orchards across the NSW Riverina region are currently alive with activity as almond growers are harvesting this year's crop which is set to be a significant improvement on last year.

Crop forecast figures released by the Almond Board of Australia (ABA) reveal a 25 percent increase in the 2010 Australian harvest which is expected to produce 46,100 tonnes of almonds, up from 36,500 tonnes in 2009.

Local Griffith almond grower and Mandolé almond orchard owner, Denis Dinicola is harvesting his 65,000 almond trees located on Lake Wyangan, six km north of Griffith.

Currently two weeks into his six-week almond harvest period, Denis is pleased with the crop outlook.

"So far this year's crop is looking as though it will be a great one. The young trees continue to double in size and production with every season. As a result, our almond production increases year in and year out," Denis said.

The recent weather conditions across the Riverina have however proven to slow the almond harvest process throughout the region.

"The recent storms have slowed the harvest process. Unfortunately, we cannot harvest in the rain so we're hoping the rain holds off over the next few weeks," Denis added.

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Almond harvest occurs when the kernel is at an acceptable moisture level, ideally lower than six per cent. The orchard floors are cleared of large weeds and swept of all foreign material. Shakers are used to vibrate the tree trunk, so that the husks, shells and nuts inside fall to the orchard floor. After drying, they are swept into rows and picked up ready for storage.

Almond Board of Australia (ABA) CEO, Julie Haslett said the outlook for the Australian almond industry is positive.

“The positive 2010 crop forecast figures show yet again that the Australian almond industry is on the rise - and it is only going to continue. Less than 20 per cent of all Australian almond plantings have reached full maturity so there will be a significant increase in almond production within the next decade,” Haslett said.

Key almond growing regions include Sunraysia in Victoria, the Riverland and Adelaide in South Australia and the Riverina region in NSW.

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

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For further information visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or contact: Julie Haslett, Almond Board of Australia CEO on 0418 958 187 or 08 8582 2055

Background:

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 value of \$250 million dollars. Production is expected to more than 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