

FoodEngineering

California almond industry launches strategic effort to cultivate innovation, sustainability



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Jeremy Gerrard

The Almond Board of California (ABC) announced the launch of its new Accelerated Innovation Management Program, a new effort that combines four major initiatives to make the industry more efficient and sustainable.

“We will make investments today that will put the entire industry in a stronger position 10, 20, or 30 years from now,” says Richard Waycott, president and CEO of ABC. “Already a leader in the size and value of our crop to California, the AIM initiatives will take our industry's leadership to the next level with innovation responsive to the changing California business and agricultural environment.”

The four major initiatives are:

Water management and efficiency - A focus on accelerating almond farmer transition to more efficient irrigation scheduling and management practices to get the most crop per drop of water. This initiative includes a range of activities from working with farmers to fine tune irrigation techniques to adopting more advanced water management technologies.

Sustainable water resources - An exploration of how to best leverage a unique strength of the California almond industry, its acreage, for accelerating natural flood-year groundwater recharge of aquifers. A second part of this initiative will look for opportunities to recycle water from multiple sources, such as municipal wastewater.

Air quality - Investigating various ways the almond industry can help meet the Central Valley's exacting air quality standards. This will delve into the various ways almond production impacts air quality and evaluate opportunities to decrease emissions.

22nd century agronomics – The ABC will lead a comprehensive exploration of almond farming techniques, bringing an exploratory mindset to consider all options as to what innovations and technical “leap frogs” will be needed to sustainably farm in the future. Each component of almond farming will be considered, from land preparation and varietal development, to equipment and processing.

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Jeremy Gerrard joined Food Engineering as Digital/Online Editor in the spring of 2014. He is a graduate of Auburn University with a degree in journalism. His previous work experience includes years spent as a reporter with the Daily Local News out of Chester County, PA. Jeremy writes FE's daily news updates, twice monthly TechFlash e-newsletter and People and Industry news sections. In addition, Jeremy manages Food Engineering's social media sites and overall web presence.

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