



December 17, 2024

ABC Joins US Ag Trade Mission to China

For the second year in a row, ABC staff joined a large team of U.S. Ag Trade Associations on a visit to China during the first week of November, mainly to visit China's International Import Expo (CIIE). This show was started seven years ago by President Xi and is designed to provide a platform for foreign manufacturers and exporters to promote their products to Chinese buyers. It is not a traditional food show but provides foreign companies and associations with the opportunity to meet Provincial delegations and private sector buyers from across China. In addition to attending the opening ceremony of a USA Food Pavilion co-sponsored by the USDA Ag Trade Office and American Chamber of Commerce based in Shanghai, ABC CEO Clarice Turner also gave a presentation on California almonds during a US-China Agricultural Trade Forum held during the show. The Forum was co-sponsored by CFNA and the Ford Foundation. More than 10 U.S. Ag Trade Associations participated in the trade mission.

ABC staff also participated in media interviews and field visits with Starbucks China, the PepsiCo R&D Center, and the first U.S. Costco Store to open in China. The delegation joined in a U.S. Embassy briefing in Beijing supported by U.S. Ambassador Burns. While in Beijing, ABC staff met with several important trade contacts based in China. Overall, the trip provided an opportunity to demonstrate that ABC is committed to supporting California almond customers for the long run. Please contact Keith at kschneller@almondboard.com with any questions.

USDA and FDA Announce Joint Request for Information About Food Date Labeling

On December 4, 2024, USDA and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced a [joint Request for Information \(RFI\)](#) about food date labeling, which includes the usage of terms such as "Sell By," "Use By" and "Best By." The RFI is seeking information on industry practices and preferences for date labeling, research results on consumer perceptions of date labeling, and any

impact date labeling may have on food waste and grocery costs. Comments are due February 3, 2025. Reminder that California passed legislation this fall banning the use of sell by dates as of July 1, 2026. For more information, please contact Gabriele at gludwig@almondboard.com

Alternaria Mycotoxins Update for EU Shipments

ABC has received inquiries from industry members regarding European Commission Recommendation 553/2022 related to monitoring Alternaria toxin levels in foods, including tenuazonic acid (TeA) for tree nuts. According to Dr. Jim Adaskaveg, Professor of Microbiology and Plant Pathology at University of California, Riverside, there is very low concern about Alternaria on almond producing inoculum levels to reach detectable mycotoxin levels. Primarily, the almond tree may be affected with "Alternaria leaf spot" disease but there is rarely any evidence of hull infections. In general, the kernels are well protected by the shell and hull and spore contamination would have to be extremely high to detect mycotoxins.

ABC conducted testing of almond kernels and found that all samples were below 0.02 ppb, substantially below the EU indicative level of 0.1 ppb. Handlers can request the Alternaria factsheet from Abhi Kulkarni at akulkarni@almondboard.com

USDA Ag Trade Mission to Morocco

ABC staff and several industry members participated in a USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) [agribusiness trade mission](#) that started on Dec. 2 in Casablanca, Morocco. Morocco is now the 10th largest export market for California almonds as well as the second-largest export market for U.S. agriculture in Africa, importing \$619 million in farm and food products last year. U.S. agricultural exports to Morocco have doubled since the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade entered into force in 2006. Morocco is expanding its food-processing sector, and its rising consumer demand is creating new potential for sales of consumer-oriented products. During the visit, ABC staff met with officials from the National Food Safety Authority (ONSSA) regional office in Casablanca, which was an opportunity to raise questions about import procedures and phyto requirements.

Working with USDA/FAS, ABC is exploring the possibility of bringing authorities to California to learn more about almond processing and food safety procedures.

During the 2024 Almond Conference, a session on N. Africa presented initial research in the region, along with comments by an industry panel regarding their “on the ground” experience in the market. Having dependable partners in the market is essential, to minimize issues related to payments and technical requirements. In 2024, ABC received funding from USDA/FAS to do a market assessment of North Africa and to start basic trade servicing in Morocco which will be in 2025. Please contact Julie at jadams@almondboard.com for more information.

ABC will be at Gulfood Show

The Gulfood Show will take place this year from February 17-21. ABC will be exhibiting in the U.S. pavilion, Stand TT. In addition, there are plans to conduct an Almond 101 seminar for buyers/processors from the region at the Conrad Hotel on the morning of February 19. Almond shipments to the UAE are on the rise currently making it our 4th largest export destination. The show attracts buyers from all around the region making it an important transshipment point. Please contact Keith or Julie if you would like to participate in the seminar at kschneller@almondboard.com or jadams@almondboard.com

Administration Transition Updates

President-elect Trump is moving quickly to select his senior administration picks including Scott Bessent for Treasury Secretary, Brooke Rollins for Secretary of Agriculture, Howard Lutnick for Commerce Secretary, and [Jamieson Greer](#) for U.S. Trade Representative. Greer was previously Chief of Staff for USTR Robert Lighthizer (and a former law partner representing the U.S. steel industry) during Trump’s first administration. President-elect Trump’s announcement of Lutnick also suggested that he would oversee USTR, though no details on that plan have been announced to date. During the 2024 Almond Conference, a session on the new administration and trade agenda stressed the fact that the industry not assume almond issues are fully understood; in fact, there will be a significant

need to educate the new administration staff and officials on almond priorities, particularly contributions to the U.S. and global economy.

ABC is closely following other appointments, particularly at the technical level. For more information or questions please Brock at bdensel@almondboard.com or Keith at kschneller@almondboard.com.

Bill to Increase Tariffs on Imports from China

The Chairman of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party [recently introduced a bill](#) to revoke China’s Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR). If passed, the bill would mean that China would no longer receive the same tariff treatment as other WTO members and would face 35% duties for non-strategic goods and a minimum of 100% duties on strategic goods. Earlier this year, similar legislation was proposed in the Senate, with the same tariff levels and offset allocation for tariff retaliation. In its annual [report](#) to Congress, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC) unanimously recommended revoking China’s PNTR status. For more information, please contact Keith at kschneller@almondboard.com.

Upcoming Events

- Jan 29-Feb2 Chinese New Year
- Feb 10-14 GMD visit to Morocco
- Feb 11 India Conference
- Feb 17-21 Gulfood Show/Almond 101 Seminar
- Feb 28-Mar29 Ramadan
- Apr 25-27 Tuksiad Conference in Antalya

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The Global Update is a publication by the Almond Board of California. For more information, please contact the Almond Board on 209-549-8262 or regulatoryissues@almondboard.com. The information reported in this document is correct to the best of our knowledge. The Almond Board of California welcomes the participation of all industry members and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, religion, age, disability or political beliefs.

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