



**For Immediate Release**

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**Blue Diamond Growers Launches Year Two of USDA Climate Smart Grant**

*The farmer-owned cooperative accelerates its ongoing sustainability achievements through its \$45M Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities grant.*

**Sacramento, CA** – Blue Diamond Growers, a farmer-owned cooperative and the world’s largest almond marketer and processor, launched the second year of enrollment for their \$45 million Climate Smart Commodities Grant this month. The grant, awarded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides farmers funding to implement climate-smart practices on-farm including planting cover crops, conservation cover and hedgerows. Blue Diamond’s farmer-members planted more than 17,000 acres of almond orchards with cover crop and over 100 conservation cover in the first year of the project. Starting May 1, the cooperative began accepting applications from their approximately 3,000 farmer-owners for the second year of activities, which are supported by grant partners Project [Apis m.](#) and Pollinator Partnership.

The grant is part of the USDA’s Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities program aimed at equipping farmers with the resources and incentives needed to further their sustainable practices on-farm. Through this grant, Blue Diamond has provided almost \$800,000 in funds for seeds, and incentive payments for 91 farmers in the first year. The total acres of almond orchards implementing pollinator habitat practices through the grant would be large enough to cover the island of Manhattan.

“This grant is an important piece of Blue Diamond’s sustainability story, and we are proud of our first-year successes,” said Dr. Dan Sonke, Head of Sustainability. “We are thankful for our partnership with the USDA as we invest in the future of agriculture and assist our farmers with implementing these critical practices.”

The grant expands Blue Diamond’s current sustainability efforts, including the cooperative’s flagship Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP), which began providing incentive payments to participating farmers in the 2020 crop year. Through OSIP, Blue Diamond has provided millions of dollars in incentives and has the most acres in an almond sustainability program in the world. Today, over 57% of Blue Diamond member acreage is participating in OSIP. The Climate Smart Grant will bolster Blue Diamond’s farmers to employ practices that support the good stewardship of their orchards.

“Blue Diamond has always been synonymous with quality because of our commitment to producing the best product possible,” said Carmen Bourgaize, Chief Commercial Officer. “This commitment continues through our investment in sustainability and in turn, increases our value proposition because our retail and manufacturing customers know they are receiving almonds that are not only safe and high-quality, but are supported by important on-farm stewardship initiatives.”

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## **About Blue Diamond**

Blue Diamond Growers, a grower-owned cooperative representing approximately 3,000 of California's almond farmers, is the world's leading almond marketer and processor. Established in 1910, it created the California almond industry and opened world markets for almonds. Blue Diamond is dedicated to delivering the benefits of almonds around the world and does so by providing high-quality almonds, almond ingredients, and branded products. Headquartered in Sacramento, the company employs more than 1,800 people throughout its processing plants, receiving stations and gift shops. To learn more about Blue Diamond Growers, visit [www.bluediamond.com](http://www.bluediamond.com) and follow the company on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).