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**Blue Diamond Growers Launches USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant Program**

*The new program equips the almond cooperative's growers with resources and incentives to implement climate-smart practices in their orchards*

Sacramento, Calif., July 20, 2023 – Blue Diamond Growers launched its USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant Program with its 3,000 grower-owners this week. The program is a major step in expanding the use of climate-smart practices in almond orchards.

The initial launch of the [Blue Diamond USDA Climate-Smart Grant Program](#) offers almond growers no-cost seed and a financial incentive for implementing cover crops and/or conservation cover on their land. These practices will not only work towards sequestering carbon but will also enhance the biodiversity of orchards, while improving soil health.<sup>1</sup> As part of this program, growers will work with civil society technical partners, Pollinator Partnership and Project *Apis m.* to implement these practices.

“This is an exciting and unique opportunity for growers outside of the traditional federal, state, and local resources that are typically available to them,” said Dan Sonke, Sr. Director of Sustainability, Blue Diamond Growers. “We know that cost and technical barriers are the largest hurdles to overcome when implementing climate-smart practices. This project provides resources to accelerate our grower-owners’ advances in soil health, biodiversity, and climate-smart agriculture.”

The program will also work to identify almond-specific methods for quantifying the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of implementing climate-smart practices and will explore market-based mechanisms to reward growers for their stewardship work.

The USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant Program further extends Blue Diamond’s current Orchard Stewardship Incentive Program (OSIP). OSIP currently has more than 50% of Blue Diamond acreage enrolled, the largest amount of almond acreage in the world participating in a sustainability program, with over 15% of Blue Diamond’s acreage being Bee Friendly Farming (B.F.F.) certified.

“Not only does this program benefit growers, but food companies and retailers as well,” continued Sonke. “Customers can partner with Blue Diamond to support the use of climate-smart practices which benefit the climate, soil health, and orchard biodiversity, and thereby procure almonds with a measured GHG reduction quantification that helps meet their own climate and sustainability targets.”

With planning and grower communication underway now, Blue Diamond Growers will largely begin to implement the grant-related practices across California beginning in October, after this year’s harvest.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/blue-diamond-growers-co-op-awarded-45-million-from-usda-to-expand-climate-smart-orchard-programs-301624864.html>



For more information on Blue Diamond Grower's sustainability efforts, please visit [bluediamond.com/sustainability](http://bluediamond.com/sustainability).

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**About Blue Diamond Growers®**

Blue Diamond Growers, a grower-owned cooperative representing approximately 3,000 of California's almond growers, 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](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).