# Almond Pest Management Alliance II Fact Sheet

Almonds are California's top horticultural export with a farm gate value of over $2 billion. There are more than 6,000 almond growers who farm over 765,000 acres in California's Central Valley. Statewide in 2007 over 19,000,000 pounds of chemicals were used on almonds (2007 DPR database).

The Almond Pest Management Alliance II is a follow-up to an earlier successful effort to educate almond growers about pesticide use. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation awarded funding of $217,860 in 2008 to the Community Alliance with Family Framers to administer Almond Pest Management Alliance II.

Almond PMA I was a very successful collaborative project that addressed solutions for reducing organophosphate and carbamate pesticides used in almond production. Although pesticide use in almonds decreased in 2000, 2001, and 2002, it has since increased

Almond PMA I produced the *Seasonal Guide to Environmentally Responsible Pest Management Practices in Almonds* and was effective in promoting information to help almond growers make environmentally responsible pest management decisions year round, without decreased yields or increased reject levels. Levels of dormant spray use on almonds declined following the first Almond PMA. Because of these successes, the Almond PMA won an IPM Innovator Award from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation in 2007.

From 2002 through 2009 thousands of acres of almond have been planted, many by growers new to almond production. Almond acreage increased by 30 percent during that time period. Accelerated efforts to educate almond growers about the use of reduced-risk pesticide management practices were needed to keep pace with new plantings and new growers. PMA II was created to fill this need.

PMA I & II validated the use of demonstration projects as effective tools in helping growers make on-farm changes. Seeing the practices demonstrated and talking with the grower and PCA (pest control advisor) builds confidence in reduced risk systems. Technical support and information from UCCE and UC IPM were equally important links to program success.

PMA II targeted geographic areas where almond pesticide use was heaviest, especially organophosphates (OPs), carbamates and pyrethroids and where there

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were large numbers of new growers entering almond production. PMA II demonstration orchards were established in these regions, with accompanying field days and grower meetings.

PMA II targeted not just almond growers but the PCAs since they make many of the on-farm pest control decisions. Efforts to change practices targeted both growers and PCAs.

One measure of project success is the overwhelming interest from PCAs attending the all-day Almond PMA course in Parlier and Stockton this month. About 140 of the 180 course participants signed in as PCAs. Here are some results from a survey conducted during the session:

- About 40 percent of course participants said they have worked in almond production for five years or less.
- About 84 percent claim they practice some or all of the critical pest management activities in the *Seasonal Guide to Environmentally Responsible Pest Management Practices in Almonds.*
- 97 percent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they would use the information from the course in the next 6 months.