

### *Almond Crop Revised Downward in July but Remains Strong*

As the 2012/13 California almond season winds down, the *2013 California Almond Objective Measurement Report*, released in early July estimates the upcoming crop at 1.85 billion shelled pounds. This represents a downward adjustment of 8 percent to the estimate since May and 2 percent less than last season's total harvest of 2.0 billion shelled pounds. Though the production level has dropped, this would be the third largest harvest on record. Weather seems to be the largest cause of the declined production, with a cold winter prompting a late and very short bloom period, reducing effective pollination. As the nuts developed, high winds caused nut drop in early April with some industry sources reporting 50 pounds of nuts lost per acre. Reduced water allotment to some growers and lower rainfall this year also poses a concern for California growers. These factors have all contributed to the lowest average kernel weight in 40 years and lower average nut set per tree. Despite the challenges grower face this season, estimated bearing acreage has increased 4 percent to 810,000 acres.

Imports of inshell almonds are up substantially through May at 37.7 million pounds, up 28 times from last season. A bulk of the inshell almonds originated from Australia with 36.7 million pounds. Shelled almond imports were down by 46 percent, with Australia the top supplier to the U.S. market, sending 1.6 million pounds.

Exports are down for the season to date, with 824.5 million shelled pounds, a drop of 11 percent from the same time last season. At the same time, inshell almond exports have increased 3 percent to 407.9 million pounds. India is the major market for U.S. inshell almonds with 146.9 million pounds, followed by Hong Kong with 123.7 million pounds. Spain is the top market for shelled almonds this year, but has received 12 percent less shelled almonds than last season. Germany is the second largest market for U.S. shelled almonds.

Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service,