



For Immediate Release – October 2, 2018

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### **Blue Diamond Growers Applauds the Completion of the U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement**

SACRAMENTO, CA – Blue Diamond Growers, the world’s leading non-profit almond processing and marketing cooperative, applauds President Trump’s announcement that a United States Mexico Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA) has been completed. On behalf of over 3,000 California almond growers, we would like to thank U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Lighthizer, Ambassador Doud, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Sharon Bomer Lauritsen, and the entire negotiating team on this successful modernization of the now nearly 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This successful outcome will provide for the continued expansion of our Blue Diamond products throughout the critical North American market.

“Blue Diamond recently engaged in exciting business partnerships with Mexico to build the growth of our Almond Breeze almondmilk and our flavored snack nuts,” said CEO Mark Jansen. “This agreement provides security and support for the investment of our grower-owners into this growth market, as well as ensuring the ongoing success we have enjoyed in Canada. Blue Diamond is hopeful this new agreement will now be approved by Congress in a timely fashion.”

Canada has long been a strong market for California almonds and particularly Blue Diamond products. In 2017, U.S. exports of in-shell and shelled almonds to Canada totaled nearly \$190 million, making that country the 7<sup>th</sup> largest export market for California almonds. Shipments to Mexico that same year were valued at \$66.5 million, ranking Mexico as the 16<sup>th</sup> largest export market. For prepared and preserved almonds, which includes such products as flavored snack nuts and Almond Breeze almond milk beverage base, Canada ranked as the #1 export market for the United States in 2017, with shipments valued at \$67 million. Mexico ranked as the #4 market that same year, with U.S. exports topping \$8 million.

Blue Diamond Growers remains very optimistic concerning our global trade outlook with the recent signing of the modernized KORUS agreements, the agreement between the United States and Japan to begin talks on a new trade agreement, and now this U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement. The cooperative believes free trade agreements are essential to the health and viability of American industries in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

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**The following are a few notable outcomes contained in the USMCA.**

**Key Achievement:** *Enhanced Rules for Science-Based Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures*

In the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures chapter, the United States, Mexico, and Canada have agreed to strengthen disciplines for science-based SPS measures, while ensuring Parties maintain their sovereign right to protect human, animal, and plant life or health. Provisions include increasing transparency on the development and implementation of SPS measures; advancing science-based decision making; improving processes for certification, regionalization and equivalency determinations; conducting systems-based audits; improving transparency for import checks; and working together to enhance compatibility of measures. The new agreement would establish a new mechanism for technical consultations to resolve issues between the Parties.

**Key Achievement:** *New Protections for Proprietary Food Formulas*

The United States, Mexico, and Canada agreed on the Annex on Proprietary Food Formulas, which requires each Party to protect the confidentiality of proprietary formulas for food products in the same manner for domestic and imported products. It also limits such information requirements to what is necessary to achieve legitimate objectives.

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**About Blue Diamond**

*Blue Diamond Growers, a grower-owned cooperative representing over 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 1,500 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.*