



THE AMERICAN EXPORTER

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**U.S. RICE:
A GLOBAL STAPLE**

**DEFINING
SUSTAINABILITY –
PART 2**

**Q&A WITH
FIVE STAR JERKY**

**WITH HARRIS
WOOLF ALMONDS,
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A Quarterly Food Magazine
Volume 18, Issue 2

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from the publisher

Rapprochement Revisited Part One

Relationships between countries are much like relationships between family members that go back generations...it's always more complicated than meets the eye. The same thing could be said about U.S. China relations. This goes back generations and it's complicated. If you listen to the current news regarding the trade wars, you would think that this was just over tariffs and the interaction of business between the world's two largest economies. Only if it were that simple! This goes back to an old Cold War stance that really has never diminished. In fact...who charges what over a product coming into the other's country is irrelevant. It has more to do with political philosophies. We're capitalists and they're communists. That has never changed. It could be said that a more market driven orientation has expanded in China's economic environment. But make no mistake...at the heart of everything China is still a communist country with all its dedication to keeping the political philosophy intact.

Many political historians praised President Nixon for his visit to China in February 1972 that marked the breakthrough to rapprochement. Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai signed the *Shanghai Communiqué*. I would have to differ on that perspective. I think that China had no choice. Like the old Soviet Union...the ability to feed the population under a hard line communist structure is nearly impossible. The U.S. ability to produce and stock our grocery stores were the envy of the world. And China knew this! The Chinese government also knew that the Nixon administration was eager to work with China on a trade deal that would open up China to trading with the United States. This was a key moment that I will get back to in closing.

So what was the strategy that the United States employed towards China pre-1972 before rapprochement. That period is known as Containment from 1949-1969. The United States would disrupt, destabilize, and weaken China's communist government. Washington believed that China was an aggressive, expansionist power that threatened the security of its noncommunist neighbors. The United States constructed an off-shore line of military alliances along China's eastern and southern borders. This was old style Cold War edicts that also were implemented against the Soviet Union and Cuba. By being even tougher on China than on its main communist rival, the Soviet Union, the United States pursued a so-called "wedge strategy."** This strategy aimed to encourage a split between the two communist allies. It was successful, because such a split did occur, becoming evident in around 1960 and worsening thereafter. This wedge strategy then ushered in the Rapprochement period.

China and the United States began to move closer to one another. The Americans were seeking to bring an end to the war in Vietnam while China wanted to find support for its resistance to pressure from the Soviet Union. As mentioned earlier, President Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 marked the breakthrough to rapprochement. Part of the agreement specified that the U.S. "acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes..."** On this basis, U.S.-China unofficial relations began to develop, with trade, educational, and cultural exchanges. Here's my observation on this. There is no doubt Taiwan was a central and important part of U.S.-China relations. But this really has to do with very basic motivations. China wanted and needed to establish relations with the

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U.S. Rice: A Global Staple

by Lisa Mooney



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More people around the globe eat rice as the primary staple of their diet than any other single food. The United States is one of the largest exporters of rice, and is ranked as the 5th largest rice producer in the world and the largest rice exporter outside of Asia.

Rice is a nutritious, affordable source of carbohydrates and is packed with vitamins and minerals. It is also the main ingredient in many international dishes including; Italian Risotto, Indian curries, Japanese sushi, and Spanish paellas. Today, as interest in international cuisine grows and it appears on more menus, consumption of rice continues to rise.

Michael Klein, Vice President, Communications & Domestic Promotion for USA Rice explains which countries are the largest importers at this time. “As of the first two months of this year (the latest data available), Mexico is the largest U.S. rice export market at \$74 million, followed by Venezuela at \$64 million, Japan at \$62 million, South Korea at \$43.5 million and Haiti at \$32.8 million. For CY2023, the top 5 export markets are; Japan \$413.9 million, Mexico \$277.7 million, Haiti \$264.5 million, Canada \$201.6 million and Iraq \$149.2 million.”

“The U.S. exports both milled and rough (paddy) rice. The largest importers for milled rice are in order: 1. Haiti, Canada, Japan, Colombia, Iraq, and Central America. Mexico remains the top destination for rough rice.”

New interest in U.S. rice continues to grow worldwide, and Klein outlines the areas gaining traction. “Central America has shown interest in new long grain varieties we are developing that are responsive to what customers there expect/prefer. Central America, particularly Nicaragua and Costa Rica, prefer a less sticky long grain rice with uniform, white grains. Additionally, the interest in aromatics both domestically and in export markets has grown over the past several years. For example, Taiwan imports not only medium and long grain rice from the U.S., but also aromatics after USA Rice introduced these varieties to the importers. More than 1,000 tons of U.S. aromatic rice is imported into Taiwan”.

Klein added “wild rice always grabs attention at trade shows or influencer postings, due to its unique look and taste. It’s not actually rice – it’s a grass – but since it looks and cooks like rice, we often include it in our promotional materials. There has been interest in high

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protein/low glycemic index rice in markets like Singapore and Canada; however, domestic production isn't quite large enough yet to export."

For exporting nations meeting market needs entails supplying the type, form, class and quality of rice that satisfy local taste preferences. The U.S. rice industry is unique in its ability to produce all types of rice and is recognized as a dependable supplier of high-quality rice, both here in the U.S. and globally, in sizes ranging from consumer packaging to bulk cargo.

"The U.S. is the 5th largest rice producer in the world and is the only major exporter that allows rough/paddy rice exports. The other major global exporters (India, Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan, and China) restrict rough/paddy rice shipments to protect their milling industries. Many countries have milling sectors so appreciate the ability to import U.S. rough rice, support their domestic milling industries and also provide a high quality, safe, and nutritious product to their consumers. More than 40% of U.S. rice exports are in the form of rough/paddy rice. Top markets

that import rough rice are Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, and Colombia. The U.S. grows and exports the type and form of rice desired by the importing country."

"Usage varies by market, but U.S.-grown rice can be found on supermarket shelves and in restaurants and hotels around the world. In Mexico and Central America, for example – grocery stores chains are the largest users for U.S. rice. In Japan and South Korea, it's the foodservice sector. In the UK, wholesalers are large importers of U.S. rice."

Promoting USA Rice abroad is a key marketing tool to both educate and introduce customers and end users to the taste and quality U.S. rice offers them.

"USA Rice receives almost \$6 million annually from USDA Foreign Ag Service to conduct marketing programs overseas to which we add additional industry funds. Our efforts here are extensive. They include retail promotions in the UK, Mexico, and Central America; paid advertising in Saudi Arabia, Canada, Haiti, and the UK; foodservice partnerships in Japan, Korean, and Mexico; sponsorship of contests,

festivals, cooking shows and schools throughout the western hemisphere and in Japan; and social media campaigns across more than two dozen markets. We also developed an authentic U.S. rice label that is used in the retail space in Latin America and Canada. Additionally, a new funding program – the regional agricultural promotion program – will allocate \$300 million to help exporters tap into new trade opportunities and markets; USA Rice has applied for these funds," according to Klein.

You can find USA Rice promoting U.S. rice at a variety of upcoming international trade shows. "We participate in several trade shows, including Gulfood (the largest annual trade show, which occurs every February) and Anuga (the largest biannual trade show, next in October 2025). Additionally, we will participate in SIAL China (May 2024), Taipei Food show (June 2024), and SIAL Paris (October 2024), to name a few. To find out more please visit www.usarice.com.

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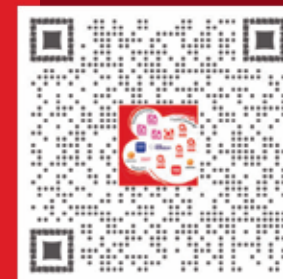
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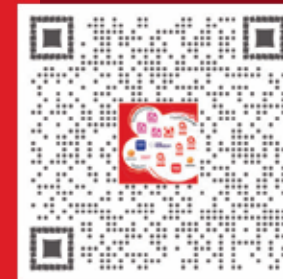
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Defining Sustainability —

Part 2 Understanding the Challenges of Doing the Right Thing *by Aisha Kabani*

In our last article Defining Sustainability – Balancing the Needs of the Present with the Technologies of the Future, we explored the basic principles of Sustainability, its economic impact opportunities and the different materials available to converters and retailers. However, as we become increasingly aware of the environmental damage caused by plastic pollution, we have definitely seen the growing push to transition away from single-use plastic items towards more sustainable, compostable alternatives. This shift holds the promise of reducing waste, minimizing the use of non-renewable resources, and creating a more circular economy. However, the path towards widespread adoption of compostable disposables is fraught with challenges that must be addressed before such a transition can be successfully

achieved. This article will explore challenges related to a variety of topics, including cost, infrastructure and behavior. Hopefully you will be able to bring up these challenges internally within your organizations to develop strategies to overcome them in order to maintain a steady and successful transition.

Cost
One of the primary barriers is the cost differential between plastic and compostable materials. Plastic, being a byproduct of the fossil fuel industry, often benefits from economies of scale and well-established supply chains that keep prices low. In contrast, compostable materials, such as plant-based bioplastics or fiber-based products, tend to be more expensive to produce, especially at smaller

scales. This cost disparity makes it difficult for businesses and consumers to justify the higher price tag associated with compostable options, even when the long-term environmental benefits are taken into account.

Infrastructure
The infrastructure required to effectively manage and process compostable waste is often lacking, particularly in many parts of the world. Industrial composting facilities capable of handling large volumes of compostable materials are still relatively scarce, and the logistics of collecting and transporting these materials to these facilities can be complex and costly. This creates a chicken-and-egg problem, where the lack of available composting infrastructure discourages the adoption

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of compostable products, while the limited demand for such products hinders the investment in and expansion of that infrastructure.

Home compostable products equally struggle as consumers may (or more likely may not) have home composting environments. Home compostable products can be thrown in the garbage and will, eventually, degrade. But consumer behavior plays a huge role in creating a home compostable environment supporting single

use products they bring home from a retailer.

The educational and awareness gap surrounding the benefits and proper disposal methods for compostable products varies and generally is a function on demographics. Many consumers may not fully understand the difference between biodegradable, compostable, and recyclable materials, or the importance of properly disposing of compostable items in designated receptacles. This lack of understanding can lead to contamination of recycling streams or

improper disposal, undermining the intended environmental benefits of using compostable products.

As we have discovered consumer behavior and habits presents a significant challenge. Plastic disposables have become deeply ingrained in many people's daily lives, and overcoming the convenience and familiarity associated with these products can be a significant barrier to widespread adoption of compostable alternatives. Changing consumer behavior and habits requires a sustained effort involving education, incentives, and the creation of new social norms that prioritize environmentally responsible choices. This opens up the question regarding social justice and social responsibility. Will (or can) consumer behavior be driven by the Tik-Tok generation? And should it?

Use Cases

Another significant obstacle is the durability and functionality of compostable materials compared to their plastic counterparts. Disposable plastic items are often designed to withstand the rigors of daily use, from hot liquids in takeout containers to the structural integrity required for carrying heavy items. Compostable materials, while improving in performance, still struggle to match the same level of durability and functionality, which can lead to product failures or unsatisfactory user experiences. This can undermine consumer confidence and slow the adoption of compostable alternatives. As outlined in the last article, PHA can be used in HOT and COLD beverages, while fiber based products can only be used in COLD beverages. This hugely impacts which material to use in the conversion from plastic to sustainable.

Furthermore, the availability and accessibility of compostable products on the market can be a significant barrier. In many cases, consumers may not have easy access to compostable alternatives to common plastic items, as the product selection and distribution channels may be limited. This lack of accessibility can discourage people from making the switch, as it can be perceived as an inconvenience or require additional effort to seek out and purchase the desired compostable items.

Continued on page 20



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Use Cases

One of the single, most crucial and therefore damaging challenges facing the transition to sustainable materials is the misinformation legislators have used to regulate sustainability. While some regions have implemented policies and standards to promote the use of compostable products, the lack of harmonization and consistency across different jurisdictions can create confusion and compliance issues for businesses and consumers. The absence of clear, universally accepted definitions and labeling requirements for compostable materials can further exacerbate this problem, making it difficult for consumers to

make informed choices and trust the claims made about the biodegradability of the products they purchase. Paper straws are a great example of this.

To address these challenges and facilitate a more successful transition from plastic to compostable disposables, a multi-faceted approach is required. Governments, businesses, and consumers all have roles to play in driving this change.

Governments can implement policies and regulations that level the playing field by incentivizing the production and use of compostable materials, while also investing in the necessary infrastructure to support effective waste management and composting systems. This could include tax incentives,

subsidies, or mandates that encourage the adoption of compostable alternatives and the development of the supporting infrastructure.

Businesses, on the other hand, must innovate and invest in the research and development of compostable materials that can match or exceed the performance of their plastic counterparts. This may involve collaboration with material scientists, packaging engineers, and supply chain experts to optimize the design, manufacturing, and distribution of compostable products. Additionally, businesses play a crucial role in educating consumers about the benefits of compostable alternatives and providing easy access to these products.

Consumers, too, have a significant part to play in this transition. By actively seeking out and choosing compostable options, consumers can drive demand and send a clear signal to businesses and policymakers about the importance of transitioning away from plastic. Furthermore, consumers play a vital role in spreading awareness and advocating for the necessary changes in their communities and beyond.

Only through a coordinated effort involving all stakeholders – governments, businesses, and consumers – can the barriers to converting plastic disposable items to compostable alternatives be overcome. By addressing the cost differences, improving infrastructure, enhancing product performance, harmonizing regulations, increasing accessibility, and fostering consumer awareness and behavior change, a more sustainable and circular future for disposable products can be achieved.

The transition to compostable disposables is not without its challenges, but the potential benefits to the environment and the long-term sustainability of our societies are too significant to ignore. By working together and tackling these obstacles head-on, we can create a future where single-use plastic items are a thing of the past, and compostable alternatives become the norm, paving the way for a more sustainable and eco-friendly world.

In Part 3 of *Defining Sustainability* we will take a deep dive into the Conversion process from plastic to sustainable materials.



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Q & A With Five Star Jerky

By Lisa Mooney



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Five Star Jerky produces premium beef and bacon jerky. Their products are made 100% in the USA with only the finest meats and ingredients for a delicious and easy snack on the go.

Michael Hocklander, CEO, Caribe Producers shared how these products stand out from the competition and why they would be a perfect addition to your store shelf.

1. What products are currently your best sellers and what makes them so popular?

Our Five Star Signature Wagyu Grilled Mesquite Beef Jerky is our best seller. It is the taste of a grilled steak in a bag with just enough smokey seasoning to not distract from the natural flavor of the Wagyu beef. Our Wagyu beef is measured at an A4 and best known for its tenderness and marbling that gives the beef jerky a fantastic, savory finish. Our Five Star Signature Wagyu Teriyaki Beef Jerky is our second best seller, but only less by one percentage point.

2. Which countries are you currently exporting your products to?

Bangladesh, Australia, South Korea, and Bahrain.

3. Which export markets will you be focusing your marketing efforts on next?

Five Star Halal Beef Jerky will focus on the Middle East. In addition, we will focus on other countries that require Halal beef. We have identified export markets where Halal beef jerky has not been introduced as a portable protein snack, in fact, many retailers do not have allocated space for it. We go into a retailer and find the nut section and discuss with them how to add SKUs and market beef jerky. Most buyers are interested in the product, have knowledge of beef jerky, but also keep in mind that this is a new product for their customer. There is a level of educating the customer that we have developed. We adjusted packaging to read "Ready To Eat" since the word "jerky" is not common or

Continued on page 28

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Farmers' Rice Cooperative (FRC) is a grower-owned rice marketing cooperative. Since 1944, we have supplied domestic and international food manufacturers, brewers, private retailers, exporters and distributors with premium quality California rice.

What makes FRC unique is our vertically integrated structure; we are directly in control of every aspect in the production lifecycle - from the fields of our grower owned farms, to the milling of the rice, all the way through final packing & shipping. This allows us to not only ensure the quality of the products we sell, but also allows us to quickly react to changing consumer needs so that we remain ahead of the market.

Diamond G® is the flagship brand of Farmers Rice Cooperative, and is distributed in over 25 countries worldwide. It has received the prestigious Superbrands® award in Jordan, acknowledging Diamond G® as a premier brand.

In addition to Diamond G®, we have several other brands which may be more tailored to specific marketing regions in the world. You may contact us below with your individual market needs so that we can find a product solution for you.

Products We Sell

Medium Grain
Short Grain
Mochi (Sweet Rice)

Processes We Offer

Musenmai (No Wash)
Oil Coated (Camolino Style)
Quick Cooking Brown Rice
Nitrogen Flush (For Freshness)

Packaging Types

1kg - 1000kg
Multiwall Kraft Paper
Woven Polypropylene
Clear PE Laminates



FARMERS' RICE COOPERATIVE

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P.O. BOX 15223 | Sacramento, CA 95851
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With Harris Woolf Almonds, the possibilities are endless.

Harris Woolf Almonds is a California-based manufacturer of almonds and almond ingredients. Our products include inshell almonds, natural almonds, almond paste/butter, almond protein powder, and almond oil. Our products have broad utility in several industries: Food & Beverage, Sports Nutrition, Restaurant & Food Service, Cosmetics, and more.

As your sales grow, we grow with you.

Harris Woolf has watched customers' orders grow from under 100 pounds to 1,000,000 pounds or greater. Reliable shipments, fair market pricing, and outstanding customer service will help you scale your production. With the commissioning of a second paste line coming soon, we're looking forward to helping more customers expand their business. In the near future, we look forward to introducing new tree nut pastes. Be sure to follow us on LinkedIn so that you don't miss our exciting news.

Innovation

Our innovation and R&D team possess the almond know-how our customers require when developing new products. Their wealth of knowledge makes them adept at getting formulations using HWA almond paste, protein powder, or oil across the finish line.

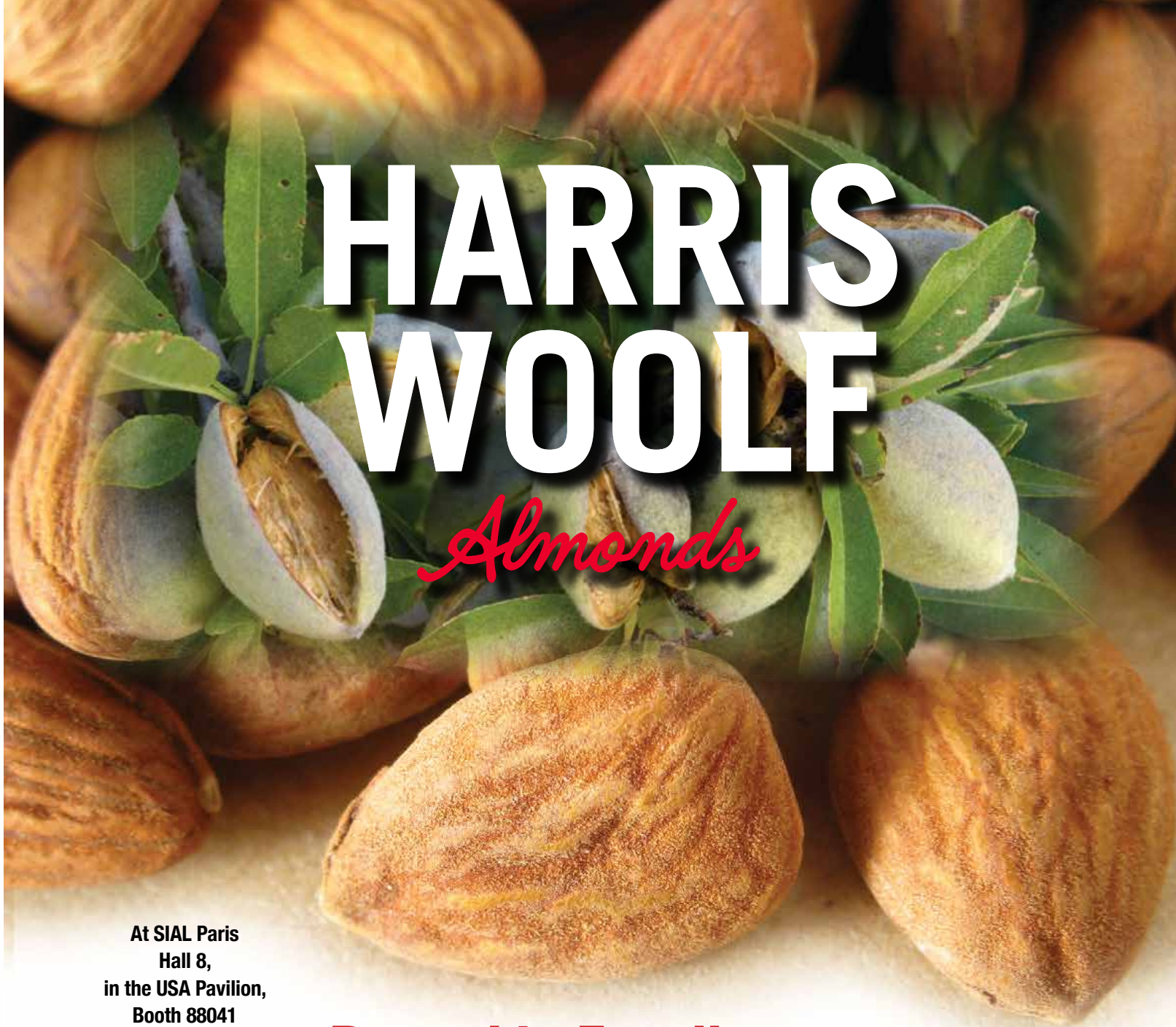


Sustainability

The best almonds formulate the best products. We work with approximately 200 unique farms and farmers to harvest high-quality, sustainable almonds. As a Certified B Corporation™, you can trust that HWA prioritizes people and planet over profit. Pollinator health, water conservation, and food safety are at the forefront of our minds and our growers' minds.

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For more information or to place an order, visit harriswoolfalmonds.com or email us at inquiry@hwalmonds.com.



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United States because the country was in trouble economically and politically. They also knew that the rest of the world was leaving them behind on all fronts. On the flip side, the arch enemy to the U.S. was the Soviet Union. And if China looked at the Soviet Union as their enemy...good enough for us. Nixon also believed that if communist countries were opened to capitalistic economies, they would transform gradually into a market economy. You could say this was the beginning of that "nation building thing" which I consider somewhat of a failure. In essence, our eagerness and naiveté is exactly why we opened up the U.S. economy without really thinking it through. This I will pick up in Part II of the next Publisher's Statement and the genesis of where and why this trade conflict is going on right now...and will it ever be resolved.

**Asia for Educators, Columbia University



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Contact: Arnold Coombs
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Product Line: Our product offerings include Pecans, Pecan Oil, and Pecan Meal-Flour in Certified Organic and non-Organic



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Fax: +1-773-927-8587
E-mail: greatlakespacking@ameritech.net
Web Site: www.glparking.com
Contact: Adriana Alcala - General Manager
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