

THE AMERICAN EXPORTER

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TARIFFS AND TRADE: GROWING PAINS TOWARD A STRONGER FUTURE FOR U.S. FARMERS

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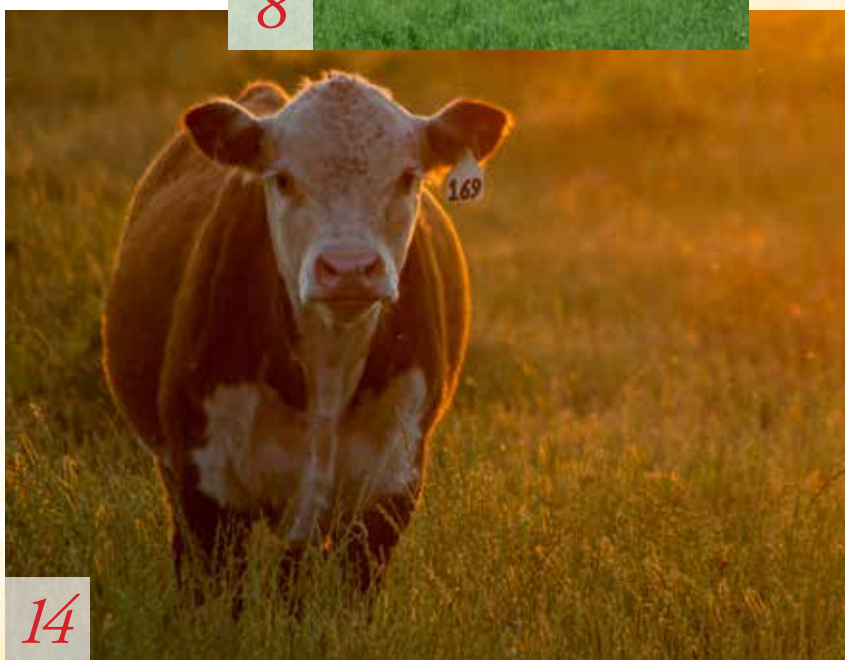
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from the publisher

The Great Trade Wars

One could say that the tariff war started with China and will probably end with China. That isn't necessarily what's starting to emerge. The European Union and the United States are now looking to be the new battle. Potential 50% tariffs maybe imposed July 9th on the EU if certain conditions are not up to par with the Trump administration. China is also on deadline. They have until roughly the end of August to come up with favorable deal or tariffs will go back to 145% threshold. The ironic thing is that the administration is making better progress with China than the EU. Either way, the United States will have a vastly different playing field once the negotiations are complete.

There have been many reports that the trade war was really directed at China and that the rest of countries were collateral damage. From the perspective of our magazine and covering the food and agricultural industry for over 20 years, we tend to agree. Well, up to the point until you really see the tariffs imposed by other countries besides China. To put it simply, it's shocking! From 425% tariffs on US dairy products imposed by Canada to beef products being completely banned in certain countries in Europe and Pacific Rim. To hell with tariffs...your banned period. To make matters worse, the trade war of President Trump's first term was directed at China. They were the "big boys on the block" and the tariffs imposed by China versus the United States was basically a left over from the Cold War in which the Soviet Union was our focus. Fast forward some 50 years and a similar Cold War has emerged with the remaining Communist power and make no mistake...China is still rigid in their belief in that orthodoxy.

President Trump's "Liberation Day" started April 9th but the real trade started with China back in 2017, that was the warm up for the big rumble that's going on right now. The good news for the US food and agricultural industry is that this stuff is old hat. China was one of the hottest markets back in the early teens. China was buying everything including chicken, nuts, dried fruit, and grain products just to name a few. Once candidate Trump was elected President in 2016, his administration immediately homed in on China and the trade imbalance. And so began the major trade wars. The food industry was directly in the path. Products like poultry was banned from the China market and US beef was reduced to a trickle. The nut industry along with the rice industry demand from China evaporated overnight! Companies that shipped 80% of their product to the China market saw it reduced to nothing. For the food and agricultural industry, the trade war began and has not ended. Many companies that appear in this magazine have survived the trade war of 2017 and are "veterans" in dealing with this.

So, when China increased their tariffs to 125% this time around, most of the US suppliers we deal with shrugged. They long ago diversified themselves to new markets and refocused on the domestic demand. In this issue, we focused on the impact of tariffs on 2 industries...California Almonds and US Rice. Please take time to read it because it explains the resiliency of the US food producers. They've been through punitive restrictions to container shortages to complete bans. The US food producer is smart and understands not to put their stock in any single market. The 2017 trade war taught them that lesson. If a company strayed from this strategy, they possibly aren't around anymore. We are still early in the true second round of the great trade wars. This is only an overview of what should be a very interest August and September. Next... we will look at the new "hot" trade war emerging with the EU and where we stand on Canada and Mexico. And with that, I'll see you out on the road somewhere!

**THE
AMERICAN
EXPORTER**

Summer 2025

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PUBLISHING POLICY:

Articles printed in The American Exporter express the opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the formal position of the publisher. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute endorsement.

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Magazine Publishers of America

The American Exporter is published quarterly by JPM International Consulting, LLC and is distributed internationally. For advertising information or to direct questions or comments regarding the magazine, contact JPM International Consulting, LLC at 816-503-6850 or exportermagazine@aol.com.

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Tariffs and Trade: Growing Pains Toward a Stronger Future for U.S. Farmers

by Courtney Ferris

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U.S. tariffs on foreign goods – and the retaliation they've sparked – are creating short-term challenges for American farmers. Yet many in agriculture see these disruptions as growing pains on the path to long-term trade stability and stronger global positioning.

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Exports of key commodities like soybeans and pork have dipped significantly in recent months, with U.S. goods exports falling by over 5 percent in May 2025, according to preliminary data from the U.S. Census Bureau and USTR reports.^[1] Countries like China have imposed steep retaliatory tariffs, shifting purchases to alternative suppliers like Brazil and Argentina.^[2] Meanwhile, American farmers are wrestling with rising input costs and tighter margins, creating economic stress in

key producing regions like Iowa and Illinois.^[3]

California's specialty crops are also feeling the pressure. Tree nuts – such as almonds, pistachios, and walnuts – have been directly impacted. California almonds, which account for nearly 80 percent of the global supply and generate nearly \$4 billion in export value annually, have faced significant market volatility due to tariffs from China, the EU, and India.^[4] Prices dropped sharply between 2019 and 2023, though they are now

slowly rebounding despite ongoing concerns of oversupply, according to the Almond Board of California.^[5]

Pistachio growers have seen some relief thanks to a recent U.S.-China agreement, which reduced retaliatory tariffs from 125 percent to 10 percent, improving export opportunities in Asian markets.^[6] This has renewed optimism for one of California's most profitable specialty crops.

Walnuts, however, remain among the hardest hit. Since 2018, China – formerly the largest importer of California walnuts – has imposed tariffs as high as 75 percent.^[7] In response, China shifted its sourcing to countries with better trade terms, particularly Chile, which benefits from a bilateral free trade agreement.^[8] Australia and Kyrgyzstan have also gained market share.^[9]

Simultaneously, China has dramatically increased its walnut production, now accounting for more

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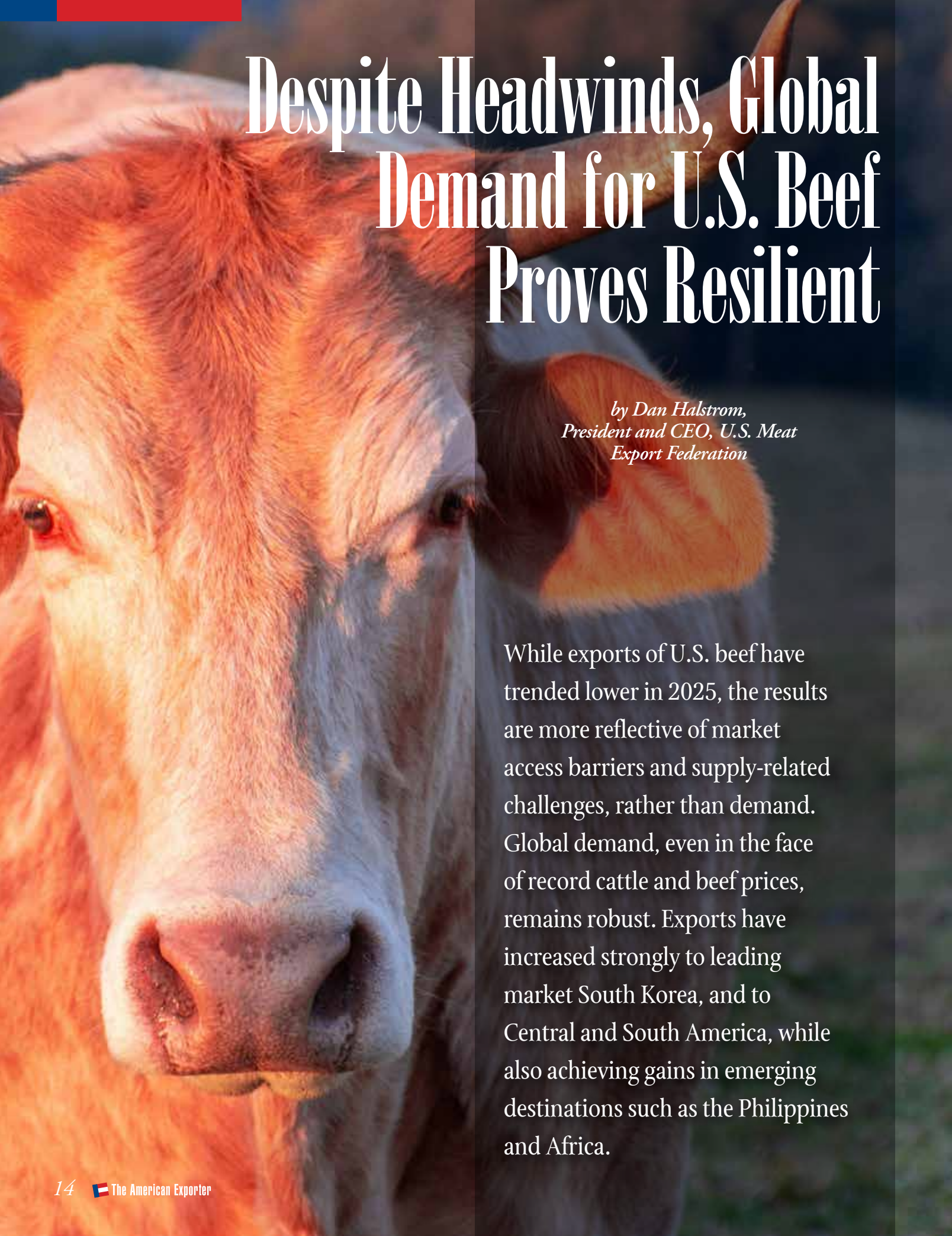
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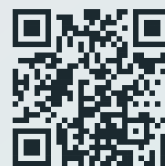




Despite Headwinds, Global Demand for U.S. Beef Proves Resilient

*by Dan Halstrom,
President and CEO, U.S. Meat
Export Federation*

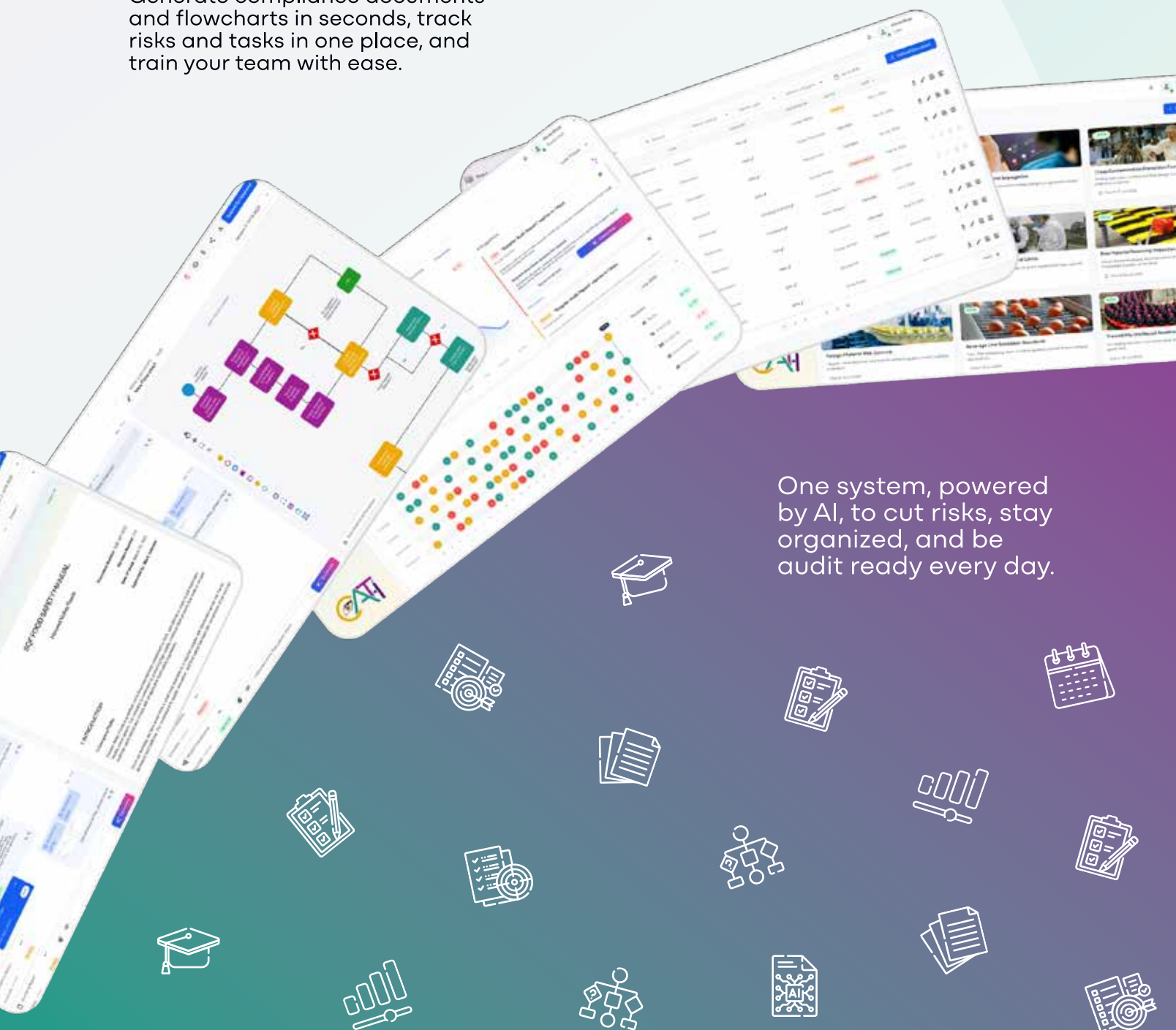
While exports of U.S. beef have trended lower in 2025, the results are more reflective of market access barriers and supply-related challenges, rather than demand. Global demand, even in the face of record cattle and beef prices, remains robust. Exports have increased strongly to leading market South Korea, and to Central and South America, while also achieving gains in emerging destinations such as the Philippines and Africa.



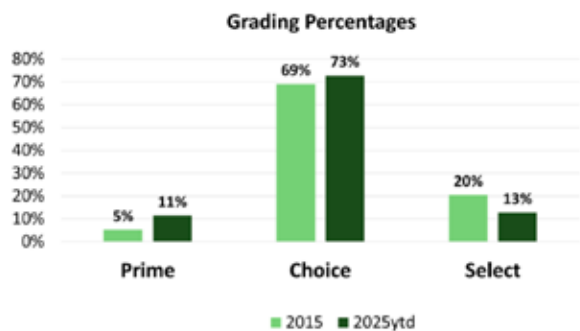
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Over the past 10 years, the share of fed beef production grading Prime has more than doubled to 11%. The share grading Choice also continues to increase.



Source: USDA/AMS, percentages are for share of total fed beef production, year-to-date through September 6, 2025



Shipments to Japan and Mexico have also held up relatively well this year this year. Even in Canada, where “Buy Canadian” sentiment has been a growing theme for consumers, demand for U.S. beef remains strong in the foodservice sector.

The year-over-year deficit is mostly related to a lockout in China, where regulators have failed to renew registrations for U.S. beef plants and cold storage facilities. This impasse interrupted what was shaping up to be a solid year for U.S. beef in China, as exports in the first quarter trended higher, reaching almost \$400 million in value. But with nearly all U.S. plants no longer eligible, exports to China ground to a halt by mid-summer.

One of the reasons demand for U.S. beef has been so resilient is that U.S. cattle producers have responded to consumers’ desire – both overseas and in the domestic U.S. market – for exceptional quality. As noted in the chart below, nearly 85% of U.S. cattle going to market in 2025 have graded Choice or higher, including a record 11% grading Prime.

These are truly remarkable figures that reflect U.S. producers’ commitment to superior genetics and state-of-the-art cattle raising, handling and feeding practices. These investments allow U.S. beef to deliver a superior dining experience, driven the rich flavor made possible through outstanding production methods, including the corn-

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Ag Alumni Seed

Craig Anderson Named President and CEO of Ag Alumni Seed



The Ag Alumni Seed Improvement Association of Romney, Indiana, has appointed Craig Anderson as its new President and Chief Executive Officer. Anderson succeeds Jay Hulbert, who is retiring after leading the organization through years of growth and innovation.

“We are excited to have Craig joining Ag Alumni Seed,” said Jay Hulbert, outgoing President and CEO. “His extensive experience in the seed industry, strategic leadership, and deep

understanding of growers’ needs will be a tremendous asset as we continue to build on our strong foundation.”

Anderson brings decades of experience in the seed industry, with expertise in business strategy, sales, marketing, and operations. Most recently, he served as Chief Operating Officer at Dryland Genetics, where he designed and implemented a fully integrated seed company model for proso millet, driving market expansion through a streamlined go-to-market approach and strong grower relationships.

Prior to that, Anderson held key leadership roles at AgReliant Genetics, serving as LG Seeds Brand Manager, Vice President of Operations, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, and Chief Operating Officer. He oversaw strategic acquisitions, drove market share growth, and implemented capital investments that improved operational efficiency.

“I’m excited to join Ag Alumni Seed and look forward to working with the team, our partners at Purdue University, and our business collaborators,” said Anderson. “Ag Alumni Seed has a strong legacy of innovation in the seed industry, and I’m eager to explore new opportunities that will drive future growth and success.”

The Ag Alumni Seed Improvement Association was

established in 1938 as a not-for-profit foundation seed association with the mission of taking seed varieties developed at Purdue University, building up inventories, and making advanced genetics available to farmers. Today, Ag Alumni Seed focuses on the research, development, and marketing of popcorn seed for domestic and international markets, as well as contract seed production, conditioning, and a private label licensing program. In addition to popcorn seed, the company works on advanced trait development with researchers at Purdue University.

Anderson’s leadership marks the beginning of a new chapter for Ag Alumni Seed as the organization continues its commitment to innovation and service to the agricultural community.

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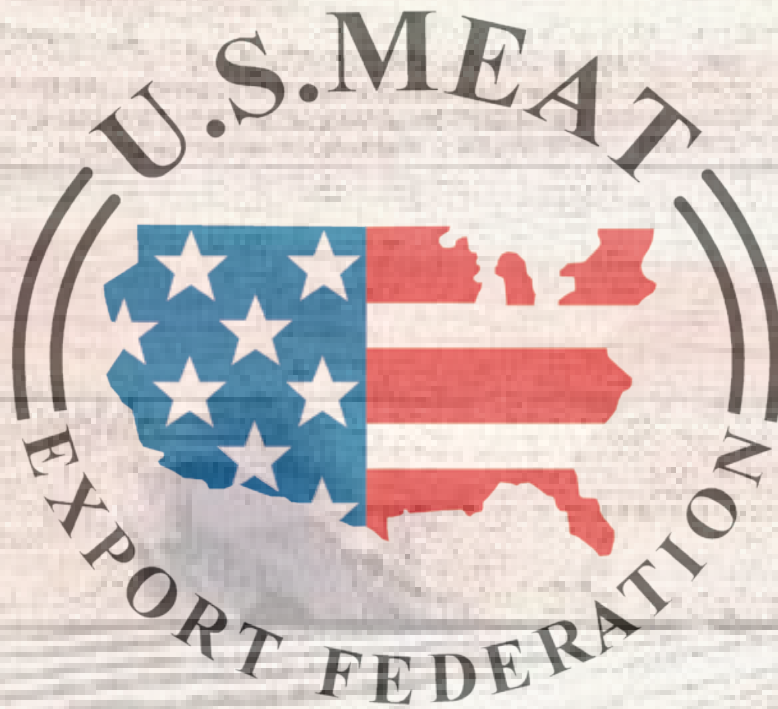
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than one-third of global output. In 2024, China harvested over 1.55 million metric tons, largely from Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces, according to the China Nuts Association.^[10] As a result, U.S. in-shell walnut exports to China have fallen by more than 90 percent since 2020, from \$3 million to under \$500,000, reports the California Walnut Commission.^[11] Many growers have been forced to accept below-cost prices or even remove orchards entirely.

Other crops, like processed fruits (e.g., prunes) and lettuce, face pressures from

rising labor and water compliance costs, particularly in California, rather than foreign tariffs.^[12] Meanwhile, apple and table grape growers are turning toward emerging Southeast Asian markets, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, to compensate for losses in China.^[13]

Despite the current strain, many farmers and trade experts remain cautiously optimistic. They argue these trade battles are part of a bigger-picture strategy aimed at securing fairer global trade agreements that will ultimately support U.S. agriculture. Emergency aid from federal programs has helped

soften the impact, but the goal remains to build a resilient and balanced trade landscape.^[14]

Importantly, U.S. agriculture continues to benefit from a significant global advantage – quality. American-grown products are internationally known for food safety, reliability, and excellence. While some buyers have shifted in the short term, many global markets still prefer U.S. commodities when available.^[15] The strength of the “American farming brand” remains strong.

However, quality alone isn’t enough to remain competitive. Small and mid-sized farms are adopting new strategies to diversify revenue and improve resilience in an uncertain trade environment. These may include:

- Branding & Direct-to-Consumer Marketing – Using tools like Shopify and Barn2Door to develop farm brands and sell directly.
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- Diversifying Export Markets – Focusing on Southeast Asia and India with support from USDA export programs.^[16]
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- Joining Co-ops and Alliances – Focusing on home turf expansion in the U.S.
- Engaging in Policy – Working with trade associations to support pro-agriculture policies.
- Exploring Agritourism – Hosting farm tours and events to bring in supplemental income.

As trade agreements change and global markets stabilize, many believe that the current turmoil could become a turning point. Between ongoing strategic marketing and employing emerging technologies, combined with advocating for pro-farmer policies, American farmers and exporters are positioned to emerge stronger. In the end, the unmatched quality of U.S. agriculture – paired with bold innovation – remains its most powerful global asset.

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California Almonds

Building Global Demand

by
Lisa Mooney

Today, the state of California is the biggest producer of almonds, growing approximately 80 percent of the world's supply. Almonds are California's top agricultural export and largest tree nut crop in total dollar value and acreage. They also rank as the largest U.S. specialty crop export.

The Almond Board of California (ABC) works to build demand around the globe for California Almonds. With a team that conducts market analysis globally, they identify and prioritize markets around the world that will provide the largest return to the almond community.

The 2025 California Almond Objective Measurement Report published in July by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS) estimates that the crop harvested in 2025 will come in at 3.0 billion meat pounds.

The Objective Estimate is up 7 percent from USDA-NASS's Subjective in May and 10 percent higher than last year's crop of 2.73 billion meat pounds. The 2024 harvest yields were 2.5% below the 2024 Objective Report estimate, reflecting the difficulty of precisely forecasting crop size given the current fluctuations in weather and economic factors.

"The Almond Board is actively driving initiatives to stimulate demand around the world," said Clarice Turner, president and CEO of the Almond Board of California. "While this year's Objective Measurement estimate is higher than the industry expected, shipments remain strong. We are focused on innovation—expanding almond applications, reaching consumers through new channels, and opening markets around the world."

The report shared that the 2025 almond crop experienced variable weather during

bloom, which began in early February and peaked in the middle of the month. Storms brought rain, wind and hail, which hindered bee hours and blossom growth. Conditions improved in early March with warm temperatures accelerating the crop's progress through the end of bloom. Mild temperatures and timely rain in spring supported nut growth and continued through early summer, lessening heat stress in orchards.

"This larger crop estimate is what the industry expected after a solid water winter and generally good weather during bloom, but it's also a testament to the hard work done by almond farmers throughout California," said Clarice Turner, president and CEO of the Almond Board of California. "Demand for California almonds around the globe continues to grow and our almond farmers constantly deliver, producing high quality California almonds to meet that demand."

Unlocking North Africa

As global demand for healthy, protein-packed snacks continues to rise, California almonds are positioning themselves as a top choice in international markets.

One region holding promising potential for almond exports is North Africa. Countries including Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt already have a strong tradition of nut consumption, especially almonds. When combined with increasing incomes, the shift in consumer habits aligns well with the benefits that almonds provide.

"It's a new area, but it really does show incredible potential," said Julie Adams, vice president, global and technical affairs at the Almond Board of California (ABC).

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finishing phase. So while low U.S. cattle numbers are definitely a concern, let's focus on the more positive side of this story: Record prices aren't being paid for U.S. cattle and beef just because they are in short supply. They are also the finest in the world – and consumers across globe are voting with their wallets.

A great example of this is how beef demand has evolved in our Western

Hemisphere markets. As recently as 10 years ago, many buyers in Mexico and Central America were only interested in Select or ungraded beef from the U.S., and even then they would hold out for attractive prices. Today's purchasing patterns are entirely different, driven by powerful demand for Choice cuts – with many buyers seeking upper 2/3 Choice and Prime. And while some of this demand comes from the region's



thriving tourism and hospitality sectors, that's only part of the story. Retail demand is also booming, with modern supermarkets and high-end meat shops carrying an expanding variety of U.S. beef cuts. Visit these locations on a typical day, and you will see dozens of shoppers seeking at-home dinner options once reserved for higher-end restaurants.

Despite our supply-side challenges, the U.S. beef industry is poised to replicate this success in other global markets. But it is no coincidence that U.S. beef's booming popularity in Latin America is happening in free trade agreement partner markets such as Mexico, Central America, the Dominican Republic and Chile. So, market access improvements are definitely needed in order for more global consumers to enjoy U.S. beef.

There has been recent progress on market access, including the United Kingdom restoring some duty-free access for U.S. beef. The United Arab Emirates and Indonesia also lifted halal-related obstacles, and U.S. beef recently gained long-overdue access to the Australian market. But trade barriers inhibiting exports of U.S. beef are not just confined to China. U.S. exporters also face significant obstacles in regions such as Europe, Southeast Asia and Africa. Even in Korea – the leading destination for U.S. beef and a valued free trade

Continued on page 38



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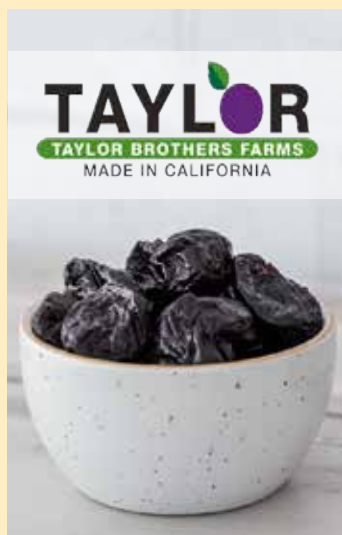
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Since 1944



Continued from page 24

“We can’t afford not to pay attention to this region, and we need to look at the opportunities.”

Another reason to focus efforts on this area of the globe is due to the projection that their population is expected to double from 2025-2050 according to data from the United Nations released by Rose Research.

Rose said that similar to India 15-20

years ago, this growing population is expected to be a younger demographic with an interest in health and nutrition. Additionally, North Africa’s vast urbanization, high fertility rates and strengthened purchasing power point in a positive direction for California almonds.

This market has a strong interest in American products. Seventy-five percent of African consumers voiced their

acceptance of buying a product labeled from the U.S, and 88% even said they’d pay a premium for them.

“Quality and safety aren’t the only things we’re going to hang our hats on,” Rose said. “We’ve got a lot of health messaging that we’re going to take advantage of as well, just like we’re doing in all of our other markets.”

Perhaps the most familiar to California almonds is Morocco. In fact, the country now stands as the industry’s tenth largest export market, and new infrastructure is being built, which will support these growing shipments. It’s common for almonds to be incorporated into at least one meal per day for Moroccans, and experts also believe the country can serve as the gateway to Africa.

Another unique factor to Morocco is its free trade agreement with the U.S. In fact, a zero-percent duty provides an exceptional opportunity and advantage over other origin suppliers.

In Egypt, nut consumption has grown by over 50% in the last three years, and similar growth is happening in neighboring countries. Egypt is particularly exciting because it’s also the population epicenter for this region, and it’s highly urbanized, meaning that its consumers are looking for safe, high quality food to be imported.

Unique to Algeria is their willingness to splurge on high quality food products. They have one of the region’s highest per-capita expenditures on food, a robust confectionary industry and are supported by strong distribution channels.

Compared to the other markets, Tunisia’s economy took longer to recover from the effects of COVID, but studies show it still presents a valuable opportunity for almonds because tourism is on the rise and consumers spend a good portion of their income on food.

*Sources: California Almond Board
Rose Research*

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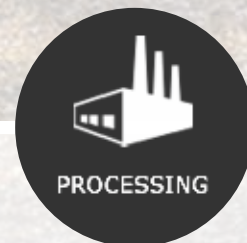
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agreement partner – limiting imports to beef from cattle less than 30 months of age depresses U.S. exports by about \$140 million annually.

Market access barriers for U.S. beef are being discussed in ongoing negotiations with a number of trading partners. USMEF appreciates the tireless efforts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to keep these issues front-and-center during this pivotal time for agricultural trade. We are also grateful for the strong commitment Congress has shown toward international market development. When combined with outstanding support from our industry partners, USDA promotion and development funding allows USMEF to explore and develop emerging markets for U.S. beef, as well as defend our hard-earned market share in established destinations.



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Web site:

www.bascomfamilyfarms.com

Contact: Arnold Coombs

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Web Site: www.mopecans.com

Business Type: Grower, Shipper,
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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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Web Site: www.glpacking.com

Contact: Adriana Alcalá -
General Manager

Product Line: Pickled Meats, Pork
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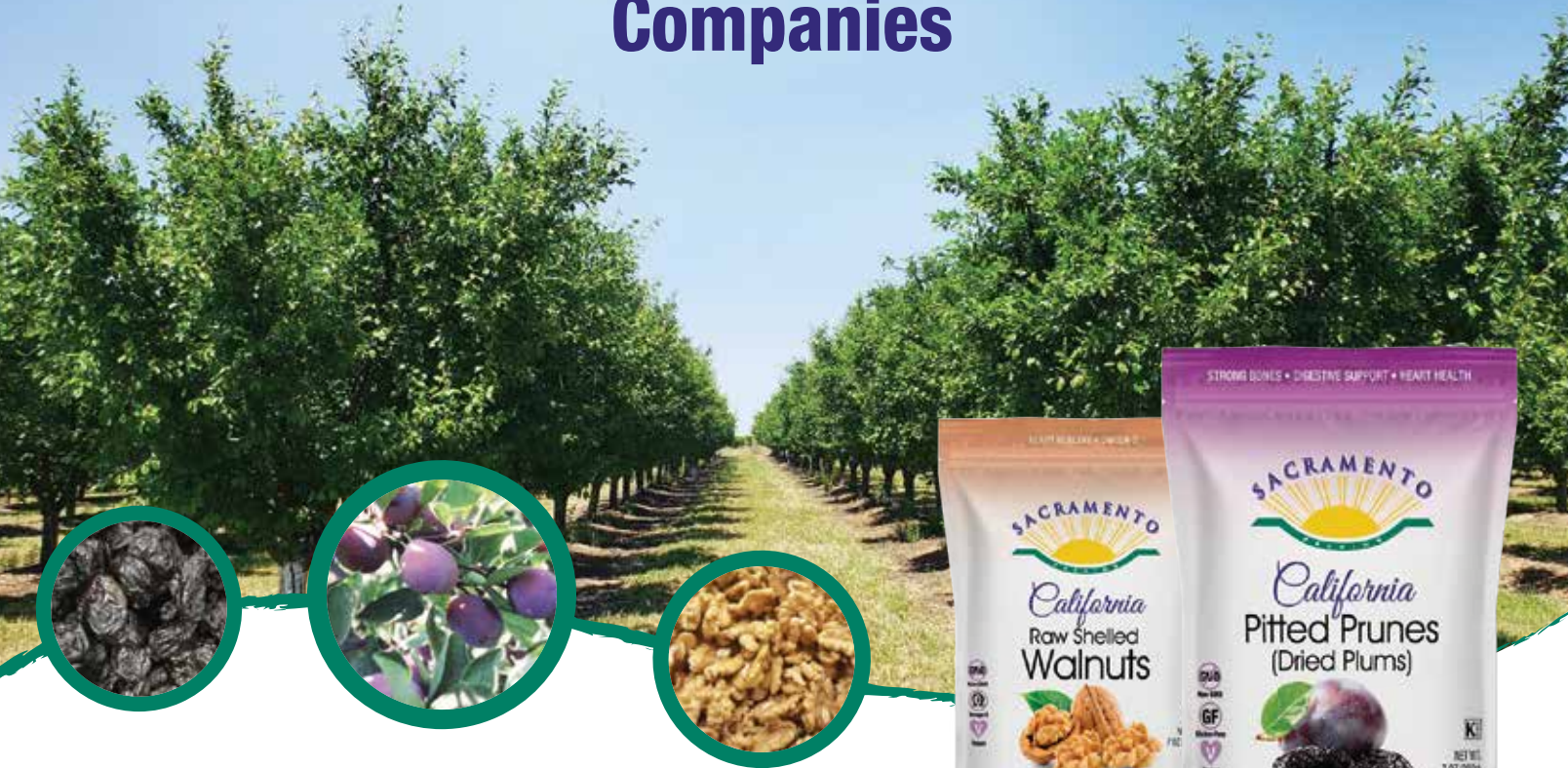
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