



18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### **California Prune Board reinforces its commitment to sustainability**

As this year's harvest comes to an end, California's prune growers remain committed to embedding and sharing sustainable practices across the state's orchards.

It follows the announcement that the California Prune Board, which represents prune growers and handlers, has joined the U.S. Sustainability Alliance (USSA). The member organisation for U.S. agriculture represents 25 farming, fishery and forestry organisations and supply chain partners, promoting sustainable U.S. production practices and products to a global market.

Spanning 43,000 acres of land across the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, California Prunes lead the premium prune category worldwide thanks to the craftsmanship at work in the orchards.

The Californian Prune industry generates millions for the U.S. state's economy and supports thousands of jobs across farms; many of which have been passed down through generations. While there is heritage, there is also progress, with growers embracing innovative technologies and sustainable practices that conserve energy, reduce water use, and improve the safety and quality of prune production while ensuring longevity for the industry.

In a state renowned for drought, water conservation efforts are being made across a number of orchards, with precise micro-irrigation systems significantly reducing water usage. The work done by the Mariani Family in Vacaville, for example, has saved more than eight million gallons thanks to the utilisation of a water purification plant to recycle water waste for use in the orchards.

Renewable energy is also being utilised by handlers and growers like Sandra Mitchell of the Mitchell Ranch in Yuba City, who has invested in solar arrays to provide a major source of energy for the farm.

As part of efforts to maintain nutrient-dense soil and improve irrigation efficiency, some farmers are utilising cover crops and other methods such as Marysville's Ranvir Singh, of Feather River Farms, where grasses are left to grow to help capture carbon and clean the air.

Soil health is also the focus of Yuba City's John Taylor, of Taylor Brothers Farms, who is focusing on improving prune tree health and productivity by injecting nitrogen and trialling beneficial bacteria in his soil.

Meanwhile, techniques to improve the ecosystem and habitats are being utilised widely across the orchards, including the positioning of owl boxes to encourage smart pest control, and the use of apiaries for crop pollination.

With California Prune growers working in partnership with nature, the California Prune Board and the U.S. Sustainability Alliance are keen to highlight their progress to a worldwide audience. Esther Ritson-Elliott, Director of International Marketing and Communications, California Prune Board, explains: "As part of strides towards sustainable practices, California Prune growers and handlers invest in orchard management and research that demonstrates its commitment to the planet, and the communities in which farmers operate and serve.

"The industry has implemented thoughtful and scientifically-based practices to help protect the environment while producing safe, nutritious prunes. Now, as part of the U.S. Sustainability Alliance, we aim to continue to share our knowledge and practices with our fellow members while promoting California Prunes' sustainability initiatives to a global audience."

For more information on California Prunes, visit [www.californiaprunes.net](http://www.californiaprunes.net)

**Ends**

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

### **ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA PRUNE BOARD**

The California Prune Board was established in 1952 to represent growers and handlers under the authority of the California Secretary of Food and Agriculture. California is the world's largest producer of prunes with orchards across 14 counties in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Promoting a lifetime of wellness through the enjoyment of California Prunes, the organisation leads the premium prune category with generations of craftsmanship supported by California's leading food safety and sustainability standards. [California Prunes. Prunes. For life.](http://www.californiaprunes.net)

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## **ABOUT THE U.S. SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE**

Founded in 2013, the U.S. Sustainability Alliance (USSA) is the voice of U.S. sustainable food and agricultural production. Today, it represents twenty-five farming, fishery and forestry associations and supply chain partners who exported almost \$8 billion in food and agricultural products to Europe and the UK in 2022. And that figure grows every year.

The USSA's mission is to share with our international counterparts in Europe and beyond insights into U.S. production methods, provide clear data on our world-leading sustainability programs, support commercial interests and develop export opportunities for the producers we represent.

<https://thesustainabilityalliance.us/>

### ***FOR CALIFORNIA PRUNE BOARD MEDIA ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:***

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