



## **California Almond Sustainability Program Recognized Globally by SAI Platform**

**First nut-specific program to be benchmarked at gold level equivalency**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. December 6, 2017** – The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) and Almond Board of California (ABC) announced today the outcome of a benchmarking effort with the ABC's California Almond Sustainability Program (CASP) and SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). CASP almond growing and processing practice assessments paired with the U.S. and California regulatory systems results in a FSA 2.0 Gold level equivalency.

"The California Almond Sustainability Program achieved the highest level of equivalency – Gold – with the Farm Sustainability Assessment" according to Joe Rushton, FSA Manager at SAI Platform. "Gold equivalence reflects the comprehensiveness of the Almond Board's sustainability program, coupled with applicable federal and state regulations, and demonstrates how the California Almond Sustainability Program can be used as an equivalent means of assessing sustainable practices relevant to the California Almond industry."

California Almonds are the first nut-specific program to be benchmarked to FSA 2.0, and one of only two US sustainability initiatives that achieved a "gold" level of equivalence. Almond trees thrive in California with the unique combination of a Mediterranean climate, rich soils, natural resources, talent, and infrastructure to farm almonds. More than 80% of the world's supply of almonds are grown in California.

Richard Waycott, ABC President and CEO commented that "establishing equivalency with the FSA's 'gold' level is an important step in recognizing the California Almond industry's well-established practices and commitment to being an economically, environmentally and socially responsible crop for California and the world." CASP has been a valuable tool enabling farmers to assess their own practices and confidentially compare their performance to peers. Moving forward, the industry now has a basis for exploring how the California Almond Sustainability Program can be leveraged throughout the supply chain.

"Our objective for working with SAI Platform's FSA is to increase efficiencies throughout the supply chain, from the almond orchard to customers, by increasing confidence in California Almond farmers' practices and reducing the need for redundant questionnaires," said Waycott.

The FSA 2.0 Gold equivalence provides the California Almond industry with a way to communicate on-farm practices and address stakeholder sustainability questions in a more harmonized and consistent manner.



### **About the Farm Sustainability Assessment Programme (FSA)**

First piloted in 2014, the Farm Sustainability Assessment programme (FSA) offers a simple, highly effective tool to assess, improve and communicate on-farm sustainability. Developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform, the FSA is used in 32 countries and available in 19 languages. Its design and purpose facilitates the understanding of industry-shared better management practices that improve farm performance and sustainability outcomes. Its Bronze, Silver and Gold performance levels are designed to be used at scale in the food supply chain and to mainstream sustainable agricultural practices. Read more at <http://fsatool.com/>

### **About the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform)**

Founded in 2002, the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) provides a pre-competitive environment for the food and drinks industry to address global sustainability challenges facing farms today, and in the years ahead. With a network of over 100 members and partners spanning across 35 countries around the world, we are developing the practice of sustainable agricultural tools and principles that create secure and strong agricultural supply chains, to protect the earth's resources. Our focus on beef, dairy, arable and vegetable, and fruit and nuts as well as our pioneering benchmarking tool, the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), lead the field to effective sustainable practices while delivering value to our members, farmers, their communities and consumers. Read more at [www.saiplatform.org](http://www.saiplatform.org)

### **About Almond Board of California**

Almonds from California are a natural, wholesome and quality food. The Almond Board of California promotes almonds through its research-based approach to all aspects of marketing, farming and production on behalf of the more than 6,800 almond growers and processors in California, many of whom are multi-generational family operations. Established in 1950 and based in Modesto, California, the Almond Board of California is a non-profit organization that administers a grower-enacted Federal Marketing Order under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture. For more information on the Almond Board of California or almonds, visit [almonds.com](http://almonds.com) or check out California Almonds on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#) and the [California Almonds blog](#).