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Australian nut industry achieves record \$1.2 billion at farm gate and \$1 billion in export earnings

The Australian tree nut crop has delivered an impressive \$1.2 billion at farm gate and over \$1 billion to the Australian economy in export earnings in 2015 and this is only set to continue, announced the Australian Nut Industry Council (ANIC) today.

These latest figures firmly cement the tree nut industry's position as one of Australia's largest horticultural industries and by far the largest horticultural export, with the exponential growth being driven by high nut prices and increasing global demand from health-conscious consumers (motivated by the growing body of research around the health benefits of nut consumption).

Tree nut production in Australia is sustainable, innovative, mechanized, internationally competitive and involves significant value-adding. ANIC Chairman Jolyon Burnett says the Australian tree nut industry is looking forward to even more growth, with at least 4.5 million new trees to be planted over the next three years, placing the industry in a commanding position to capitalise on the growing global demand for nuts.

"All tree nuts are reporting strong interest in plantings for the coming years," says Mr. Burnett. "These trees will be close to full production by 2020, further driving the volume of Australian tree nuts available for sale."

The 'powerhouse' of the Australian nut industry, almonds, will see 5000ha of new plantings per year over the next three years. They are supported by walnuts (who will plant over 400ha per year for the next four years), pistachios (who will see over 20,000 new trees in the ground in 2016) and hazelnuts and chestnuts who are continuing to expand through existing growers planting new trees and new entrants to the industry. Further north, the macadamia industry is also enjoying the industry profitability, with 1500ha of new plantings already underway, and the pecan industry is about to embark on the most significant plantings since the 1970s.

"With our crops being counter-seasonal to the northern hemisphere nut producing nations, Australia offers the freshest nuts for six months of the year" says Mr. Burnett. "This, combined with the high quality of Australian nuts places us in a prime position to capitalise on growing demand."

Export markets are a key focus for several of the Australian tree nuts industries, namely almonds, macadamias, walnuts and pecans. Small quantities of chestnuts are also exported into niche markets. Mechanisms such as free trade agreements that reduce or eliminate tariff trade barriers into our markets are vital. "The Australian nut industry has always been export focused with markets in over 40 countries around the world," says Mr. Burnett.



This next phase of expansion of the industry is not without its challenges, ANIC reports. To continue to be globally competitive, we must continue to invest in research and development into advanced production systems, educate and keep the consumer excited about our product and continue to develop our export markets.

“Australia has spent a decade pursuing world’s best practices and technologies and nurturing a culture of innovation,” says Mr. Burnett. “We now have to take that forward with innovative research and advanced holistic orchard management. This includes genetics, dwarfing varieties, robotics and mechanisation and managing climate variability.”

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The Australian Nut Industry Council brings together the Australian almond, chestnut, hazelnut, macadamia, pecan, pistachio and walnut industries. The tree nut industry employs around 6000 people throughout regional Australia with more than 15 million nut trees planted around the country.

<p>For more information and interviews please contact: ANIC Executive Officer – Chaseley Ross 0409 707 806 or ANIC Chair – Jolyon Burnett 0416 224 935</p>
