

Sran Family Orchards becomes first Bee Better Certified grower

KERMAN, Calif.; January 11, 2018---Sran Family Orchards, the world's largest grower of organic almonds, has long committed to sustainable farming, with flower-rich pollinator habitat an integral part of the almond orchards. This investment recently paid off when [Sran Family Orchards](#) gained certification as a [Bee Better Certified](#) grower.

"By being Bee Better Certified we are assured that we are being guided by the highest standards of the very best possible program in place for bees' future," said Jason Hickman of Sran Family Orchards.

"Because we understand the importance of bees and their diversity within the food system, we saw the need here at Sran Family Orchards to do our part in giving the bees the most beneficial diet."

"We're thrilled to welcome Sran Family Orchards to the Bee Better Certified community," said Cameron Newell, Bee Better Certified Coordinator for the [Xerces Society](#).

Bee Better Certified is the only third-party food and farming certification program in the world focused specifically on pollinator conservation. With the goal of giving bees a healthy place to live, the program was launched in June 2017 by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation in collaboration with national nonprofit organic certifier, [Oregon Tilth](#).

Jason Hickman and his team at Sran Family Orchards started their work to protect bees and other pollinators years ago. With 23.5 acres of permanent pollinator habitat and 116 acres of flowering cover crops spread strategically across their 10 ranches, they knew that Bee Better Certified would be a good fit for them.

"It was these extensive habitat plantings that allowed them to adapt so quickly and to become the very first Bee Better Certified farm," noted Newell.

Bee Better Certified's focus on habitat is unique among farm certification programs, yet compatible with any farming operation. All growers wanting to be certified are required to dedicate part of their land to flowering habitat and mitigate exposure to pesticides through a combination of preventative pest management techniques and the elimination of high-risk pesticides.

"As the first grower to achieve this certification, Sran Family Orchards has established itself as a clear leader, moving the almond industry toward a future in sustainable production," said Eric Lee-Mäder, who as the Xerces Society's Pollinator Program Co-Director has guided the development of the Bee Better Certified program.

Oregon Tilth, partner in the development of the Bee Better Certified program standards, assesses and certifies farms based on habitat created and pest management strategies that protect crop pollinators.

“The heart of any certification program is strong, credible and achievable standards,” said Oregon Tilth Certification Director Connie Karr. “Bee Better Certified is unique in how the requirements for getting certification blends together the technical know-how of Xerces with verifiable and accessible farm production practices. Sran Family Orchards demonstrates how holistic, systems-based thinking on farms can lead to farm resilience and success.”

Bee Better Certified was developed with the support of an advisory board comprised of experts in the fields of agriculture, certification, pesticide risk mitigation, pollinator research, retail and sustainable sourcing. Startup funding was received through the Conservation Innovation Grant program run by U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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About Bee Better Certified

Bee Better Certified is creating better places for bees. The program works with farmers to create, restore, and protect habitat for pollinators. Bee Better Certified farms contain flower-rich habitats that are protected from pesticides. To learn more, visit beebettercertified.org.

Bee Better Certified™ is a trademark of the Xerces Society, Inc.

For information about creating pollinator habitat on farms, visit <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/>

About the Xerces Society

The Xerces Society is a nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat. Established in 1971, the Society is a trusted source for science-based information and advice. We collaborate with people and institutions at all levels and our work to protect pollinators encompasses all landscapes. Our team draws together experts from the fields of habitat restoration, entomology, botany, and conservation biology with a single focus—protecting the life that sustains us. To learn more about our work, visit www.xerces.org.

About Oregon Tilth

Oregon Tilth is a leading national nonprofit certifier, educator, and advocate for organic agriculture and products since 1974. Our mission to make our agriculture biologically sound and socially equitable requires us to find practical ways to tackle big challenges. We advance this mission to balance the needs of people and planet through focus on certification, conservation, policy, and the marketplace. For more on our mission and services, visit www.tilth.org.

About Sran Family Orchards

Since the 1950s, Sran Family Orchards has been focused on growing quality products and developing innovative processes. With roots as family farmers, we understand the unique needs of the grower, and have built this business model and a processing plant designed to serve those needs. Sran Family

Orchards is the largest grower of organic almonds. This share of the market provides us a distinctive perspective and exciting opportunities to lead the way in modern processing techniques. With our system, we take almonds from shell to shelf while maintaining the highest quality product and providing the best value to the grower. For more about Sran Family Orchards, visit www.sranfamilyorchards.com.