



CENTRAL VALLEY AGRICULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

## APRIL 2026 FIELD REPORT

Published end of March · For April planning & operations

- ◆ ALMOND HULL SPLIT AUG TARGET ◆ PISTACHIO BLOOM ACTIVE ◆ WHEAT PRICES FIRMING
- ◆ COTTON PLANTING WINDOW OPENS ◆ NEW: SOLUTION GYPSUM + HUMIC ACID

SECTION 1

### CROP STATUS & GROWING SEASON

April is one of the highest-leverage months in the Central Valley — nearly every commodity is in a critical growth phase simultaneously. Temperatures warming into the 70–80°F range, soil moisture from winter rains, and long daylight hours combine to drive explosive biomass accumulation. Watch irrigation timing closely as evapotranspiration climbs rapidly.

#### ALMONDS

NUT SET

**Petal fall complete. Jackets dropping.** Hull and shell development in full swing — this is the most water-sensitive period of the season. Confirm you hit pollination adequately; small nut counts should be identified now. **Watch for navel orangeworm egg lay** and continue NOW mite monitoring. Confirm irrigation scheduling for hull split push starting in May.

#### PISTACHIOS

BLOOM / POLLINATION

**Peak bloom mid-April.** Wind-driven pollen transfer from male to female trees is occurring now — avoid any orchard disturbance. 2026 is shaping up as an "on-year" in the alternate-bearing cycle; yield potential is elevated. Monitor for **Botryosphaeria panicle & shoot blight**. Irrigation should be minimal during bloom to avoid soil cracking near root zone.

#### WALNUTS

CATKIN / BUD SWELL

**Chandler and Howard varieties breaking bud.** Catkin elongation underway — critical window for codling moth first flight egg deposits. Deploy degree-day traps **now**. Watch for walnut blight (*Xanthomonas*) if late rains hit in April. Verify adequate chill hours were accumulated this winter; any deficit could mean uneven leafout and reduced fruit set.

#### WINE & TABLE GRAPES

BUD BREAK / EARLY SHOOT

**Bud break to 2–4 inch shoot growth.** Frost risk persists through mid-April — monitor overnight temps closely. This is the most frost-vulnerable period. Begin **powdery mildew** spray program at 0.5-inch shoot. Table grape Coachella Valley harvest ramping; SJV vineyards in early growth stage. Deficit irrigation strategy should be locked in now.

#### KIWIS

SHOOT GROWTH / PRE-BLOOM

**Rapid vegetative shoot growth phase.** Training and tying new canes is a priority task this month. Begin thinning overcrowded fruiting canes. Pollinator bee hive placement should be scheduled — **bloom is 3–5 weeks out**. Botrytis pressure rises with April fog events; monitor canopy microclimate closely. Drip or micro irrigation ramping up.

#### CITRUS

BLOOM / PETAL FALL

**Orange and navel bloom peak in April.** Fragrant orchards signal the brief but critical window for fruit set. Regulate irrigation to **mild stress** leading into bloom, then ease off at full petal drop. Monitor for citrus thrips during fruit set. Asian Citrus Psyllid (HLB vector) monitoring remains a top priority — report any suspicious symptoms to CDFA immediately.

#### COTTON

PRE-PLANT / PLANTING

**Soil temps need to hit 65°F at 4-inch depth** — typically achieved mid-to-late April in Kern and Kings counties. Get final pre-plant herbicide applications done. Soil prep and bed shaping should be complete. Confirm seed variety and treatment selections. Planting window generally opens last 10 days of April. **Wait for stable soil temps** to avoid chilling injury.

## WHEAT (WINTER)

JOINTING / HEADING

**Stem elongation to early head emergence.** This is the highest-yield-impact period for nitrogen. Apply final top-dress N if not done in March. Scout heavily for **stripe rust and powdery mildew** — fungicide application window is tight at flag leaf through heading. Aphid populations can build fast in warm April weather. Check soil moisture at depth; deep roots require profile fill.

SECTION 2

## APRIL FERTILIZER REQUIREMENTS

April is peak demand season for most crops. Rapid growth means nutrient uptake curves are steep — timing and placement are critical. Fertigate where possible to match uptake to demand. Soil and tissue testing from March should be guiding your rates.

CROP	PRIMARY NUTRIENTS	MICRONUTRIENTS / NOTES	TIMING & METHOD
<b>Almonds</b>	N: 40–60 lbs/ac total season — fertigate split doses through July. K: critical post-petal fall for hull sizing. P: minimal if soil test adequate.	Zinc & Boron foliar spray at petal fall <b>HIGH</b> . Calcium foliar for shell integrity.	Begin split fertigation every 10–14 days via drip. First big K push now through May.
<b>Pistachios</b>	Minimal during bloom — avoid high N until bloom is complete. Post-bloom K & Ca become priority.	Do NOT apply foliar during active bloom. Zinc correction if leaf tissue deficient. <b>HIGH</b>	Hold N & heavy fertigation during peak bloom. Resume aggressive program post-petal fall.
<b>Walnuts</b>	N: 80–100 lbs/ac for the season — deliver 30% of total in April via fertigation. Potassium demand increases as catkins extend.	Zinc critical for walnut — foliar Zn at catkin stage. Manganese if deficient per tissue test. <b>MED</b>	Fertigation via micro-sprinklers or drip. First 30% N dose applied now.
<b>Grapes</b>	N: 30–50 lbs/ac season total — apply 40% of N in April as shoots push hard. K demand begins at 4-inch shoot.	Boron foliar at pre-bloom critical for fruit set. <b>HIGH</b> Zinc & Magnesium via foliar if tissue shows deficiency.	Fertigation and/or dry broadcast. Foliar micro sprays before bloom (not during).
<b>Kiwis</b>	High N demand during shoot growth — 40 lbs/ac N in April–May window. Potassium essential for vine structure.	Boron & Calcium foliar ahead of bloom. <b>HIGH</b> Magnesium via fertigation if pale leaf color noted.	Split fertigations every 2 weeks. Foliar nutrients 2–3 weeks before first bloom.
<b>Citrus</b>	N: moderate — 20–25 lbs/ac in April split dose. Avoid excess N at bloom (reduces fruit set). Ca & Mg important.	Zinc & Manganese foliar post-petal fall. <b>MED</b> Iron chelate if chlorosis evident in young leaves.	Fertigation. No heavy N during peak bloom; resume at petal fall.
<b>Cotton</b>	Pre-plant: P & K incorporated if soil test calls for it. At emergence: starter N (15–20 lbs/ac) to establish seedlings.	Zinc pre-plant or in-furrow. <b>MED</b> Boron pre-plant on deficient soils.	Pre-plant broadcast & incorporate. In-furrow starter at planting.
<b>Wheat</b>	Final top-dress N: 30–40 lbs/ac UAN or urea at flag leaf if not done in March. <b>HIGH</b> Sulfur 10–15 lbs/ac if not in base program.	Foliar Mn & Zn if flag leaf tissue shows deficiency. Manganese particularly important on alkaline soils.	Ground or aerial application at flag leaf (Zadoks GS 37–39). UAN 28% via streamer bars.

**Advisor Note:** April soil temperatures and tissue tests from late March should drive final rate decisions. Water stress during fertigation events reduces uptake efficiency by 30–50%. Always confirm irrigation scheduling before injecting — nutrients sitting dry in soil don't benefit your crop.

Commodity prices as of late March 2026. Directional indicators reflect near-term trend only. Trade policy and tariff uncertainty continues to create volatility — consult your broker before making major marketing decisions.

## ALMONDS

**\$1.30–\$1.55**

per lb · handler price

↑ **Firming.** 2025 crop size was down slightly, supporting stronger prices vs. prior 2 years. Export demand from India and EU showing modest recovery. Tariff risk remains a headwind for China shipments.

## PISTACHIOS

**\$2.00–\$2.40**

per lb · in-shell equiv.

→ **Steady.** 2026 "on-year" crop could push supply higher later this year. Current prices firm on strong domestic and Middle East demand. Lock in forward contracts for 30–40% of anticipated crop.

## WALNUTS

**\$0.55–\$0.75**

per lb · grower price

→ **Challenging.** Persistent supply overhang and trade friction with China keeping prices depressed. Cost-of-production squeeze is real. Diversify buyers and explore value-added channels if possible.

## GRAPES

**\$250–\$450**

per ton · varietal dependent

↓ **Soft on wine.** Wine grape crush contracts under pressure; some acreage being fallowed. Table grapes from Coachella starting — early variety premium intact. Focus on contracted vs. open-market position.

## KIWIS

**\$42–\$46**

per 9kg container

→ **Steady.** LA terminal market showing Hayward at \$42–\$46 per 9kg (late March data). Gold/yellow kiwi premium remains. U.S. domestic production small vs. NZ/Chile imports. Quality & timing drive premium access.

## CITRUS

**\$8–\$14**

per 40-lb carton

↑ **Improving.** Navel season winding down; Valencia coming on. Tighter supply from Florida HLB losses supporting CA prices. Organic premium strong at 25–35% above conventional. Pack-out quality critical.

## COTTON

**\$0.68–\$0.73**

per lb · NY futures basis

→ **Uncertain.** Prices in a narrow band with trade policy creating noise. USDA Feb 2026 report shows cotton under price pressure. Check your crop insurance coverage levels before committing planting acres.

## WHEAT

**\$5.40–\$5.70**

per bushel · July contract

↑ **Slight Firming.** Dry weather in winter wheat states pushing HRW up. USDA March 2026 reports show Soft White Winter up \$2/ton to \$251/ton. U.S. exports forecast at 900M bushels — 5-year high. Modest optimism warranted.

**Tariff Watch:** Trade policy under the current administration continues to affect all export-dependent commodities. Almonds, pistachios, and walnuts all have significant China exposure. Monitor USDA trade updates weekly and maintain flexibility in your marketing plan. Consult your commodity broker — this newsletter is for informational purposes only and does not constitute financial advice.

April's rapid crop growth and rising soil temperatures make it the ideal window to address calcium and sulfur deficiencies before they limit yield. This month we're spotlighting our **solution-grade soil amendment program** — designed for efficient fertigation delivery through your existing drip or micro-spray system.

SOIL AMENDMENT · SOLUTION GRADE

## Solution Grade

### Gypsum

$CaSO_4$  · Calcium Sulfate in suspension

CALCIUM (CA)

~22%

SULFUR (S)

~17%

FORM

**Liquid Suspension**

APPLICATION

**Fertigation / Drip**

**The workhorse amendment for Central Valley soils.** Solution-grade gypsum delivers calcium and sulfur directly to the root zone through your irrigation system — no dry spreading, no incorporation equipment needed. Ideal for breaking up sodic and high-sodium soils, improving water infiltration, and building structural soil tilth ahead of the hot season.

- ✓ Improves soil structure & water penetration on heavy clay and alkali ground
- ✓ Supplies plant-available Ca during critical nut sizing & fruit set windows
- ✓ Sulfur source for N efficiency — reduces ammonia volatilization
- ✓ Compatible with most liquid fertilizer programs
- ✓ No pH spike — neutral salt, will not raise soil pH

ALMONDS

PISTACHIOS

WALNUTS

GRAPES

CITRUS

COTTON

WHEAT

SOIL AMENDMENT · SOLUTION GRADE

★ NEW PRODUCT

## Solution Grade Gypsum

### + Humic Acid

$CaSO_4$  enhanced with concentrated humates

CALCIUM (CA)

~20%

SULFUR (S)

~16%

HUMIC ACID

**Added Concentrate**

APPLICATION

**Fertigation / Drip**

**Our newest product — gypsum and humic acid working together.** Humic acid enhances the performance of solution gypsum by improving cation exchange capacity, stimulating microbial activity, and acting as a chelating agent that increases nutrient availability. The combination delivers the soil-conditioning power of gypsum with the biological and chemical benefits of humates in a single pass through your system.

- ✓ Amplifies Ca & S uptake efficiency through humate chelation
- ✓ Stimulates soil biology & organic matter breakdown
- ✓ Improves root architecture and root mass development
- ✓ Enhances CEC — soils hold nutrients better between irrigations
- ✓ Ideal for tired, compacted, or low-organic-matter ground
- ✓ Single product — fewer injection events, less labor

ALMONDS

PISTACHIOS

WALNUTS

GRAPES

KIWIS

CITRUS

COTTON

FEATURE / BENEFIT

SOLUTION GYPSUM

GYPSUM + HUMIC ACID

Calcium & Sulfur delivery via drip/micro

✓ Yes

✓ Yes

<b>Breaks up sodic / high-Na soils</b>	✓ Yes	✓ Yes — enhanced
<b>Improves water infiltration rate</b>	✓ Yes	✓ Yes — enhanced
<b>Humic acid / biological stimulation</b>	— No	✓ Yes
<b>Chelation of Ca, Fe, Mn, Zn</b>	— No	✓ Yes
<b>Increases CEC &amp; organic matter activity</b>	— No	✓ Yes
<b>Stimulates root development</b>	Indirect via Ca	✓ Direct & indirect
<b>Best use scenario</b>	Ca/S correction; sodic soils; routine maintenance	Low-OM soils; compacted ground; high-performance nutrition programs

**April Application Timing:** Both products are ideally applied in early-to-mid April before crop water demand peaks. Solution gypsum is most effective when injected during the first 30–40% of an irrigation set to carry Ca and S into the active root zone. Ask us about recommended rates by crop and soil type — every field is different.

## LET'S BUILD YOUR PROGRAM

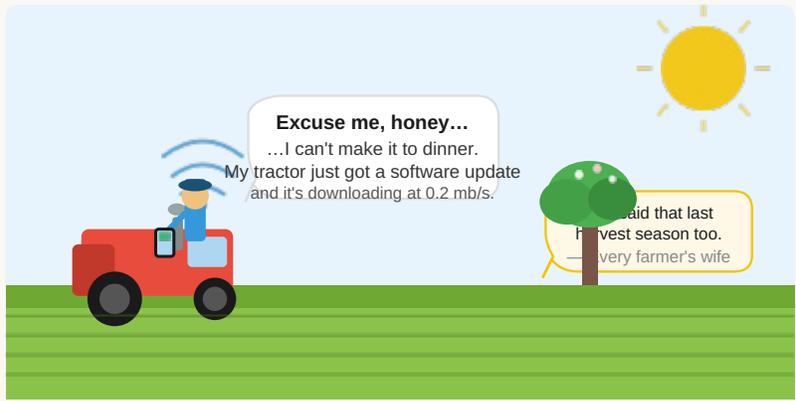
Not sure which product fits your ground? Start with the data. We offer soil sampling, lab analysis, amendment quotes, and fully custom blend programs tailored to your crop, your soil, and your budget. One call gets you answers.

- SOIL SAMPLING
- LAB ANALYSIS
- AMENDMENT QUOTES
- CUSTOM BLENDS
- FERTIGATION PLANNING
- SOLUTION GRADE PRODUCTS

CONTACT US TODAY

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*"Modern farming: same tractor, same field, same problem — now with better WiFi excuses."*

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