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State Farm Service Agency Director Connie Conway named 2020 Almond Champion of the Year

Modesto, CA - - Connie Conway, Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in California, has been honored as the Almond Alliance of California's 2020 Almond Champion of the Year for the agency's outstanding efforts in assisting almond growers with the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP.)

The Almond Champion of the Year Award is presented annually to those who have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in education, coalition building, partnerships and promoting legislation and policies that encourage the advancement and protection of California agriculture and the California almond industry.

The CFAP consists of direct payments to almond growers for losses suffered as a result of COVID-19 as well as disruptions to the supply chain. The Almond Alliance advocated for federal funding for the original program and the subsequent program known as CFAP 2. To date, the California almond community has received over \$125 million through the programs.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers the funding and provides technical assistance to potential applicants. Almond Alliance Chair Mike Curry praised Conway for her leadership in providing access to the program. "Some of these programs can be incredibly technical and complex. Connie and her team have been very attentive and worked with our industry members above and beyond what would normally be expected," he explained. "Her team has conducted numerous educational webinars for our members and addressed literally hundreds of questions about the program and how it works. Her leadership and commitment to excellence in providing this assistance during these unprecedented times is truly appreciated."

Prior to her appointment, Conway ran her own consulting business, focusing on strategic planning, business development, and government relations services. She also served as an assemblywoman for the California State Legislature where she served as Minority Leader and on the Agriculture, Transportation, Labor and Health Committees. She also served as a member of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors.

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About the Almond Alliance of California

The Almond Alliance of California (AAC) is a trusted non-profit organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of the California almond community. California almonds generate more than \$21 billion in economic revenue and directly contribute more than \$11 billion to the state's total economy. California's top agricultural export, almonds create approximately 104,000 jobs statewide, over 97,000 in the Central Valley, which suffers from chronic unemployment. The AAC is dedicated to educating state legislators, policy makers and regulatory officials about the California almond community. As a membership-based organization, our members include almond processors, hullers/shellers, growers and allied businesses. Through workshops, newsletters, conferences, social media and personal meetings, AAC works to raise awareness, knowledge and provide a better understanding about the scope, size, value and sustainability of the California almond community.

For more information on the Almond Alliance, visit <https://almondalliance.org/> or check out the Almond Alliance on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.