



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA's intention to purchase \$29.7 million walnuts for federal food nutrition assistance programs. Vilsack said "today's announcement will help mitigate further downward prices, stabilize market conditions, stimulate the economy, and provide high quality, nutritious food to recipients of our nutrition programs." Along with walnuts, this purchase also includes turkey, pork & lamb.

This purchase should equate to the equivalent of about 20,000 in-shell tons of product and if completed would result in a much reduced carry-in to the new 2009 crop. The California Walnut Board made the following announcement in a press release dated March 31, 2009:

### **USDA Adds Walnuts to Government Sponsored Meals**

**FOLSOM, California (March 31, 2009)** – Today, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced its decision to purchase walnuts as part of the School Lunch Buy, a government sponsored feeding program.

"This purchase represents welcomed support from the USDA, making walnuts available for the first time in several years, and will help distribute the industry's record crop of 434,000 short tons, exceeding the previous record crop of 355,000 short tons set in 2005" says California Walnut Board Chairman and Public Member, Jerome B. Siebert, PhD.

"Our industry is proud to provide a tasty and nutritious product to school children and others in-need throughout the United States, particularly at a time when so many people are seeking assistance," says Dennis A. Balint, Executive Director of the California Walnut Board. Unique among nuts, walnuts contain the highest amount of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) the plant based omega-3 fatty acid essential to the human body. In addition, a one-ounce serving of walnuts provides 4 grams of protein, 2 grams of fiber and many antioxidants (13.126 mmol/gram) including ellagic acid, melatonin and gamma-tocopherol.[1]

California harvests 99% of the walnuts available in the United States and the majority of the world supply. The industry is comprised of over 4,800 walnut growers and 58 processors, most of which are family businesses working in the fertile California Central Valley. Walnut trees can produce quality nuts for 75 to 100 years and orchards are often passed down from generation to generation.

The California Walnut Board was established in 1948 to represent the walnut growers and handlers of California. The CWB is funded by mandatory assessments of the handlers and is governed by a Federal Walnut Marketing Order. The Board promotes usage of walnuts in the United States through publicity and educational programs as well as funding for walnut production and post-harvest research.

[1] Please note: One ounce of walnuts provides 18g of total fat, 2.5g of monounsaturated fat, 13.4g of polyunsaturated fat, including 2.6 grams of alpha linolenic acid - the plant based omega-3.  
([http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/cgi-bin/list\\_nut\\_edit.pl](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/cgi-bin/list_nut_edit.pl))

Exerts taken from the California Walnut Board's website [www.walnuts.org](http://www.walnuts.org)