

P.I. NEWS

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Funding Grants For Women's Leadership Development

Women & Leadership Australia (WLA) is administering a national initiative to support the development of female leaders across Australia's agriculture sector.

The initiative is providing women with grants to enable participation in a range of leadership development programs.

The leadership development programs are part-time and delivered nationally via WLA's blended learning model. Scholarship funding is strictly limited and will be awarded based on a set of selection criteria being met.

Expressions of Interest

Find out more and register your interest by completing the Expression of Interest form here prior to September 15th: <http://www.wla.edu.au/farmingagriculture.html>

2017 CHILL

Chill in July was not as good as June. Sunraysia and Renmark have dropped back towards average. Mitigation for lack of chill may be required in some areas. At the end of the July Chill report there was a probabilities table indicating the chance of each areas receiving the necessary chill by the 15th August - decision day for taking mitigating action.

CROP PREDICTION:

Following recent orchard visits Dr Jianlu Zhang has made the following prediction for 2018:

"I estimate over 2200 tonnes but I do not think 2400 tonnes."

"Having measured trunk increments from the mechanical pruning trial the increases are clear."

We will follow the season to see how accurate the prediction is!!

R&D

Two new R&D projects are being implemented through the Pistachio Collective Industry Fund (CIF) program.

Request For Proposals (RFP) have been released by Horticulture Innovation Australia Limited for the following:

- PS16000: Understanding and managing insects on pistachio orchards
- PS16002: Pathogens and other factors contributing to dark staining on pistachio shells

PGA will report further on these once the projects have officially commenced.

AGM/Symposium

The 2017 Annual General Meeting and Symposium will be held on Thursday 21st September at Waikerie, SA.

More details to follow.

Nominations for Executive Committee members are being called so if you are interested/willing please contact Trevor Ranford on 0417 809 172 or e-mail: sahort@bigpond.com



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Pistachio Growers' Association



OVERSEAS TRADE:

India: Pistachio Declines - Fall in Demand

New Delhi, Jul 26 (PTI) Pistachio prices fell by Rs 5 per kg in the national capital today largely due to fall in demand from retailers and stockists amid sufficient stocks.

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Besides, increased arrivals from overseas markets too put pressure on pistachio prices.

Pistachio (hairati and peshawari) were down by Rs 5 each to settle at Rs 1,375-1,445 and Rs 1,495-1,595 per kg, respectively.

Traders said fall in demand from retailers and stockists against increased arrivals, mainly led to the fall in pistachio prices.

USA/Iran: US Dept. Promoting Iran Trade Despite Trump Opposition

The US Department of Agriculture is promoting increased trade with Iran, despite the clear opposition of the Trump White House, American news website The Washington Free Beacon reported.

A July report released by USDA praises the Obama administration's efforts to open trade with Iran following the landmark nuclear agreement that dropped major sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The report is being viewed by administration insiders and regional experts as the product of efforts by the former Obama administration to promote positive propaganda about Iran to boost support for the Iran deal.

These sources viewed the report as a sign that Trump administration agencies, including USDA and even the State Department, are taking increasingly rogue action contradicting official White House policy on a range of key issues.

The USDA report, which touts renewed prospects for trade between the United States and Iran in light of the Iran deal, outlines "the potential for new opportunities for US producers in the long run".

The report further states that the nuclear deal is an opportunity to help Iran engage with international markets, including those in the United States, to sell products such as pistachios and caviar.

"The lifting of the US import ban on Iranian agricultural products, including pistachios and caviar, [represents] a large new market for Iran's most valuable export crops," according to the USDA report. "Arguably as important, however, was the removal of certain US 'secondary sanctions', penalties levied on foreign persons and companies seeking to do business in Iran, particularly in its finance, banking, insurance, and energy sectors."

The report noted that this significant change allows Iran to attract foreign investment, import equipment and adopt new technologies, all of which bear on Iran's agricultural production and consumption.

The report further claims that the United States could face competition from Iran with regard to the pistachio market and urges the American market to brace for such a scenario.

"One example of the JCOA's [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] possible effect on US producers relates to pistachios," the report states. "With relaxed import restrictions from Iran, US producers potentially face new competition from the world's largest pistachio producer and second largest pistachio exporter. Decades of sanctions and trade restrictions have pushed Iran out of the large US and European markets, but news reports have suggested that Iranian pistachio imports could resurge."

Unshelled Pistachio Exports



Close to 460 tons of unshelled pistachio worth 223.5 billion rials (\$5.9 million) were exported from Iran during the first month of the current fiscal year (March 21-April 20), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration.

The main export destinations for the delicacy over the period were Germany, the UAE, Lebanon, India, Turkey, Italy, Ukraine, Japan, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Jordan, China, Switzerland and Qatar.

OVERSEAS NEWS:

Thousands Storm Pistachio Jungles in Samangan



Thousands of people have illegally started harvesting pistachio nuts from government forests in northern Samangan province before reaching maturity, an official said Saturday.

The pistachio jungles in Samangan are protected by local councils in coordination with the provincial and livestock department until the fruit ripens in early August. After a specific period, people start collecting pistachios from jungles.

Mohammad Asif Qasimi, forests manager at the Samangan agriculture and livestock department, said around 10,000 people from different areas of the province had gathered around pistachio jungles over the past 10 days stormed the trees on Friday night. He said forest guards were limited and could not prevent the large number of people from attacking the jungle.

Qasimi said pistachio jungles were national asset and collecting the nuts illegally was a crime. He said harvesting pistachios before reaching maturity led to a 50 percent decrease in the yield. A ripened pistachio has more weight compared to the un-ripened.

Mohammad Aslam, a resident of Takht-i-Rustum village of Aibak, the provincial capital, said: "When I heard the pistachio is ripening and people prepared to storm its jungles, I along with eight other persons came by our car near the jungles then three days ago and we started collecting the fruit last evening when other people did so."

He said he collected 35 kilograms of pistachio. Zargul, a resident of Shalakto area of Aibak city, said he collected 70 kilograms of pistachio from Hazara Mazari Jungles. He said a kilogram of pistachio cost 1,000 afghanis in Aibak city.

According to the provincial agriculture and livestock department, more than 21,000 acres of pistachio jungles are available in Samangan. Samangan pistachio is exported to India and European countries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: MENAFN - Pajhwok Afghan News

ORCHARD MANAGEMENT:

WANT BETTER PISTACHIO FRUIT SET? REDUCE ORCHARD DUST DURING BLOOM



Higher levels of orchard dust during bloom can reduce pistachio yield set.

Dusty orchard conditions during the pistachio bloom period could be a reason for poor fruit set in pistachios.

University of California, Davis researchers Lu Zhang and Louise Ferguson are conducting a study on the effects of dust, and dust mixed with herbicide and pesticide residues, on pistachio flowers during the bloom period. This includes dust generated inside the orchard, and dust blown into orchards.

With this wind-pollinated species, the male staminate and female pistillate inflorescences are panicles composed of hundreds of individual small flowers. Inflorescence buds begin to swell in late March and into the first two weeks of April when the 100-300 flowers per panicle are pollinated and set.

The florets of male and female flowers have no petals. The stigmas and anthers are fully exposed to air and vulnerable to environmental conditions.

Zhang reports that a successful fruit set for pistachio is determined by stigma condition, pollen tube health, and ovule longevity. Preliminary research in 2016 found that dust inhibits pistachio pollination; causing the flower stigma to wilt. Using a scanning electron microscope to see the effects of dust on pistachio flowers, Zhang and Ferguson found dust alone caused stigmas to wilt.

A mixture of dust, pesticide, and herbicide residue on the flowers also caused the disappearance of the papilla cells of the stigmas. Their preliminary study, says Zhang, suggests that the residues of herbicides and pesticides found on the ground in orchards are carried with dust, and during bloom it can cause unsuccessful fertilization.

They did not do a large scale trial in the field to determine which day during bloom that dust most adversely affects fruit set.

The main target for this year's study will be determining how dust/toxic dust influences pollination, fertilization and parthenocarpy (seedless fruit). Zhang notes that he and Ferguson are checking pollen tube growth and possible dust movement in vivo and pollination-related hormone levels in flowers.

Zhang says specialized instruments made by the Amphasy Company were used to determine the dust level of the pollen and dust mixtures used in the hand pollination of pistachio flowers. To measure the natural dust level in the field, he says dust was collected from sticky tape attached to trees. Dust levels were also checked by microscope.

The 2016 trial included bagging Kerman pistachio flowers which were hand pollinated on three successive days with dust, pollen, dust and pollen, and dust mixtures during bloom. Zhang says the findings suggest that nut set and production were extremely low in clusters receiving only dust, compared to clusters receiving only pollen, plus pollen and dust mixtures.

The production of the clusters receiving dust was only 32 percent in nut count and 38 percent in nut weight compared to clusters with applied pollen. The higher percentage of blanks in the unpollinated control confirmed observations of fruit development without fertilization as the more common reason for blanking.

Extremely dry conditions during the bloom period (except for this year) can cause high amounts of dust generated by equipment, including flail mowers. Zhang says avoiding work on orchard floors, wetting middles of rows, or spreading mulch in the middles can help minimize in-orchard dust during bloom.

He believes all varieties of pistachio are affected similarly by dust, regardless of their bloom period. Even earlier blooming varieties, including Kaleghouchi, Golden Hills, and Lost Hills, are no more than one week earlier than the dominant cultivar Kerman.

TRIED-AND-TRUE, NEW WAYS TO KEEP PESKY BIRDS OUT OF PISTACHIO ORCHARDS



You are not alone when scouting your pistachio crop. Chances are scout birds are busily scoping out the maturing crop, ready to call in the rest of the flock to feed and put a dent in yields.

The primary bird pests in pistachios are members of the Corvidae family, including crows and ravens.

"They will begin to work the trees at hull spilt and can do a lot of damage in a hurry," said Tim Peltzer of Peltzer Farm Management in Tulare County, Calif.

In the Pistachio Production Manual, University of California specialists Louise Ferguson and David Haviland note regular monitoring of pistachio orchards helps determine when damage starts so control efforts can be taken.

Observing bird movement in the orchard also helps detect the source of the bird invasions, and scare tactics to be initiated before feeding patterns become well established.

Scout birds often fly in search of food sources early in the morning and return to roosting areas to guide the flock to the feed. If scout birds are frightened away, the flock will choose another food source.

Peltzer, other growers, and farm managers report different hazing or scare tactics used to keep crows and other pesky birds from feeding on pistachio nuts.

These include workers armed with shotguns, recorded distress calls, or propane-powered cannon guns as common crow deterrents. The consistency in tactics usually pays off. Convincing scout birds that harassment will continue can send them searching for food elsewhere.

Peltzer said, "Crows are smart. If they learn we will be actively trying to keep them from feeding in our orchards they will choose to feed elsewhere."

Roving shooters and distress calls via audio speakers in the orchard are two methods he uses. Shooters have been effective. Peltzer said the crows now recognize the shooters' pickup truck in the orchard and leave the area knowing that shooting will commence soon.

Playing back recorded distress calls has also been effective for the grower. Speakers are placed higher than male pistachio trees and used through harvest time. Newer versions of distress calls can target specific bird species.

The generated noise affects communication between the birds, causing the flying pests to leave the area. Propane cannons, programmed to discharge at regular intervals, have been used yet some counties have use restrictions based on noise complaints.

Peltzer said some growers simply take their chances with crows and production losses. Certain areas where pistachios can be planted are attractive to crows, including power lines crossing the property.

Companies which specialize in urban bird removal are now considering agricultural applications with some success in pistachios and wine grape crops.

Rick Williams of New Jersey-based Flock Free say their bird control products aim to relocate birds and train them to stay away from a particular crop. The company has a 'hazer' method for agricultural areas.

This method uses dispensers that release methyl anthranilate into the air where birds fly into an orchard. The company says the product is actually a food product which irritates a nerve in the bird's beak when inhaled.

"They learn to associate pain with the location and will avoid it," Williams said.

MARKETING:

The World's Largest Integrated Pistachio Grower-Processor, Creative and Wide-Ranging Marketing Campaigns

Following the biggest crop ever for the world's largest integrated pistachio grower-processor, creative and wide-ranging marketing campaigns have led to a "record level of brand awareness" amongst U.S. consumers.

Wonderful Pistachios has shelled out big to achieve that recognition. Speaking with *Fresh Fruit Portal*, the company's vice president of marketing Adam Cooper said the most recent marketing campaign was valued at US\$55 million.

"We've become the fastest-growing snack nut and actually the fastest-growing salty snack overall," he said.

Marketing included tongue-in-cheek videos with 3D cartoon character Ernie the Elephant, a dedicated health campaign and promotions with National Football League (NFL) star Richard Sherman.

"For Ernie we've seen a lot of success for him compared to past programs we've done... with Ernie we had really good recall and people actually liked that campaign even more than past campaigns which is great," Cooper said.

"Most importantly to us is that it motivated people to buy pistachios specifically so we were very excited to see that, and the campaign helped us to achieve a record level of brand awareness as well as record market share.

"In the U.S. we've reached over 80% market share in the pistachio category. There's been a lot of growth this year and Wonderful alone has accounted for about 97% of all the dollar growth in pistachios."

Times Square positioning and attracting health nuts

Wonderful Pistachios is also bringing in another NFL star, Clay Matthews, and recently announced a new marketing alliance with the world's largest live entertainment company Live Nation as well as adding three new team partnerships in Major League Baseball (MLB).

More broadly, the Wonderful Company (including POM Wonderful, Wonderful Halos and other brands) has also made a new investment with billboard advertising in Times Square, New York.

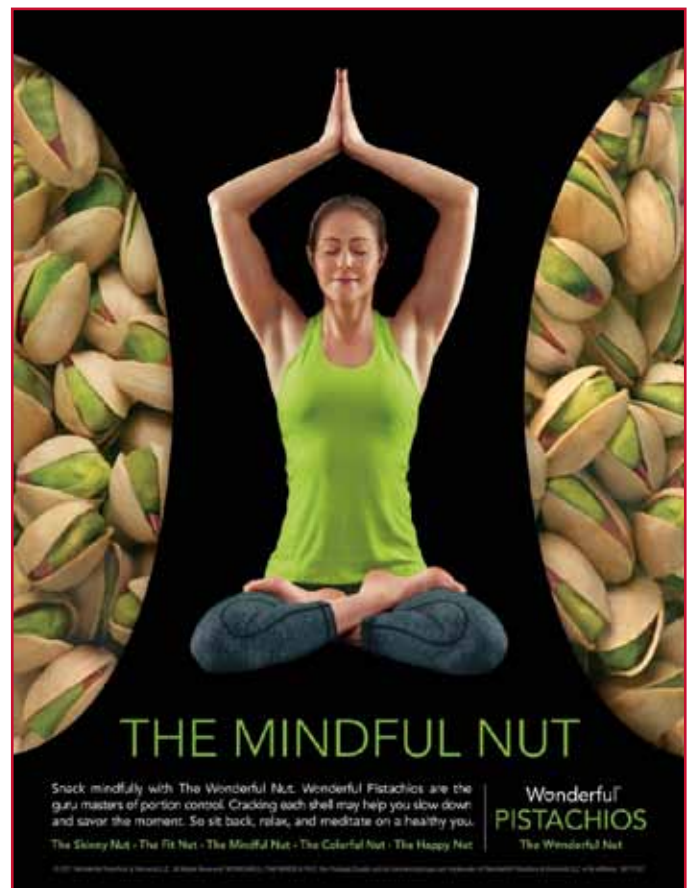
"I think it's relevant because obviously there tourists come not just from all over the country but all over the world," Cooper said.

"It's a new digital billboard which is on the building where the ball drops on New Year's Eve, so one of the most famous buildings in the world now has healthy brands talking to the locals."

In pistachios, Cooper said part of the campaign was aimed at people looking for a "fun, PC neat snack", and another component focusing on the specific health benefits of pistachios.

"The health campaign is talking to folks who are enjoying snacks while watching sports at home - so there's something for everybody which is a unique marketing challenge and opportunity for us," he said.

"It [the health campaign] started this past year but we're really doubling down on it for next year, and it's about being the "Wonderful Nut", being the fit nut, the skinny nut, the mindful nut, the colorful nut and the happy nut.



"All of those are based on the fact that Wonderful Pistachios compared to other snacks is one of the best in terms of health; it's one of the lowest in calories, one of the lowest in fat, one of the highest in protein and fiber, and of course heart-healthy," he said.

He added pistachios' green color also made them different and appealing, adding to the already strong case for health.

"We really think Wonderful Pistachios can be considered the healthiest of the nuts and we hope people will see it that way," he said.

Production gets cracking

Cooper said this past harvest was "the biggest crop we've ever had by far" for both Wonderful and the Californian industry.

"It was over 900 million pounds across the California industry and we were very well prepared for it," he said.

"We have been investing in capacity and operations and food safety for many years, knowing that this big crop was coming and it finally came.

"We went out big with this huge marketing campaign, more aggressive prices than we had in the past, and we're seeing a lot of success across the industry - in the U.S. in particular we're up over 50% in our volume and I think we see growth continuing."

After this point he clarified pistachios were alternate bearing with on- and off-cycles.

"But because there are so many pistachios coming on-line from investments made over the past decade, we're not going to have quite as big a crop but it's still going to be quite a nice-sized crop for next year," he added.

"We feel like we have one of the industry leading processes for getting nuts off the trees, both farming as well as processing, and we believe we use the most advanced technology available to process our nuts.

"We have new roasting and packaging plants that have been built just over the last five years, and we're using fuel cells and other things that are helping from a sustainability point of view."

In layman's terms, he said farming involved trucks going down the rows, hooking themselves to the trees and shaking them to catch the nuts.

"We are always looking for continuous improvement opportunities - in almonds it's a different process, the almonds fall off the tree and then we sweep them up off the ground after they've dried out, and we have a nice process where trucks go down and vacuum them up.

"But in order to minimize the dust and obviously the impact to the local environment, we have this technique of adding water to that."

He said the group was always looking for different ways to use the hulls taken off the nuts during processing, including for use in the local dairy industry as cattle feed, or using them to make energy.

And as with any conversation about sustainability in California, water is not an issue that can be ignored.

"We're certainly committed to the conservation of water for all our crops, and we're always looking for new ways to further reduce our water footprint," Cooper said.

"The biggest thing we've done is we've invested more than US\$100 million to innovate and implement more efficient ways of irrigating our orchards.

"We're doing everything we can to minimize the impact but we also want to make sure we can make these healthy snacks available to a lot of people and we need water to do that - we hope it helps people make healthier choices."

He said Wonderful Companies had 65,000 acres of pistachios and almonds, while the group also partnered with grower-partners who "adhere to the same strict standards we have".

"We're very proud of those relationships," Cooper said.

"Of the California crop we represent roughly 60-65% of the crop with all of our partners, so it's a very consolidated industry here and Wonderful is actually the leader."

Can pistachios overtake walnuts or almonds?

It felt like a far-fetched question but the response was a surprise.

"In terms of snacking occasions, pistachios right now within snack tests for example are pretty close to almonds," Cooper said.

"Of course almonds are bigger in baking and walnuts are bigger in baking as well, but in terms of snacking which is where spend most of our time and focus, pistachios are certainly already ahead of walnuts and really approaching the size of almonds in terms of dollar spending.

"We hope, and we're always striving, to make Wonderful Pistachios the preferred snack nut."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: www.freshfruitportal.com



RECIPES:

Chocolate Mousse with Pistachios



If you've tried to make chocolate mousse and ended up with a solidified mess or lumps of cooked eggs through it, don't despair because Harrington Park mum Melissa Engel can help turn your disaster into a delicious success.

Mrs Engel, 31, who runs The Sweetest Kind gourmet desserts at home, said the secret to making the perfect chocolate mousse was ensuring the eggs were at room temperature.

"It can get tricky but a few simple techniques will ensure that the mousse turns out perfect every time," Mrs Engel said.

After melting the chocolate she advises to let it cool to the same temperature as the eggs to ensure the ingredients combine to a smooth consistency.

"The biggest problem is adding the chocolate when it is too hot," she said. "This will then cook your eggs and you will have a terrible lumpy mixture. Finally, when incorporating your chocolate into your egg mixture, take your time."

Mrs Engel developed her recipe for chocolate mousse with roasted pistachios from a combination of research and trial and error. She said the chocolate mousse was one of her biggest sellers.

Looking to the future, Mrs Engel hopes to open a dessert bar one day. "I am a mother of four young kids that was looking for something that could be flexible around them," she said.

Ingredients:

- 300g good-quality dark chocolate,
- 3 eggs,
- 1/4 cup caster sugar,
- 300ml thickened cream, plus extra to serve,
- roasted pistachio, chopped.

Method:

- Melt the dark chocolate and set aside either over a double boiler or microwave.
- Place eggs and sugar in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer until the mixture is pale, thick and has doubled in volume.
- In a separate bowl, whip the cream until soft peaks form.
- Slowly and gently combine your cooled chocolate to your egg mixture with a rubber spatula.
- Carefully fold in your whipped cream to the chocolate mixture.
- Spoon or pipe the chocolate mousse into serving glasses and chill in the fridge for at least one hour.
- Top with extra whipped cream and the roasted pistachio, to serve.

Note: Roast the pistachios under a hot grill or in a frypan until they are golden brown in colour. Roasting them brings out the nutty flavour.

Classic Skirt Steak with Pistachio Chimichurri Sauce

Argentina's Independence Day celebrations and traditions may not be as loud like in the USA. Even though there are political parades to commemorate the National Day, the fireworks and pool parties aren't part of the activities of July 9. That's why we want to help you ignite the sparks in your eyes with this mouthwatering steak skirt.

Argentina is very famous for their meat, which is called "asado" in Spanish and can be a standard word for "barbecue," their Tango dance, and of course, soccer and soccer players (Lionel Messi, Diego Maradona, etc). There's so many fascinating facts about the country, but let's concentrate in a fantastic way to celebrate Argentina's Independence Day treating yourself and your loved ones to an original cookout dish.

The Skirt Steak with Pistachio Chimichurri Sauce is a spin on the classic Argentinian dish. Made with roasted and salted pistachios, the chimichurri sauce provides a good source of protein and fiber, which are two key players in reaching your daily nutrition goals.

Servings: 4 **Time:** 35 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 (1 ½ to 2lbs) skirt steak
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- ½ bunch parsley
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 cup of Wonderful Pistachios Roasted and Salted
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste

Method:

1. Season steak generously with salt and pepper. Let it stand at room temperature for 30 minutes, while you prepare the chimichurri sauce.
2. Combine the parsley, garlic, Wonderful Pistachios, red wine vinegar, salt, freshly ground pepper and ¼ cup olive oil in a food processor. Pulse until well blended but still coarse. Remove to a small bowl and stir in the remaining olive oil and red pepper flakes. Reserve at room temperature for up to 6 hours, or refrigerate if not using within that time frame.
3. Light a charcoal or gas grill or preheat a cast iron pan on the stove, over medium heat, until smoking. Grill the skirt steak over high heat (or pan fry over medium high heat) until the meat is charred on the outside, about 2-3 minutes per side for rare or until the desired temperature.
4. Transfer to a cutting board and let it rest for 10 minutes. Then, slice it across the grain and serve immediately, with the pistachio chimichurri sauce on the side!

