Vierra Brothers, Almond Orchard Application, Colusa, CA

OUTSTANDING CROP YIELD BY USING THE RAIN BIRD® CLIMATE MINDER SYSTEM

Vierra Brothers, formed by three almond growers in Maxwell, CA in 2005, achieved a remarkable yield of 2,700 lbs. per acre in 2013 from a 5-year orchard. This orchard is located on the west side of the Sacramento Valley, where this is a pretty strong result. Bob Vierra attributes the majority of this success to their use of the Rain Bird ClimateMinder soil moisture monitoring system to manage their irrigation.

By accurately controlling the timing and the amount of irrigation, Vierra Brothers is able to manage the deficit irrigation process properly, which is very important to maximize the yield by obtaining optimum kernel size and achieving more uniform hull split. "When you deficit irrigate, you can get more even drying across the orchard and nuts start to crack more uniformly. But if you stress a little too much, you start to hurt the kernel size. It is a very fine balance. To manage this well, you need precise tools like the ClimateMinder system," says Bob Vierra.

“We religiously follow our soil moisture data versus the management boundaries we set. We do ground truthing and verify the data with pressure bomb to make sure we are following the right thresholds. We are very confident with our ClimateMinder system and the soil moisture readings collected. As a result, we are more efficient with our water application” – Bob Vierra.

THE NEED

As relatively new almond growers, Bob and his brothers realized very quickly that they needed all the cutting-edge tools to help them make better decisions to be successful in growing almonds.

“Our orchards are on a heavy ground, so we can’t go out there right after the irrigation. But we can see our water application through the probes remotely. This system gives us the ability to check whether we applied too little or too much water anytime we want. This is a great management tool to stop the waste of fuel energy and avoid developing disease problems," says Bob Vierra.

(continued)

* Vierra Brothers’ ClimateMinder system is installed and maintained by LaserMan, Inc. in Oroville, CA. LaserMan, Inc. also provides data interpretation support and software training. Bob describes the service he is getting as personal and prompt. He adds “they do what they say they are going to do.”
HOW DOES BOB USE THE CLIMATE MINDER SYSTEM?

Bob uses his ClimateMinder system to:

• Continuously monitor the soil moisture conditions at every foot down to 5’ in real-time to make sure they don’t over or under irrigate. Bob thinks that the ClimateMinder system makes them very efficient in the use of water, which helps them increase yield.

• Look at pressure switch events to verify the timing of the irrigation activity precisely. One time, the pressure switch alerts helped them catch their diesel pump running out of diesel and stopping earlier than scheduled.

• Receive frost alerts as phone calls or text messages during cold days. Bob mentioned that he received three early warning alerts last year, which allowed him to go to the field and run his water to increase the temperature about 2 degrees in 75 minutes. He believes that this potentially saved big losses for them.

Bob believes that the ClimateMinder software is user-friendly and feels very comfortable navigating through the pages to access critical information quickly. He especially likes the look and feel of the recently introduced map-view, which allows him to identify problem areas quickly with color-coded map icons.

ABOUT BOB VIERRA, MANAGING PARTNER OF VIERRA BROTHERS:

In 2003, Bob retired from his job as an Ag school teacher. At that point, one of his brothers was in rice farming and the other one was working for farm credit. After their mother passed away in 2005, three Vierra Brothers started their farming operation. Today, they have three different ranches over a total of 171 acres in Colusa County.

Bob is a board member of the 44th District Ag Association (Colusa County Fair) and helps with the organization of the Colusa Farm Show.

Crop: Almonds

Irrigation Type: Spinner micro-sprinklers and fixed micro jets.

CONTACT US:

To learn more about the Rain Bird ClimateMinder System and how it can help you achieve higher yield and quality while saving on valuable and limited resources such as water, please contact Rain Bird or LaserMan, Inc.:

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