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Robert Verloop Named Executive Director and CEO for the California Walnut Board and California Walnut Commission

FOLSOM, Calif., June 16, 2022 -- The California Walnut Board (CWB) and the California Walnut Commission (CWC) are pleased to announce that Robert Verloop has been named executive director and chief executive officer, effective July 11, 2022. The CWB and CWC represent over 4,500 California walnut growers and nearly 90 handlers, producing over 1.4 billion pounds of walnuts in 2021 that ship to more than 50 countries around the world.

“We are excited to bring onboard an experienced strategic leader such as Robert, his background will well serve the California walnut industry. He has the unique experience of leadership roles as a grower/shipper of highly perishable produce and in commodity organizations. Robert understands the challenge to ‘move the crop.’ In addition, he has extensive knowledge and creativity as a marketer working in complex domestic and international markets,” said Bill Tos, the California Walnut Board’s Executive Committee Chairperson.

Mr. Verloop recently held the position of COO for Coastline Family Farms, a family-owned vegetable grower/shipper. Previously, he held executive/ leadership roles with Naturipe Farms/Naturipe Brands, Sunkist Growers Inc., and the California Avocado Commission. In those capacities, Robert worked in such areas as marketing and sales promotions in retail, foodservice and ingredient channels in domestic and global markets; issues management; strategic planning; and government relations, working with various state and federal agencies, including USDA, FAS/ATO, CDFA, and FDA.

“When he was a member of the then-Produce Marketing Association Board of Directors, Robert showed a true drive to help find and create solutions for the global produce and floral community. His focus on disciplined marketing and uncovering the implications in challenges and opportunities helped us immensely, and I expect the walnut industry will realize these same leadership benefits,” said International Fresh Produce Association CEO Cathy Burns.

“I am looking forward to working with the staff, the two Boards (CWB and CWC), and the growers and handlers that make up the California walnut industry. Walnuts are highly versatile and nutritious, ideal for plant-based eating. In collaboration with the growers and handlers we must respond to rapidly evolving market conditions with a sense of urgency and purpose and continue to build an ongoing dialogue with key customer segments in order to drive sales in all market segments,” added Verloop. “I am also keenly aware of the multi-generational nature of an industry dating back more than a century. The new generations are inheriting a dynamic industry that continues to evolve through innovation, starting with new advances in orchard management practices, post-harvest management, and developing exciting new consumer products that showcase the versatility and delicious taste of nutritious California walnuts.”

The CWB and the CWC play a vital role in expanding walnut usage occasions and understanding walnuts’ health benefits, solving for production and post-harvest challenges, protecting the industry against burdensome regulations, and building demand for California walnuts globally. Despite current supply-chain challenges, there is rising demand for walnuts given their versatility and wide range of studied health benefits. Interest in plant-based eating

around the globe is an opportunity for walnuts, which contain protein and fiber, and are the only nut that is an excellent source of essential plant-based omega-3 ALA. [\[1\]](#)

“We look forward to Robert and the CWB and CWC staff working in collaboration with the industry to address the near-term challenges in supply chain logistics, port congestion and rising costs. At the same time, we will refresh and refocus our long-term strategies given the evolving marketplace and not waiver our focus on the mission of market development and increasing consumer demand globally for our future crops,” added Tos.

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About the California Walnut Board

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

About the California Walnut Commission

The California Walnut Commission, established in 1987, is funded by mandatory assessments of the growers. The Commission is an agency of the State of California that works in concurrence with the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). The CWC is mainly involved in health research and export market development activities. For more industry information, health research and recipe ideas, visit www.walnuts.org.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The California Walnut Commission (CWC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (not all bases apply to all programs).