



California Pear Growers Call on Retailers to Shift from Imports Ahead of Early Harvest

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Sacramento, CA — California pear growers are optimistic about the upcoming 2026 season, with an early and abundant harvest expected following a warm spring that accelerated bloom across key growing regions.

“California pears are always the first to harvest in North America and our season is even earlier this year than normal with harvest anticipated in late June and promotable volume available in early July,” said Chris Zanobini, Executive Director of the California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB).

“When California comes into the market, they offer consumers the only fresh, locally grown Bartlett pear in the U.S.,” said Zanobini. “California pears are produced by multi-generational family farms who operate under the most stringent regulations in the world to protect people and the environment. We’re looking for support from retailers to kick-start this year’s pear season with early promotions.”

Zanobini noted that Bartlett pears are the favorite of consumers. In recent years, Argentina has been exporting increasingly more pears to U.S. retailers in the late Spring. Since 2016, Argentine exports of fresh pears to the U.S. have increased by 125 percent, directly competing with California Bartlett pears at the start of their season.

“Last year was especially challenging, with roughly 70 percent of imports arriving in April and May, creating a backlog of inventory as California began harvesting its first pears of the season,” said Zanobini. “We are urging retailers to stop importing pears well before California pear harvest begins in July.

“Retailers should also understand that Argentine exporters sometimes treat pears with the anti-ripening agent, 1-MCP, at post-harvest to prolong shelf life,” explained Zanobini. “This treatment results in pears that don’t ripen, slowing consumer purchases and reducing retail profitability. So, when buying imported pears – or even those from domestic producers -- make sure they are not treated with 1-MCP.”

California growers are committed to delivering a consistently high-quality product.

“California pear growers have pledged never to use 1-MCP,” Zanobini said. “Instead, we allow Bartlett pears to ripen naturally, ensuring an optimum eating experience for consumers.”

To support a successful transition to domestic fruit, CPAB recommends retailers phase out offshore pears by late April or early May. The California pear industry is ready to support

retailers with promotion and consumer advertising to bring California Pears to light as a great summer fruit.

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