



**MERIDIAN
NUT GROWERS**
DRIED FRUITS - NUTS

April 20, 2009

MERIDIAN NUT GROWERS

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MERIDIAN MONITOR

In a nutshell...

- Moving past the Pistachio Recall
- March shipments

MARKET NEWS AND INDUSTRY INFORMATION FOR MERIDIAN'S VALUED CUSTOMERS

Pistachio Recall Update

As most of you are aware, Setton Pistachio announced a voluntary recall of some of their pistachios over the past 3 weeks. For full details on the recall, please visit the WPA website at www.westernpistachio.org.

To date, we have not seen a tremendous impact on demand especially from the international marketplace. We understand that some of the increased buying interest is from customer replacing Setton product. But this means that the distribution channel still predicts that pistachios will be consumed.

In addition, buyers are asking question about the expected 2009 crop in California and Iran. We will have a better sense of the crop in California in the next 60-90 days. We do understand that there have been reported frost and rain in the growing regions in Iran. But it is hard to predict what impact if any, this will have on the Iranian crop.

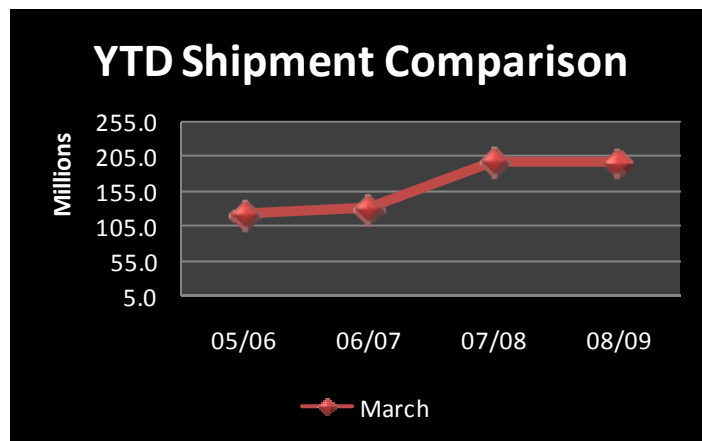
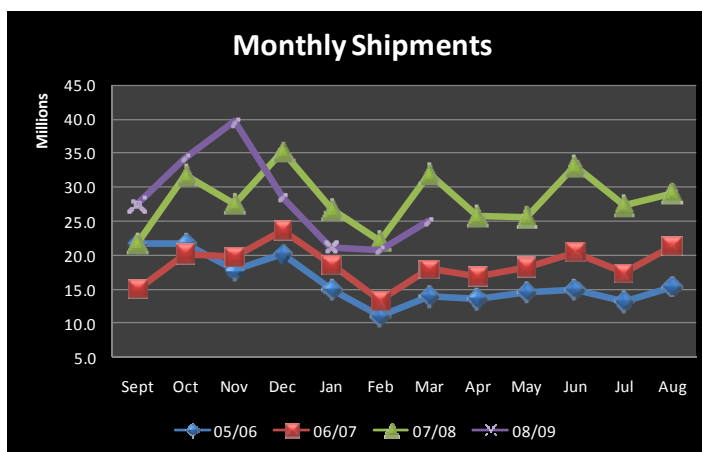
In the coming days, weeks and months, we will be informing you of the various practices we had in place prior to this recall to help minimize any contamination on our products. Some of the steps we had in place prior to the recall included:

- Increased testing of incoming product at the huller began over 3 years ago.
- Increased testing of product as it was being processed started almost 5 years ago.
- A complete separation of the raw and roasting/salted line that was completed over 3 years ago.
- Comprehensive HACCP program in place for over 5 years including industry leading sanitization program.
- An ISO certified in house laboratory
- Roaster was certified as a pasteurizer for almonds 2 years ago.
- Food grade plant philosophy

Steps to be taken in the future:

- Continuous testing of product for containments increased at the finished product level and ready to eat.
- Validation of roaster as a possible pasteurizer for pistachios
- Creation of a ready to eat room completely separated from the processing.
- Addition of PPO chambers for sterilization of outgoing products if requested.

We take food safety very seriously as do you. We have taken and will continue to take all necessary steps needed to give you the confidence that the products we supply are as safe as possible. If you have any questions regarding our food safety programs, please do not hesitate to contact our office.



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