

# California Walnut LCA

## Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: March 2026

### What is a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)?

An LCA is a standardized way of measuring environmental impacts and benefits across a product's lifecycle. For walnuts, that means looking at inputs and practices from growing through processing and summarizing them at an industry-wide scale.

### Who designed and is running the LCA?

The LCA is being designed and conducted by UC Davis using internationally recognized LCA standards. California Walnuts is supporting the effort, and Measure to Improve is helping coordinate industry engagement and logistics.

### How does this LCA support small walnut operations?

- Protects your ability to sell your crop and keep access to key markets by differentiating California Walnuts from global competitors such as China.
- Strengthen your position with buyers by backing up your practices with real data.
- Gives you an opportunity to know your operation more intimately by collecting data and information you may not have gathered in the past.
  - This process can reveal cost savings and efficiencies.
- Provides science-backed data to make marketing claims and push back on potential regulatory demands.
- Prepares for future buyer and regulatory requirements.
- Helps keep your farm competitive and viable for the next generation.

### How is the survey set up?

There are separate surveys based on your role in the supply chain:

- Grower
- Huller/Dryer
- Handler

You only see questions that apply to what you do.

## How will organizations responsible for multiple processes in the supply chain respond to this survey?

- When starting the survey, participants will select which activity (growing, hulling/drying, or handling) they will report on, and appropriate survey questions will populate.
- Organizations with multiple activities should open the survey link again and select another activity. If necessary, you may do this again to select a third activity.
- You may also forward the survey to others in your organization to answer questions about a different activity.

## Is this survey mandatory to participate?

No. Participation in this survey is voluntary.

## How is sensitive information like water or yield handled?

Sensitive data is handled carefully:

- Responses are aggregated by region with others for analysis and reporting
- Data is summarized at a regional or county level
- No individual operations are identified in any publicly available results

## Will my information be shared with outside parties?

No. Individual results will remain confidential and will not be shared publicly.

## Will anyone compare my operation's information to someone else's?

**No.**

There are no operation-to-operation comparisons. All benchmarking is anonymous, based on regional averages and only shared with participants.

## Do I need to report on my entire operation or every block?

**No.**

Growers are asked to report on their most representative orchard or typical operation, not every block or field. Free-response sections throughout the survey allow you to note anything unique or different.

## Are estimates really okay?

**Yes.** The survey is designed around best estimates and typical practices, not perfect historical records. UC Davis combines survey responses with public and industry data to build a credible model.

## What if I don't know an answer or don't want to answer something?

You can:

- Skip any question
- Leave sections incomplete
- Answer based on your best judgment

**Partial surveys are still useful.**

## Will I receive anything back if I participate?

Given sufficient survey responses participants will receive:

- A summary of their own results
- Anonymous regional benchmarks for context

**This information is only shared with the participants.**

## How often will the industry have to do this?

This is not an annual survey.

Similar crops have completed LCAs only a few times over many years. This study creates a baseline that can be used for future needs without repeating the full effort.

## What happens after the survey is complete?

UC Davis will:

- Analyze and aggregate the data
- Develop industry-level results and summaries
- Produce materials that can be used for buyer conversations, trade discussions, and industry communications

**Individual operations are not identified in the final analysis.**

## Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns?

- Questions can be directed to your handler or to [LCA@measuretoimprovelc.com](mailto:LCA@measuretoimprovelc.com)