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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USDA TO PURCHASE SIX MILLION POUNDS OF PISTACHIOS

California, Arizona and New Mexico Growers benefit from record purchase

FRESNO, CA – October 4, 2011 – American Pistachio Growers (APG) today announced USDA’s plans to purchase more than six million pounds of pistachio nuts for federal food nutrition assistance programs. The purchase coincides with the beginning of the 2011 pistachio harvest and follows the widely publicized 2010 bumper crop. The request to purchase the nuts was initiated by APG, marking the first USDA purchase of pistachios. Based on current wholesale pricing, the purchase represents approximately \$24 million in new revenues to the pistachio industry.

“Our members are very pleased with the first purchase of pistachios by USDA,” said Jim Zion, APG Chairman. “American Pistachio Growers is a partner in MyPlate.gov and we appreciate the opportunity to further the goals of USDA to provide safe, nutritious food, while familiarizing more Americans with the nutritional benefits of pistachios.”

Each year, USDA purchases a variety of American-farmed foods for the USDA Foods Program, which includes the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The food must meet strict quality standards and are generally required to be low in fat, sugar and sodium.

Pistachios fared well in the new **2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**, which encourage the consumption of more plant-based protein vs. animal proteins. While often thought of as a snack food, pistachio nuts are a nutrition powerhouse packed with protein and nutrients while having the lowest amount of fat per serving among nuts.

Thanks to the efforts of American Pistachio Growers and an abundance of recently published scientific research studies, pistachios are achieving “super nut” status among the health-conscience and nutritionally enlightened. The comparisons include:

PROTEIN: 2oz pistachio kernels contain 12g of protein; 2oz cooked Greenland halibut contains 10.5 g

FIBER: 2oz pistachio kernels contain 6g of fiber; 2oz cooked broccoli contains just 1.9g

POTASSIUM: 2oz of pistachio kernels contain 570mg of potassium; 1 large banana contains 487mg

Pistachios came into commercial production in the 1970’s in the United States. The U.S. now leads the world in production with 528,000,000 million pounds produced in 2010, followed by the country of Iran.

American Pistachio Growers is a voluntary trade association representing members who are pistachio growers, processors and industry partners in California, Arizona and New Mexico. These states represent 100 percent of the domestic commercial pistachio production. APG pistachios are the “Official Snack” of USA Water Polo and Miss California.



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