Olam's Lemoore tomato plant closes — Kings County, 2020

Olam West Coast, Inc. permanently closed its large tomato-processing plant in Lemoore, eliminating 567 jobs — the earliest of the closures this project tracks, and the one that first put a second Kings County town, not just Hanford, into this record.

567

Jobs eliminated, per the official California WARN filing (Closure, Permanent).

1.57M

Metric tonnes/year — Olam's combined California tomato-processing capacity as of 2018, among the largest in the state.

What happened

Olam announced in November 2019 that it would exit industrial tomato processing at Lemoore and scale back retail operations there, as part of a wider pullback that also closed its Woodland and Williams facilities the same year. A company representative told Tomato News in March 2020 that the Lemoore plant — about 250 employees at the time — would not operate that season and would be permanently shut by October. The state WARN filing, dated April 29, 2020, lists 567 employees affected, effective July 1, 2020 — a larger number than the ~250 reported working the plant months earlier, which this archive has not reconciled (it may reflect total plant headcount across shifts and seasons, not a single point-in-time count; see Open questions).

Industry reporting at the time cited rising grower costs, a tomato surplus depressing prices, a strong dollar hurting export competitiveness, and a trade dispute with the European Union — structural pressure on the sector, not a Lemoore-specific problem.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Jobs:** 567 WARN-covered positions eliminated, effective July 1, 2020.

- **The site since:** As of February 2022 — the most recent source this archive has found — Olam was still trying to sell the property, splitting a 15-acre tomato-processing parcel for sale while keeping 10 acres for its separate granulated-garlic business. Lemoore's city manager called regaining those jobs "a major priority for the community" and said several buyers were interested.
- **What happened to the workers:** Not documented in any source found. No reemployment data, no union or workforce-agency accounting located.
- **Open question:** Whether a sale of the tomato-processing parcel ever closed, and whether any of the jobs came back, is unconfirmed past February 2022 — worth a direct check with the Kings County Economic Development Corporation or the City of Lemoore.

Did this closure move Kings County's economy?

We checked directly, with a real statistical method (synthetic control), rather than assuming a 567-job closure would show up in the county's own numbers. It didn't — at county or town level, in employment, unemployment, or wages. See **Measuring Closures** for the full check, including two real bugs we caught along the way and what the null result actually means.

Part of a larger pattern

This was the first of what this archive now documents as three separate commodity-processing closures landing on the same pair of Kings County towns, Hanford and Lemoore — this one, **Del Monte's Hanford tomato plant closure** in 2024, and **Leprino Foods' Lemoore East dairy plant closure** in 2025–26. A local news report on the Leprino closure noted in passing that Lemoore "has already lost a tomato plant and a grain mill" — the tomato plant is this closure; the grain mill remains an unconfirmed lead.

Sources

- **Tomato News (crediting The Business Journal, Fresno), "California: Lemoore's Olam plant not likely to operate in 2020,"** March 31, 2020.
- **HortiDaily / FreshPlaza, "International food company Olam intends to sell off Lemoore tomato plant,"** February 18, 2022.
- California EDD WARN report, confirmed directly: Olam West Coast Inc., Lemoore, Kings County, 567 employees, Closure, Permanent, notice date April 29, 2020, effective July 1,

2020. Access: obtained — taken directly from the agency's own filings rather than from a web page.

Full citation detail and source archive: **Data**. Back to **all case studies**.