

MARKET NEWS

An extended freeze did little damage to central Florida's major agricultural commodities. Wish Farms and the Florida Strawberry Growers Association reported minor losses due to high winds that prevented water from spreading evenly over the plants, leaving some open to damage from the freezing air, reported *The Ledger*. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, **cold weather in Florida could cause blossom drop for tomatoes and peppers.** Additionally, producers in California, Arizona, Mexico and Chile are contending with weather issues. The blossom drop could lead to a supply gap in mid- to late February, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

North American cocoa processors ground 116,080 metric tons of beans between October and December 2017, down 1.3% from the same period in 2016, according to the National Confectioners Association. The amount was the lowest for the fourth quarter since 2009. Europe's grind rose 4.4% to 353,286 metric tons during the same period, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

The Alaska Board of Fisheries is considering new restrictions to the herring fishery and king salmon. The Sitka Tribe's proposals would limit the amount of herring commercial fishers can catch and limit trolling in order to protect king salmon that use the Stikine, Chilkat and Taku rivers, reported *Juneau Empire*. [Full Story](#)

Archer Daniels Midland Co. (ADM) and Qingdao Vland Biotech Group Co. Ltd. launched a joint development agreement for the development and commercialization of enzymes for animal feed applications. The companies will share enzyme-producing strains as a basis for the development of feed enzymes that will improve animal nutrition and health. In addition, ADM will open a U.S. enzyme research and development lab in California. [Full Story](#)

Brown County, MN, rejected the state's Department of Agriculture's offer for free nitrate well tests. The county rejected the state program after residents voiced fears that the data could be used to target farmers for additional regulations, reported *The State*. [Full Story](#)

Affiliates of Pinnacle Asset Management L.P. entered an agreement to acquire Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, a collection of feeding assets and farms, from JBS USA for approximately \$200 million. The deal includes 11 feed yards across Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, and a long-term agreement to supply cattle to JBS USA beef processing plants. The Five Rivers management team will remain in place. [Full Story](#)

The governor of Maine claimed the Trump administration is blocking an effort to prevent the use of food stamps for the purchase of soda and candy. The initiative was previously blocked by the Obama administration. Maine will revise its request and resubmit it to USDA, reported *The Charlotte Observer*. [Full Story](#)

Mushrooms are a "powerhouse of nutrition," according to an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics spokesperson. Mushrooms contain over a dozen vitamins and minerals, and are high in certain antioxidants. Common button mushrooms carry high levels of potassium and selenium, while porcini mushrooms have the greatest concentration of the antioxidant ergothioneine, reported *The Wall Street Journal*. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

Texas citrus producers note demand is high for both grapefruit and oranges. Due to a smaller California navel crop than usual, the market for Texas oranges is very strong, according to Lone Star Citrus. Additionally, promotions centered on Chinese New Year are increasing exports, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Avocado producers in California and Mexico are expected to ship about 52.1 million-lbs. of the product the week of Jan. 14, according to the Hass Avocado Board. Producers in the two countries, along with Chile and the Dominican Republic, shipped about 46.3 million-lbs. the week of Jan. 7. [Full Story](#)

Nearly half of Wisconsin's dairy, fruit and vegetable exports were shipped to Canada and Mexico in 2017, raising concerns about NAFTA renegotiations among regional producers. The American Farm Bureau found 90% of live animal exports were shipped to NAFTA partners in 2017, reported *Miami Herald*. [Full Story](#)

Average truck rates for refrigerated freight climbed to all-time highs in December 2017, according to the DAT Freight Index. The average refrigerated rate was \$2.46 per mile, \$0.03 higher than the November 2017 average, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

South Carolina is proposing to limit unchecked groundwater withdrawals in seven counties, where pumping by large farms affects water supplies. Regulators propose requiring that anyone wanting to withdraw at least three million gallons a month of groundwater first obtain a state permit, reported *The State*. [Full Story](#)

Twenty-eight percent of consumers buy grocery items online, compared with 23% in first quarter 2016, according to the IRI Consumer Connect survey. Although consumer confidence held steady year-over-year, 31% of consumers in fourth quarter 2017 claimed they were struggling to buy needed groceries compared with 30% in fourth quarter 2016. Half of consumer packaged goods category growth is predicted to be online in 2018. [Full Story](#)

USDA cleared the Port of Savannah to serve as an entry port for Chilean blueberries. The Savannah, GA, port joins south Florida, Philadelphia/New Jersey and Los Angeles/Long Beach as the only places in the nation allowed to import the produce. [Full Story](#)

Damage to a Mexican bridge will cause "minimal to non-existent" interruption of eastbound produce trade from west Mexico to Texas, according to the Texas International Produce Association. A diesel tanker exploded along the Durango-Mazatlan Highway the night of Jan. 13, with a resulting fire burning about 9,000-sq. ft. of the highway, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. turkey eggs set in incubators totaled 28.7 million as of Jan. 1, a 4% drop from the year-ago period, according to USDA. Poult hatched in December 2017 totaled about 22.3 million, down 12% from the year-ago period. [Full Report](#)

Virginia had the highest yields of peanuts and soybeans ever in 2017, according to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Soybean production reached about 26 million bushels, up 20% from 2016, while peanut production was about 123 million-lbs., a 60% jump from the previous year, reported *Washington Post*. [Full Story](#)

Fertilizer company Crop Production Services purchased 13 acres of property from the Port of Sunnyside in Sunnyside, WA. The company plans to build a dry and liquid fertilizer storage distribution facility on the property, with construction slated to be completed by fall, reported *Yakima Herald-Republic*. [Full Story](#)

Mexican asparagus volumes could be 15% higher compared to the same period in 2017, according to Crystal Valley Foods. Growing conditions in the Caborca region in northern Sonora have been excellent, and promotable supplies should be available through February and March, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

The West Coast commercial Dungeness crab season was put on hold after fishermen and processors debated prices. Processors initially offered \$2.30 per lb. for the product, well below the previous season's starting price of \$2.89 per lb., reported *The Oregonian*. [Full Story](#)

California strawberry growers shipped approximately 180.0 million flats through Jan. 11, a 6.1% increase from the year-ago period, according to the California Strawberry Commission. The highest recorded daily production between Jan. 4. and Jan. 11 was Jan. 6, with a total of about 188,000 flats. [Full Story](#)

Alaska seafood marketers are rebranding fish parts as "specialty" products and mapping a path for millions more dollars in sales. The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute is looking for uses for fish heads, oil, meal, crab products, roe, herring fillets, arrowtooth flounder, spiny dogfish and skates that could be worth an additional \$700 million if offered on the market, reported *Cordova Times*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. corn for grain production was estimated 14.6 billion bushels in 2017, a 4% decrease from the 2016 estimate, according to USDA. Sorghum grain production was estimated at 364 million bushels, while soybean production was estimated at a record 4.4 billion bushels. [Full Report](#)

Meanwhile, **U.S. corn stocks in all positions totaled about 12.5 billion bushels Dec. 1, 2017**, according to USDA. U.S. soybean stocks stored in all positions jumped 9% on the date when compared to the prior year to about 3.2 billion bushels. [Full Report](#)

U.S. rough rice stocks in all positions totaled 120 million cwt. on Dec. 1, 2017, down 25% from the year-ago period, according to USDA. Milled rice stocks in all positions totaled about 6.7 million cwt on the date. [Full Report](#)

Florida orange production is forecast at 46 million boxes, unchanged from December 2017 but a 33% decrease over last season, according to USDA. Florida grapefruit growers are expected to produce 4.7 million boxes, a decrease of 40% from a year ago. [Full Report](#)

U.S. winter wheat seeded area for 2018 is expected to total 32.6 million acres, down less than 1% from 2017, according to USDA. Hard red winter wheat is expected to be planted on 23.1 million acres, while soft red winter and white winter wheat will account for about 6.0 million and 3.6 million acres, respectively. [Full Report](#)

Mango producers in Peru and Ecuador shipped approximately 606,000 boxes the week ending Jan. 6, down from 1.6 million from the year-ago period, according to the National Mango Board. Ecuadorian producers shipped about 12.4 million boxes for the season-to-date. [Full Story](#)

Chilean blueberry producers exported 8,032 tons the week of Jan. 1, above the projection of 6,200 tons, according to the Chilean Blueberry Committee. About 5.3% of the total was organic blueberries. [Full Report](#)

U.S. beef shipments to South Korea grew 13.7% in 2017 to 177,446 metric tons, accounting for nearly half the country's beef imports, according to customs data. The U.S. became the top source of beef for South Korea as Australian shipments fell 4% to 172,804 metric tons, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Analysis shows a more abundance of cod in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank that will result in quotas expected to increase slightly in the spring, according to New England Fishery Management Council. The council has proposed about doubling the commercial cod quota for the two areas to nearly 3.9 million-lbs., but the move is still pending approval by the federal Department of Commerce, reported *The State*. [Full Story](#)

Increasingly tight financial times are imminent for South Dakota's farmers, according to South Dakota State University. Agriculture producers should expect tight budgets for about two more years, as gross crop revenues are down about 50% from their peak, reported *Modesto Bee*. [Full Story](#)

