

## MARKET NEWS

**U.S. turkey eggs in incubators on March 1 in the U.S. totaled 28.5 million**, down 5% from March 1, 2017, according to USDA. Eggs in incubators were up slightly from the Feb. 1 total of 28.4 million eggs. [Full Report](#)

**Mexican table grape producers report an abundant supply of the fruit**, according to regional trade group AALPUM. Mexican grapes will begin arriving in the U.S. at the end of April, with peak supplies between the last week of May and the third week of June, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

**Florida blueberry growers report optimal growing conditions**, including sufficient chilling hours and warm daytime temperatures that are speeding up the growth cycle. Decent volumes are expected in mid-to-late March and April, according to Wish Farms, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, **a cold snap the week of March 5 could damage blueberry crops in Georgia**. Growers encountered temperatures as low as 28 degrees that persisted four to five hours on some nights, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

**Virginia-based Gladstone Land Corp. acquired a 176-acre blueberry farm in Michigan** for \$2.1 million. Upon acquisition, Gladstone entered into a 10-year lease with blueberry growers and marketers True Blue Farms. The property currently consists of approximately 100 planted acres of blueberries and is fully irrigated with access to multiple water sources. [Full Story](#)

**Bayer AG's plan to win antitrust approval for its takeover of Monsanto Co. hasn't satisfied U.S. officials** who are worried the merger could hurt competition, according to people familiar with the matter. The Justice Department's antitrust division doesn't think Bayer's proposal to sell its businesses goes far enough and wants Bayer to divest more assets to resolve its concerns, according to the sources, reported *Bloomberg*. [Full Story](#)

**The EU may institute a 25% levy on U.S. cranberries in response to new tariffs** on steel and aluminum. The U.S. sends about 95 million-lbs. of cranberries to the EU annually, representing 12% of domestic production, according to Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers, reported *Bloomberg*. [Full Story](#)

**Michigan-based Peach Ridge Orchard Supply acquired Fruit Picking Equipment Co.** Fruit Picking Equipment production of harvest buckets, bags and accessories for the fruit and vegetable industries will continue out of its facility in Sparta, MI, reported *Fruit Growers News*. [Full Story](#)

**Lipman Family Farms entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Canada-based Huron Produce**, a greenhouse grower and distributor of tomatoes and vegetables. Huron packs under the Suntastic brand and will add operations in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to Lipman's portfolio, reported *The*

operations in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to Lipman's portfolio, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

**About 51% of the value of U.S. farm production came from farms with at least \$1 million in sales** by 2015, compared to 31% in 1991, according to USDA. Cropland acreage likewise concentrated into fewer but larger farms by 2012, with 36% of all U.S. cropland owned by farms with at least 2,000 acres of cropland. [Full Report](#)

**U.S. honey production from producers with five or more colonies totaled about 148 million-lbs.** in 2017, down 9% from 2016, according to USDA. There were about 2.7 million colonies producing honey in 2017, down 4% from 2016. [Full Report](#)

**Limits on improving yield and other critical traits in maize are likely due to rare harmful mutations** that are genetically linked to beneficial gene combinations that are selected for domestication and breeding, according to a USDA study published in the journal *Nature*. The study argues similar genetic processes affect other crops, and the next generation of enhanced crops will be made by fixing these mutations. [Full Story](#)

**Many bottled water brands contain bits of plastic called microplastics,** according to research from Orb Media. The research, conducted at the State University of New York, evaluated more than 250 bottles from 11 different brands, sold across nine countries. A bottle of Nestle Pure Life water showed the highest levels, with 10,390 particles per liter. Nestle and Gerolsteiner disputed Orb Media's results, saying they found much lower quantities of microplastics in their water, reported *Fortune*. [Full Story](#)

**Avocado producers in California, Mexico and Chile are expected to ship about 56.5 million-lbs.** of the product the week of March 18, according to the Hass Avocado Board. The board reported about 52.8 million-lbs. shipped the week of March 11. [Full Story](#)

**Ranchers and marketers report strong demand for California lamb in 2018.** California lambs are born in the fall and marketed after Easter, despite the fact that the holiday is the biggest time for lamb consumption in the U.S., reported *AgAlert*. [Full Story](#)

**Prince William Sound hatcheries produced about 28.5 million salmon in 2017** worth an estimated ex-vessel value of \$69 million, according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Of that total, about \$36 million came from pink salmon, \$23 million from chum and \$10 million from sockeyes, reported *Cordova Times*. [Full Story](#)

**New Mexico farmers produced fewer chile hot peppers in 2017.** Planted Chile acreage decreased 12% to 8,100 acres with production totaling about 62,700 tons, down from 69,600 tons the previous year. The value of the crop dropped to an estimated \$44.6 million, reported *The State*. [Full Story](#)

**Scientists at the University of California, San Diego, have been testing**

**ways to immunize bees** against the fungus Nosema. The researchers believe a successful vaccine would give farmers a new way to treat honeybee fungal diseases. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, **a USDA scientist will lead a \$1 million international consortium of scientists** to seek controls for Varroa mites. The mites are considered to be the greatest cause of declining honey bee colonies. [Full Story](#)

**National Marine Fisheries Service is reducing the Atlantic herring possession limit** for federally permitted vessels fishing with midwater trawl gear in the Mid-Atlantic/Southern New England Catch Cap Closure Area. It will prohibit herring vessels from fishing for, possessing, catching, transferring, or landing more than 2,000-lbs. of herring per trip or calendar day in or from that catch cap closure area for the remainder of the fishing year. [Full Story](#)

**Texas and federal agriculture authorities are testing birds and poultry for avian flu** in Hopkins County, TX, after inspectors detected a low-pathogenic form at a poultry farm. The H7N1 influenza was found during routine surveillance of a commercial breeder's flock of about 24,000 chickens with authorities testing other poultry farms within 6 miles of the farm, reported *Kansas City Star*. [Full Story](#)

**U.S. sweet potato grower-shippers reported strong demand** but even stronger volumes. Many companies that grow sweet potatoes reported good quality and volume from the 2017 crop and increasing interest from retail and foodservice partners, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

**California strawberry growers shipped approximately 19.4 million flats through March 11**, a 49.9% increase from the year-ago period, according to the California Strawberry Commission. The highest recorded daily production between March 4 and March 11 was March 9, with a total of about 351,000 flats. [Full Story](#)

**Vidalia onions should be available in early April, with volumes reaching the historical average**, according to the Vidalia Onion Committee. Plant quality was rated in the range of very normal to good, according to G&R Farms, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

**Roof rats are migrating to California farms**, according to University of California scientists. Although it's unknown how much damage the rats have caused this year, researchers report that the rats have been found munching on pomegranates, citrus, avocados, pistachios and irrigation tubing, reported *Fresno Bee*. [Full Story](#)

**China's Commerce Ministry approved Bayer AG's acquisition of Monsanto Co.** as long as it spins off some assets, among other conditions. Bayer will need to dispose of its global vegetable seeds business and other seeds business, reported *MarketWatch*. [Full Story](#)

**USDA revised late payment and interest charges on past due**

**assessments for honey packers and importers.** The rule will become effective 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*, which is expected March 14. [Full Notice](#)

**USDA adopted as final an interim rule that decreased the assessment rate for pistachios** grown in 2017-2018 and subsequent production years. The rule is expected to become effective March 15. [Full Notice](#)

**Warming weather in New England is pushing the maple syrup season to open early**, but producers are hopeful recent cold spells and snow will extend the season. The Vermont Maple Sugar Producers Association noted the season began in mid-February, continuing a trend from the past few years of earlier start dates, reported *Yakima Herald-Republic*. [Full Story](#)

**Mango producers in Peru, Mexico, Nicaragua and Guatemala shipped approximately 2.0 million boxes** the week ending March 3, up from 1.5 million in the year-ago period, according to the National Mango Board. Mexican producers shipped about 5.5 million boxes for the season-to-date. [Full Story](#)

**Chilean blueberry producers shipped about 2,700 tons of product the week ending March 4**, according to the Chilean Blueberry Committee. About 79.3% of total exports were shipped to North America during the week. Additionally, producers in the country shipped about 9,900 tons of organic blueberries to-date. [Full Story](#)

**Corn prices have climbed consistently for almost two months** as concerns mount about weather problems in South America affecting the corn harvest in Brazil and Argentina. Fear of losing the current profitable prices is prompting many to sell stored grain or use markets to lock in current levels for fall's crop via the December corn futures contract, which traded at \$4.08 per bushel March 9, reported *Des Moines Register*. [Full Story](#)

**Members of Maine's elver fishing industry are expecting high prices in the 2018 season** because of a shortage on the international market. A New York distributor expects prices will be double the normal amount, as fishermen in Asia are seeing a poor harvest and European eel fisheries are cracking down on poaching, reported *The Japan Times*. [Full Story](#)

**The 2018 Texas onion crop will be smaller than the 2017 harvest**, according to the Onion House LLC. Harvest is expected to begin the last week of March, with shipments lasting until the second or third week of May, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

**Ranchers in northern Arizona may reduce their cattle numbers due to drought conditions.** Ranchers are attempting to mitigate dry conditions by moving cattle and supplying supplemental feed to prevent overgrazing as precipitation is not expected to replenish forage growth and fill water tanks for cattle in the area, reported *Santa Fe New Mexican*. [Full Story](#)

**The Florida spring vegetable deal was off to a strong start at the**

**beginning of March**, according to regional producers. Dry conditions have helped keep disease and input pressure under control, according to Duda Farm Fresh Foods Inc., reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

**Prices for farmland declined across Minnesota in 2017**, down about 20% from when the market peaked in 2012. The median price per acre of farmland was \$4,625, down 5.4% from 2016, reported *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. [Full Story](#)

**Hatchery-produced salmon accounted for 21% of Alaska's commercial harvest in 2017**, the lowest percentage since 1995, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The agency found that the smaller catch of hatchery salmon was due to the stock of wild salmon making a strong return, reported *KTUU.com*. [Full Story](#)

**A takeover agreement between Archer Daniels Midland and Bunge has stalled** after more than a month of negotiation. The deal is expected to face regulatory hurdles, given the companies' competing grain facilities, shipping terminals and processing plants. The stalled talks could provide a chance for Glencore, which confirmed its takeover talks with Bunge in May 2017, reported *Crain's Chicago Business*. [Full Story](#)