

## FOOD NEWS

**The genome of several avocado varieties was sequenced** , according to the University of Buffalo. Scientists focused on the Hass avocado in addition to varieties native to Mexico, Guatemala and the West Indies. The researchers believe the information could boost productivity, improve disease resistance and produce new flavors and textures for the fruit. [Full Story](#)

**Maine's wild blueberry growers will not receive aid** from USDA's Market Facilitation Program. The agency stated the program is intended for crops that aren't easily used in school food programs or by food banks, reported *Portland Press Herald* . [Full Story](#)

**The 2018-19 California navel orange season will go down as one of the worst in history** , according to California Citrus Mutual. The group noted major freezes, unprecedented volumes of imported fruit, inconsistent quality, poor flavor and cheap prices were challenges encountered throughout the season, reported *The Produce News* . [Full Story](#)

**Climate change and overfishing are increasing levels of toxic mercury** in cod and tuna, according to a study by Harvard scientists. The concentration of methylmercury rose by 23% in cod and 27% in bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Maine over about three decades, reported *Reuters* . [Full Story](#)

**Northwest pear growers' estimate for the 2019-20 season is 18.6 million standard boxes** , an 8% increase from the initial crop estimate, 1% higher than the 5-year average, but 1% less than the 2018 harvest. Green Anjou will be the leading variety with 9.5 million standard boxes, followed by Green Bartlett with

4.8 million boxes and Bosc with 2.5 million. There will be 1.1 million standard boxes of Red Anjou, representing about 6% of the crop. [Full Story](#)

**The Washington State Tree Fruit Association forecasts 137.3 million standard 40-lb. boxes** of fresh apples for 2019, an 18% increase from 2018. Gala is projected to be the most numerous variety in 2019 at 23% of production, followed by Red Delicious at 20%, reported *Fruit Growers News* . [Full Story](#)

**Volumes of California organic stone fruit could be in short supply** due to rains in May, with late season peaches and nectarines expected to last through August, according to Homegrown Organic Farms. The company noted organic pluots and plums would be available in September, but adverse weather during bloom pushed volumes down, reported *Organic Produce Network* . [Full Story](#)

**U.S. imports of Peruvian asparagus increased 13% in 2019** compared to the prior year, totaling about 200 million-lbs., according to the Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association. The U.S. imported more than 567 million-lbs. of fresh market asparagus during the year, with the association noting it expects increased demand for the 2019-2020 season, reported *The Packer* . [Full Story](#)

**Micro Lab Farms is opening a research and development center** , showroom and sales center in Tulsa, OK. The 2.5-acre facility is intended to provide support for farmers, business owners and entrepreneurs throughout the Midwest as well as offer turnkey solutions to those wanting to enter the cannabis and organic food markets. [Full Story](#)

**Chinese soybean imports jumped in July** to the highest level

in almost a year as crushers boosted volumes from South America, and before halting U.S. purchases. Imports rose to 8.6 million tons, from 6.5 million tons in June and 8 million a year ago, reported *Bloomberg* . [Full Story](#)

**U.S. soybean growers are targeting new markets** as demand from China plunged dramatically. Total shipments to the country are expected to end this marketing year some two-thirds lower, according to the U.S. Soybean Export Council. Europe is a market in which U.S. soybean exports have fared well, with the share of American oilseeds expected to hit 75% of imports this year, up from 30% previously, reported *CNBC* . [Full Story](#)

**Meanwhile, USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue is confident farmers will regain market share** . Perdue stated the government is working to develop alternative markets, including in India, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, reported *Twin Cities Pioneer Press* . [Full Story](#)

**Fresh produce unit growth slowed** compared to other fresh departments and the grocery department in the last quarter, according to United Fresh's FreshFacts on Retail. Value added vegetables continued growth momentum, bolstered by strong gains in meal prep. [Full Story](#)

**USDA may have exceeded its authority when deciding to relocate two offices** from the Washington, DC, area, according to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). OIG said although the Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1953 provided USDA with the legal authority to relocate the Economic Research Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the General Provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 placed limits on these actions and required congressional approval, which the agency did not obtain. [Full Report](#)

**California tomato processors harvested 723,335 tons the week ending Aug. 3** , according to the Processing Tomato Advisory Board. A total of 2.1 million tons have been harvested this year, down from 3 million tons at the same time last year.

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**The Alaska commercial salmon catch was 105.5 million fish as of Aug. 6** , according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Deliveries included 53.1 million sockeye, 41 million pink, 10.4 million chum, 822,000 coho and 211,000 chinook salmon.

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**Avocado producers are expected to ship about 44 million-lbs.** the week of Aug. 18, according to the Hass Avocado Board. The board reported shipments totaling 39.6 million-lbs. for the week of Aug. 4.

[Full Story](#)

**Wisconsin potato growers anticipate a strong season** despite a slightly later start than normal, according to the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association. Most producers in the state expect a mid-August start, although some like Alsum Farms & Produce Inc. began harvesting red and golden potatoes as early as Aug. 1, reported *The Packer* .

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**China suspended purchases of all U.S. agricultural products** . The country's Commerce Ministry said it would not rule out establishing tariffs on U.S. agricultural products purchased after Aug. 3, reported *MarketWatch* .

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**Seafood processor Bornstein Seafoods is closing part of its operations** in Bellingham, WA. The company will stop groundfish processing due to changing regulations and commercial fishing fleet consolidations, while keeping its value-added albacore tuna

operations intact, reported *The Bellingham Herald* . [Full Story](#)

**The U.S. corn crop is rated at 57% good to excellent** in the top 18 corn producing states as of Aug. 4, a drop from 58% a week ago, according to USDA's weekly crop progress report. Soybeans are rated 54% good to excellent, equal to a week ago. [Full Story](#)

**Tyson's U.S. protein production will rise 2% in the next year** with export markets absorbing the increase. The company's operating margins for chicken will improve over this year's 6%, while beef and pork margins are expected to be the same or better, reported *Bloomberg* . [Full Story](#)

**USDA removed Scotland from the list of regions considered a negligible risk** for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The agency reported a case of BSE was confirmed in the region Oct. 18, 2018. [Full Notice](#)

**California strawberry growers shipped 105.6 million flats through Aug. 4** , a 12.4% decrease from the year-ago period, according to the California Strawberry Commission. The highest recorded daily production during the one-week period was July 31, with a total of about 1.3 million flats. [Full Story](#)

**Meat producers are turning to feed substitutes** in an attempt to keep production costs down and stretch out supplies of corn held in storage, as spring planting delays have boosted prices for locally grown corn. Farmers are swapping out corn for dry pet food, recycled bakery byproducts and wheat middlings, a byproduct of the flour milling process, reported *Reuters* . [Full Story](#)

**An orange juice additive is being tested to combat citrus**

**greening.** USDA is testing a Jones Laffin Co. additive made from pea protein mitigating bitter flavors in juice made with oranges harvested from greening-infected trees. If the USDA research supports the technology, the company could begin marketing it to Florida citrus processors by the middle of 2020, reported *The Ledger* . [Full Story](#)

**A heatwave could affect cherries and berries grown in British Columbia, Canada** , according to Weathermelon. Production numbers for the crops could improve as temperatures between the mid-80s to low-90s hit the region between Aug. 2-7, reported *The Produce News* . [Full Story](#)

**U.S. farm production expenditures were estimated at \$354 billion in 2018** , down from \$357.8 billion in 2017, according to USDA. The per farm average was \$175,169 in 2018, down 0.4% from 2017. [Full Report](#)

**Mango producers in Mexico, Haiti and Brazil exported about 3.2 million boxes** the week ended July 27, down from the 3.4 million boxes reported a year ago, according to the National Mango Board. Overall mango volumes from Mexico are expected to increase 26% through the end of the harvest season when compared to the prior year. [Full Story](#)

**Benson Hill Biosystems raised an additional \$32.6 million** as an extension of its Series C funding. The company plans to use the funds to further accelerate its growth, reported *St. Louis Business Journal* . [Full Story](#) (Subscription Required)