

Market News

Culinary Spotlight

Genetic modification said to improve beef flavor

Scientists in China said they have modified the genetics of cattle to create beef that is more flavorful. Two calves have an extra gene that increases fat in their muscles, but the results won't be known until they are slaughtered and the meat is evaluated. The Telegraph (London) (8/26)

Europe's coffee drinkers cut back in tough times

Europe's troubled economy has consumers cutting back on coffee, with many eschewing daily trips to the cafe and trading down for less-pricey brews. Europe imports more than half the world's coffee and, while imports were flat across the entire continent in the first six months of the year, they were down dramatically in key coffee-drinking countries including Italy and Spain, according to the International Coffee Organization. The Wall Street Journal (8/22)

Why Mario Batali doesn't yell at people

In many restaurant kitchens, it's typical for chefs to yell their instructions -- and to shout even louder when things go wrong. New York chef and entrepreneur Mario Batali says screaming is simply a sign of a chef's frustration at having failed to train and prep workers better, and that it's more effective to stay civil. "[I]f someone isn't learning, my strategy for changing someone's behavior has always been a stern, relatively direct conversation, sotto voce but within earshot of their peers," he says. The New York Times (tiered subscription model) (8/25)

Mexican tomato industry representatives are continuing working with commerce officials to avoid a possible trade war resulting from Florida growers' call to end the tomato suspension agreement. Members of AMHPAC, the Mexican association of protected horticulture, approved an assessment based a grower's number of hectares to raise funds for legal fees in the case, reported The Packer Online. Full Story

Bland Farms is seeing tight onion supplies and strong markets for Peruvian sweets. Warm weather shortened the crop by about 20%, and that tightening up means retailers and even entire countries will be competing for portions of the Peruvian crop, creating a strong market. This year's crop will see more mediums than usual, though the overall bulb size will be roughly the same as an average year, reported The Produce News. Full Story

Fruit losses this winter will lead to a market shift. An unusually warm March followed by a round of spring freezes decimated much of the apple and

cherry crops in the Midwest and East. Western crops managed to avoid damage, however, and were poised to fill the market gaps. In July, growers, processors and buyers on both ends of the country were adjusting to the new situation, reported Fruit Growers News. [Full Story](#)

The Australian chickpea crop is shaping up to be one of the biggest on record due to favorable weather conditions at planting a significant increase in the area planted to chickpea because of high chickpea prices and low wheat prices. "The chickpea area sown nationally is above 500,000 hectares with the potential to deliver a record harvest," according to Pulse Australia's senior crop manager. The current production estimate for 2012-13 is 750,000 metric tons of chickpeas, compared with the previous high of 480,000 in 2009-10, reported the Stock Journal. [Full Story](#)

The remnants of Tropical Storm Isaac could bring welcome rain to some states in the Midwest this week, although it is unlikely to break the drought that has been gripping the region, according to The Associated Press. The states most likely to benefit from the storm are in the Mississippi River valley. The National Weather Service predicts 2 to 6 inches of rain will fall in eastern Arkansas, southeast Missouri and southern Illinois later this week. [Full Story](#)

At least one Michigan orchard reports having more apples than they had anticipated. King Orchards in Kewadin, MI stated they are finding more fruit than first thought but are worried that the news will not get to the consumers. "Even though the apple crop is only about 30% of our potential, it is still a lot of apples," stated the orchard, reported Fruit Growers News. [Full Story](#)

Considered the worst American drought in 50 years, corn has been among the hardest hit crops, and as a result consumers can expect higher prices in particularly in 2013. Since mid-June futures prices for corn rose 60% and 24% for soybeans, reported an article in Food Nutrition & Science. [Full Story](#)

U.S. grain and soybean futures finished mixed on Aug. 28, with soybeans rising on fresh export demand. The soybean market was able to separate itself from selling pressures plaguing corn and wheat futures because record prices have not reduced demand for soybeans from end users such as food processors and exporters. CBOT soybeans for September delivery settled 0.2% higher at \$17.32 1/2 a bushel. November soybeans also settled 0.2% higher at \$17.22 1/4 a bushel, reported The Wall Street Journal. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

ERS published highlights from the 2012 Farm Income Forecast. U.S. net farm income is projected to exceed \$122 billion in 2012 and net cash income is

expected to exceed \$139 billion, both record nominal values. The expected increase in income reflects large price-led gains in corn and soybean receipts as well as large increases in crop insurance indemnities. Crop farm gains should be more than enough to offset livestock farmers' higher feed expenses and a decline in sales of wholesale milk. Full Story

Some California walnut orchards experienced dramatic nut drop in June and July due to walnut blight. Vina orchards seem to be the worst affected, but orchards of other varieties also saw significant disease and crop loss, reported Western Farm Press. Full Story

A tastier California navel orange will hit the market this season, thanks to seven years of consumer research that has resulted in the all-new California Standard. The California Standard is the new standard by which all California navels will be measured, in an effort to ensure a better navel orange eating experience and better sales results. Previously, California navels were required to meet a ratio measurement, which the industry has now shown to be an ineffective predictor of eating quality. The new California Standard instead measures the balance between brix (sweetness) and acidity, which is a superior indicator of sweetness and taste, reported Western Farm Press. Full Story

Oregon-based Cascade Specialties is expanding its White Oak Frozen Foods division to Merced, CA. The company will establish a new food processing plant to process locally grown vegetables into IQF reduced moisture vegetables and fruits. The move to the larger site increases White Oak's handling, processing and warehousing capacity. Cascade Specialties is a subsidiary of the India-based agriculture company Jain Irrigation Systems, Limited, an international company with a presence in 120 countries and 7,500 employees, reported KMPH.com. Full Story

The U.S. grain industry is on alert for a naturally occurring toxin in corn. Trace amounts of aflatoxin have shown up in some of the corn harvested, with dairy company Dean Foods in talks with state officials in Indiana and Iowa about testing milk for the carcinogenic byproduct of mold. Any major outbreak has the potential to snarl the grain handling system in the Corn Belt and trigger demand for untainted corn, reported Reuters. Full Story

The price of soybeans hit at an all-time high on Aug. 30 on expectations that Tropical Storm Isaac may cause more damage to crops that already have been battered by the drought, according to The Associated Press. Soybeans for September delivery rose 9 cents to finish at \$17.7025 per bushel. That topped the previous record high of \$17.575 per bushel set July 20. The most active contract, for November delivery, rose 10.5 cents to end at \$17.635 per bushel. Full Story

Apples are in New York City's Greenmarket earlier, due to the longer, warmer summer, but is likely to have less crunch and fainter skins from the heat. In New York, the harvest is expected to be down 54% from last year, to 14 million bushels, reported The New York Times on the web. Full Story (NYT Subscription Required)

The Czech hops harvest is expected to decrease 26% to 4,500 metric tons, from 6,088 metric tons in 2011, due to freezing temperatures in February and a drought in spring. Authorities claim there are enough supplies following the exceptionally high harvests of the previous two years, and that prices are unlikely to rise, according to the chairman of the Hop Growers Union of the Czech Republic, reported The Associated Press. Full Story