

More than a hundred crab fishing boats went on strike and stayed in harbor last week in a dispute over prices that has caused a shortage of Dungeness crab in the Bay Area. Crab boat skippers heard that fish brokers were planning to cut the prices they pay for fresh crab from \$3 per pound to as low as \$1.80. "No crab boats are leaving the dock," stated Larry Collins, president of the Crab Boat Owners Association in San Francisco. Collins stated all three principal crab fishing ports were affected - San Francisco, Half Moon Bay and Bodega Bay, reported *San Francisco Chronicle*. [Full Story](#) (Free Subscription Required)

Demand for chicken feet is booming from Asia's burgeoning middle class, making Georgia's Port of Savannah the fastest growing in the U.S. Feet and chicken leg quarters have pushed Savannah to an annual growth rate of 11% in the past decade, double that of Houston, the second-quickest. Chicken feet and leg-quarter exports rose 5.6% this year through September to 2.72 million metric tons, according to the U.S.A. Poultry & Egg Export Council, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

After the sale of its worldwide packaged foods and Asian fresh businesses to Itochu, Dole will focus on two lines of fresh produce: fresh fruit and fresh vegetables. Proceeds from the deal will be used to pay off existing Dole debt, helping to reduce interest expense, according to a release. The deal is expected to result in overall Dole revenue decreasing by about 30% to \$4.2 billion annually, but it also should reduce the firm's costs, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

Despite the impact of frost to the 2012 potato crop from the Red River Valley, the region's growers are moving their largest crop since 2008. "It would have been larger if we hadn't lost 2,100 acres to frost late in the harvest," stated the marketing director for the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association. Movement this marketing season has been brisk, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Paramount Citrus agreed to acquire the citrus assets of Rio Queen Citrus. Paramount Citrus is already among the largest vertically integrated grower-packer-shippers of fresh citrus in North America, handling Mandarins, Navel oranges, Valencia oranges, lemons and limes. The acquisition of Rio Queen, following closely on

the heels of Paramount's recent acquisition of Healds Valley, positions the company as the preeminent supplier of Texas citrus, representing a majority share of the state's industry, primarily of the superior red grapefruit, according to a press release issued by Paramount, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Rocket Farms Herbs, a large horticultural greenhouse grower, is buying fresh herbs grower-shipper HerbThyme Farms. The acquisition helps further Rocket Farms' growth strategy to launch new products, enter new categories and expand into new distribution channels, according to a news release. Calling itself the largest U.S. cut herb producer, HerbThyme grows and ships more than 5 million pounds of fresh herbs a year from 200 acres of conventional and 150 acres of organic farmland, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

New Mexico State University celebrated two researchers who are part of a team receiving a \$2.4 million collaborative grant to help pecan growers in the state - and across the U.S. pecan-growing belt - stay competitive in the market focusing on the nutritional benefits of the nut crop. The University of Georgia is the lead on the project, with partners at Texas A&M. Through this project, researchers will attempt to improve long-term pecan production efficiency, productivity and profitability, reported *Western Farm Press*. [Full Story](#)

For the second time this season, Oregon's commercial Dungeness crab season has been delayed until Dec. 31. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife made the call, citing poor quality crab, at least in some areas. The earliest the season can normally open is Dec. 1. Last year, the season was delayed until Dec. 15 for most of the state, except Port Orford south and Northern California, where the season was closed until Jan. 15, reported *OregonLive.com*. [Full Story](#)

Report: 39% of NYC fish is mislabeled

About 39% of 142 seafood samples from 81 stores and restaurants in New York City were shown by DNA tests to be mislabeled, including 94% of fish labeled as white tuna that turned out to be a type of mackerel that contains a toxin known to cause digestive problems, according to Oceana, an advocacy group. The U.S. imports more than 90% of its seafood, and 500 chefs and restaurant owners teamed up in October to sign an Oceana petition against seafood fraud. [Los](#)

in October to sign an accord on a position against leaked nuclear [Los Angeles Times/Money & Co. blog](#).

Illinois has long been the nation's leading supplier of pumpkin pie filling, and in recent years the pumpkin's growing popularity has led more farmers to jump into the industry. While pumpkins represent a small share of the Illinois farming industry, more farmers are getting into the market. In 2007, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 502 of the state's 72,400 farms grew pumpkins, according to USDA, reported *The Chicago Tribune*. [Full Story](#)

Researchers claimed they have unlocked the genetic secrets of honey bees' high sensitivity to environmental change. Scientists from the UK and Australia think their findings could help show links between nutrition, environment and the insects' development. It could, they suggest, offer an insight into problems like Colony Collapse Disorder, reported *BBC News*. [Full Story](#)

One of Tennessee's oldest and largest organic farms is shutting down operations following a dispute over a corporate chicken farming operation next door. The farm's owner claims the closing is due to concerns over possible contamination from a neighboring farm that is growing chickens for a Tyson Foods subsidiary, reported *The Tennessean*. [Full Story](#)

California's Department of Fish and Game ended the squid catching season more than four months early after fishermen reached the annual maximum haul, 118,000 tons, by mid-November. Squid season normally ends Mar. 31, an fishermen normally never reach the limit. The vast majority of California's squid catch is frozen and sent to restaurants for use year-round. Only fresh squid at markets will be hard to come by, reported *San Francisco Chronicle*. [Full Story](#)

Japan suspended imports of meat from Brazil after a cow tested positive for mad cow disease. Japan, which imported 1,435 metric tons of Brazilian beef last year, will seek supplies from alternative exporters such as the U.S. and Australia. Other nations may follow suit, bolstering cattle futures in Chicago that rallied to a record last month, reported *The Japan Times*. [Full Story](#)

The pay gap separating fast-food workers from their CEOs is growing; the disparity doubled at McDonald's in the last 10 years, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. At the same time, the company helped pay for lobbying against minimum-wage increases and sought to prevent unionization efforts. Older workers are staffing fast-food grills and fryers more often, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. In 2010, 16- to 19-year-olds made up 17% of food preparation and serving workers, down from almost a quarter in 2000, as older, underemployed Americans took those jobs, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

Costco Wholesale anticipates some inflation in fresh foods, particularly proteins, with increases in the mid- to high single-digit range likely over the next six to nine months. "Beyond that, it's hit and miss," stated the executive vice president and chief financial officer. Asked if the anticipated price increases would be enough to dampen demand, he replied, "Not on our part," reported *Supermarket News*. [Full Story](#)

The absence of plum pox virus in two New York counties means stone fruit growers can resume planting trees there. Orleans and Wayne counties tested negative for plum pox virus three years in a row, which releases them from Regulated Area designation, according to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Quarantine regulations remain in effect in the counties, but growers may now plant stone fruit and other trees in them, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

Cherry and soft-fruit growers in Washington state will begin voting late this month on a proposal to expand research on their crops. The state Department of Agriculture stated ballots will go out about Dec. 26, asking whether growers want to create the special assessment on their production. The proposal, developed by the Washington State Tree Fruit Research Commission, seeks \$4 per ton for cherries and \$1 per ton for soft fruits like peaches and nectarines. The special assessment is equal to what growers currently pay to fund research, reported *Yakima Herald*. [Full Story](#)

Although the crops have all been harvested in Michigan and across the U.S., the drought that affected the country this year

across the state, the drought that affected the country this year **is not over**. Much of the middle part of the U.S. is still suffering through some degree of drought. Some parts of the Midwest need over six inches of moisture to be brought out of drought conditions. Most of Michigan needs less than two inches of extra moisture to be out of drought. Snowfall can help to relieve the drought, reported *MLive*. [Full Story](#)

Promotable volumes of high-quality Chilean grapes should start peaking in late January. Pandol Bros. expects Chilean grape volumes shipped to the U.S. and Canada to rise this year, and for North America to take a bigger slice of the total Chilean export pie, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

Brazil could end up increasing beef exports to Russia, its biggest buyer, after banning a controversial feed additive that promotes muscle growth in animals such as pigs and cattle, according to Russia's food safety watchdog. Russia stepped up tests on U.S. and Canadian meat imports for traces of the additive, a beta blocker called ractopamine, and demanded both nations certify their meat as ractopamine-free. U.S. exports alone to Russia are worth about \$500 million, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, China and South Africa informed Brazil on Dec. 13 that they were suspending imports of beef following a case of atypical mad cow disease that was confirmed last week. Including Japan, three countries have now restricted purchases of beef from Brazil, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Two well-known Florida citrus growers are launching a branded tangerine product aimed at getting healthy snacks to children. Lake Wales growers Vic Story and Marty McKenna have created the "Legend of Sun Lion Florida Tangerines" brand for the 2012-13 season. The company's initial focus is tangerines but will incorporate other fresh Florida citrus over time, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

While U.S. soybean supplies now are a bit tighter than corn, producers should keep in mind that "the markets are more comfortable with a tight soybean supply than with tight corn supply," stated the American Farm Bureau Federation deputy chief economist. reported *Southeast Farm Press*. [Full Story](#)

