

Market News

Wisconsin's cheesemaking industry continues to put out huge amounts of product. USDA reports that the state's dairy plants produced 249.6 million-lbs. of cheese during the month, up 2.7% from March 2012, and 13.4% more than this past February. Nationally, 954 million-lbs. of cheese was produced, down fractionally from March 2012, but 11.5% above the previous month's production totals. Wisconsin's production of American cheese increased as the state produced 76.2 million-lbs., reported *Wisconsin Ag Connection*. [Full Story](#)

North Carolina strawberries experienced a very cold spring, resulting in a later than-normal harvest season. The harvest season will be two to three weeks later and in addition to the late harvest, yields will be lower due to two aphid-borne viruses, reported *Southeast Farm Press*. [Full Story](#)

Since Chiquita Brands moved its headquarters late last year, the produce marketer has been refocusing on its core banana and salad businesses. While the recession may have slowed category growth, sales at Chiquita have been increasing, thanks to supermarkets and the healthy eating trend, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

California's Coachella Valley table grapes estimated start dates range from as early as May 10 to as late as May 20. The crop is being reported as being of excellent quality, with estimates of volume between 5.8 million boxes and 6.2 million boxes, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

Florida's citrus industry is closer to receiving funding to combat citrus greening. The state legislature has approved \$9.5 million in research to fight huanglongbing, also known as HLB and citrus greening, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

Argentine wheat farmers may increase sowing areas as the government proposes reimbursing grain export taxes, after decreasing acreage for the past two seasons, claimed analysts from the three largest grain exchanges and the spokesman for Argentina's largest wheat farmers group. Argentina's South American

Argentina's largest wheat farming group. Argentina, South America's largest wheat producer, is poised to disclose today a proposal to reimburse as much as 23 percent export tax for the 2013-14 season, reported *Bloomberg Businessweek*. [Full Story](#)

The sight of empty trays inside a bee box is chilling for beekeepers and the brokers who help place the bees on almond farms. And it is unwelcome news for almond growers, who must pay more for increasingly scarce bees. Almond trees depend wholly on the bees for pollination. Each year brings the increasing fear that a farm will not have enough bees, stated a bee broker and owner of the Pollination Connection, reported *The Sacramento Bee*. [Full Story](#) (Free Registration Required)

After a 2012 season that started early with unseasonably warm weather, Wisconsin farmers and agriculture officials claim cold weather has delayed potato planting this year. According to the executive director of the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association, the state had a strong potato crop in 2012 despite a dry and hot season that at times produced drought conditions. State growers produced 63,500 harvested acres and a total crop of 29 million hundredweight. This year, snowfall and low temperatures through much of April have left farmers with a challenge, reported *Wisconsin Rapids Tribune*. [Full Story](#)

Honey bee colonies declined 31% last winter, according USDA. More than \$20 billion of annual U.S. harvests rely on pollination, with almonds valued at about \$4 billion of that amount, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Colonies have been declining steadily since 2006 and the 31% drop is comparable to most winter declines since then but is larger than the 22% decline a year ago. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required) [USDA Report](#)

The Florida legislature agreed to fund \$9.5 million in research-related activities to combat citrus greening, which threatens to wipe out Florida's \$9 billion citrus industry. The funding is part of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services' (FDACS) 2013-14 budget, which still must be approved by Gov. Rick Scott. The funds would include \$8 million for citrus greening reserved research and incremental funding of \$500,000 for each of the related FDACS programs, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Green Giant Fresh is adding avocados to its line of fresh fruits, vegetables and value-added meal solutions. GGF-Avo-5-Count "Green Giant Fresh" brand avocados will be available to retailers nationwide beginning in late May. The new avocado product line will be available year-round through C.H. Robinson, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

A new wave of genetically-modified (GM) foods in grocery aisles with clear-cut benefits may help with shopper acceptance. The power of transgenic corn and biotech soybeans is harnessed on farmland; but GM apples and bananas and Golden rice will make their impact on the grocery aisle, directly appealing to consumers, reported *Western Farm Press*. [Full Story](#)

Last week's rare May snowstorm was a close call for many Nebraska fruit growers. The manager at Kimmel Orchard and Vineyard claimed he was the most concerned about the peach trees, which are almost all in full bloom. The orchard grows apples, cherries, pears, peaches, plums, grapes and a few other crops, reported *Nebraska Radio Network*. [Full Story](#)

May 5's fierce, day-long wind storm hit California's Kern County's stone fruit and almond growers hard, stripping cherries, peaches and plums off trees, ripping through almond orchards and uprooting thousands of the shallow-rooted trees. The blow to almond growers, who produce Kern County's second-largest crop, could be a major, long-term handicap. Cherry growers were also unhappy, especially because the wind and rain followed a week of hot temperatures that had pushed the fruit to the edge of harvest, reported *Bakersfield Californian*. [Full Story](#)

Declining tax revenues and other hits mean the Florida Department of Citrus will spend \$3.3 million less in the 2013-14 fiscal year, but its biggest program, orange juice marketing, emerged unscathed. Meanwhile, the Florida Citrus Commission approved going forward with one new OJ spot for the new citrus season beginning in October. The commission proposed a budget at \$48.1 million, down 6.5% from the current \$51.4 million budget, reported *The Lakeland Ledger*. [Full Story](#) (Free Registration Required)

Citrus greening has infected all of Florida's 22 citrus groves

Citrus greening has infected all of Florida's 32 citrus growing counties and is the most "serious threat in (the industry's) history," reported *The New York Times* on the web. [Full Story](#)

With an electric bill of about \$2 million a year, Blue Diamond Growers' processing plant in Sacramento, CA upgraded the lighting systems. In all, 588,000-sq.-ft. at the plant got new lighting, both energy efficient and controllable from a remote location, including a smartphone. As a result, the company can program the system to have lights dim or turn off completely to match production schedules. Other upgrades included a chiller with the ability to shut down during high-energy usage periods and get by on the cool air already created, reported *Sacramento Business Journal*. [Full Story](#)

Florida avocado grower-shippers are looking forward to another normal season. They expect some shipments to begin in small volumes in mid- and late May, but most growers plan to start in earnest in early to mid-June. Volumes build until promotable volume typically begins in early July, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Uesugi Farms' Gilroy, CA, headquarters launched a new 791-kilowatt solar-generation installation that will provide electrical power for essentially 100% of the facility's needs over the course of a year. Construction on the solar installation - the fifth-largest in Santa Clara County and either the largest or second-largest for an agricultural operation - began last fall and the new generation plant went online in February, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Federal inspectors have begun checking cantaloupe packing operations, with the first inspection at an unnamed facility in Florida. The inspections are in response to the deadly multistate outbreaks linked to cantaloupe in 2011 and 2012, according to a letter posted Feb. 25 by FDA, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

