

Corn reached a 34-month low in Chicago as cool weather and moist soil boosted optimism that the harvest will climb to a record in the U.S., the world's biggest producer of the grain. Near-to-below-normal temperatures in the Midwest through August's first half will favor corn pollination and soil moisture will stay favorable over southern and eastern areas, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

Prices for Arabica beans ended 2.3% higher Aug. 2 after it closed at a four-year low of \$1.1560 a pound a day earlier as news broke that Brazil is preparing to buy beans. Brazil's agriculture minister will announce plans to help struggling farmers Aug. 5, reported *Wall Street Journal*. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

Unheard of high potato prices are making potato growers in Wisconsin harvest potatoes ahead of schedule this year. Usually growers who start digging their crop too soon give up some of their potential yield by harvesting immature potatoes, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

A record 1.5 billion-lbs. of avocados were consumed in the U.S. in 2012, reflecting an ongoing dramatic increase in demand. So far, 2013 is on track to beat that record. Major sources of avocados in the U.S. market are Mexico, California, Chile and Peru, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Britain's cherry crops are expected to produce 3,000 to 3,500 tonnes (6.6 to 7.7 million-lbs.). Last year, the country produced 978 tonnes of cherries. This year's record is partly due to the cold spring which made the trees blossom later and the fruit developed more slowly, reported *BBC*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. cranberry growers are fighting deep surpluses and declining prices, along with increased competition from Canadian and overseas producers. The U.S. produced 402,300 tons of cranberries last year, an increase from 385,700 the year previous, reported *Fruit Growers News*. [Full Story](#)

Michigan researchers are exploring the potential for establishing high-density systems for tart cherry hedgerow production that can lead to more effective over-the-row harvests. Cherry growers have traditionally optimized tree growth for up to six years, in order to

develop enough trunk hardness to avoid injury from mechanical shakers, reported *Fruit Growers News*. [Full Story](#)

USDA announced 8,144 farmers' markets are now listed in the department's National Farmers Market Directory, up from about 5,000 in 2008. According to the latest Census of Agriculture, direct sales of food products from farmers to individual consumers rose by nearly 50% between 2002 and 2007. Worth an estimated \$1 billion in 2005, local food sales grew to \$4.8 billion in 2007 and nearly \$7 billion last year, according to industry estimates, reported *Fruit Growers News*. [Full Story](#)

Orange juice futures are down 60% since August 2011. As of Aug. 5, traders held \$440.8 million, down from the \$1.1 billion they held two years ago. Average daily trading volume also decreased, 15% in the last decade to 2,233 contracts. Consumption of orange juice is low due to health concerns over sugar. Supplies have also decreased due to citrus greening and Florida lands being used to build more condos, driving the prices up, reported *The Wall Street Journal*. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

Late-sown corn in the U.S. is at risk of frost damage in the northern and northwestern Corn Belt because of delayed development, according to Soybean & Corn Advisor Inc. Should initial frosts occur two weeks earlier than normal on Sept. 15, "we would have a big problem," stated the report. Early frosts may leave the corn yield in the U.S. at 150 bushels an acre (9.42 metric tons a hectare) or less, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

Eight in 10 Americans report eating at fast-food restaurants at least monthly, with almost half saying they eat fast food at least weekly. Only 4% say they never eat at fast-food restaurants. But slightly fewer Americans eat fast food weekly now than did so in 2006, reported *Gallup*. [Full Story](#)

China has approved its first shipment of genetically modified Argentine corn, Buenos Aires stated August 6. Argentine agriculture minister stated that Chinese health authorities cleared 60,000 tonnes of genetically modified Argentine corn, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Cattle futures climbed to a five-month high as Tyson Foods, the top U.S. meat processor, plans to suspend purchases of animals fed with a supplement made by Merck & Co. after discovering lame livestock at factories. "Some animal-health experts have suggested that the use of the feed supplement Zilmax, also known as zilpaterol, is one possible cause" for the animals being unable to walk, according to a letter sent by Tyson to cattle suppliers, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

Soybeans climbed as a slump to the lowest level in 18 months spurred demand before USDA updates its production estimates. The contract for November delivery rose as much as 0.7% to \$11.74 a bushel on the Chicago Board of Trade, reported *Bloomberg.com*. [Full Story](#)

As a result of the PED virus, pork price futures have skyrocketed to historic levels, with hundredweights of pork selling for about \$105 in recent trading at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. USDA data show that the same amount of pork went for \$78 in March, before the virus hit, reported *The Huffington Post*. [Full Story](#)

With only a couple of weeks of old potato crop remaining, shippers and buyers are scrambling to meet supply demands. Unusually smaller old-crop storage supplies and planting and weather disruptions across growing regions delayed the start of new crop harvesting and produced late summer price spikes, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Cucurbit downy mildew (CDM) is being reported on cucumbers, butternut squash and pumpkins across the state of Virginia and growers are urged to consider spraying preventative applications for downy mildew and thoroughly scout for the disease, reported *Southeast Farm Press*. [Full Story](#)

California's larger crop of avocados this year have growers expecting their shipping season to continue later into the year than usual, with peak volume continuing through August and much of September, good volume into October, and some shipments moving into the market as late as November. A total California crop of around 500 million-lbs. is anticipated for the year, up from around 460 million-lbs. in 2012 and a much smaller crop the

prior year, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

A strong vegetable market remains the order of the day as lighter-than-usual supplies from local and homegrown deals have created a demand-exceeds-supply situation for lettuce, tomatoes and other vegetables, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)