

## ***Market News***

**Futures of frozen orange-juice concentrate plunged 7.5%, the lowest level in more than six weeks, as weather forecasts appeared to rule out the biggest seasonal threat to Florida's citrus crop: freezes.** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center has forecast above-average temperatures for Florida in the Jan. 7-13 period. Some meteorologists claim it is too early to tell whether Florida will escape a freeze this winter, despite a forecast for warmer weather in the state. Those conditions would preclude a frost that would damage oranges and limit supplies from the state, which produced 71% of the nation's orange crop last season, reported *The Wall Street Journal*. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

**Meanwhile, Researchers estimate more than half of Florida's citrus groves are infected with citrus greening disease, which slowly kills trees as it causes them to shed fruit.** It "represents an existential threat to Florida's signature crop," stated state agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam. Although oranges from an infected tree are safe to eat, the disease gradually saps a tree's vitality. Last month, USDA cut its forecast for this season's citrus production in Florida by 5%, to 146 million boxes from 154 million. Among the reasons it cited was an increased rate of droppage- a term referring to fallen fruit- now projected to be the highest since 1970, reported *The Wall Street Journal*. [Full Story](#) (WSJ Subscription Required)

**Gulf of Mexico shrimpers have filed petitions with the federal government seeking relief from subsidized shrimp imports,** according to *The Associated Press*. The move came several weeks after Gulf of Mexico shrimpers hailed a House bill that included a provision to increase U.S. Customs and Border Protection's powers to combat illegal imports. The Coalition of Gulf Shrimp Industries filed the petitions Dec. 28, which seek "countervailing duties" - duties imposed to offset subsidies by foreign governments - on shrimp from China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. The coalition states the duties are needed "to offset the unfair trade advantage currently held by these countries," reported *The Stamford Advocate*. [Full Story](#)

**Higher corn prices cost chicken processors on 3,800 Georgia farms an extra \$430 million last year in feed**, according to the University of Georgia, resulting in poultry producers trimming supply to reduce costs. One farm, Fieldale, spent an extra \$50 million on chicken feed last year. "If we have a great corn crop, prices will be just high...If we have a bad corn crop (this) year prices will be horrendously high," stated a UGA professor of poultry science, reported *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. [Full Story](#)

**Lettuce has taken the biggest hit from weather patterns that drove growers in the desert regions of California and Arizona to use up acreage ahead of schedule on all vegetable crops**. Light frosts hit California's Coachella and Imperial valleys and Yuma, AZ, starting Dec. 19, part of a welcome cooling trend. The cold did little damage to most operations, but by slowing growth it raised the prospect of January shortages. "Any given crop could be 25% to 60% short," stated the president of D'Arrigo Bros., reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

**Peru has cut mango exports dramatically as growers there respond to dropping prices**. Shortly before Christmas, growers in San Lorenzo Valley, Cieneguillo and Alto Piura announced a 15-day suspension of sales. The price paid to farmers for 20 kilograms of mangoes had fallen from the equivalent of \$10.58 to \$3.13 in less than a month, reported the Peruvian newspaper *Diario Correo*. According to USDA, as the year came to a close, Peru had exported 59 million-lbs. of mangoes to the U.S. this year, compared to 1.19 billion-lbs. at the end of 2011, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

**With a significant increase in acreage, Fresh Farms now has "a very large cucumber program that includes outside pole-grown cucumbers" from the state of Sonora, Mexico, "and also shadehouse cucumbers from Sonora," increasing the program "threefold,"** stated the director of sales and marketing for the company. The cucumber harvest started in early October and will continue nonstop into June, he stated, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

**The chairman of a Washington fruit research group is optimistic the state's cherry and stone fruit growers will vote to double their assessments for research**. A proposal developed by the

Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission would assess cherry growers \$4 a ton and stone fruit growers \$1 a ton to fund endowed chairs at Washington State University, stated the commission's president and president of Doornink Fruit Ranch. The assessment, which also would pay for Extension programs, would be capped at \$5 million or eight years, whichever came first, reported *The Packer Online*. [Full Story](#)

**Oregon farmers are coming off two strong years, after the state's agriculture industry, more dependent than most states on housing due to grass-seed and nursery crops, was hammered by the financial collapse in 2009 and 2010.** But politically, agriculture risks being left behind as Congress and the Oregon Legislature focus on higher-profile issues. In particular, it is critical that the next farm bill recognize the growing importance of specialty crops, which produce about 80% of Oregon farm revenues, reported *OregonLive.com*. [Full Story](#)

**Meanwhile, Oregon's Dungeness crab season is off to a disappointing start so far, with fisherman seeing low catch amounts.** The season began on Monday just after midnight, after poor crab quality in some test sites forced a pair of two-week delays from the usual Dec. 1 start. While it looks like the haul will be down this season, that does not mean it is going to be a horrible year, but perhaps a normal one, reported *OregonLive.com*. [Full Story](#)

**Season-to-date, the San Joaquin Valley citrus crop has felt minimal pressure from below-freezing temperatures as compared to last year,** according to California Citrus Mutual. Overnight temperatures Jan. 2 dropped to a season low of 27 degrees in the coldest areas; however, the cold weather proved manageable and no damage to either the Navel or Mandarin crops was reported, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)