

MARKET NEWS

The avian flu virus could reappear in the spring, according to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Vilsack said there are concerns that the arrival of spring will present the greatest risk for recurrence after the disease destroyed nearly 50 million farm birds last year, reported *Des Moines Register*. [Full Story](#)

Shell eggs broken totaled 161 million dozen during November 2015, a 12% drop from the same month in 2014, according to USDA. Shell eggs broken totaled 1,932 million dozen in 2015 through November, a 7% drop compared to the same period in 2014. [Full Report](#)

The return of cooler daytime temperatures and foggy weather to San Joaquin Valley is helping tree fruit farmers. Cooler weather is getting the trees off to a good start, and some regions on the west side of Fresno County accumulated 70% of the total chill necessary for cherries, reported *Fresno Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Heavy rain and flooding in the Midwest is affecting hog producers, with reports noting thousands of pigs killed in the floods. Processors are sending out additional trucks to retrieve market-ready pigs, while hog producers in Illinois are calling on other farmers in hopes of finding extra barn space to house surviving pigs, reported *The Denver Post*. [Full Story](#) Meanwhile, **flooding spurred a surge in corn and soybean prices** as farmers sought shelter for crops and handlers looked for alternative transportation routes. Rising prices could also curb export demand, with U.S. traders struggling to compete with Latin American producers, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Frequent rain and muddy conditions made the closing sugarcane harvesting season in Louisiana a rough one for farmers and mill operators. While the first two weeks of the season were dry, heavy rains came Oct. 24 and continued throughout the season, leaving little chance for fields to dry. The season's yield is expected to be average to below average, reported *Times-Picayune*. [Full Story](#)

Central Washington apple growers lost at least \$85 million due to drought in 2015, according to initial estimates from the state Department of Agriculture. Raspberry growers in the state lost \$14 million, while dryland wheat farmers lost \$212 million, reported *Yakima Herald-Republic*. [Full Story](#)

More than 30,000 dairy cows were killed in a blizzard that swept across farms in Texas and New Mexico. It is estimated that half of Texas' top 10 milk-producing counties, home to about 36% of the state's dairy cows, were hit the hardest, reported *Fox Business*. [Full Story](#)

An Asian citrus psyllid was found in a tree in Fresno, CA. Survey crews from the California Department of Food and Agriculture will begin checking trees in the area for live psyllids, and a five-mile quarantine around the find will prohibit citrus trees and fruit from being moved outside the area, reported *Fresno Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Soybeans crushed for crude oil in the U.S. totaled nearly 5 million tons in November 2015, down from the 5.1 million tons produced in October 2015, according to USDA. Canola seeds crushed for crude oil during the time frame was set at 128.9 thousand tons, up from the 99.1 thousand tons produced during October 2015. [Full Report](#)

Washington state agricultural producers lost at least \$336 million to drought in 2015, according to the Washington Department of Agriculture. The number is expected to rise, as the report did not tally losses for commodities including potatoes, milk and cattle. They will be tallied as more pricing information becomes available, reported *The Capital Press*. [Full Story](#)

The Florida Citrus Commission voted to suspend minimum acid levels for the rest of the 2015-16 season on fresh oranges and tangelos. The vote came at the request of Florida Citrus Packers because a large amount of the fruit did not meet the standard of 0.4% citrus acid and could not be sold. The lower acid level is attributed to the extremely warm fall and winter, reported *The Ledger*. [Full Story](#)

As much as 15 inches of rain and 24 inches of snow are expected in Northern California over the next 16 days due to El Nino. Coastal and valley areas in Southern California are expecting between 2 inches and 3.5 inches of rain and up to 5 inches of snow in the mountains. The effects on the drought are difficult to predict, but some relief is expected, reported *San Francisco Gate*. [Full Story](#)

Hendrix Genetics will build its third U.S. chicken hatchery in Grand Island, NE. The \$10 million, 60,000-sq. ft. hatchery will produce 24 million chicks a year. Construction will begin in the spring and hatchery operations should begin in 2017, reported *Bradenton Herald*. [Full Story](#)

Wheat and other winter crops are thriving in Tulare County, CA, due to a good mixture of rain and sunshine, according to USDA. Kiwifruit from the region is being packed for the domestic market, while exports of citrus fruit slowed following the holiday season. In Fresno County, alfalfa fields went dormant due to frost. [Full Report](#)

Georgia peach orchards are about 300 chill hours behind the amount accrued by January in a typical year, but growers in the region do not expect the atypically warm winter to significantly affect the summer peach harvest. Forecasts for a cooler January and February should help with crop

quality, specifically fruit sizing, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

A major pesticide harms honeybees when used on citrus but not when used on other important crops, according to EPA. The agency found some cases where neonicotinoids didn't harm bees and others where the pesticide posed a significant risk. Crops that weren't conclusive and need more testing include legumes, melons, tree nuts and herbs. Treating seeds didn't seem to harm bees, reported *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. [Full Story](#)

Ardent Mills resumed operations in Alton, IL, as floodwaters along the Mississippi River receded. Another mill in Chester, IL, will remain down for weeks. Ardent was able to meet customer orders through other facilities, and the flooding's impact was minimized due to the Christmas holiday being a slow time in the flour business, reported *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. [Full Story](#)

USDA expanded farming conservation efforts in Iowa to an additional 85,000 acres. The lands were targeted to help the state's farmers and livestock producers conserve water and soil resources while improving nutrient management practices on the state's 30 million acres of farmland. [Full Story](#)

Large U.S. corn and soybean yields in 2015 could keep supplies burdensome in the coming year, according to a survey by FarmFutures.com. A corn crop of 13.6 billion bushels is expected, less than in the past two years but the third biggest on record. Soybean production is expected to be about 4 billion bushels, 5 million bushels more than USDA's current estimate. [Full Story](#)

A third case of bovine tuberculosis was found in Michigan cattle herds during routine testing. According to officials, the malady was detected in northeastern Lower Peninsula and Alpena County, reported *San Francisco Gate*. [Full Story](#)

Total U.S. cheese output totaled 976 million-lbs. in November 2015, a 0.6% increase above November 2014 but a 2.2% drop compared to October 2015, according to USDA. Butter production reached 151 million-lbs. during the month, a 4.4% increase compared to the same period in 2014. [Full Report](#)

The Mexican government imposed new duties on most U.S. apple exports in response to allegations of dumping. The new duties range from 2.44% to 20.82% and apply to all U.S. shippers except Monson Fruit, CPC International Apple and Washington Fruit and Produce, reported *Yakima Herald-Republic*. [Full Story](#)

Pepper shipments from Spain to the U.S. were banned to prevent the spread of Mediterranean fruit flies. In December, U.S. Customs and Border

Protection inspections at U.S. ports made five positive fruit fly finds in commercial shipments of Spanish peppers, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Monsanto Co. will eliminate another 1,000 jobs as it expands a cost-cutting plan designed to deal with falling sales of biotech-corn seeds. The additional layoffs will bring the company's total planned cuts to 3,600 jobs over the next two years, about 16% of its global workforce, reported *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, **Monsanto CEO Hugh Grant claimed low commodity prices should lead** to more consolidation in the agricultural sector. The company expects low prices to push its 2016 earnings to the low end of its forecast, and Grant stated that there is still "a significant opportunity" for integration between Monsanto and Syngenta AG, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Alexander & Baldwin Inc. is exiting the sugar-growing business. The company, Hawaii's last sugar plantation, will phase out sugar by the end of 2016, with its 36,000 acre Maui plantation divided in smaller farms to grow biofuels, food crops and pastures for local cattle ranchers, reported *The State*. [Full Story](#)

The California Avocado Commission forecast a harvest of 392.5 million-lbs. for 2016. Some of the harvest will occur in January to support local Big Game promotions, while the season will begin in earnest in March with promotable volumes available in April. [Full Story](#)

The U.S. lifted a ban on imports for 16 fruit and vegetables grown in the Dominican Republic. The repeal of the ban allows 31 provinces that were previously banned from shipping products due to Mediterranean fruit fly finds to ship non-Hass avocados, grapes, papayas, peppers, citrus and specialty products to the U.S., reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

The State Department is negotiating for U.S. ships to regain access to Pacific tuna fisheries administered by the parties to the Nauru

Agreement. The 37-boat U.S. fleet has been locked out of the area since Jan. 1 due to some members' non-payment. About 60% of U.S. canned tuna is caught in the waters, reported *San Diego Union-Tribune*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. producers will be able to export poultry, pork and beef products to South Africa after USDA and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative reached an agreement with South African government officials. The renewed access for U.S. red meat and poultry products could generate \$75 million of shipments annually. [Full Story](#)

Two to three feet of snow accumulated in the Sierra Nevada as El Nino brought precipitation to California. As much as five inches of rain fell along the coast from San Francisco to Eureka, and Angeles National Forest received 3.5 inches of rain. Flagstaff, AZ, received 19 inches of snow, reported *San Diego Union-Tribune*. [Full Story](#)