

Today in Food

USDA proposed a rule to decrease the assessment rate for tomatoes grown in Florida handled under the federal marketing order. The rate would be \$0.025 per 25-lb. container or equivalent of tomatoes. USDA will accept public comment for 30 days. [Full Notice](#)

USDA received a petition from Nuseed Americas seeking a determination of nonregulated status of canola designated as event B0050-027, which was genetically engineered to accumulate a long chain omega-3 fatty acid in seed. The agency will accept public comment for 60 days. [Full Notice](#)

France is facing dwindling local supplies of foie gras. Production dropped 22% in 2017 from already reduced 2016 output, according to foie gras trade association Cifog. As a result, prices will likely rise around 20%, but Cifog believes 90% of the French demand will be met and any additional shortages can be made up by other countries, reported *Food & Wine*. [Full Story](#)

Thailand suspended the import of shrimps from India. Thailand suspended the import license for five categories of shrimps to prevent the infectious myonecrosis disease from spreading, reported *Business Standard*. [Full Story](#)

Nearly 40% of customers have ordered directly from a restaurant website in the past three months, according to Tillster's Online and Mobile Ordering Index. More than 65% would order more often if a restaurant provided online ordering, and more than 73% would visit more if pre-ordering for pick-up or dine-in were offered. Nearly two-thirds of fast-casual customers plan to order online in 2018. [Full Story](#)

A wildfire in California's Ventura County will affect avocado and citrus groves as it spreads across thousands of acres. The Ventura County Fire Department noted 45,500 acres had "zero" containment as of the morning of Dec. 5, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Avocado growers in Mexico, Chile and the Dominican Republic shipped about 32.7 million-lbs. the week of Dec. 3, up from the 27.9 million-lbs. the week prior, according to the Hass Avocado Board. About 46.7 million-lbs. of avocados are projected to ship from Mexico and Chile for the week of Dec. 10. [Full Story](#)

Chinook salmon returning to the Stikine and Taku rivers in Southeast Alaska in 2018 are below the escapement goal range and will not provide for an allowable catch, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The new forecast is below the lower end of the escapement goal range of 19,000 fish, reported *Cordova Times*. [Full Story](#)

A toxic algae bloom closed most of the fertile shellfishing areas in Casco Bay, ME. The Department of Marine Resources expanded a closure area that

stretches from Portland Harbor to the west side of Harpswell. The closure was triggered when shellfish flesh tests showed elevated levels of a naturally occurring toxin produced by a large phytoplankton bloom, reported *Press Herald*. [Full Story](#)

The weight of cows at slaughter increased about nine pounds per year to 1,363-lbs. in 2016 from 996-lbs. in 1975. Changes in the body mean restaurants and grocery stores need to change how they cut the meat, and as a result many cuts are getting thinner and there's a rise of alternate cuts, reported *Washington Post*. [Full Story](#)

Indigo Ag closed on a \$203 million funding round. The money will support the company's global commercial expansion and its continued investment in the plant microbiome and development of software and data tools. [Full Story](#)

Total 2017 fall potato production for the U.S. and Canada is estimated at 505 million-cwt., down 1% from the revised 2016 estimates, according to USDA and Statistics Canada. U.S. production increased 2% to about 399 million-cwt., while Canadian production increased slightly to 106 million-cwt. [Full Report](#)

Total U.S. cheese production was set at about 1.1 billion-lbs. in October, a 1.7% increase from the year-ago period, according to USDA. Production included 455 million-lbs. of Italian type cheese and 418 million-lbs. of American type cheese. [Full Report](#)

Pacific halibut catches are likely to drop by 20% in 2018 to about 31 million-lbs., and the declines could continue for several years, according to the International Pacific Halibut Commission. Halibut numbers were down 23% in 2017 from 2016, and the total weight dropped 10%, reported *Alaska Journal of Commerce*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. agricultural producer sentiment turned lower in November, driven by a decline in optimism about future economic conditions in agriculture, according to the Purdue/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer. Ag producer sentiment dropped seven points in November to 128, the second weakest observed during 2017 and stood four points above the 2017 low of 124, set in March. [Full Story](#)

Researchers identified a pheromone used by the Asian citrus psyllid that could help in the fight against citrus greening. University of California Davis scientists hope the discovery can be used to design a less toxic method of control for the pest. [Full Story](#)

Almond Board of California invested \$4.8 million in 64 independent, third-party research projects exploring next-generation farming practices. The board released its first almond sustainability publication as well. [Full Story](#)

PureCircle launched a stevia farming program with tobacco farmers in the U.S. After planting and harvesting small trial plots this past fall, PureCircle

and its partner-farmers will increase commercial production of StarLeaf stevia for the next planting season. [Full Story](#)

Florida vegetable growers are approaching normal production in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. Cucumbers, squash, tomatoes and peppers are beginning to enter harvest, and many regional growers expect significant volumes to accumulate in early 2018, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

California strawberry growers shipped approximately 175.6 million flats through Dec. 3, a 5% increase from the year-ago period, according to the California Strawberry Commission. The highest recorded daily production between Nov. 26 and Dec. 3 came Nov. 27, with a total of about 352,000 flats. [Full Story](#)

Withdrawing from NAFTA would cause long-term harm to Nebraska farmers and ranchers, according to the Nebraska Farm Bureau. The four top-producing ag counties are estimated to export more than \$30 million each in commodities to Canada and Mexico, exports that could significantly slow without free-trade rules in place. On the farm level, the value of trade in North America works out to as much as \$55,500 per farm in Phelps County, reported *Omaha World-Herald*. [Full Story](#)

A two-year, \$10 million study will research the number of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico. The study, which is meant to help provide an independent tally for fishermen around the Gulf, is expected to help resolve an ongoing dispute over strict snapper rules and quotas designed in the 1980s to protect the red snapper population, reported *Miami Herald*. [Full Story](#)

U.S. soybeans crushed for crude oil totaled about 5.3 million tons in October, up from the 4.4 million tons reported in September, according to USDA. Canola seeds crushed for crude oil totaled 184,000 tons during the month. [Full Report](#)

Mango producers in Peru, Ecuador and Brazil shipped approximately 1.5 million boxes the week ending Nov. 25, a 36.4% increase from the year-ago period, according to the National Mango Board. Brazilian exporters shipped about 7.9 million boxes for the season to-date. [Full Story](#)

Chilean blueberry producers exported about 2,310 tons of fresh product the week of Nov. 27, according to the Chilean Blueberry Committee. Producers in the country exported 220 tons of organic blueberries during the week, representing 9.5% of total exports. [Full Story](#)

A section of the Eastern Aleutian District Tanner crab fishery will open for harvesting on Jan. 15, 2018. The 2017 survey abundance estimate of mature male Tanner crab in the Makushin/Skan Bay Section is 291,480 crabs, above the threshold of 45,000 required for a fishery opening, reported *Cordova Times*. [Full Story](#)

AgroFresh Solutions acquired a controlling interest in Tecnidex. a

provider of post-harvest fungicides, waxes and biocides for the citrus market. The move expands the company's post-harvest presence to new crops, and increases its penetration of the produce market in Latin America, southern Europe and Africa. [Full Story](#)