

MARKET NEWS

Rain in California prompted mudslides and flooding, further exacerbating issues in avocado groves that survived wildfires, according to the Ventura County agricultural commissioner. California avocado volume should be up significantly despite the weather issues, as the groves are alternate-bearing, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

The global grain glut is hitting white corn after farmers started planting more niche crops due to low prices for staple grains. White corn, which can trade for as much as \$1 per bushel above yellow corn, was down to as little as a \$0.05 above Chicago Board of Trade corn futures. Export volumes of white corn fell to about 1.6 million metric tons between January and November 2017, down 10% from 2016, according to USDA, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Average prices for high-quality farmland increased over the past year in seven leading agricultural states, held steady in seven others and declined in four, according to Farmers National. Prices for irrigated cropland in Nebraska averaged \$9,000 an acre in 2017, down from \$9,500 in 2016 and \$10,000 in 2015. The average for high-quality Iowa farmland was \$10,500 in 2017, up from \$10,100 in 2016 and 2015, reported *Omaha World-Herald*. [Full Story](#)

Japan's retail prices for lettuce, cabbage, Chinese cabbage and radish doubled in the last week of December 2017 compared with the average price for the same period over the previous five years, according to figures from the farm ministry. The upswing in winter vegetable prices was attributed to Typhoon Lan, followed by cold temperatures in November 2017 that, coupled with long periods of precipitation, hurt crop yields, reported *The Japan Times*. [Full Story](#)

The nation's eating and drinking places saw sales rise 3.9% in December 2017 versus the same month on 2016, according to The Food Institute. This put total 2017 sales at \$618.9 billion, or 2.7% more than 2016. [Full Story](#)

Georgia farmers are cautiously optimistic for the coming citrus season after a week of unusually low temperatures. Farmers protected their trees as best as they could, with techniques ranging from pipe insulation to continuously icing trees to create heat, reported *Modesto Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Colombian avocados will begin shipping to the U.S. in January, according to Colombian agricultural officials. Hass avocado exports to Europe and North America are expected to increase by 20%, according to the Colombian Agricultural and Livestock Institute, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Global food prices rose 8% in 2017, led by increases in dairy and meat, according to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization. Dairy prices rose by almost a third with a record rise in butter, followed by whole milk powder and cheese, while meat prices gained 9%. Cereals rose 3.2% and vegetable oil

prices increased 3%, while sugar fell 11% due to a bumper harvest in Brazil.

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U.S. fresh-market apple holdings totaled 115.8 million bushels as of Jan. 1, a 12% increase compared to the same date in 2017, according to the U.S. Apple Association. The total represented a 19% increase from the five year-average, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Avocado producers in Mexico and Chile are expected to ship about 41.2 million-lbs. of product the week of January 7, according to the Hass Avocado Board. Peru will likely ship about 284,000-lbs. the week of January 8. [Full Story](#)

The overall value of Ventura County crops dropped 4.2% to \$2.1 billion in 2016. The county's top 10 crops in 2016 were the same as in 2015, and strawberries topped the list with total gross value of \$654.9 million, reported *Ventura County Star*. [Full Story](#)

Honey bees are attracted to the fungicide chlorothalonil, which could negatively affect their health. Researchers at the University of Illinois found bees preferred to collect sugar syrup laced with the fungicide over plain syrup. Consuming the chemical could increase the toxicity of pesticides and kill off helpful fungi in hives, reported *Reuters*. [Full Story](#)

Louisiana farmers are optimistic the recent freeze didn't do major damage to sugar and wheat crops. About 10% of the Teche area's sugarcane is still in the field, partly due to farmers increasing plantings, while wheat was probably young enough to remain undamaged, reported *Wichita Eagle*. [Full Story](#)

California strawberry growers shipped approximately 180.0 million flats through Jan. 4, a 5.9% increase from the year-ago period, according to the California Strawberry Commission. The highest recorded daily production between Dec. 28, 2017 and Jan. 4 was Jan. 3, with a total of about 220,000 flats. [Full Story](#)

Iceberg lettuce trucking prices to Boston from California's Imperial Valley jumped 25% in January compared to the same period in 2016 and 2017, reaching \$8,300 to \$8,600 per truckload, according to USDA. Advanced Transportation Services noted the "bomb cyclone" winter storm in the Northeast pushed truck quotes even higher, with some cross-country trips costing as much as \$10,000, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Wisconsin lost 500 dairy farms in 2017 as expanding commercial farms continued to increase the state's milk production. The state's dairy numbers have dropped more than 20% since 2012, resulting in about 8,800 dairy herds licensed in the state at the beginning of 2018, reported *Modesto Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Westfalia Fruit International partnered with Chile-based Agricom to open an avocado pipeline to the Americas. Agricom is already partnered with Mexico-based Aztecavo, an avocado exporter, reported *The Packer*. [Full Story](#)

Private equity firm Butterfly acquired Pacifico Aquaculture, a producer of ocean-raised striped bass. The deal is expected to help Pacifico expand its reach throughout North America and globally. [Full Story](#)

California-based Bluefield Technologies plans to launch satellites to detect methane emissions to help commodity traders track the supply of cattle. Measuring levels of the gas can indicate the size of herds in areas where shelters block visual checks, such as dairy farms or feedlots, reported *Houston Chronicle*. [Full Story](#)

Frigid temperatures combined with unusually low tides could pose a problem for Maryland oyster farmers. Farm-raised oysters can die when exposed to cold air for a prolonged period of time, reported *Modesto Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Mango producers in Peru and Ecuador shipped approximately 1.1 million boxes the week ending Dec. 30, 2017, down from 1.4 million from the year-ago period, according to the National Mango Board. Ecuadorian producers shipped about 12.3 million boxes for the season-to-date. [Full Story](#)

Chilean blueberry producers shipped more than 9,600 tons the week ending Dec. 31, 2017, according to the Chilean Blueberry Committee. The committee reported optimal weather conditions for blueberry development in the country. [Full Story](#)

Meanwhile, **Chilean cherry producers are expected to ship more than 30 million cartons** during the 2017-2018 season, setting a new record, according to the Chilean Fruit Exporters Association. The country shipped over 21.7 million cartons during the season to-date, and expects the market to surge for Chinese New Year Feb. 16, reported *The Produce News*. [Full Story](#)

Fish farmers in Arkansas were issued federal permits to kill a limited number of double-crested cormorants. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued the permits under a new environmental assessment that weighs the bird's population count against the economic losses of fish farms and threats to public health and safety, reported *Modesto Bee*. [Full Story](#)

Maine lobstermen are balking at sharing details how they fish with federal regulators. Fisheries managers want to use this data to assess the health of the Gulf of Maine lobster stock and understand the economic impact of other projects, but lobstermen are hesitant to share what they consider trade secrets, reported *Press Herald*. [Full Story](#)

AgroFresh Solutions acquired a 15% stake in UK-based Food Freshness Technology Holdings Ltd. for \$10 million. Through the agreement, AgroFresh

will gain access to It's Fresh! Ethylene Removal Filters, adding a new technology offering for crops such as berries, stone fruit, avocados, tomatoes and cherries. [Full Story](#)