

WEEKLY NEWS ARTICLE UPDATE



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Export Sales Highlights

This summary is based on reports from exporters for the period January 9-15, 2015.

Soybeans: Net sales of 14,100 MT for 2014/2015--a marketing-year low--were down 99 percent from the previous week and 98 percent from the prior 4-week average. Increases for Russia (83,200 MT, including 80,000 MT switched from unknown destinations), the Netherlands (77,000 MT, including 70,000 MT switched from unknown destinations), Mexico (65,700 MT), Spain (65,000 MT, switched from unknown destinations), Japan (57,600 MT, including 36,000 MT switched from unknown destinations), Taiwan (36,500 MT), and Tunisia (30,000 MT), were partially offset by decreases for unknown destinations (413,800 MT) and China (77,000 MT). Net sales of 101,200 MT for 2015/2016 were for unknown destinations (100,000 MT) and Japan (1,200 MT). Exports of 1,631,800 MT were down 7 percent from the previous week and 5 percent from the prior 4-week average. The primary destinations were China (1,149,400 MT), Mexico (79,000 MT), the Netherlands (77,000 MT), Japan (65,700 MT), Spain (65,000 MT), Indonesia (53,500 MT), and Russia (53,200 MT).

Optional Origin Sales: For 2014/2015, outstanding optional origin sales total 876,000 MT, all China.

Exports for Own Account: The current exports for own account balance is 1,900 MT, all Canada.

Soybean Cake and Meal: Net sales of 284,500 MT for 2014/2015 were up noticeably from the previous week and from the prior 4-week average. Increases were reported for Spain (74,000 MT, including 40,000 MT switched from unknown destinations), Colombia (49,900 MT, including 15,000 MT switched from unknown destinations, and decreases of 6,600 MT), Mexico (43,100 MT), Denmark (41,000 MT, including 40,000 MT switched from unknown destinations), France (30,000 MT), and Ecuador (16,000 MT). Decreases were reported for unknown destinations (38,100 MT) and Turkey (10,000 MT). Net sales of 6,100 MT for 2015/2016 were reported for unknown destinations (6,000 MT) and Canada (100 RB). Exports of 302,900 MT were down 31 percent from the previous week, but up 11 percent from the prior 4-week average. The primary destinations were Thailand (49,400 MT), the Philippines (45,700 MT), Denmark (41,000 MT), Colombia (38,400 MT), Spain (36,000 MT), Mexico (24,700 MT), and Canada (14,000 MT).

Soybean Oil: Net sales of 17,100 MT for 2014/2015 were down 42 percent from the previous week and 22 percent from the prior 4-week average. Increases were reported for Peru (7,600 MT), the Dominican Republic (5,800 MT), Mexico (2,100 MT), and Morocco (900 MT). Exports of 43,500 MT were up 96 percent from the previous week and up noticeably from the prior 4-week average. The primary destinations were Morocco (18,900 MT), the Dominican Republic (15,000 MT), Jamaica (3,500 MT), and Mexico (2,900 MT).

[Biofuels Industry in Regulatory Gridlock as It Awaits EPA Ruling](#)

Jan. 21--FORT WORTH -- Seven years ago President George W. Bush signed a law requiring that refineries blend fuels derived from corn, animal fat and plant waste into the nation's fuel supply. But the industry it spawned says it's on the verge of plant closures and layoffs if the federal government doesn't clear up uncertainty about future fuel standards.

At the National Biodiesel Conference in Fort Worth on Tuesday, National Biodiesel Board CEO Joe Jobe said opposition from the oil industry had bogged down efforts to update the fuel standard and urged the Environmental Protection Agency to move forward.

"If the EPA doesn't get this back on track, we might as well not even have a program," he said.

The renewable fuel standard, which sets year-by-year mandates for ethanol, biodiesel and other biofuels, has come under debate in Washington over concern there is already too much ethanol in the nation's gasoline supply. In late 2013, a top EPA official told Congress that as domestic fuel demand weakened because of more efficient cars, the proportion of ethanol in the fuel supply had risen to the point it could harm engines -- what engineers refer to as the "blend wall."

At the same time, U.S. oil production has increased 80 percent since 2010 to more than 9 million barrels a day. One of the chief arguments for biofuels -- besides cutting carbon emissions -- was reducing the nation's dependence on foreign oil. And, at least for now, U.S. oil imports are on the decline.

That has left the biofuel industry in regulatory gridlock. The EPA has not updated the renewable fuel standard since November 2013. That year biodiesel production hit 1.8 billion gallons. But with no new standard, that number fell to 1.75 billion gallons in 2014, according to the biodiesel board.

Earlier this month Green Earth Fuels, a Houston biodiesel producer, filed for bankruptcy, and there is fear more losses are coming.

At the conference Tuesday, companies showed off biodiesel-fueled trucks and jars of crystal clear fuel made from used cooking oil. Hanging over the downtown exhibition hall was a sense of unease over the government's commitment to biofuels.

Jarren Nagy, whose Northern California company collects used cooking oil from restaurants for use in biodiesel production, said two of his competitors had closed over the last year.

"I have all my eggs in this. It would be nice to have some certainty from the government," he said.

The EPA was scheduled to release renewable fuel standards for 2015 two months ago. And with no decision date set, rhetoric between the biofuel and oil industries has been ramping up.

During a presentation laden with clips from movies including Star Wars and Back to the Future, Jobe cataloged what he described as "misinformation" about the biofuel industry spread by groups including the American Petroleum Institute, the oil industry's chief lobbying arm.

He pointed to a 2013 study commissioned by API predicting that by 2015 the renewable fuel standard would cause gasoline prices to rise 30 percent and diesel 300 percent. Oil prices are down more than 50 percent since the end of 2013.

Asked to comment, an API spokesman said the fuel standard was "costly, based on outdated policy aimed at reducing [oil] imports, and most importantly puts consumers at a safety risk since no auto manufacturer will warranty more [ethanol] in gasoline than 10 percent."

Still, Jobe said he remained optimistic. He said he believed there were potential partners within the oil industry, to whom he appealed for greater cooperation.

"In 2014, the renewable fuel standard got off track. It's our goal to get it back on track in 2015," he said.

[Brazil's Agroconsult Cuts Soy Estimate After Dry Weather](#)

SAO PAULO, Jan 22 (Reuters) - Brazil's 2014/15 soy crop will likely yield 93.9 million tonnes, down from a late 2014 forecast of 94.8 million tonnes after dry weather in early January, analyst firm Agroconsult said on Thursday.

Rains that made their return this week will determine the ultimate potential of what is still expected to be a record-large soy crop, the firm's director Andre Pessoa said.

A cold front went through most of Brazil's crop areas on Wednesday, ending some 20 days of hot, dry weather. But Pessoa cast a more pessimistic view on the forecasts.

"The rains that will come in the next few days are not all that positive," Pessoa told journalists.

The states most effected by the dry weather were Minas Gerais, Goias, Bahia and Piaui, Pessoa said, leaving out the top three soy producing states of Mato Grosso, Parana and Rio Grande do Sul.

Brazil's overall 2014/15 corn crop will likely be 80 million tonnes, up from 78 million tonnes last month, Agroconsult said. That includes 30 million tonnes from the first crop and 50 million tonnes from the second crop that will be planted soon.

Some analysts were concerned a delayed start to soy planting in the center-west would lead to less time to plant second crop corn, but Agroconsult expects the crop's area to rise by 2.5 percent from last year and output to increase by 3.7 percent.

Soybean prices have fallen steadily in recent months because bumper crops are expected in the top two global producers, the United States and Brazil.

Pessoa said profit margins would be tighter in Brazil than they have been in recent years. Agroconsult said in a statement that the changing mood could result in less confidence to make investments and ultimately have an impact the whole supply chain.

[Democrats Reject Obama's Call on Free Trade](#)

BY [SEAN HIGGINS](#)

A coalition of Democratic lawmakers resoundingly rejected President Obama's call to pass legislation that would make it easier for him to negotiate international trade deals, saying the administration's trade agenda was dangerous to the economy and had to be stopped.

"The president said [last night](#) that previous trade deals had not lived up to the hype. That may be the understatement of the century," Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., said at a press conference with other House Democrats. "We will fight this tooth and nail, and I believe we are going to win."

The president urged lawmakers Tuesday to pass trade promotion authority, legislation that would limit Congress to an up-or-down vote on approving trade deals. Obama said he needs it to strengthen his hand in international negotiations. Otherwise the U.S. would cede the stage to others, he warned.

Manitoba: \$443K for Seven Soybean Projects

The Brandon Sun -- WINNIPEG, MB -- January 22, 2015 -- The federal and provincial governments announced a cash boost for research into soybeans -- now the third most commonly grown crop in Manitoba.

The \$443,000, announced at Ag Days on Tuesday, will be divided among seven soybean research projects through the Manitoba Pulse Growers Association, the Western Grains Research Foundation and others.

The soybean industry is contributing another \$796,000 to these projects.

"Soybeans are important to Manitoba's farmers and out agri-processing industry," said Agriculture, Food and Rural Development Minister Ron Kostyshyn.

"A strategic investment in research will help ensure this crop continues to create good returns for farmers and economic opportunities throughout the province."

The research funding will focus on:

- * How phosphorus fertilizer application, soil temperature and crop residue affect soybean emergence;
- * Developing effective control methods for pests like soybean cyst nematode and root rot; and
- * Effective organic production strategies.

"Canada's soybeans are highly regarded around the world for their high quality and health benefits," Brandon-Souris Conservative MP Larry Maguire said.

"Our government is proud to invest in new research to generate higher yields of soybeans, creating more opportunities for farmers and processors to prosper."

Last year, nearly 1.3 million acres of soybeans were grown in Manitoba, making it the third most commonly grown crop after canola and wheat.

The annual farm gate value of soybeans is estimated at more than \$435 million.

Manitoba soybeans are crushed for oil and used as a protein source in livestock feed. Most soybeans are exported, with about 60 per cent sold in the United States.

"Soybeans continue to expand in our province," said Kyle Friessen, president of the Manitoba Pulse Growers Association. "Investing in these soybean research projects will ensure our growers have scientific information to improve their crop management decisions."

The project is one of 32 funded this year through Growing Forward 2, a five-year partnership between the federal and provincial governments through which \$176 million will be invested.

More than \$3.2 million will be invested into industry-led research for the crops, livestock, agri-environment and food sectors this year.

Russian Commission Recommends Ban on Growing GMO Crops

MOSCOW, January 20. /TASS/. A Russian governmental commission has approved a draft law aimed at improving the state regulation of genetic engineering, the government said on its website on Tuesday.

The bill imposes a ban on cultivation and breeding of genetically modified plants and animals in Russia, with the exception of their use for research purposes.

Imports of such products will be closely monitored, the government said. The draft law also implies administrative liability for the use of genetically modified organisms.

According to the Russian Grain Union /RGU/, more than 50 companies supply over 500,000 tons of genetically modified products to Russia annually. Transgene soybeans and corn can be found in 61 products on the Russian market (flour, sausages, beverages, food additives, and infant foods). -0- vnk/ir

Street Protests Loom as Shortages, Inflation and Oil Slump Hit Venezuela

Friday 16 January 2015

Venezuela's most conciliatory opposition leader has had enough.

Amid sky-high inflation, an absent president, snaking queues outside supermarkets, and plummeting oil prices, Henrique Capriles said this week that the time was ripe to try to force a change.

"We are in a state of emergency," he said on Monday. "This is the time to mobilise in the streets."

The call to protest was significant because Capriles, a state governor, disavowed last year's violent protests demanding the resignation of Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela's president. Instead, Capriles had advocated regime change through the ballot box.

But the situation on the ground has changed since then. Venezuela's economy is estimated to have shrunk by 4% in 2014, with inflation hitting 64%. The price of oil, which accounts for more than 95% of Venezuela's hard-currency income, continues to fall. According to the latest opinion poll, Maduro enjoys the support of just 22% of the population, and he has come under fire on social media and editorial pages for spending nearly two weeks outside the country – with his extended family in tow – while the crisis deepens.

Most worrying for Venezuelans are food shortages. Standing in line for hours to buy basic subsidised goods such as milk, soap and diapers has become an exhausting reality of everyday life, but tensions have grown since stocks are running lower than usual after the holidays and police began enforcing a policy that limits patrons to two shopping days a week at government-run supermarkets. In three states, authorities have banned overnight queues.

Capriles, who narrowly lost the presidency to Maduro in 2013, met with other opposition leaders throughout the week to define their protest strategy.

The Venezuelan opposition leader Enrique Capriles gives a press conference in Caracas on Wednesday. Photograph: Ariana Cubillos/AP

But in the western city of San Cristóbal, the flashpoint of last year's protests, a small group of students have already begun to set up roadblocks and burn tyres, according to Reuters. Flashes of protest at supermarkets in Caracas have landed a handful of people in jail.

"Venezuela is living in a state of perpetual crisis," says Carlos Romero, a Caracas-based political analyst. "But it's been a stable crisis," he says, adding that despite rumours of a possible coup or an impending debt default, Maduro still holds the political reins.

In December, Maduro confirmed that the country was in recession, but blamed an "economic war" orchestrated by political foes.

"The strategy that they are carrying out aims to disrupt civilians and cause extreme situations, that is the key part of their efforts to destabilise the country," Maduro told reporters. "An economic coup is also under way in Venezuela," he said.

The president, who succeeded the father of Venezuela's socialist revolution, Hugo Chávez, two years ago, set off on 4 January on a whirlwind tour of China, Russia and several Opec nations to seek fresh money to shore up the Venezuelan economy and try to convince other oil producers to curtail production.

In Beijing, Maduro announced that China had agreed to invest more than \$20bn (£13.2bn) in Venezuela, but it remains unclear whether the sum represented a fresh arrangement or was part of pre-existing oil-for-loans deals. Even if the investments are new, it is far from certain that this is money that the Venezuelan government can use for imports or debt repayments.

Oil prices continued to drop during his tour but after meeting Vladimir Putin on Thursday, Maduro said he secured enough pledges of money to buttress Venezuela's economy.

"I have got the funds needed so that the country can maintain its rhythm of investment, of imports and economic stability," he announced from Moscow. There was speculation in Caracas about whether he might fly next to Mexico, another major oil producer, for a meeting with President Enrique Peña Nieto.

[TABLE-China's December 2014 Soybean Import](#)

Jan 23 (Reuters) - The following table shows China's imports of soybeans from major countries of in December 2014

Data was provided by the General Administration of Customs of China.

	Dec		\$/tonne	AI of CY 2014	
	tonnes	pct chg*		tonnes	pct chg*
Imports:					
Soy	8,526,824	15.17	491.4	71,398,983	12.66
From					
USA	7,778,512	30.96	491.21	30,024,768	35.02
Canada	342,132	-8.44	480.95	862,654	2.83
Argentina	183,305	-57.95	515.96	6,004,450	-1.95
Brazil	170,979	-70.32	511.09	32,005,374	0.62
Russia	27,162	203.89	307.14	59,323	-12.87
Uruguay	24,735	-64.5	578.68	2,442,234	6.19
Bangladesh	-	-	-	180	-