

Losses will continue until ports to get back to normal

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the port because it was taking too long for its ships to be unloaded and loaded.

Hanjin carries 78 percent of the cargo out of Portland, and two smaller shipping lines don't have the capacity to pick up the slack, said Steve Johnson, port spokesman. Port managers are working to get Hanjin back or attract other shipping lines, he said.

Otherwise, ag exporters will have to truck or send by rail their cargo to other ports at \$600 to \$1,000 more per container, he said.

While agricultural exporters are pleased ports are operating again, they already have lost an estimated \$1.75 billion worth of sales per month for two to three months, said Peter Friedmann, executive director of the Agriculture Transportation Coalition.

And losses will continue for the several months it takes ports to get back to normal, he said.

Containers of apples, hay, frozen potato products, meats and other goods are stacked up and waiting for the 15-day ocean crossing to Asia.

The number of containers on a ship varies from 5,000 to 18,000 but the average on the West Coast is 7,500 to 8,000, Friedmann said. The normal turn-around time to unload and load a ship varies from one to five days, depending on the size of the ship and how much is being unloaded and loaded, he said.

Shelly Boshart Davis, vice president of international sales at Bossco Trading, a rye grass straw exporter in Tangent, Ore., said her company has had 140 containers of straw, worth \$500,000 to \$700,000, at the ports of Portland, Tacoma and Seattle since Jan. 15.

"We need to get containers moving," she said. "We will be OK if we can, but we can't do another six months of this."

Three more months to get ports back to normal may push some exporters to bankruptcy, she said.

Changing the law?

It remains to be seen



Nick Ut/Associated Press

A dock worker arrives at the Port of Los Angeles on Feb. 23. Nearly all West Coast seaports began the week with dockworkers hustling to load and unload cargo ships that were held up amid a months-long labor-management dispute.

whether the new port contract will embolden exporters and members of Congress to try to change federal labor law to prevent future disruptions.

"...(I)t is appropriate to evaluate all options that would end the economic threat posed by such disputes in the future," Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., said in a statement.

Chris Schlect, president of the Northwest Horticultural Council in Yakima, Wash., said often interest in changing the laws wanes once disputes are resolved.

But, he said, this crisis was big enough that people may be more willing to look at it, and more will be interested after the contract is ratified because comments could no longer derail it.

Schlect said he has not heard of anyone going bankrupt because of the port slowdown but wouldn't be surprised if some tree fruit growers do because of many factors that have made it a poor year. A record large harvest, lower prices and factors such as the Russian boycott of European Union and U.S. fruit have combined with the port slowdown to hurt the industry.

European apples have been displacing Washington apples in Asian markets because of the slowdown, and it will take "a lot of brand building to get ourselves back into the marketplace and top in minds of consumers," said Todd Fryhover, president of the Washington Apple Commission in Wenatchee.

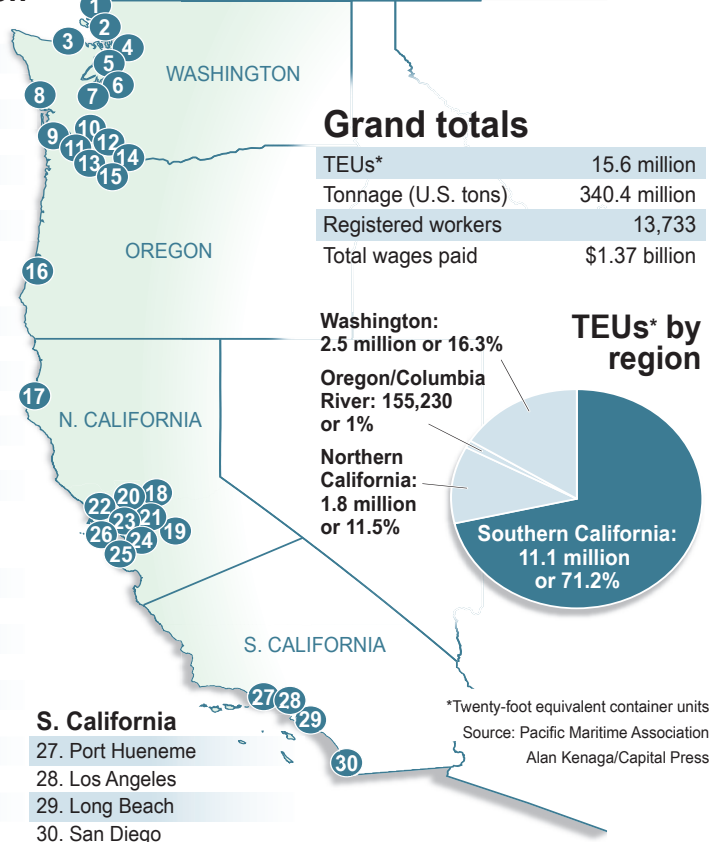
Friedmann said the coalition is "totally for" changing labor law to prevent future disruptions and will continue to push the Pacific Maritime Association and the ILWU to improve West Coast port productivity.

"U.S. agriculture can recover but only with a collective effort," he said. The PMA and union need to improve the pace of terminal operations, automation and eliminate outdated labor and management practices, he said.

West Coast port statistics, 2013

Locations by region

- Washington**
 1. Bellingham
 2. Anacortes
 3. Port Angeles
 4. Everett
 5. Seattle
 6. Tacoma
 7. Olympia
 8. Aberdeen/Grays Harbor
- Oregon**
 9. Astoria
 10. Longview
 11. Rainier
 12. Kalama
 13. St. Helens
 14. Vancouver
 15. Portland
 16. N. Bend/Coos Bay
- N. California**
 17. Eureka
 18. W. Sacramento
 19. Stockton
 20. Port Chicago
 21. Benicia
 22. Crockett
 23. Richmond
 24. Oakland
 25. Redwood City
 26. San Francisco
- S. California**
 27. Port Hueneme
 28. Los Angeles
 29. Long Beach
 30. San Diego



Accrued heat affects more than just plant life — insects also impacted

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Bear Creek Orchards, the pear and peach producing division of the Harry & David fruit basket company, is already preparing its propane heaters and wind machines for the possibility of an additional month of frost

season, said Josh Minchow, the firm's manager of fruit growing operations.

Keeping blossoms viable during low temperatures often requires more labor, fuel and electricity to protect the company's investment, said Minchow. "That could translate to a

pretty big bill," he said.

In the cherry-growing region along the mid-Columbia river, an early bloom is not the only concern associated with the higher-than-normal accumulation in degree days, said Lynn Long, extension horticulturist at OSU.

Last November, temperatures as low as minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit caused damage to cherry trees, which would benefit from a slower emergence from dormancy, said Long.

"Rushing that by having warm temperatures is just going to put more stress on the

trees," he said.

Accrued heat affects more than just plant life — insects are also impacted by higher temperatures.

Pests like the spotted wing drosophila and brown marmorated stinkbug are posed to benefit from the early onset

of spring, since it provides the opportunity for additional generations to hatch and build up populations, said Coop.

However, the development of predatory insects, such as those that feed on aphids, is also sped up by warmer temperatures, he said.

Importers cope with U.S. product shortages

By RICHARD SMITH
For the Capital Press

TOKYO — Japanese importers have switched from buying U.S. commodities or have shipped them by air or through alternative ports to get around shortages caused by the West Coast dockworker dispute.

"The problem has become worse as the slowdown continued and inventories within Japan have been depleted," said Jeff McNeil, president of the Tokyo-based marketing company Market Makers. The company represents the California Table Grape Commission, National Dry Bean Council, the U.S. Dairy Export Council and the Raisin Administrative Committee.

"Some (importers) may be looking at alternatives, such as shipping from non-West Coast ports," McNeil said.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association reached a tentative contract agreement on Feb. 20, but it still needs to be ratified, and it may take months to clear the backlog of containers stacked up at West Coast ports.

Other importers are switching to commodities from other countries.

That may become the case for hay, said Hiroyuki Nakamura, assistant general affairs section manager for Zenrakuren, the National Federation of Dairy Cooperative Associations, which represents 181 dairy co-



AP Photo/Koji Sasahara

In this Feb. 16 photo, a container ship is docked at a port in Tokyo. The flow of agricultural goods imported to Japan has reduced by a work slowdown at West Coast ports. It was part of a months-long contract dispute between port operators and dock workers.

"As there are no problems in shipping from Australia, it is possible we may switch to importing from Australia," Nakamura said.

Because of work slowdowns, most U.S. hay orders since October have been delayed two to three weeks and sometimes up to one month, he said, adding that inventories here have become tighter each day.

"It will take two to three months for things to return to normal here" now that a new contract has been reached, Nakamura said.

Beef is another case in point. Importers have not been able to get U.S. refrigerated pork and beef as planned, and shipments of frozen pork have been delayed, said Tatsuo Iwama, secretary-general of the 26-member Japan Meat Traders Association.

Canadian and Mexican refrigerated pork shipments have

also been impacted. In some cases, the pork reaches the limit as chilled product and must be frozen while aboard the ships at sea, called chilled-fro, Iwama said.

Meat Export Federation Japan technical services senior director Susumu Harada said converting fresh meat into chill-fro product hurts quality.

"Some chilled product users are forced to sell chill-fro product at a discount, facing a profit loss and price disturbance," Harada said.

Meat shipment delays and cancellations have occurred, while some orders have been flown to Japan to meet delivery deadlines despite the higher shipping costs, he said.

Japanese users are taking every possible measure to minimize the impact by sourcing from alternative sources such as domestic pork and beef pro-

ducers and beef from Australia, Harada said.

Japanese importers worry that if the delays persist they may lose the peak spring sales opportunities, he said.

"If the Japanese trade foresees this, they would be forced to switch from U.S. meat to other sources," Harada said.

McDonald's Japan faced a french fry potato shortage, forcing it to limit french fry sales to small orders only from Dec. 17 through Jan. 4.

The company resolved the problem by air freighting 1,000 tons of french fries to Japan, followed by sea shipments from the East Coast totaling 1,600 tons at the end of January, spokeswoman Kokoro Toyama said.

McDonald's is now coping with the crisis by working with importers, shipping companies, field suppliers and McDonald's outlets in other countries, Toyama said.

The slowdowns had little effect on other U.S. products the company uses, as their overall consumption is small compared to that of potatoes.

"As we have made sure to have extra inventory, there has been little influence" of the slowdown on the availability of other products, Toyama said.

Jun Kamoshida, president of marketing company J Plus, which represents Western Growers, an alliance of California and Arizona vegetable growers, said some vegetable shipments have been delayed.

Oregon wolf survey shows numbers continue to increase

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Oregon had at least 77 wolves in nine packs in 2014, according to an annual survey released Tuesday by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Biologists consider 77 a minimum number and say the state most likely has more wolves. Oregon had at least 64 wolves in the 2013 census. Almost all the state's wolves are in the northeast corner of the state. The Rogue Pack, made up of the well-known wandering wolf OR-7, his mate and at least three pups, is established in the Southwest Oregon Cascades.

Wolves are listed as endangered in Eastern Oregon under the state Endangered Species Act, and are protected in the rest of the state under the federal ESA. While conservation groups and much of the public cheer wolf recovery efforts, they are not popular among livestock producers, who bear the additional cost of protecting herds.

Kayli Hanley, spokeswoman for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said it's no surprise the wolf count continues to rise. Oregon has allowed the wolf population to "grow unchecked," she said in an email.

"Any animal will over-populate if it does not have a natural predator and wolves are no different," Hanley said.

The state documented 11 incidents in which sheep, cattle or guard dogs were killed

or injured by wolves in 2014; 13 incidents were documented the previous year. In 2014, two other incidents were listed as "probable" wolf attacks, nine were classified as possible or unknown, and 12 were listed as "other."

Ranchers believe wolves kill far more livestock than is documented. In many cases, ranchers say, cattle or sheep disappear while grazing in forests or rangeland and it's not clear what happened to them.

A cow, one calf and 30 sheep were killed in the 2014 incidents. Eleven sheep, two calves, a cow and two dogs were injured.

Oregon paid out \$150,830 in compensation in 2014. Most of the money was used to pay for preventive measures intended to deter wolves; much of the rest was direct compensation for losses.

The report will be presented to the ODFW Commission at its March 6 meeting in Salem. The eastern part of the state has now recorded at least four breeding pairs of wolves for three consecutive years. Under Oregon's wolf plan, the survey numbers mean the state has met its conservation goal in Eastern Oregon and can consider removing wolves from the state ESA list.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association favors delisting.

"We do expect more wolf attacks on livestock this year if wolves continue to remain listed," spokeswoman Hanley said.