

TPP could boost California ag exports, researchers say

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press



Sumner

DAVIS, Calif. — The proposed 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact could be significant for California, lowering import barriers and enabling more of the state's agricultural products to be sent to Japan and other nations, university researchers conclude.

The deal, the full text of which was unveiled by President Barack Obama's administration on Nov. 5, would also enable California's industries to reach developing markets such as Malaysia and Vietnam, asserts a study led by Daniel Sumner, an ag econo-

mist at the University of California-Davis.

Further, better access to imports from TPP countries would give U.S. consumers more spending power, and thus could increase domestic demand for California farm products, Sumner observes in an essay outlining the impacts of the trade deal.

Freer trade "generally means more economic growth and expanded markets" at home and abroad as well as more political and economic stability, the paper asserts.

"California agriculture

will benefit from stability in the Pacific Rim markets," the essay argues.

Sumner wrote the analysis with the help of researchers Hyunok Lee and William A. Matthews of the UC's Agricultural Issues Center, which Sumner leads. The paper was an update for the university's Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics.

California now sends about 40 percent of its exported agricultural goods to TPP countries, with about 72 percent of that total shipped to the "big three" — Canada, Japan and Mexico, according to the Agricultural Issues Center.

Almond exports from California to TPP nations in 2013 were valued at \$650 million, with wine and table grapes closely behind at about \$500 million in export value each, according to the researchers.

Under the TPP, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam would eliminate tariffs for tree nuts. The current tariff into Japan is just 5.6 percent, but Vietnam's tariff is 23 percent, the researchers note.

Tariffs for citrus fruit in Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam would also be eliminated. Already, Japan imported about \$170 million in California citrus fruit in 2013 despite a 12 percent tariff, and Malaysian buyers added another

\$24 million to California citrus exports that year, Sumner wrote.

The analysis comes as farm groups nationwide have had mixed reactions to the 30-chapter, 2,000-page agreement. The National Potato Council and Northwest Horticultural Council were among groups that endorsed the deal, while the National Farmers Union is among its critics.

The California Farm Bureau Federation is urging the state's congressional delegation to support the deal, arguing that the Golden State's proximity to Pacific Rim countries uniquely positions the state to gain from it.

"California-grown food

and food products have a worldwide reputation for high quality, and our ports have the ability to deliver those products efficiently," CFBF president Paul Wenger said in a statement. He added that increased farm exports would lead to jobs in urban as well as rural areas.

For the U.S. economy as a whole, the TPP's impacts will be "moderate at best," Sumner and the other researchers wrote. Its most important influence may be to entice China and other large Asian economies to join, which would "add substantially to the market for California agricultural exports," the researchers concluded.

Proposed ban on chlorpyrifos could have big impact in California

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — A federal proposal to ban the pesticide chlorpyrifos for agricultural use could have a big impact in California, where it is used on some 60 crops including tree nuts, oranges and grapes, regulators say.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is taking public comments on a plan to revoke food residue tolerances for chlorpyrifos, which is produced by Dow AgroSciences and controls many different pests, including termites, mosquitoes and roundworms.

The EPA said on its website that humans' exposure risk to chlorpyrifos could exceed safety standards "in certain watersheds" — particularly small watersheds where the pesticide is heavily used. Chlorpyrifos was banned for residential use about 15 years ago.

While the chemical is heavily regulated in California and its use has declined, between 1 million and 2 million pounds of chlorpyrifos is still applied to crops in the state each year, said Charlotte Fadipe, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Pesticide Regulation.

"This ... would be a major change for California growers, as it is used on many crops," Fadipe said in an email. She added the DPR has been "anticipating for a while" that the federal government would move to limit or ban chlorpyrifos, and DPR director Brian Leahy has been encouraging growers to seek alternatives to the organophosphate pesticide.

Tehama County Farm Bureau president Michael Vasey said he has used chlorpyrifos in the walnut groves at Lindauer River Ranch in Red Bluff, Calif., which he manages. He said he needed to study the EPA proposal more thoroughly before commenting on it.

He said growers are sometimes frustrated by the lack of available alternatives when regulators move to ban various pesticides. For instance, the phaseout of the fumigant methyl bromide began two decades ago, and growers are still looking for technically or economically feasible alternatives, he said.

Under an August ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the EPA had until Oct. 31 to either issue a final ban of chlorpyrifos, put a proposed ban out for public review or deny the petition filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Pesticide Action Network North America.

Issuing a proposed revocation allows the EPA to gather public input before making a final decision, which it plans to do by December 2016, according to the agency's website. Environmental groups praised the EPA for finally acting on a 2007 petition to ban the chemical.

"At long last, the agency is signaling its intention to protect children, workers and their families by banning this hazardous pesticide," Earthjustice attorney Patti Goldman said in a statement.

In recent years, California has put significant controls on the use of chlorpyrifos, requiring training, licensing and local county approval for anyone who uses it. Growers must tell their county agricultural commissioner when, where and how

they want to use the pesticide, and counties require buffers of up to 150 feet between the user and a school, river or other sensitive site.

Last year, the Department of Pesticide Regulation contracted with the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program to create commodity-specific guidelines for using chlorpyrifos. Teams focused on its use on alfalfa, almonds, citrus fruit and cotton, identifying alternatives as well as instances when use of the chemical is critical to protecting the crop.

A resulting report by the university examined other pest-control tactics, including planting pest-resistant crop varieties, mating disruption, field sanitation and other insecticides.

However, the teams "agreed that chlorpyrifos is an essential element to their IPM programs to continue production and quality standards heretofore established for their commodities," the report's executive summary stated.

NAWG looks to grow wheat acreage

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

SPOKANE — The National Association of Wheat Growers will survey U.S. farmers as a first step toward determining how to increase the amount of wheat grown nationwide.

"They need to see more productivity on their own farms to keep planting wheat, or consider wheat as a viable alternative in their rotation," NAWG president Brett Blankenship told the Washington Grain Commission at a recent meeting.

The survey is the first step in developing the association's national wheat action plan, designed to reinvigorate the industry, said Blankenship, a Washtucna, Wash., farmer.

In the last two decades U.S. wheat acreage has decreased from roughly 90 million acres to 54 million acres. Most of the decline has occurred in the Midwest.

In 1995 farmers in Washington, Idaho and Oregon grew 5.14 million acres of wheat. In 2015 they planted 4.56 million acres.

He attributed the decline in the region to an increase in the number of USDA conservation



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

reserve program acres. "A farmer who grew wheat now perhaps grows soybeans and corn, and is making almost twice the dollars per acre as he was before, so as an individual farmer, he doesn't view that as a crisis, he views that as a benefit," he said.

The wheat industry needs to figure out a way to increase acreage while it's still healthy, Blankenship said.

"If we wait, it may be too late to reverse the trend and

we could drift into becoming a more minor crop," he said. "The smaller you get in your land and economic base, your political base shrinks.

"If you want to stay in the game, so to speak, we need to stay a major, growing, vibrant wheat economy," he said.

A study by Texas A&M University predicts that a 20 percent increase in productivity would reverse the downward trend, Blankenship said. He believes that's within reach with

improved management and gains provided through wheat research.

If production remains flat or declines, fewer funds collected through assessments are re-invested in research or market development, Blankenship said. Budgets for state commissions will also become increasingly stressed, he said.

"This conversation needs to include, 'What do we really need to prosper?'" Blankenship said. "When you compare ourselves to other industries, even though we have invested significant dollars into research, it pales in comparison to some of the other commodities."

Blankenship hopes to survey farmers by the end of the year.

NAWG has raised roughly \$250,000 from technical providers to begin the effort.

The organization will solicit other companies that would benefit from growth in the wheat industry, Blankenship said.

NAWG will also spend the next year asking for information from all sectors of the industry, including export market development and research.

6EVOLVED
Reliability.
Reborn.

We took the popular, fuel-efficient and affordable John Deere 6D ... and made it even better.

Introducing the new 6E.

This is everything an affordable utility tractor should be. Built for long-term reliability, simple to operate, a low cost to operate, and versatile enough to pull a baler, lift pallets, move a mountain of gravel, mow all day long, stack bales ... and more.

With all the options you want — 12F/12R or 24F/12R PowrReverser™ transmission, 105-, 120-, or 135-engine hp, open station or cab, 2WD or MFWDD.

The PowerTech™ engine uses an integrated approach to Final Tier 4 compliance, giving the 6E power, torque, fluid efficiency and responsiveness rather than just emissions compliance alone.

Inside you'll find one of the quietest cabs available in a utility tractor. The controls are all right where you need them. And there's 15 degrees of bi-directional seat swivel for improved comfort and visibility.

See your dealer to take a look at the evolutionary 6E. It's the reliable utility tractor ... reborn.



Everything you need. Nothing you don't.

 **JOHN DEERE**

JohnDeere.com/6E

John Deere Dealers

See one of these dealers for a demonstration

Belkorp Ag, LLC
Modesto, CA

Campbell Tractor & Implement
Fruitland, ID
Homedale, ID
Nampa, ID
Wendell, ID

Evergreen Implement Inc.
Coulee City, WA
Moses Lake, WA
Othello, WA
Ritzville, WA

Kern Machinery Inc.
Bakersfield, CA
Buttonwillow, CA
Delano, CA

Papé Machinery
Bonners Ferry, ID
Four Lakes, WA
Madras, OR
Merrill, OR
Moscow, ID
Ponderay, ID
Tangent, OR
Tekoa, WA
Walla Walla, WA

Washington Tractor, Incorporated
Chehalis, WA
Ellensburg, WA
Lynden, WA
Quincy, WA

 **JOHN DEERE**