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## SHRINKING

# APPETITE

Don Jenkins/Capital Press  
The Hong Kong-registered cargo vessel OOCL Rotterdam is moored at the Port of Tacoma to be unloaded. Before tying up at Tacoma, the ship had made stops at Vancouver, British Columbia; Ningbo and Shanghai in China; and Busan in South Korea.

## Growers, investors nervous as China reduces its imports of U.S. crops

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

**C**hina's appetite for U.S. farm products once seemed limitless.

The nation of 1.3 billion people, with its wealthy emerging middle class, demanded shiploads of U.S. crops ranging from almonds and apples to raw materials such as cotton.

Overall, the annual value of U.S. food exported to China surged in value roughly 15 times over since the dawn of the 21st century,

peaking at nearly \$26 billion in 2012. No longer. Since then, demand has ebbed. Imports of farm goods leveled off in 2013, receded a bit in 2014 and fell in value by 17 percent in 2015.

However, experts say the slowdown in imports from the U.S. isn't necessarily cause for alarm, especially in light of the white-hot growth seen over the past decade.

Turn to CHINA, Page 12

### China vs. U.S. — agricultural production and trade statistics



Statistic	China	United States
Population (2015 est.)	1.37 billion	321.4 million
Labor force in ag (2012 est.)	270.1 million	10.9 million
Total land area (sq. mi.)	3.7 million	3.8 million
Ag land as percent of total (2011 est.)	54.7%	44.5%
Irrigated land (sq. mi., 2012)	266,440	87,200
Ag as percent of GDP (2015 est.)	8.9%	1.6%
Total value of ag imports	\$140.4 billion (2013)	\$111.7 billion (2014)
Total value of ag exports	\$79.8 billion (2013)	\$150 billion (2014)

Source: USDA ERS, FAS; www.cia.gov

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press



Photos by Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press  
Glenn Loehr of NW Bierhaus Jerky & Oregon Wine Country Jerky, left, speaks with Eric Lee of Euroasia Group during a recent meeting in Portland, Ore., that was part of an inbound trade mission by Chinese food buyers.

**"There are no miracle markets. It's all just global competition."**

Nick Kukanan,  
CEO of Paramount Export

### STANDOFF AFTERMATH

## Producers hope for a real change

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

### ANALYSIS

Harney County residents, government agencies, ranchers, farmers and politicians breathed a sigh of relief when the last occupier left the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge without further bloodshed. But is that the end of it?

Does the occupation get written off by Eastern media and average citizens as a spasm by armed, out-of-state crackpots, and it's back to business as usual?

Hard to say, but there are signs the underlying causes of despair and anger in the rural West — including loss of economic opportunity and a sense of government overreach — received attention that may lead to action.

The first opportunity to drive the point home may come soon. A coalition that includes U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, whose congressional district covers Eastern Oregon, is working to head off presidential designation of a 2.5 million acre Owyhee Canyonlands national monument and wilderness. President Obama recently designated three California monuments, and producer groups fear he'll do the same in Southeast Oregon.

Oregon Natural Desert Association, backed by the Keen Footwear company, has proposed the Owyhee Canyonlands designation. Opponents say it would cover 40 percent of the land in Malheur County. Despite assurances to the contrary, opponents believe monument designation would prohibit or hopelessly snag grazing, mining, logging, hunting and other pursuits.

"We can't afford to have that loss," said Katie Fast, executive director of Oregonians for Food & Shelter. "If the industry doesn't build off the attention and momentum, it would be a loss."

Fast said people "on the ground" in Eastern Oregon need to be the leading voices on such issues.

"My hope is all of us who work in industry and love the industry can help them," she said.

Turn to CHANGE, Page 12

## Search for bird flu grows cold

### Don't relax; return migration ahead

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

The highly pathogenic bird flu virus that spread from South Korea to North America and claimed 48 million American chickens and turkeys last year has not resur-

faced in the U.S. so far this winter, a vanishing act that Washington State Veterinarian Joe Baker calls a "sweet mystery."

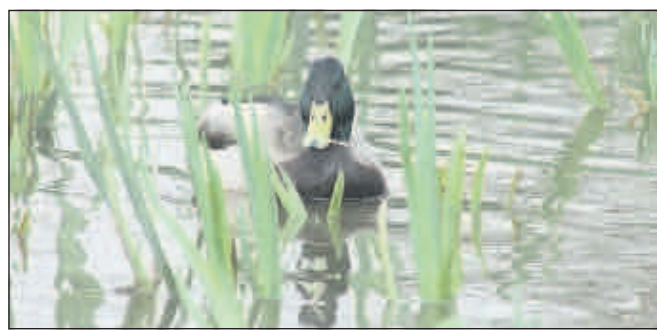
"We'll take the relief from it, whatever the reason," he said Tuesday.

Eurasian bird flu — sometimes mixing with milder North American strains — hit 15 states between late 2014 and mid-2015. Besides com-

mercial and non-commercial poultry flocks, the disease showed up in ducks, geese, falcons, eagles and owls.

The interplay in the wild between Eurasian and North American bird flu strains created viruses never seen before in the U.S. Bird flu evaporated over the summer as waterfowl, virus reservoirs,

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Don Jenkins/Capital Press  
A duck swims among the weeds in a lake in southwest Washington on Feb. 16. More than 43,000 wild birds nationwide have been tested since July and none have positively been found to be carrying a highly pathogenic bird flu virus.

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