

U.S. potato exports fall in July

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

U.S. potato exports in July fell in all categories from July 2017, dragged down by trade wars, Potatoes USA reported Sept. 13.

Frozen-potato exports dropped by 3 percent in volume and 2 percent in value for July 2018 compared to July 2017, the trade group said in a release.

U.S. exports of dehydrated potatoes fell by 3 percent each in volume and value. Fresh-potato exports fell by 31 percent in volume and by 22 percent in value.

Mexico in late June imposed a 20 percent tariff on frozen potatoes. Potatoes USA said that caused U.S. exports of frozen potatoes to that country to decline by 17 percent in July 2018 from July 2017, to 9,121 metric tons. Meanwhile, Canadian exports of frozen potatoes to Mexico rose 16 percent to 4,223 metric tons.

Washington State Potato Commis-



Washington Potato Commission

Frozen, dehydrated and fresh potato exports were down compared to July 2017, according to Potatoes USA.

sion Executive Director Chris Voigt said Washington's volume to Mexico in July was down by 16.5 percent from July 2017. The state exports about 70 percent of its total potato production.

Elsewhere, U.S. frozen-potato exports increased by 7 percent to Central America, 8 percent to China — to 7,048 metric tons — and rose by less than 1 percent to Japan, Potatoes USA said. The U.S. saw declines of

10 percent to South Korea, 11 percent to the Philippines and 20 percent to Thailand.

China plans a 10 percent tariff for frozen potatoes and a 25 percent tariff for dehydrated potatoes, both yet to be implemented.

U.S. dehydrated-potato exports in July 2018 fell by 13 percent to Mexico and increased by 3 percent to Canada compared to July 2017, to 1,834 and 4,445 metric tons, respectively, Potatoes USA said. Exports to South Korea and Malaysia increased while exports to China, Japan and the Philippines declined. China's volume was down 26 percent to 327 metric tons.

Fresh-potato exports from the U.S. for July 2018 compared to July 2017 increased by 72 percent to Mexico to 9,486 metric tons, and decreased by 36 percent to Canada to 33,245, the trade group said. Exports to Asia fell — by 67 percent to Japan, 65 percent to Taiwan, 59 percent to Malaysia and 58 percent to the Philippines. China is not a targeted country for U.S. fresh potatoes.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press File

Christopher Schnepf, forest educator for University of Idaho Extension in Coeur d'Alene, is offering a course on family forest management.

UI course will help new family forest owners ask better questions

Family forests provide 25 percent of mill volume

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

By the end of the upcoming University of Idaho Extension short course, forestry educator Chris Schnepf hopes family forest owners be able to ask better questions about managing their land.

"People are afraid to cut a tree sometimes," Schnepf said. "That's understandable, because it's hard to put them back on the stump."

The course includes the importance of growing the right species at the right density, Schnepf said.

The six-week short course will be Thursdays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15 and Dec. 6 and 13 at the UI Kootenai County Extension Office, 1808 N. Third St., Coeur d'Alene. Registration fee is \$38. Pre-register by Oct. 18 at 208-446-1680.

"We want those questions to be based on good science," Schnepf said. "A lot of times people have their instincts about their forests based on hearsay. They don't realize there's things they have to do actively if they want the forest to continue on a good trajectory or get on a better trajectory."

The course is "really a great way for people to get a good grounding in forest ecology, silviculture, wildlife management, a whole range of things to help them manage their forest land," Schnepf said.

In many counties, forest owners must file a forest management plan to receive a reduced property tax rate. The program helps owners write their plan or informs their discussions with a consulting forester.

Schnepf estimates Idaho gains 2,000 to 3,000 new forest owners each year.

"New" can be defined as recently moved to Idaho and purchased rural acreage, or someone who takes over management of the family forest from parents, he said.

A 2016 UI survey of 36,000 family forest owners found that those who participated in the short course were most likely to implement forest land management practices, he said.

In the Idaho Panhandle, roughly 40 percent of the forest landscape is family forests, Schnepf said.

"Statewide, family forests are only 11 percent," he said. "But a lot of federal land is low-value trees, tough rocky (terrain) or high-elevation sites. ... Family forests may only be 11 percent of the state's forest land, but on average, the last 10 years, they've provided 25 percent of the volume to mills."

The course will also be offered in Sandpoint on Wednesday mornings in June and July.

U.S. potato exports set dollar record for marketing year amid flat volume

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

The value of total U.S. potato and potato-product exports rose by nearly 2.4 percent to a record-high \$1.8 billion for the July 2017-June 2018 marketing year, trade group Potatoes USA reported.

Export gains of 8.5 percent for fresh potatoes, 6 percent for dehydrated and 1.8 percent for frozen offset a 4 percent drop in the value of chip exports.

But fresh-weight equivalent volume of exports declined by 0.86 percent to 3,246,830 metric tons or 71.6 million hundredweight, about 20 percent of U.S. volume for the marketing year, Potatoes USA said in a news release. Only dehydrated and seed potatoes showed year-to-year volume gains, 2 percent each. Fresh-potato volume — table and chip stock — declined most sharply at 7 percent.



Capital Press File

The value of total U.S. potato and potato-product exports rose by nearly 2.4 percent to a record-high \$1.8 billion for the July 2017-June 2018 marketing year.

Frozen-potato export volume dropped by just 0.1 percent.

Mexico bought 13 percent more U.S. frozen potatoes by volume in the year ended June 30, but U.S. market share dropped by six points to 76 percent as the European Union and Canada made significant gains in Mexico, Potatoes USA said. Mexico in late June

imposed a 20 percent tariff on U.S. frozen potatoes.

"We know it's going to affect the market," Oregon Potato Commission administrator Bill Brewer said of the Mexico tariff. "Either people will make up the difference in the price they sell the product to offset the tariff, or they are going to lose volume."

China has proposed, but not implemented, tariffs of 10 percent on frozen and 25 percent on dehydrated potatoes. U.S. frozen-potato exports in the year ended June 30 fell 7 percent after recovering from significant declines in the first half, Potatoes USA reported. But world exports to China were up 34 percent after European Union exports to China jumped by 183 percent.

"Prospects for U.S. exports in the coming year are mixed," Potatoes USA Chief Marketing Officer John Toasperm said in the release. "The ongoing trade disputes with Mexico, Canada and China could reduce exports to these very important markets. Additionally, new trade agreements by competitors the EU and Canada with Japan, Vietnam and other markets will result in lower tariffs for their products compared to the U.S. On the positive side, world trade in potatoes continues to increase,

up 84 percent in value and 48 percent in volume from 2013 to 2017."

U.S. exports of frozen potatoes to its fifth-largest market, the Philippines, increased by 1 percent even as worldwide exports to that nation dropped 4 percent. U.S. frozen exports to Japan, its largest market, fell 1.4 percent.

For fresh potatoes, table and chip stock, U.S. export dollar value rose by 8.5 percent thanks to higher prices, which in turn help push volume down by 6.8 percent. Exports to Canada — 46 percent of total export volume — dropped by 13.5 percent and to Japan (all chip stock) by 18 percent following a record high the previous year as severe weather reduced Japan's domestic supply. U.S. fresh export volume to Mexico increased by 11.7 percent. Fresh exports to Taiwan maintained year-earlier highs, and chip-stock exports to Korea rebounded.

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