

# Trade report: U.S. blueberry industry doing fine

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

The U.S. International Trade Commission found signs that blueberry farms are reasonably profitable, rejecting claims that growers need protection from foreign competitors, a report issued Monday states.

The report to U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai details why the five-member trade commission in February unanimously voted against putting up trade barriers to safeguard American blueberry farmers.

Although some producers lost money between 2015 and 2019, the industry overall planted more berries, employed more people, paid higher wages and increased sales, according to the report.

“With respect to profitability, we find that there is no clear trend sufficient to support a finding of threat of serious injury,” according to the commission.

Tai’s predecessor, Robert Lighthizer, asked the commission to investigate whether fruit from several countries seriously harmed or threatened to harm the U.S. blueberry industry.

The commission looked at industry trends over the five-year period, taking testimony and reviewing financial information from public sources and confidential questionnaires.

By several measurements, the blueberry industry thrived, according to the commission. “We find it persuasive in this case that the industry reported substantial operating profits.”

The American Blueberry Growers Alliance, a trade group that sought the investigation, claimed that a surge of imports in the spring and fall suppressed lucrative early and late harvest prices.

“The reality for American blueberry



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press File

**The U.S. International Trade Commission concludes that imports are not seriously harming the U.S. blueberry industry.**

farmers is that foreign imports targeting the U.S. blueberry market have had a devastating impact on the domestic blueberry market — causing great hardship for family-owned farm operations,” an alliance spokeswoman said Tuesday in an email.

Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Argentina intervened in the investigation, as did U.S. farm and food companies with international operations.

Representatives testified that foreign farmers supply blueberries to U.S. consumers during off-seasons.

The trade commission concluded that peak-season prices — during May, June and July — are generally rising, offsetting any loss of revenue for the shoulder seasons.

The commission rejected a claim that foreign countries are poised to flood the U.S. with more blueberries.

“Indeed the record often indicates that exports to the United States will account for

a declining share of shipments for foreign producers,” according to the commission.

The industry’s average hourly wage rose from \$16.51 in 2015 to \$20.51 in 2020, according to the report.

“We observe that labor availability was a frequently cited issue for U.S. growers, which suggests that employment levels likely would have been greater if U.S. producers had been able to obtain additional workers,” the report stated.

Lighthizer sought the investigation under a U.S. trade law that allows the president to erect trade barriers, such as tariffs or quotas, to protect an industry from serious harm.

The investigation drew wide interest from farm groups. Organizations whose members rely on foreign trade cautioned the commission against starting a trade war. Other groups that rely on U.S. consumers urged the commission to safeguard American agriculture.

# Debate over banning Oregon mink farms centers on coronavirus

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

SALEM — Arguments over whether lawmakers should prohibit mink farms in Oregon recently centered on whether coronavirus risks from such operations are either unjustifiable or exaggerated.

Proponents of Senate Bill 832, which would ban mink farming within nine months of enactment, argue the animals pose a unique danger for spreading the coronavirus and amplifying its hazards to humans.

Mink are the only species known to get infected by the virus and then transmit it back to people, said Jim Keen, a veterinarian who serves on the veterinary council of the Animal Wellness Action nonprofit.

The animals are housed in stressful conditions under which the virus can more readily spread, adding to the risk of new variants developing, Keen said.

The species is also considered a top candidate for the “missing link” that transmitted the corona-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press File

**Joe Ruef holds a mink at his farm in Mt. Angel, Ore. Ruef recently testified against a bill that would ban mink farming in Oregon.**

virus between bats and humans, starting or accelerating the pandemic, he said.

Oregon has only five mink farms. One facility had an outbreak of the coronavirus during which three of the animals escaped, said Lori Ann Burd, environmental health program

director for the Center for Biological Diversity nonprofit.

Aside from the threat to public health, escaped mink can imperil related species such as river otters, fishers and martens, Burd said.

“This is not an attack on Oregon agriculture. This is looking at the threat five operations pose to us,” she said.

John Easley, a veterinarian and mink industry consultant, countered that mink farms have developed new biosecurity measures aimed at thwarting coronavirus spread, in collaboration with federal and state agencies.

A vaccine against the coronavirus has been developed for mink, which will further reduce the chances of transmission and mutations, Easley said.

Denmark, which euthanized 17 million mink after an outbreak, had 1,100 mink farms in an area one-third the size of Wisconsin, so the odds of virus transmission among them was much higher, he said.

Even so, the animals clear

the disease quickly and pose a minimal threat to the public health, Easley said. “The decision to cull an entire industry was not warranted. The science did not support that.”

Opponents of SB 832 claimed that battling the coronavirus pandemic is merely a pretext for animal rights organizations to ban fur production, which has long been their aim.

The bill’s critics also argued that prohibiting a single agricultural sector would set a terrible precedent for the state’s farm industry.

Mink farmers testified that provisions in SB 832 that would provide them with loans and training could not compensate for the loss of their operations.

Joe Ruef, a mink farmer near Mt. Angel, said his family has been in the industry for 50 years and would have no other uses for the associated equipment and would squander valuable genetics if the bill passes.

“We make every effort to keep our employees safe and our mink safe,” he said.

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 04/19/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by  
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2012 JEEP WRANGLER 4W  
VIN = 1C4BJWFG8CL206604  
Amount due on lien \$1,415.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
GIOVANNY OBREGON & MARIA GUEVARA  
ONPOINT COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2016 HONDA CIVIC 4DR  
VIN = 19XFC2F73GE216704  
Amount due on lien \$1,415.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
MICHELLE RUIZ  
BK OF THE WEST

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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 04/19/2021. The sale will be held at 10:00am by  
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2017 TOYOTA CAMRY 4DR  
VIN = 4T1BF1FK6HU712793  
Amount due on lien \$1,415.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
JOHN DUDLEY MARTIN  
RELIABLE CREDIT ASSOCIATION INC

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**PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87**  
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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2018 TOYOTA CAMRY 4DR  
VIN = JTNB11HKJ3J042580  
Amount due on lien \$1,415.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
MOHAMED ADEN HASSAN  
HYUNDAI MOTOR FINANCE

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2018 JEEP RENEGADE UT  
VIN = ZACCJBAB4JPG87842  
Amount due on lien \$1,415.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
NICOLAS & STACI OTTO  
WELLS FARGO AUTO

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2016 FORD ESCAPE UT  
VIN = 1FMCU9G94GUC00405  
Amount due on lien \$1,575.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
NORTH AMERICAN BREWERIES INC  
BBL FLEET CO - LESSOR

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2018 CHRYSLER PACIFICA VAN  
VIN = 2C4RC1H76JR168609  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
JILL SCOBY

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2019 JEEP CHEROKEE 4W  
VIN = 1C4RJFBGXC637741  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
THOMAS GANAHL LEWIS  
USB LEASING LT-LESSOR

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2014 VOLVO XC90 UT  
VIN = YV4952CZ3E1691683  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
STACY COYNE HOUSER

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2009 DODGE 3500 PU  
VIN = 3D7MX38L19G511860  
Amount due on lien \$1,555.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
NICKOLOUS WAYNE DEVLIN  
IRONWORKERS USA C.U

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2018 KIA OPTIMA 4DR  
VIN = 5XXGT4L30JG260496  
Amount due on lien \$2,435.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
DAWNIELLE M & GEORGE R POST JR  
OREGON COMMUNITY C.U

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
1996 OTHR R.T  
VIN = 1R9F52028T1093362  
Amount due on lien \$1,575.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
COPART

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2016 TOYOTA PRIUS 4DR  
VIN = JTDZN3EUSJ045638  
Amount due on lien \$1,575.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
IBSA SUFIYAN MUSE  
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2013 TOYOTA 4RUNNER UT  
VIN = JTEBU5JR4D5132738  
Amount due on lien \$1,595.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
LEE ROSS WRIGHT  
UNITUS COMMUNITY C.U

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2020 INDI ROADMSTR  
VIN = 56KTKDBXL3384766  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
COPART

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2013 AUDI Q 7 LL  
VIN = WA1DGAFFEDD013054  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
NORBERTO ACEVEDO MAGDELANO  
COLUMBIA CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2011 CHEV EXPRESS VAN  
VIN = 1GB3G3B85B1166052  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
IRS ENVIRONMENT OF PDX INC  
WASHINGTON TRUST BANK

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2012 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER UT  
VIN = JTEDC3EHC3C2009708  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
ZOUHAIR J & ZAKARYA BAZA  
SOUND CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2005 FORD F350 PU  
VIN = 1FTWW31Y05EC00790  
Amount due on lien \$1,515.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
JOHN SELDON COMSTOCK

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2018 DODGE CHARGER 4DR  
VIN = 2C3CDXCT9JH180869  
Amount due on lien \$1,535.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
PAUL M SCHWEND & ANDREA G GASPAR  
REGIONAL ACCEPTANCE CORP

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2009 FORD F 150 PU  
VIN = 1FTPW14V89FA34903  
Amount due on lien \$1,555.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
STEVEN F & GRACE K ATKINS  
OREGON STATE CREDIT UNION

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2019 JEEP CHEROKEE UT  
VIN = 1C4RJFBGXC637741  
Amount due on lien \$1,935.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
THOMAS GANAHL LEWIS  
USB LEASING LT - LESSOR

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
1971 VW BEETLE 2DR  
VIN = 1112941653  
Amount due on lien \$1,575.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
HALEY A & AMY R BALLARD

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COPART OF WASHINGTON INC  
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR  
2020 TOYOTA RAV 4U  
VIN = 2T3G1RFV4LC110800  
Amount due on lien \$1,575.00  
Reputed owner(s)  
JUN CHEN  
TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP