

# FOODLINK



# U.S.

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR IMPORTERS OF U.S. FOODS

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## FIT FOR THE FUTURE

**Retailers are experimenting with new merchandising ideas to best address their shoppers' health-related needs.**

**I**n the food industry, it has become virtually impossible to talk about food without also bringing up health concerns. Consumers around the globe are more aware than ever of food ingredients, how food is prepared, and how it impacts their health. And some industry observers say the trend has just hit the tip of the iceberg.

A recap of recent health-related happenings in the food industry illustrates just how strong the link between food and health has become:

- New York City's health commissioner has proposed banning trans fats in restaurants and requiring some facilities to post calorie content in food. Canada is looking at similar measures. Both examples follow a move made by Denmark two years ago, when the country made it illegal for any food to have more than 2% trans fats.

- Nearly \$2 billion worth of food products in the United Kingdom are being reformulated in order to eliminate trans fats, according to the Food and Drink Federation, a food industry body. Retailer Sainsbury's has promised to remove hydrogenated vegetable oil from its own-brand products.

- The Walt Disney Co. has unveiled new food guidelines whereby Disney will use its

name and characters only on kid-focused products that meet specific guidelines, including limits on calories, fat, saturated fat, and sugar.

These major initiatives illustrate the extent that companies are willing to go to, not only to address consumers' concerns, but also to set themselves apart as responsible businesses. If food is the next tobacco, so to speak, companies want to be prepared.

### NEW MERCHANDISING IDEAS

Supermarkets in particular see the buzz around health as a smart business opportunity. Many are beginning to experiment with merchandising tactics to evaluate the best way to serve shoppers.

A recent survey conducted by *Progressive Grocer* magazine finds that U.S. food retailers are using a number of tools to promote health-related products in their stores. The majority (71.4%) use signage; and another big chunk of retailers (61.9%) create special sections in their stores. Shelf tags are also becoming a more popular tool for those retailers that can weather the logistics and labor involved.



The most commonly used method for promotion involves shelf tags that designate products as organic or natural, or, at a more advanced level, as heart-healthy, suitable for diabetics, and so on. Specific colors and symbols are often used so that consumers can easily recognize them. In many cases, retailers are bringing in dietitians or nutritionists to spearhead such programs.

Some supermarkets outside the U.S. are taking similar approaches to help their customers easily identify the nutritional attributes of various foods. Tesco, for example, has said it will put the content of salt, sugar, saturated fat, and calories in grams and how this relates to the recommended daily intake on its own-label products. The retailer is rejecting government-endorsed "traffic-light food labels" that use colors to designate how healthy products are, because it says the system is confusing.

Hannaford Bros. Co., a U.S. chain based in Scarborough, Maine and owned

*continued*

FIT FOR THE FUTURE *continued*

by Brussels-based Delhaize Group, recently introduced a more groundbreaking, and potentially controversial, system. Called "Guiding Stars," the program features a ranking of one, two, or three stars to designate a product's level of nutritional value. The chain is applying it to 27,000-plus edible items, under all brands.

The scoring system is based on a propri-

etary formula created by a board of scientific advisers, and aligns with the U.S. government's dietary guidelines. Foods are credited for attributes such as minerals, vitamins, dietary fiber, and whole grains, and debited for trans fats, saturated fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and added sodium.

## ORGANIC GROWTH

Just as consumers have become more aware of trans fats, sodium, and other ingre-

dients, a growing number of them are intrigued by how food is grown and whether or not agricultural methods affect their health. Organic foods have gained the reputation of being a healthier option, although no widespread research has been able to confirm their long-term health benefits.

The Hartman Group, a consumer research group based in Bellevue, Washington, recently reported that a whopping 73% of the U.S. population participates in what it calls the "organics world," by buying organic products at least occasionally. (That's up from 55% in 2000.)

However, retailers are apparently still mixed on what the best ways are to position and price organics.

*Progressive Grocer's* study finds that the dairy and center store categories are more likely to have integrated sets (in which organics and non-organics from the same categories are positioned together), while meat and produce departments are more likely to segregate organic items, or keep them separate.

As for pricing, U.S. retailers say their standard markup for organic products is in the 30% range, while the markup for mainstream products typically falls in the high 20% range. Most retailers said they expect their markup rate to remain the same next year.

For sourcing organics, a slight majority of retailers (54.8%) say that they depend on specialty distributors. They also go direct to mainstream manufacturers for some organic products. But looking ahead, more retailers say they expect to buy directly from specialty manufacturers, local farmers, and specialty wholesalers in the future.

Sourcing will undoubtedly play a big role in the success of organics, moving forward, and retailers admit that they're concerned about supply shortages and availability in specific regions.

But they strongly expect the No. 1 factor that will have the biggest impact on the organics category in their stores to be pricing, the survey shows. Wal-Mart, which surprised some analysts earlier this year when it announced it will be carrying more organic foods, is also an admitted major concern. ★

## Read more about health & wellness

A complete version of *Progressive Grocer's* "Health & Wellness Executive Insight Series" study is available on U.S. Foodlink's Web site, [www.usfoodlink.com](http://www.usfoodlink.com).

## Healthier dining

### Foodservice operators around the world are reacting to increased consumer concerns over health.

The message is getting out. The World Health Organization (WHO) has found that more than a billion people internationally are overweight and at least 300 million obese. Consumers are reacting to reports of this potential pandemic by demanding healthier fare when they dine away from home, and the global foodservice industry, in turn, is responding in a variety of ways.

In England, 23% of the population is now obese, a three-fold increase since 1980. One reaction by consumers is an unprecedented growth in the UK of the heretofore humble sandwich. As a healthy alternative to fast food, sandwiches have prospered, and manufacturers are capitalizing on the trend by launching "healthy eating" and better-for-you ranges with reduced fat and salt levels. Indeed, Euromonitor International research shows that low-calorie sandwiches accounted for upwards of 10% of all sandwiches consumed in the UK in 2005.

Across the world in Australia, McDonald's is planning to launch a new, healthier Pasta Zoo Happy Meal Menu containing pasta filled with roasted vegetables and cheese and served with tomato sauce and flavored, low-fat milk.

Organic and preservative-free foods have also been showing up on menus in response to customer demand. In the United States, the C.E.O. of yogurt maker

Stonyfield Farm has launched an all-natural and organic fast-food casual restaurant called O'Naturals. The Portland, Maine-based operation has four restaurants and is now seeking franchisees.

In Madrid, famed chef Ferran Adria recently opened Fast Good, a restaurant that serves quality fresh ingredients without preservatives. Menu items include hormone-free veal burgers cooked in olive oil. Fast Good has been open for a year, and the company has said it plans to expand to South America and the U.S. within two years.

In Japan, organic restaurants and shops are sprouting up all over Tokyo.

Consumer interest in improving health, fitness, and appearance through diet has sparked a new demand for organic, low-fat, and non-meat foods. Venues like Pure Café, which serves the "best vegan lunch in Tokyo," and Hiroba, located in the unique Crayon House Building, are among the new, healthy dining spots.

The growing interest in healthy eating has also hit the island of Antigua in the Caribbean, where Mama Lolly's Vegetarian Café & Takeaway uses the slogan "where no meat is still a treat" and offers vegetarian and fish dishes, a wide variety of wraps, sandwiches, and salads, together with a veggie roti and veggie burger.

Meanwhile in Belgium, Exki is a chain that offers healthy organic products. Its motto is "natural, fresh, and ready." ★



# SOLUTIONS FOR LIVING

Safeway's new Lifestyle store makes food shopping exciting again.

The façade of the new Safeway in Boulder, Colorado stops people in their tracks. They just know that something is different about this supermarket—different from other supermarkets, as well as from other nearby Safeways.

Once inside the doors, it becomes clear that this is a food store, but its differences are magnified. All of the basic ingredients seem the same—floral sits in the corner to the right, produce is straight ahead, to the left are checkout stands—yet what makes the experience unique is that all of these various categories at the new Safeway appear to be working together.

In fact, that's one of the top aims of Pleasanton, California-based Safeway's new Lifestyle format: creating solutions for food consumers—"Solutions for Life," to borrow Safeway's new slogan. In doing so, the retailer is making the traditional supermarket experience exciting again.

## ACTIVE 'LIFESTYLE'

The store, sporting 72,000 square feet of selling space, is the latest iteration of the company's Lifestyle format, developed using feedback from results and learnings at other Lifestyle stores, and tweaked with close attention to the Boulder market.

"We're bringing a unique offering to a unique customer base," says Denver division president Scott Grimmett. "To do this, we study shopper insights closely and get a good understanding of the customer, then tailor our store offerings to them."

And a unique market it is. According to Grimmett, the local customer base consists of 100,000 people. They're highly educated, but they also love outdoor recreation; biking, snowboarding, and running are popular activities. Many comprise families where both heads of households work.

Basically, this customer base can be summed up in one word: active. So Safeway developed the store to become a center for food consumers on the move, and on the prowl for meals at any given time of the day.

"It's a destination for meals, whether those meals are a morning coffee, a grab-and-go lunch, or ingredients for a leisurely

dinner with the family at home," says Safeway executive vice president and chief marketing officer Brian Cornell.

An A-framed roof highlights the entrance, and it's there where Safeway's commitment to merchandising freshness begins. Umbrella-covered stands at the store's entrance feature watermelons and other colorful fruits and vegetables, as well as organic juice drinks.

The produce assortment includes locally grown items, accompanied by signs indicating the products' origins, as well as organic selections. But beyond fruits and vegetables, nonperishable organics and natural products are featured in Natural Marketplace, Safeway's store-within-a-store concept. Here shoppers will find a comprehensive selection of organics ranging from cereals to personal care items.

A bulk nut station is a circular service counter that features 17 types of organic nuts, along with 40 flavorings that can be added to them in the store. Adjacent to it is a self-serve station where shoppers can make their own fresh nut butter.

Safeway's new corporate-brand organic label, O, is the pride and joy of the Natural Marketplace. Given top billing even at the building's entrance, it's the first and last thing a shopper sees during a visit to the store.

## PLAYING A ROLE

The service departments are designed to be a theater, at which the shoppers are part of the show. Food production and preparation are in full swing—and full view—in each department.

At the service meat counter, butchers carve meat on a marble slab, showing just how fresh the display items are.

Just past the meat and seafood service counters, in the left rear corner of the store, is where the theme of creating theater reaches its pinnacle. Called Kitchen Inspirations, the department features a manned circular counter where chefs hold cooking demos,



teaching shoppers how to create delicious meals using products found in the store. The walls of this department display tableware and china elegantly, as if they were in a department store.

If shoppers are looking for additional inspiration, all they have to do is continue around the corner to the prepared food department and take in the sights, sounds, and smells of the various meals being created there.

The deli offers a variety of premium cold cuts sliced to order, and a selection of more than 300 cheeses from around the world, artfully displayed on shelves mixed with selections of crackers, recipe books, and serving dishes.

A handcrafted ceramic hearth oven is the centerpiece of the bakery, and is where the store's artisan bread is baked.

From the bakery, one passes through several foodservice offerings. Some are traditional, like the hot lunch bar, while others tend to be a bit more exotic in appearance.

Sitting at the sushi bar, shoppers can easily forget that they're right smack in the middle of a full-service supermarket. A full-time sushi chef prepares items like tuna rolls and California rolls, once again providing theater where the food is the star.

Since no meal is complete without dessert and coffee, a licensed Starbucks operation is located right at the entrance to the foodservice area. With both outdoor and indoor seating and Wi-Fi connectivity, it's a destination for many consumers—not just the ones who shop there. ★

## Calendar of Events

### JANUARY

**21-23: National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) Winter Fancy Food Show**  
San Francisco, California  
Moscone Convention Center  
[www.fancyfoodshows.com](http://www.fancyfoodshows.com)

**31-February 2: CIES International Food Safety Conference**  
Munich, Germany  
ArabellaSheraton Grand Hotel Munich  
[www.ciesfoodsafety.com](http://www.ciesfoodsafety.com)

### FEBRUARY

**19-22: Gulfood 2007 Food, Hotel and Equipment Exhibition and Salon Culinare\***  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Center  
[www.gulfood.com](http://www.gulfood.com)

**22-24: Global Pet Expo\***  
Orlando, Florida  
Orange County Convention Center  
[www.globalpetexpo.org](http://www.globalpetexpo.org)

### MARCH

**9-11: Natural Products Expo West\***  
Anaheim, California  
Anaheim Convention Center  
[www.expowest.com](http://www.expowest.com)

**11-13: International Boston Seafood Show\***  
Boston, Massachusetts  
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center  
[www.bostonseafood.com](http://www.bostonseafood.com)

**13-16: ANTAD (Latin American food & supermarket show)\***  
Guadalajara, Mexico  
[www.antad.org.mx/](http://www.antad.org.mx/)

**13-16: Foodex Japan\***  
Tokyo, Japan  
Makuhari Messe (Halls 1-8)  
[www.jma.or.jp/FOODEX/](http://www.jma.or.jp/FOODEX/)

\* Food Export Association of the Midwest and Food Export USA-Northeast will be at this show.

# NEW PRODUCTS



## Sassy chips

PotatoFinger, Inc. was formed in 1999 with the purpose of inventing the world's best potato chips. Today the Decatur, Georgia-based company is sharing its delicious line of award-winning products with the world. The chips are made from natural, authentic chipper potatoes, which are smaller and rounder than baking potatoes—and also contain less starch and lower sugar. The finished

product is free of hydrogenated oils or trans fats, so the chips are a healthier snack alternative. Additionally, each flavor recipe is kosher. PotatoFinger's varieties include lightly salted, barbecue, sour cream & onion, and vinegar & salt. All flavors are available in both 2.5-ounce and 8-ounce sizes. Find out more by visiting [www.potatofinger.com](http://www.potatofinger.com), or contact Max Haarer at (404) 687-3331 or [max@potatofinger.com](mailto:max@potatofinger.com).

## Superior cake mixes

EFCO Products, Inc., of Poughkeepsie, New York, has expanded its line of cake mixes and bases to include Superior Moist Add-Oil Cake Mixes. The new mixes are available in Yellow, White, and Chocolate. EFCO's Superior Moist Mixes produce cakes with fine texture, improved eating qualities, and extended shelf life. They can be used in rack or convection ovens to produce extremely rich, moist, tender cakes without having to incorporate eggs. EFCO also makes Add-Water-Only Mixes, as well as a full line of other bakery mixes, fruit and creme-style fillings, jams, and fruit specialties. The company has been manufacturing ingredients for over 100 years, and serves the needs of global industrial food processors, bakeries, foodservice operations, and restaurant chains. For more information visit [www.efco-products.com](http://www.efco-products.com), or contact Michael Effron at (845) 452-4715 or [meffron@efco-products.com](mailto:meffron@efco-products.com).



## Vodka with real appeal

General John Stark Vodka comes highly recommended by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. One reviewer for the magazine said, "The mouth entry is viscous, nicely astringent on the tongue, and tastes of fruit peel. The aftertaste is dry and cleansing." This superb vodka, which is made with apples, is produced by Lee, New Hampshire-based Flag Hill Enterprises. The company's distillery produces approximately 1,000 cases of distilled spirits per year. Other products from Flag Hill include a variety of wines, port, and oils and vinegars. For more information visit [www.flaghill.com](http://www.flaghill.com), or contact Heather Houle at (603) 659-2949 or [heather@flaghill.com](mailto:heather@flaghill.com).



## Orange zest

A new ingredient made from orange pulp is changing the face of food manufacturing. Citri-Fi, produced by Willmar, Minnesota-based Fiberstar, Inc., is being used by food firms to manage moisture in foods, improve nutrition by partially replacing oil, and as a processing aid while taste, texture, and cost are maintained or improved.

Popular uses include meat fillings, baked goods, prepared salads, dressings, sauces, dips, and pet foods. Citri-Fi was first introduced in the U.S. market in 2004. This ingredient is sold in a powder form and is easily incorporated into food products. Citri-Fi is all-natural, GRAS, GMO-free, and non-allergenic. No chemical extraction or treatment is involved in the manufacturing process, according to Fiberstar. Learn more by visiting [www.fiberstar.net](http://www.fiberstar.net), or contact Nick Kovalenko at (651) 491-4053 or [n.kovalenko@fiberstar.net](mailto:n.kovalenko@fiberstar.net).



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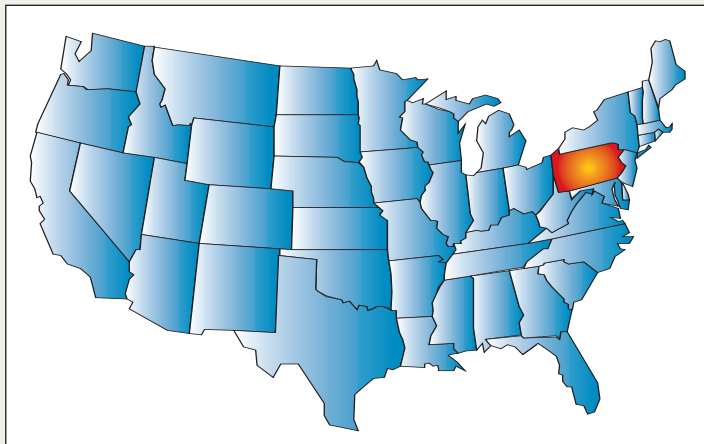
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## STATE SPOTLIGHT: Pennsylvania



✓ Pennsylvania's 59,000 farm families continue to be the stewards of more than 7.7 million acres of farmland.

✓ This Northeast state's biggest crop by acreage is corn for grain, which accounts for 1.4 million acres. Its biggest vegetable crop by value is sweet corn, which is estimated to be worth \$31 million.

✓ Pennsylvania ranks among the biggest dairy-producing states. It's considered fourth, with 560,000 dairy cows.

✓ Other major agricultural products that come from Pennsylvania include tomatoes, pumpkins, and strawberries.

✓ One of the state's claims to fame is that mushrooms were first

cultivated in Kennett Square. Today the borough calls itself the "Mushroom Capital of the World."

**TOP AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS:**

**WOOD**  
Total value: \$416.4 million

**COCOA**  
Total value: \$252.16 million

**CEREAL & MILK PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$103.6 million

**PREPARED FOODS**  
Total value: \$85.5 million

**FRUITS & NUTS**  
Total value: \$66.9 million

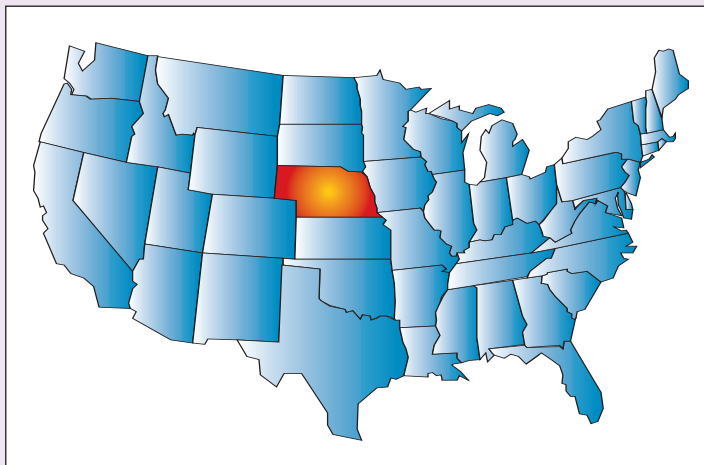
**DAIRY PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$38.1 million

**GUMS & RESINS**  
Total value: \$37.2 million

**ANIMAL FEEDS**  
Total value: \$25.3 million

**PREPARED MEATS**  
Total value: \$19.3 million

## STATE SPOTLIGHT: Nebraska



✓ Nebraska features a wealth of land used for food production. This Midwestern state has an impressive 48,000 farms and ranches. Those farms and ranches utilize 45.7 million acres—93% of the state's total land area.

✓ The average operation consists of 952 acres, and average net income per farm was \$41,977 during the 2000-2004 period.

✓ The Nebraska livestock industry accounts for approximately 62% of the state's total agricultural cash receipts each year. Nearly 55% of Nebraska farms have livestock or poultry operations.

✓ One American farmer/rancher produces enough food for 129 people—95 in the U.S. and 34 abroad.

✓ More than 15% of Nebraska's corn crop goes into the production of

ethanol. In 2005 there were 11 operating ethanol plants that produced over half a billion gallons of ethanol.

**TOP AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS:**

**MEAT**  
Total value: \$235.95 million

**OIL SEEDS**  
Total value: \$155.9 million

**CEREALS**  
Total value: \$117.9 million

**ANIMAL FEEDS**  
Total value: \$103 million

**ANIMAL PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$97.5 million

**CEREAL & MILK PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$33.58 million

**MILLING PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$32.3 million

**DAIRY PRODUCTS**  
Total value: \$29.3 million

**VEGETABLES**  
\$27.1 million

# NEWS BRIEFS

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-** based Aramark Healthcare has opened its first brand of free-standing restaurants, called Soluna Cafe & Bakery, in **Houston, Texas**. Leveraging the healthcare provider's customer insight and food and nutrition expertise, the new concept offers fresh salads, made-to-order sandwiches, quiches, home-style soups, specialty coffee drinks, infused teas, real fruit smoothies, and desserts. Customers may also request nutritional information for any menu item, which can be printed and given to them with their order. Soluna Cafe & Bakery also features a catering component, which allows the restaurant to deliver catered meals and snacks to nearby hospitals, universities, and businesses. Two more restaurants are slated to open in early 2007 in **Columbus, Ohio** and **San Diego, California**.

Wal-Mart Canada Corp., a subsidiary of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., has opened its first three Canadian Supercenters in **Ontario**. The company said it plans to open up to 14 more in

2007. Canadian retailers are bracing for the impact of Wal-Mart's Supercenter format, which is almost twice as big as regular Wal-Mart stores and offers a full range of fresh produce, meats, and bakery products, in addition to general merchandise.

**German** retailer Metro Cash & Carry plans to launch a shrink management and source protection program at its stores in **Europe, Asia, and Africa** to minimize shrinkage and enhance the shopping experience. The retailer tapped Checkpoint Systems for the installation of 3G NDRF (new digital radio frequency) technology and source-tagging antennas and deactivators across 425 Cash & Carry self-service wholesale stores in 28 countries. According to Checkpoint, the global shrink management solution will provide Metro with product protection throughout the entire supply chain, from manufacturing and distribution to the point of sale, where the RF tags on the item are deactivated.

Several of the leading **U.S.**-based breweries are branching out with dessert-style beers. Miller Brewing Co. is launching a chocolate-flavored beer for the holiday season, while Anheuser-Busch has introduced Michelob Honey Lager. Craft beers, the industry term given to unusually flavored or seasonal beers, grew at 11% during the first half of 2006, which makes them one of the fastest-growing beer segments of late. Another major trend has been "energy beers," or beers infused with caffeine and supplements such as ginseng.

Dunnhumby Limited, a provider of consumer-centric marketing solutions for leading consumer packaged goods and retailers Kroger and Tesco, has entered into a long-term joint venture agreement with Groupe Casino, the **France**-based global retailer with more than 8,000 stores. Known as dunnhumbyFrance, the joint venture will draw on existing data from Groupe Casino's loyalty card programs to provide insight for decisions around customer strategy, customer segmentation, pricing, promotion, and product ranges, the partners said.

## Your link to U.S. foods



If you like what you're reading in U.S. Foodlink, check out the online component at [www.usfoodlink.com](http://www.usfoodlink.com), where you'll find a comprehensive listing of all the **new products** that have been featured in this newsletter, as well as regularly updated articles on the latest **U.S. market trends** and **promotion and merchandising** ideas.

Other features on the Web site include:

**Training & Education:** A concise resource of educational programs and events designed for knowledge sharing within the food industry.

**News Briefs:** Links to relevant global news from the past two weeks.

**Store of the Month downloads:** Free access to in-depth tours of the most innovative U.S. supermarkets.

**Calendar of Events:** Convenient listing of key industry events around the world. Includes links to trade show Web sites.

**Market Research:** Easy access to food industry reports and exclusive data.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Foodlink Web site, newsletter, and e-mail bulletin are all brought to you by the Food Export Association of the Midwest USA and Food Export USA – Northeast, two state regional trade groups located in the U.S. that promote exports of U.S. food and agriculture. Through a partnership with Progressive Grocer/VNU, U.S. Foodlink was created to provide readers credible data and information in an easy-to-read format.

**Persons in the U.S.:** Food Export Association of the Midwest and Food Export USA – Northeast prohibit discrimination in employment and services. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means for communication of program information, or to request our full nondiscriminatory policy, please contact us.

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