

Global production of table grapes is expected to rise during the 2019-20 season with gains in Asia more than offsetting European losses, according to a new report.

A USDA Gain report said that volumes are expected to rise by 4% to 23.4m metric tons (MT). Heavy rains in Europe have affected the crop there, but higher production in China and India is expected to more than makeup for that.

It also reports that global exports and imports are forecast to rise slightly. And as domestic demand evolves in both the U.S. and Europe, it looks as though the table grape industry is shifting too.

China and India boost global table grape production

Changes for Asian producers are worth paying attention to. For instance, China rebounded this year after last year's frost-damaged crop. Its production forecast is up, rising by 900,000MT to 10.8m MT.

India is also looking up. Although the industry expects that heavy rains late in the season will impact yield and quality in India, expectations remain at a record high of 3m MT. However, exports in the country will likely drop by about 27,000MT.

Similarly, heavy rain impacted EU table grapes this year, causing a decline of 220,000MT to total 1.4m MT. The top producing country, Italy, saw significant losses this season. Overall, the EU expects to export 78,000MT, a flat forecast.

This will probably have an effect on rates of domestic consumption in the EU, which is anticipated to decrease to its lowest since 2001-02.

Relative to domestic consumption, in the U.S., trends point upward. The report details that large quantities of domestic table grapes "are expected to underpin the rising trend in domestic consumption".

In terms of production in the U.S., it remains consistent. The USDA anticipates a steady 998,000MT produced, citing "good growing conditions".

Table grape imports into the U.S. surged this year. Imports from Mexico jumped to record highs in June - ending with a total 645,000MT imported -, shifting global projections to an uptick.

On the other hand, U.S. exports are down to 345,000MT. The USDA attributes this to lower

exports to Mexico due to decreased demand.

Regarding exports, both Australia and India should see higher-than-expected shipments of table grapes in 2019-20.

Australia exported 31,000MT, with China and Indonesia being standout destination markets. This is likely due to higher production this year with an expected rise of 30,000MT.

Additionally, Indian exports noted a 42,000MT year-on-year rise.

Table grapes from Latin America and South Africa

Projections for Peru are up 18,000MT as new plantings came to fruition this year for the country.

In Chile, production hit a rough patch as drought-affected top growing regions in Valparaiso and O'Higgins. Its production is expected to slip by 26,000MT to 809,000MT this season. Chile looks to plant more seedless varieties to keep up with market preferences as exports are down to 640,000MT.

In contrast, favorable conditions and sufficient water provided a good season for South African table grapes. Production is projected to rise by 12,000MT to 310,000MT.