

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** November 05, 2021

**Report Number:** CS2021-0011

**Report Name:** Hurricane Ida Disruption to Corn and Soybean Supplies  
Drives Significant Losses

**Country:** Costa Rica

**Post:** San Jose

**Report Category:** Grain and Feed, Oilseeds and Products, Agricultural Situation

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**Report Highlights:**

Damage to port facilities in New Orleans during Hurricane Ida caused significant delays to shipments of U.S. feed grains to Costa Rica, where the poultry, pork, and dairy sectors rely almost exclusively on U.S. suppliers. Shortages of corn and soybeans forced animal operations to implement maintenance rations and caused Costa Rica's only soybean crushing mill to go dark for weeks in October. Costa Rica imported more than \$300 million of U.S. feed grains in 2020.

In 2020, Costa Rica imported 869,188 metric tons (MT) of corn from the United States valued at \$151 million. Imports of soybeans amounted to 300,851 MT and \$111 million during 2020. Soybean meal imports for the same period reached 91,807 MT, valued at \$32 million. Grain importers usually schedule mixed shipments (soybeans, corn and DDGs) for delivery every two or three weeks. The United States holds an almost 100 percent market share for these products in the Costa Rican market.

A 50,000 MT shipment of corn, soybeans, and DDGs destined for Costa Rica was loading in the port of New Orleans when Hurricane Ida forced the partially loaded vessel out to sea. The grain terminal was hit hard enough to knock out power for nearly two weeks through September 10. Inconsistent prioritization of loading operations after the terminal resumed operations delayed departure of the vessel until September 30, roughly a month after it was scheduled to depart. Mechanical issues with the vessel ultimately forced Costa Rican importers to tow the vessel from New Orleans to Moin, Costa Rica's Atlantic port, rather than transiting the Panama Canal en route to Caldera on the Pacific side, where Costa Rica's feed millers are concentrated and soybean crusher is located. After arriving in Moin on October 24, commodities were loaded (one bucket at a time) onto trucks and hauled the width of the country to reach mills en route to geographically dispersed livestock operations.

Some relief was afforded by an emergency 30,000 MT shipment of corn sourced from Tacoma, WA, which arrived in early October to alleviate the worst of the grain shortfall. However, soybean stocks were depleted by the time that vessel arrived, and no soybeans could be sourced more quickly than the anticipated arrival of the damaged 50,000 MT vessel.

The shortage of soybeans throughout the month of October resulted in Costa Rica's lone soybean crusher halting operations, causing significant losses to the company, which supplies the bulk of the soybean meal to feed millers as well as a large portion of the country's vegetable oil supply. Animals across Costa Rica's livestock sector were moved to lower protein rations throughout October, affecting swine and broiler weight gain as well as layer productivity; dairy cattle were the least affected. Additional costs were incurred as reformulated feed products were re-labeled, several feed mills shuttered facilities, and feed supply chains were disrupted.

According to importers, market conditions and operations should revert to normal operations by mid-November, following the arrival of the disabled 50,000 MT vessel in Moin and of a 'regularly scheduled' shipment of grains and soybeans in Caldera in early November.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.