U.S. exports of distillers grains (DG)—a co-product of dry mill ethanol production—totaled 11.48 million metric tons (MMT) in 2016, down 10% from 2015’s record high but still the second-highest ever. Exports were shipped to 50 countries on five continents last year, demonstrating the global reach of U.S.-produced DG.

Monthly exports in 2016 followed normal seasonal patterns, with outbound shipments peaking in the summer months and receding in the winter. Exports hit a high mark of 1.16 MMT in August.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
An estimated 31% of U.S. DG production was exported in 2016, meaning one out of every three tons produced was shipped to foreign markets. That was down from 35% in 2015 and the first annual decline in five years.

U.S. DG exports had a total value of $2.19 billion in 2016, down 27% from 2015 and the lowest in four years. Export prices averaged $191 per MT, down 19% from 2015 and the lowest in six years.

DG export volumes to the Top 10 markets in 2016 are shown in the table at left, along with a comparison to 2015 volumes. **China received 21%** of 2016 exports, while **Mexico (17%)**, **Vietnam (10%)**, and **South Korea (8%)** were other top markets. Exports to China plunged 63% compared to 2015, while shipments to the other nine countries in the Top 10 experienced growth.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
DG exports to East Asia fell dramatically, as China reduced imports. Meanwhile, export growth was experienced in all other regions, with Southeast Asia and the Middle East showing the biggest increases in U.S. DG imports.

China remained the top market for U.S. DG exports in 2016, but it also remained the most volatile. China’s dumping investigation and adoption of preliminary duties led to a major decline in imports from the U.S. in 2016. China’s final duty rates were even higher than the preliminary rates, meaning DG exports to China are expected to fall further.
The United States imported 330,300 MT of DG in 2016, down 23% from the 2015 total and the lowest in eight years. U.S. DG imports were equivalent to just 2.8% of DG exports.

Canada was again the top supplier of U.S. DG imports in 2016, shipping 316,020 MT to the United States. Brazil and China were the only other two DG exporters to the U.S. market in 2015.

2016 Top Suppliers of U.S. DG Imports

Canada 96%
Brazil 3%
China 1%
U.S. exports of corn gluten feed (CGF)—a co-product from wet mill ethanol—rebounded to a five-year high in 2016. CGF exports were up 43% over 2015 levels. Ireland was the top market, receiving 27% of total U.S. CGF exports, while Turkey and Israel were other top markets.

Annual U.S. Corn Gluten Feed Exports, 2007-2016

U.S. exports of corn gluten meal (CGM)—a co-product from wet mill ethanol production—fell for the third straight year in 2016. Indonesia was the top destination for U.S. CGM, receiving 28% total U.S. exports.

Annual U.S. Corn Gluten Meal Exports, 2007-2016

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, and U.S. International Trade Commission
When co-product exports are appropriately considered, total exports of corn and corn-derived co-products reached record heights of 73 million MT in 2016.

Prices for all co-product exports receded again in 2016. The spread between corn and DG prices narrowed considerably during 2016, with DG export prices at 108% the price of corn exports. By comparison, DG prices were at 128% the price of corn in 2015.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Energy Information Administration
U.S. Co-product Export and Import Data

• The export and import data in this report include products classified under the following Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes:
  • 2303300000: Brewing or distilling dregs and waste (Distillers Grains)
  • 2303100010: Residues of starch manufacture and similar residues: Corn gluten feed
  • 2303100020: Residues of starch manufacture and similar residues: Corn gluten meal

Sources


The Renewable Fuels Association publishes monthly summaries of export and import data for both ethanol and distillers grains on its award-winning E-Blog.