U.S. exports of distillers grains (DGs)—a high-quality feed ingredient produced by dry-mill ethanol facilities—rose to 11.6 million metric tons (MMT) in 2021, the third-highest volume on record. DGs were exported to more than 50 countries on six continents.

Monthly exports followed a typical seasonal pattern and exceeded 1.2 MMT in August—close to the record levels reached in mid-2015.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
Exports are a vital component of the market for distillers grains. Over 36% of U.S. DG output was exported in 2021, just shy of the record set in 2020.

U.S. DG exports left the country through 25 ports and exit points in 2021 (the top 10 by volume are shown on the map). New Orleans again handled the most tonnage, followed by Los Angeles and Laredo.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
U.S. DISTILLERS GRAINS EXPORTS: TOP MARKETS

The rankings of the top four destinations for U.S. DG exports in remained the same in 2021. Mexico accounted for 21% of total shipments. Exports to Mexico, Canada and China exhibited strong growth.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
Due in part to logistical issues affecting overseas shipments, exports to other North American countries grew significantly, while exports to Southeast Asia declined.

Exports to China grew approximately 70%, making it the 7th largest destination for U.S.-produced DGs. Still, volume growth was moderate compared to other feedstuffs, and total shipments remained far below levels experienced from 2012 to 2016.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture.
The value of U.S. DG exports hit a record $3.00 billion in 2021, as both shipments and prices increased. DGs continue to be an important revenue source for dry-mill ethanol facilities.

The unit value of U.S. DG exports rose to $258 per MT in 2021, as prices of agricultural commodities strengthened.
U.S. imports of DGs fell to 196,000 MT in 2021, down more than 25% from 2020 and the lowest level in over a decade. Imports accounted for only 1% of U.S. DG consumption and were equivalent to less than 2% of exports.

Canada was again the top supplier of DGs imported into the U.S., shipping 168,000 MT. Brazil was the only other exporter of significant DG volumes to the U.S. market.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture.

U.S. exports of corn gluten meal—a feed co-product made by ethanol wet mills—declined slightly to 746,000 MT in 2021. Chile, Indonesia and Colombia were the top destinations.

U.S. exports of corn gluten feed—also a co-product made by wet-mill ethanol facilities—rebonded to 855,000 MT in 2021. Similar to the previous few years, more than two-thirds of shipments went to Ireland and Israel.
ABOUT THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

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 ethanol and distillers dried grains in its Trade Monitor.

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