TRADE NEWS WEEKLY

November 2-November 6, 2026

A summary of international business news prepared by the Hawaii Foreign-Trade Zone 9 with the collaboration of the Research and Economic Analysis Division of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, and based on research and information from various trade publications, which track news and events related to global trade. Other information sources may occasionally be included when appropriate.

Kenco Survey: 43% of Shoppers Plan to Spend More This Peak

Kenco's 2026 Peak Season Consumer Report found that 43% of the North American consumers it surveyed plan to spend more this peak season, more than double the 20% who said so a year earlier. Another 39% expect to spend about the same, and 18% plan to spend less, down from 28% in 2025. Among respondents, 73% consider free shipping standard when shopping online, 48% expect two-day delivery, 47% expect free returns and 40% expect real-time tracking. The survey polled more than 350 consumers in August.

Kenco's Frank Loewen said the jump in planned spending can be read two ways: shoppers who are better off, or shoppers who expect higher prices and still have to buy gifts. NRF said most holiday merchandise has already arrived.
Source: FreightWaves

Strike Threat at Los Angeles, Long Beach Ports Delayed as Union and Employers Extend Talks

A potential strike threatening operations at some of the busiest container terminals in the United States has been pushed back after the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 26 agreed to extend negotiations through November 4, 2026.

PMA announced that the two sides had signed an extension through 5 p.m. Pacific Time on Wednesday, November 4, 2026, avoiding a potential walkout that had been threatened for November 1, 2026.

Negotiations will continue with assistance from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The dispute involves approximately 250 maritime watchmen represented by ILWU Local 26 who perform security-related duties at terminals throughout the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Despite the relatively small number of workers involved, the potential disruption is significant. According to PMA, Local 26 members work at terminals handling roughly 85% of cargo moving through the Port of Long Beach and 33% at the Port of Los Angeles.

A strike could have consequences well beyond the watchmen themselves. PMA has warned that other ILWU workers are unlikely to cross Local 26 picket lines, potentially halting vessel, yard and gate operations at affected terminals.

The union had identified eight terminal locations that could be affected by a walkout.

The two sides have been negotiating a new agreement since the previous contract expired in July 2025. Local 26 has accused employers of failing to make meaningful progress, while PMA has maintained that significant differences remain despite more than a year of bargaining.

"PMA remains committed to reaching a fair agreement at the bargaining table that avoids disruption at the nation's two busiest ports,"

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the employer association said Friday, October 30, 2026.

The extension provides several additional days for negotiators to reach an agreement, but the underlying labor dispute remains unresolved.

The stakes are particularly high for the Southern California port complex, which handled a combined record 2.04 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in September.

For now, the immediate strike threat has been postponed, with the next deadline set for Wednesday afternoon.
Source: gCaptain

No Section 232 Tariffs on Robotics and Industrial Machinery

President Trump has declined to impose Section 232 tariffs on imports of robotics, industrial machinery, and their parts and components.

Trump made this decision despite the Department of Commerce's (DOC) determination in its Section 232 investigation that these goods are being imported under such circumstances as to threaten to impair U.S. national security. Among other things the DOC concluded that the U.S. relies on foreign imports for most types of robotics and industrial machinery and their components, that the value of such imports has increased over the last decade and is projected to continue to increase, and that these goods when sourced from foreign entities can pose significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

However, instead of imposing Section 232 tariffs on such imports, the president instead directed the DOC and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to pursue or continue the negotiation of agreements with foreign trading partners to adjust imports. These agencies will update the president on the progress of these talks within 180 days, and depending on their status or outcome the president may consider alternative remedies in the future. These may include imposing or modifying tariffs, duties, quotas, and fees as well as establishing a program to incentivize new investment in U.S. production.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

USDA to Play Role in Preferential Tariff Treatment for Apparel Imports

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) announced in May the Great American Cotton Plan, a comprehensive initiative that among other things seeks to improve cotton trade by (1) implementing a three-point trade plan to expand export opportunities for U.S. cotton, (2) secured commitments from Indonesia and Bangladesh that will support future U.S. cotton purchases and textile production using U.S. cotton, and (3) continued USDA support of cotton exports through the Market Access Program and COTTON USA™ licensing initiatives.

The plan noted that under separate agreements on reciprocal trade (1) Indonesia agreed to support and facilitate commercial arrangements to import at least 163,000 metric tons of U.S. cotton annually for five years and then maintain a minimum level of imports of at least 150,000 metric tons and (2) Bangladesh will receive a tariff reduction on apparel produced using U.S. cotton and textile inputs.

USDA has now announced that its Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is designing a mechanism that will incentivize purchases of U.S. cotton that will launch in 2027. Specifically, FAS will play a key role in verifying purchases of U.S. cotton by select countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia) in exchange for preferential tariff treatment on imports of apparel produced using U.S. cotton and textile inputs.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

Forced Labor Import Ban List Expanded

Effective Oct. 29, 2026, goods produced by three companies based in China are prohibited from entering the U.S. after those entities were added to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) Entity List.

The Department of Homeland Security said these three affiliated companies constitute one of the largest advanced gene-sequencing and genetic-material collection enterprises in the world and help the government of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region build and operate its mass surveillance infrastructure.

The UFLPA Entity List is a consolidated register of the four lists required to be developed and maintained under that law: (1) entities in the XUAR that mine, produce, or manufacture wholly or in part any goods, wares, articles, and merchandise with forced labor, (2) entities working with the XUAR government to recruit, transport, transfer, harbor, or receive forced labor or Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, or members of other persecuted groups out of the XUAR, (3) entities that export products made by any of the above entities from China into the U.S., and (4) facilities and entities, including the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, that source material from the XUAR or from persons working with the XUAR government or the XPCC for purposes of the "poverty alleviation" program or the "pairing-assistance" program or any other government-labor scheme that uses forced labor.

The UFLPA establishes a rebuttable presumption that goods made wholly or in part in the XUAR are made with forced labor and are therefore excluded from entry into the U.S. CBP applies this presumption to goods mined, produced, or manufactured by entities on the UFLPA Entity List, which are thus prohibited from importation into the U.S. under 19 USC 1307. There are now 190 companies on this list.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

Beef Import Regulations Would be Amended Under USDA Proposal

The Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to lower from 4 °C to 2 °C the minimum maturation temperature for fresh (chilled or frozen) boneless beef and ovine meat from certain listed regions or countries affected with foot-and-mouth disease. Comments on this proposal are due no later than December 21, 2026. APHIS states that all other existing mitigations for the importation of beef from regions or countries affected with FMD would remain unchanged.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

Passion Fruit from Vietnam Proposed for USDA Import Authorization

The Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is seeking public comment by December 18, 2026, on a proposal to authorize the importation of fresh passion fruit from Vietnam into the U.S. for consumption.

This commodity is currently not permitted to enter the U.S. However, based on the findings of a pest risk analysis, APHIS has determined that it can be safely imported under specific safeguarding measures outlined in the risk management document.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

U.S. Origin Statements on Seafood Labeling are Focus of FDA Guidance

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is accepting comments by Dec. 28, 2026, on a draft guidance for industry providing examples of U.S.-origin statements in seafood product labeling that the FDA would consider to be truthful and not misleading. Affected products include both single-ingredient seafood and the seafood components of multi-ingredient foods.

U.S. law prohibits the introduction or delivery for introduction into interstate commerce of any food that is misbranded; e.g., if its labeling is false or misleading in any particular. Labeling is deemed misleading if, among other things, it fails to reveal facts that are material in light of representations made or suggested on the labeling.

In that context, FDA-regulated food products may bear U.S.-origin statements in their labeling – e.g., "U.S.-caught" or "U.S. farm-raised" – as long as those statements are truthful and not misleading and comply with

other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. The FDA's draft guidance provides examples of such statements in seafood product labeling that it would consider truthful and not misleading. The FDA notes that those that choose to use U.S.-origin statements on their seafood products should be able to substantiate them.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

Import Alerts

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) import alerts affecting the following have been newly issued or modified in the past week.

– baked beans from South Africa

– dried mango from Vietnam

– dried mint from Türkiye

– drug products from India

– husk tomatoes from Mexico

– laurel soap bag with loofah from Syria

– material processing laser products from China

– mussels from Italy

– tamarind paste from Thailand

– toothpastes from India

– ultra-high temperature milk from Vietnam

Import alerts inform FDA field staff that the agency has enough evidence or other information to allow a product that appears to be in violation of FDA laws and regulations to be detained without physical examination (DWPE) at the time of entry. Import alerts may cover products from designated countries or areas (including from all foreign countries), manufacturers, or shippers.

Firms and/or products on the "red list" of an import alert are subject to DWPE, while firms and/or products on the "green list" are not because they have met the criteria for exclusion. Some import alerts include a "yellow list" of firms, products, and/or countries subject to intensified surveillance because the nature of the violations may warrant further field examinations of individual entries and/or additional analyses. In addition, depending on the specific import alert, shipments of products subject to DWPE may still be imported into the U.S. if the importer has demonstrated that the shipment is in compliance.

If a product is detained without physical examination the importer has the right to provide evidence to the FDA in an attempt to overcome the appearance of the violation. If no such evidence is submitted, or if the evidence provided is insufficient, the product will be subject to refusal of entry into the U.S.
Source: Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, P.A.

ShipMatrix Forecasts 4% rise in Parcel Demand this Holiday Season

Parcel carriers will deliver about 2.4 billion packages during the current peak shipping season, up 4% from the same period last year, according to a ShipMatrix estimate reported by Eric Kulisch. An extra shopping day aids the increase, and the projected volume would be the highest for the parcel industry since 2022. Retailers have also seen a 16% jump in parcel shipping rates from last year, driven largely by broad fuel surcharges, other new fees and general rate increases.

In the first half of 2026, Amazon's U.S. domestic parcel volume rose 9.7% and FedEx's rose 4.6%, while UPS fell 5.7% and the U.S. Postal Service fell 3.1%, per ShipMatrix. UPS will hire 100,000 seasonal workers, down from 109,000 last year, while Amazon is hiring 300,000, a 20% increase.
Source: FreightWaves