

US farmers bear the brunt of tariff policies

Producers' association ASA appeals to President Trump

Berlin, 3 September 2025 – Global demand for protein has risen sharply over the past three decades. The US, along with Brazil, is one of the world's largest supplier of soybeans. The ongoing tariff conflict between the US and China – the main soy importer – is expected to significantly reduce Chinese demand, exacerbating uncertainty for American soybean farmers.

The US is the second-largest global supplier of soybeans, while China is by far the most important importer. In the 2023/24 crop year alone, China imported roughly 25 million tonnes of soybeans from the US, accounting for 54 per cent of total US soybean exports. By comparison, the EU – the second largest customer after China – only received 4.9 million tonnes.

The continuing trade dispute between the two countries is intensifying uncertainty around future Chinese demand and threatening the economic stability of many US soybean farms. Although senior Chinese officials have emphasised that the conflict should not be played out at the expense of farmers, many US farmers are already under significant financial strain. Caleb Ragland, President of the American Soybean Association (ASA), has therefore made an urgent appeal to President Trump to change course on tariff policies. He warned that the looming decline in Chinese imports could have a negative effect on producer prices, at a time when input costs are rising. Ragland also highlighted the ongoing shift in Chinese imports toward Brazilian soybeans, a trend already evident in the market. He added that there were growing concerns that the conflict could put the economic stability of numerous farms at risk. Due to retaliatory tariffs, US soybeans are currently about 20 per cent more expensive than South American commodity, which notably reduces their competitiveness.

Traditionally, China has purchased larger quantities of US soybeans in late summer to bridge the supply gap before the Brazilian harvest. However, there has been no significant new business from the US to China so far this season.



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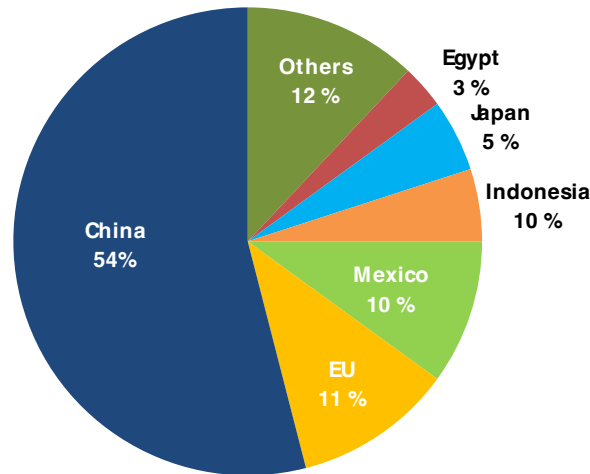
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INFORMATION
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US soybean exports by destination

Shares in per cent, 2023/24



Source: USDA, FAS, ASA

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