



For Immediate Release

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U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Industry Exports \$1.43 Billion of Product in First Half of 2014

Export Values are 6.7% above 2013 Levels

Washington, D.C. , August 12, 2014 – Exports of United States hide, skin and leather products have continued the record-setting pace from 2013, marking one of the most successful periods the industry has seen to date. Through June 2014, the industry has exported more than \$1.43 billion worth of U.S. cattle hides, pig skins, and semi-processed wet blue leather products (hides that have undergone the first stages of leather tanning.) This represents a 6.7% increase over the \$1.34 billion exported during the same period in 2013.

U.S. hides and skins companies – including producers, processors, brokers and dealers – regularly export more than 90% of total U.S. production and are one of the top raw materials suppliers to the global leather manufacturing industry.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics, U.S. exports of wet salted cattle hides (cattle hides that have been preserved using brine solutions) increased 4% in value to more than \$955 million. China was the largest buyer of these products, with imports valued at \$619 million, a 7% increase over the same period in 2013. Taiwan has likewise seen a 7% increase over 2013 levels to \$68 million. Most major leather tanning markets saw U.S. export values increase, including Mexico, the European Union (EU), Thailand and Vietnam. The exception was South Korea, the second largest importer of U.S. wet salted cattle hides, which decreased 11% in value to \$142 million.

Wet blue cattle hides also continued to increase in value. Through June, total exports of U.S. wet blue products were just over \$451 million in value, a 13% increase over 2013. Several U.S. firms have increasingly shifted their focus from exporting raw materials to semi-process wet blue products in an effort to increase value and maximize gains. China, again, is the largest importer of these products, taking in \$168 million worth (a 4% increase over 2013), while the EU, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, Mexico and the Dominican Republic account for the remainder.

Despite increasing export values, the U.S. hides and skins industry faces a shortage of available supplies as cattle slaughter rates have decreased approximately 7% below 2013 levels. This continues a multi-year trend of reduced slaughter rates and cattle hide availability.

U.S. pig and sow skins, used largely to make leather for shoe lining, dropped 8% in value to \$27 million through June. Mexico is the largest importer of the product, taking in \$13 million. The U.S. industry faces market access restrictions for pig and sow skins in China, the largest leather producing country in the world.

“The hide, skin and leather industry in the U.S. continues to cement its reputation as an agricultural export engine, despite ongoing challenges related to cattle hide supplies, pig skin market access barriers, and uncertain conditions in key leather manufacturing sectors,” said Stephen Sothmann, President of the U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association (USHSLA). “It is a testament to the resilience and ingenuity of U.S. firms.”

Complete industry export statistics are available on the USHSLA website by following this [link](#). Please note the Association disputes the number of pieces reported as exported in the USDA statistics and therefore they should be used purely as a reference.

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The **U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association (USHSLA)** is a full service industry organization devoted to the U.S. hides, skins and wet blue leather products industry. Founded in 1980, the association provides its members with government, public relations, and international trade assistance and support. The USHSLA is also a cooperator under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s foreign market development programs, assisting U.S. firms develop new markets for U.S. agricultural exports. USHSLA is at the forefront of the industry’s needs, providing members with service, information, and opportunities to compete in today’s global marketplace.