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Charting the Future: The Port of Hueneme Hosts 13th Annual World Trade Month Summit on International Trade

Global partners in agricultural and automotive cargo gather alongside key stakeholders

PORT HUENEME, Calif., - May 18, 2026 – The Port of Hueneme recently convened global trade leaders, agricultural exporters, and partners for its 13th Annual World Trade Month event, celebrating the Port’s agricultural roots while highlighting its role as a critical gateway for U.S. exports.



Strengthening America’s Export Engine panel

This year’s theme underscored the Port’s legacy as “*the Port that the farmers built,*” honoring generations of Ventura County growers who have relied on the Port to bring their products to international markets. Today, that legacy continues through the Port’s leadership in moving fresh produce, nursery stock, specialty crops, and automobiles to high-value destinations worldwide with unmatched speed and efficiency.

“This event celebrates the partnerships that power global trade. It’s a reminder that what happens at our Port reaches far beyond our shoreline, supporting jobs, economies, and connections around the world,” said Vice President Mary Anne Rooney.



Vice President Mary Anne Rooney addresses the audience

The event featured a keynote address from Christine Birdsong, Undersecretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, who spoke about the importance of expanding global opportunities for California agriculture. “We are always looking for ways to improve our product, our quality, and our value. That’s where a facility like the Port of Hueneme can really fill a need. I’m very excited to hear that you are growing to take on more capacity to move some of our products out of the state of California,” she said.



Christine Birdsong, Undersecretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, delivers the keynote address

The program also brought together leading voices in agriculture for a panel discussion on strengthening America’s export engine, moderated by Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner Korinne Bell. Panelists included Ian LeMay of the California Table Grape Association, Glenn Millar of the California Milk Advisory Board, and Harold Edwards of Limoneira, who shared insights on the policies, infrastructure, and partnerships needed to keep U.S. agriculture competitive on the international stage.



Harold Edwards, President and CEO of Limoneira, answers a question from the moderator, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner Korinne Bell

“The Port of Hueneme is responsible and very helpful in helping us identify new markets and how to get there,” said Harold Edwards, President and CEO of Limoneira. “It’s creating new opportunities for our business to grow as developing countries become regular consumers of the products we are producing.”

Further emphasizing the Port’s diverse capabilities, a fireside chat moderated by Stacy Lange, Chief Commercial and Public Affairs Officer, featured Christian Beninati and Jeff DiPrimio of Wallenius Wilhelmsen, who discussed the evolving landscape of automotive and industrial exports and the Port’s role in supporting efficient, resilient supply chains.



Stacy Lange, Chief Commercial and Public Affairs Officer, moderates a fireside chat with Wallenius Wilhelmsen

“World Trade Month is about connection and bringing people, businesses, and opportunities together across borders,” said Kristin Decas, CEO and Port Director. “At the Port of Hueneme, we’re focused on advancing strategic trade growth, expanding our export portfolio, and supporting high-quality jobs here at home through continued investment, strong partnerships, and a commitment to efficiency and sustainability.”



Kristin Decas, CEO and Port Director presents an update on the Port

Attendees also heard from regional export resource leaders, including Bruce Stenslie of the Economic Development Collaborative - Ventura County, Ray Bowman of the Small Business Development Center, and Maryanne Burke of the U.S. Commercial Service, who shared tools and strategies to help local businesses expand into foreign markets.



Ray Bowman of the Small Business Development Center speaks on the export resources panel

The event highlighted the importance of international partnerships, with participation from the Consulate of Mexico in Oxnard, the Consulate General of Peru in Los Angeles, and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council—key partners in fostering cross-border trade.

As part of the celebration, the Port recognized outstanding contributions to global trade through its annual Export Achievement Awards. Toyota Motor North America was honored with the Auto Export Achievement Award for its leadership in advancing automotive exports through the Port, while Allied Potato received the Container Export Achievement Award, marking its continued excellence and long-standing partnership in moving agricultural products to markets around the world.



Representatives from Allied Potato and Toyota receive Export Achievement Awards from Port Commissioners and team

With California and federal leaders focused on expanding export opportunities for U.S. farmers, the Port of Hueneme continues to demonstrate how strategic investment, innovation, and



collaboration can strengthen America's position worldwide. This year's World Trade Month event not only celebrated a proud agricultural legacy but also charted a path forward for expanding international market access and supporting the next generation of exporters.

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About the Port of Hueneme

The Port of Hueneme is one of the most productive and efficient commercial trade gateways for niche cargo on the West Coast. Five locally elected Port Commissioners govern the Port. The Port consistently ranks among the top ten U.S. Ports for automobiles and fresh produce. Port operations support the community by bringing \$2.8 billion in economic activity and creating 25,000 trade-related jobs. Trade through the Port of Hueneme generates more than \$236 million in direct and related state and local taxes, which fund vital community services. In 2017, the Port of Hueneme became the first port in California to become Green Marine certified and was voted the Greenest Port in the U.S. at the Green Shipping Summit.