

Want your avocados, tomatoes and berries? Trump shutdown of Mexico border could cause shortages

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President Trump has threatened to "seal" the U.S.-Mexico border to combat illegal immigration – a move that might include shutting down trade, according to multiple news outlets.

Closing off trade would disrupt the flow of \$26 billion of food imports in the U.S. from Mexico – threatening U.S. shoppers with potential shortages and higher prices for their groceries. Consumers would see the biggest impact at the produce section, which imports nearly \$14 billion of fruits and vegetables from Mexico annually.

Top imports from Mexico: \$2.3 billion worth of avocados in 2017; \$1.8 billion in tomatoes; \$2 billion in berries; and nearly \$1 billion in peppers, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Katie Lindsay, left, prepares to bag avocados at Kroger in Oakley on Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2018.

Albert Cesare / The Enquirer,

Trump renewed calls for tougher border security last week as he cut off aid to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador – countries blamed for migrant caravans that travel through Mexico to enter the U.S. The president threatened to close the border

with Mexico, adding closing off trade was a possibility, according to the New York Times.

Officials with Cincinnati-based Kroger, the nation's largest supermarket chain, declined comment.

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Such a move would affect nearly 50 border crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border that would be closed for entry and exit, stopping the hundreds of thousands of people and an estimated \$1.7 billion in goods and services that cross each day, according to the State Department.

Americans would run out of avocados in three weeks if imports from Mexico were stopped, officials with the world's largest grower told Reuters.

"You couldn't pick a worse time of year because Mexico supplies virtually 100 percent of the avocados in the U.S. right now," said Mission Produce CEO Steve Barnard.

White House officials expressed concern Monday about the potential effects if Trump follows through on his threat to shut down the US border with Mexico.

"We could be in a whole world of hurt," one White House official told CNN on Monday.

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