

Competition for the world soy market is stiff. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, exports from South America have expanded rapidly. South American soybean harvests have set record highs nearly every year for almost a decade.

Over the past five years, exports from the continent have surpassed U.S. foreign trade in soybeans, despite a historic drought in Argentina and high

production costs and poor financing that caused problems in Brazil.

Although overseas exports are not the only market, meeting international buyers' demands is important. Kentaro Hasegawa is a buyer for a Japanese company that processes fermented soyfoods. He says he is very impressed by the soybeans U.S. farmers grow, as well as the strict food regulations and reliable, fast shipping he has come to expect.

"U.S. farmers not only grow soybeans and sell them to the overseas market, but they are also considered sustainable and environmentally responsible," he says.

Manif Lakhdhar, a Tunisian soy buyer, feels the same way — U.S. soy farmers are meeting his demands.

"It's not a secret that U.S. soy is of very good quality," Lakhdhar says. "It is the most homogeneous quality worldwide."

When buying soy from South America, Lakhdhar has experienced difficulties not present when purchasing U.S. soy.

"What we have seen in the last five years is that when we buy from South America, the arrival time becomes random due to lineups and strikes, which can sometimes last more than a month," Lakhdhar says. "We have had some unexpected shutdowns of the plant because of this."

