

Letter No. 3618
Friday, May 27, 2011
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3618

Friday, May 27, 2011

Monday, May 30th



(May 27)

SUMMERTIME GRILLING SEASON FOOD SAFETY

The 2011 cookout season is upon us. As you welcome summer at your Memorial Day weekend barbecue this year, the USDA reminds you that safe grilling practices are the key to making your cookout a big hit with your guests. "We want Americans to know that simple food safety steps can make cookouts and picnics worry-free for hosts," says USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen. "A food thermometer and our virtual food safety representative, Ask Karen, may be the most important ingredients for families and friends hosting events throughout the year, including fun, safe summer cookouts over Memorial Day Weekend." The experts at the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline have broken down safe cooking and handling practices into four simple steps: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. For the full details on the four steps go to <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>.



A helpful resource for cooking out is the USDA's virtual representative, Ask Karen, a feature that allows you to ask food safety-related questions 24 hours a day. Visit Ask Karen at AskKaren.gov or call the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Recorded messages are available 24 hours a day and the Hotline is staffed with food safety experts, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time.



Ask Karen is available as an app for your iPad, iPhone, or Android mobile device, so you can take her with you to the grocery store, to the barbecue grill, or wherever you may have food safety questions. Go to m.AskKaren.gov on your mobile device's browser, or download the app for free from the Android and iTunes app stores. In portable format and available 24/7, mobile Ask Karen is your food safety base coach all season long! USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (301) 344-4764

Congressional and Public Affairs Office (202) 720-9113
For full story: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

(May 26)

**REMARKS FOR AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TESTIFYING
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack speaks before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. He discussed U.S. agriculture and the next farm bill. "Many folks don't recognize it, but America's farmers and our agriculture industry are responsible in no small way for the health and strength of this nation. Not only do we rely on American agriculture for our food, feed, fiber, and fuel, our agricultural producers preserve our environment, and help drive our national economy.

Agriculture is responsible for one out of every 12 jobs in America. And while many sectors of our economy are running trade deficits, American agriculture has enjoyed a trade surplus for nearly 50 years. This year we expect a record surplus and record agricultural exports should help support more than 1 million jobs across the nation.

"At USDA, we support farmers in both their domestic responsibilities and international role. Additionally, the Department seeks to conserve the nation's natural resources, build thriving rural communities, and ensure that every American has access to healthy, safe, affordable food.

"I have no doubts that the next Farm Bill will be smaller than the one agreed to in 2008. In acknowledging that reality, I hope that this Committee will give serious thought to your priorities for American agriculture – your priorities for USDA – and to the values of the American people.

"Please also recognize that we cannot simply cut our way out of a deficit — we have to help grow our way out. If we want grow businesses, create jobs, and increase incomes, we need to make sure America is built to compete. We will have to bear the cutbacks while still investing in our future, so that we strengthen the middle class, American agriculture and rural communities and grow our economy.

"In the end, the American farmer and rancher should be instructive to this body. The strength of American producers comes from their willingness to adapt, to work hard, to shoulder sacrifice, and to innovate. As Congress moves to write a Farm Bill with limited resources, I hope you think of USDA in a similar light. We are ready to adapt and innovate, but we need clear goals and the resources to get us there."

Contact: Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For full story: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15377>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15378>

(May 25)

AG LEADERS CALL FOR COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Two of the country's top agricultural leaders are calling for comprehensive immigration reform that would not just focus on enforcement. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack outlines some basic things he'd like to see in any immigration reform effort.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15370>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15369>

FFA STUDENTS TRAVEL MORE THAN 1000 MILES TO VISIT THE USDA

A group of Future Farmers of America students from Calvert, Texas came to the USDA to get a firsthand look on how the department works.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15371>

(May 24)

AG SEC TOM VILSACK TALKS BIOFUEL ENERGY PRODUCTION

The Agriculture Secretary told a national TV audience why biofuel industry development is an important part of American energy independence. For radio story:

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15356>

Meantime, USDA Rural Development Business and Cooperatives Programs Administrator Judith Canales was in Michigan highlighting support for flexible fuel pumps, also known as "blender pumps." The USDA has \$1.2 million in grants and \$1.6 million in guaranteed loans

available to help Michigan fuel station owners install flexible fuel pumps. The application deadline is June 15. This event is open to the media.

In addition to flexible fuel pumps being eligible for funding under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), funds are available to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. Grants are available for audits of energy improvements and studies to determine the feasibility of renewable energy systems; and agricultural producers in non-rural areas are eligible for REAP assistance. Small businesses must still be located in rural areas. This clarification makes REAP eligibility requirements consistent with those of other USDA energy programs.

Visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> for additional information about the agency's programs or to locate the USDA Rural Development office nearest you.

Contact: Alec Lloyd (517)324-5204

THERE'S A CHANGE TO THE USDA COOKING ADVICE FOR PORK, BEEF AND VEAL CUTS

If you prepare and cook meat and poultry products, you might want to check out the new cooking recommendations from Agriculture Department experts. Diane Van, with the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, says USDA has lowered its cooking temperature advice for pork cuts, so that all red meat cuts share the same recommendations. USDA experts have not changed the cooking temperature recommendations for ground meat and poultry products.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15367>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15365>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15366>

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK TO GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION AT CHICAGO COUNCIL ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS EVENT

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack delivers keynote address at a Chicago Council on Global Affairs event, "Feeding the World: How Partnerships and Innovation Drive Real Results." The purpose, to review progress on the U.S. government's global food security strategy; discuss how long-term U.S. public and private sector support for agricultural development can advance global security, stability, and economic prosperity; and offer constructive thinking on future implementation challenges. Vilsack's remarks mainly address the U.S. government's and the USDA's coordination and support for cooperative agricultural research and education.

Contact: Office of Communications 202-720-4623

THE UPCOMING HURRICANE SEASON IS LIKELY TO BE ROARING

As we embark on the 2011 hurricane season ... it's anticipated to be an active one.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15363>

THE LATEST AGGRESSIVE WEATHER PATTERN IS EXPECTED TO DIE DOWN A BIT

The recent tornadoes and other severe weather are all a part of an active weather pattern.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15360>

2011 JOPLIN, MISSOURI TORNADO WILL GO DOWN IN THE HISTORY BOOKS

Tornadoes have been in the picture a lot lately with the recent damage and deaths in Missouri reaching record status.

For radio story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15359>

(May 23)

SECRETARY VILSACK HIGHLIGHTS EFFORTS TO DECREASE U.S. DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL DURING TENNESSEE VISIT

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says, "Flex-fuel pumps give Americans a choice to purchase domestically produced renewable transportation fuels. The Obama Administration is working to transform the United States into a global clean energy leader because transportation fuels created from a wide variety of renewable energy sources will create a new generation of jobs here at home, reduce dependence on foreign oil and enhance our national security."

In April, Secretary Vilsack announced a series of initiatives to help farmers and rural small businesses implement renewable energy systems and become more energy efficient. One of those initiatives allows USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to now make funding available for flexible fuel pumps, sometimes referred to as "blender pumps." This is expected to encourage fuel station owners to invest the capital necessary to give American motorists the option of selecting the blend of renewable fuel that meets their needs. The Obama administration has set a goal of installing 10,000 flexible fuel pumps nationwide within 5 years.

The deadlines for submitting completed REAP applications are June 15 and June 30, depending on the type of project to be funded. For information on how to apply for assistance, contact your local USDA Rural Development office or see the April 14 Federal Register, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/pdf/2011-8456.pdf>. A list of USDA offices is available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/StateOfficeAddresses.html>.

Contact: Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For full story: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For more agriculture news go to www.usda.gov and click Newsroom on the toolbar.
Also, check out the [USDA Blog](#)



FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 22.11 – From the Dakota's down to the Gulf of Mexico farmers are sadly watching the water as it covers their farms. On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA Gary Crawford hears from some of these producers and the USDA folks who are standing by to help them.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 22.11 – Some Reasons Why Beef Is Costing So Much. Bee Losses Continue To Deal Staggering Blow To Beekeepers. New Cooking Temperature Recommendations For Meats. The Spread Of The Gypsy Moth Can Be Stopped. A Different Kind Of Garden.

AG UPDATE CD # 22.11 – Impacts Of The Morganza Spillway Flooding. The Weather And The Cattle Markets. Extreme Weather And Crop Insurance Options. Catfish Industry Challenges Start With The Letter F. A Roaring Hurricane Season Is On Tape For 2011.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – May 31 Crop Progress Report (WAOB). June 1 – Crop Weather (WAOB). June 6 - Crop Progress Report (WAOB). **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The Radio Newsline carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.**

Access the Radio Newsline at 202-720-6776, 5PM ET or go to www.usda.gov, click on Newsroom at top of page, scroll down on right side of page to Radio and TV.

Then click on Daily Radio News Service or Weekly Radio Feature Service.

Questions on USDA Radio's Features, fax name, station, and address to 202-690-2165.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

USDA Introduces Mobile Food Safety For Smartphones

Food safety answers are as close as your Smartphone now thanks to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeYLkCI9e08>

WMV: <mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/bmtc/vnr/askkaren.wmv>

A new TV feature is available on the USDA FTP site

Filename: food safety camp

Download instructions:

The host: <ftp://ocbmtcmedia.download.akamai.com>

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264), MPEG 4, MPEG2 and HDV
Please email bob.ellison@usda.gov if you have problems or suggestions

Also, use this free ftp client if you have problems

<http://filezilla-project.org/download.php?type+client>

OFF MIKE

MOTHER NATURE'S REPRIEVE ALLOWS FOR PLANTING IN NORTH DAKOTA - Farmers are taking advantage of good weather giving them a chance to catch up on planting. **Mike Hergert** (Red River Farm Network – Grand Forks, North Dakota <http://www.rfn.com>) says corn is the priority, as planting advanced from 14% to 49% in one week. However, “As of May 22nd, only 6% of the durum, 21% of the barley, and 34% of the spring wheat were planted.” **Hergert** adds farmers are faced with a big decision, as the final crop insurance planting date for corn approaches, May 31st. “The high price of corn, and the good crop insurance coverage means farmers will do all they can to plant their corn. If not, it's likely that prevented plant coverage is a better option than planting soybeans or other crops.”

The marketing director for the North Dakota Wheat Commission reports North Dakota could easily lose 500,000 acres, or more, of the expected 700,000 acre increase in spring wheat acreage in USDA's March Prospective Plantings Report. Fifty-one percent of North Dakota's topsoil moisture is rated surplus.

RFD-TV'S MARK OPPOLD HOSTS LIVE BROADCAST WITH AG SEC TOM VILSACK - The live prime time broadcast 'Home Grown Energy ... Fueling America's Future' Monday, May 23rd focused on renewable energy. Host **Mark Oppold** (RFD-TV – Nashville, Tennessee <http://www.rfdtv.com>) says RFD-TV viewers and a live studio audience asked questions of the Secretary. The Renewable Fuels Association and American Coalition for Ethanol supplied a life-sized flexible fuel pump for the show. Ethanol and bio-diesel industry leaders, NCGA and ASA leadership, farm organizations, and 4-H and FFA students and invited guests made up the studio audience.

AFGHANISTAN AG DEVELOPMENT TEAM TALKS WITH THE 'HAT' RADIO TEAM - The discussion was about farm radio broadcasting with members of agriculture development teams that have been training in Indiana the last few weeks for upcoming missions in Afghanistan. **Gary Truitt** (Hoosier Ag Today - Clermont, Indiana <http://www.hoosieragtoday.com>) tells us that, “Radio is a key method of communicating with farmers not only in the U.S. but Afghanistan as well. Teams from Illinois and Georgia contacted HAT just to get a basic background on farm radio and brainstorm about possible ways to utilize the medium once they get on foreign soil.” Ag Development Teams from other states come to train at [Camp Atterbury](#) which is based in Edinburg, Indiana. The team **Truitt** interviewed is from Illinois. “The Illinois team's tour in Kunar Province begins near the end of this month and they'll come home around the first of April 2012. The mission is to support the Afghan government in building their agriculture system, including the ag extension service.”

Lt. Colonel Al Gorman with the Illinois Army National Guard describes his team. ““We create a system where people can go to an expert in the Ministry of Agriculture in Afghanistan and talk to that person about what they're situation or ag problem is,” Gorman explained. “And so what we're going to do is work with that extension agent and kind of help him develop his business, if you will.”

ADT members are quite diverse with backgrounds ranging from foresters, ag marketing, and hydrologists, to integrated pest management, plant pathologists and soil scientists, and veterinarians.

This photo of the Illinois Army National Guard was snapped by Vice President of Operations for HAT Andy Eubank seen there in the red shirt. That's HAT President Gary Truitt in the green shirt.



Photo by Andy Eubank

Broadcasters if you have any humanitarian or community service events you'd like to share please forward to susan.carter@oc.usda.gov. We love to hear about what you're doing and share it with others in the farm broadcaster family.

From all of us to all of you ... thank you for what you do

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