



Letter No. 3625
Friday, July 15, 2011
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
202-215-3931

BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3625

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(July 12)

USDA LAUNCHES FRESH PRODUCE PROGRAM FOR FLORIDA, MICHIGAN SCHOOLS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is conducting a pilot launch for acquiring fresh fruits and vegetables to build on farm-to-school programs in Florida and Michigan. The pilot will use commercial distribution models already in place and allow schools to obtain locally grown produce.

"This is a win-win for everyone as this pilot program will allow us to get fresh fruits and vegetables to schools," says Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. "We are constantly searching for new opportunities to expand markets for producers while providing fresh, healthy food to schools."

AMS will review growers' eligibility to participate in the program to ensure they meet Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices. A Request for Proposal for various domestic fresh fruits and vegetables delivered in quantities that are usable by recipients will be put forth by AMS.

Florida and Michigan will use their entitlement funds to purchase the commodities from a list of various foods purchased by USDA and offered through the school lunch program. Entitlements are grants-in-aid to schools that help defray the cost of school lunch; local schools earn a fixed federal reimbursement for each school lunch served consistent with USDA nutritional guidelines.

USDA typically purchases 15 to 20 percent of the foods that are used in the National School Lunch Program. Purchases include poultry, meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and oils. USDA food purchases serve the dual purpose of supporting agricultural markets and providing nutritious foods to school children and needy Americans.

Contact: Jimmie Turner (202) 720-8998 jimmie.turner@ams.usda.gov

THE FORECAST FOR CORN SUPPLIES IS UP

Last season's corn yields coupled with this year's harvest and more acreage has the USDA projecting more production than expected this season. The result will be higher than expected stock levels by year's end. Meantime, World Agricultural Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange says the current USDA corn for ethanol outlook will be profitable. He says lower corn prices will mean higher profits for ethanol producers and more ethanol production.

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15708>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15710>

DROUGHT RELIEF FOR SOME IN THE SOUTH, NOT FOR OTHERS

Moisture has found its way to some parts of the nation's Southern tier while others are still dry from a lengthy drought. USDA Meteorologist Eric Luebehusen says some areas of the Southeast are receiving much needed moisture, and should continue to do so in coming days. Luebehusen also says the annual monsoon season has brought much needed moisture to drought stricken areas like Arizona.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15713>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15714>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15715>

(June 11)

MORE THAN 2,000 ORGANIZATIONS JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT OF THE MYPLATE FOOD ICON

The USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) says the recently launched Nutrition Communicators Network has reached an important milestone of over 2,000 organizations. The network is comprised of organizations actively committed to promoting healthy eating in accordance with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, as symbolized by *MyPlate*. Community partners range from public and private businesses to non-profit organizations that represent a diverse cross-section of stakeholders and partners. The launch of this partnership program coincided with the June 2, 2011, unveiling of the new *MyPlate* food icon.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the business community and organizations to get involved in a partnership that promotes healthy eating for our nation," says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "By joining this effort, organizations send the message that they are ready to help all Americans lead healthier lives and to reverse childhood obesity. This broad-based support is a testament to the appeal of the new *MyPlate* food icon and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and affirmation of what we know - that a healthy nation starts with healthy people."

The appeal of the new *MyPlate* food icon has resulted in broad public support and engagement. Two categories of partnerships are now available, Community Partners and National Strategic Partners.

Community Partners are typically smaller, local or regional, public and private businesses and non-profit organizations that represent a diverse cross-section of the public, including schools and school systems, hospitals, community nutrition programs, churches, libraries, dietitians, athletic centers, extension agencies, and *Head Start* programs.

National Strategic Partners are large corporate and non-profit organizations. Among them are Weight Watchers, General Electric, WebMD, American Dietetic Association, American Society for Nutrition, Produce for Better Health Foundation, Food Marketing Institute, American Diabetes Association, and the Institute of Food Technologists. A list of current partners can be viewed from the following link:

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

USDA STRENGTHENS EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CITRUS GREENING

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking to establish a Citrus Disease Research and Development Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from both the citrus producer and scientific communities. The Advisory Committee would report to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and provide leadership to citrus disease scientists. The USDA will invest \$2 million this year into research on the disease at the U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory, a USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) laboratory located in Ft. Pierce, Fla. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has committed to focusing \$9 million in a three-year, competitive grants program targeting citrus greening.

Citrus greening is one of the most devastating diseases affecting any commercial agricultural crop, according to the National Academy of Sciences. More than 250,000 jobs representing key sectors of the U.S. economy are at risk, including harvesting, packaging, processing, transportation, marketing, retail sales, and nursery production.

Citrus greening threatens to destroy over 1 million commercial citrus acres that have an annual production value of approximately \$3 billion across the nation. Yearly losses could reach \$10 billion if citrus greening is left unchecked. The disease obstructs the flow of nutrients in citrus trees and leads many fruits to remain green, grow lopsided and taste bitter. The disease is present in Florida and portions of South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia, and Puerto Rico. The Asian Citrus Psyllid, the insect that spreads citrus greening, has been detected in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and areas of Southern California and Arizona. This broad distribution increases the concern that, should citrus greening be introduced into new states, the insect would rapidly spread the disease.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

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Also, check out the [USDA Blog](#)



FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 29.11 – It's been nearly two decades that the U.S. and Mexico have been embroiled in a cross-border trucking dispute. In this edition of Agriculture USA, Susan Carter tells how a new memorandum of understanding is bringing the disagreement to an end.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 29.11 – Studying The Impacts Of The Los Conchas Fire. Balancing The Needs In A Desert Watershed. Demand For Bison Meat Products Outstripping The Supply. How To Mess Up Your Home Tomato Plants. Some Tips On How To Reduce Salt And Sodium Intake.

AG UPDATE CD # 29.11 – Free Trade Agreements Making Their Way Through Approval Process. Big News For Cellulosis Biofuel Production. Latest Crop Report Shows More Corn And Wheat. Does Corn Planting Always Mean Reduced Yields? Climate Perpetuates Southern Plains Drought.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – July 19 – Crop Weather (WAOB). July 22 – Cattle On Feed Report (NASS). July 25 – 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

ACTUALITIES – Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Meets With Rural Leaders

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack met with rural leaders at the White House to hear their ideas and concerns.

New actualities are available on the USDA FTP site

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

THE HEAT IS ON IN NEBRASKA – County fairs are underway and the biggest concern is the heat and its effects on not only the 4H & FFA members, but the livestock. **Susan Littlefield** (KZEN Radio – Columbus, Nebraska <http://www.ontheradio.net/KZEN>) says heat indexes have reached the triple digits and one county fair canceled its highly attended team penning because of the weather. “Despite the heat kids I have talked to said it has given them extra reason's to wash livestock!”

HEAT FACTORS CONTINUE TO DRIVE SOUTHERN PLAINS DROUGHT – A multitude of weather, soil, and air conditions are working together to continue a rise in temperatures and drought conditions from Kansas to Texas. <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15717>

DEPENDING ON LOCATION RAIN IS A MAJOR CONCERN – “We've received more rain we don't need-- just yet-- since the 1st of the month,” says **Jody Heemstra** (KWAT - Watertown, South Dakota www.GoWatertown.net). Temperatures have finally warmed up; giving the crops the heat units they badly needed to grow. **Heemstra** says, “Corn looks fantastic. Beans are lagging a bit in maturity, but hopefully will catch up in the next few weeks.” It seems some spring wheat has been forced down by wind, having producers hoping it will stand back up. Other positive news is that winter wheat looks good and is on track for harvest in about a month. Also “pastures and their water sources continue to be in great condition. Mosquitoes and flies that bite are now causing much irritation for animals and humans both.”

**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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