



Letter No. 3626
Friday, July 22, 2011
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3626

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(July 22)

APPLICATIONS ARE BEING SOUGHT FOR GRANTS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF RURAL HOUSING

USDA Funding is available to weatherize and repair existing structures, install or improve plumbing or provide access to people with disabilities. Applications are being accepted for grants to eligible applicants to help low- and very-low-income rural residents repair their homes. "These funds help limited-income rural homeowners improve their living conditions," says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The costs associated with maintaining a home are a challenge for many rural homeowners and the funding we are announcing will be used by awardees to help low and very-low-income residents in rural areas maintain and repair their homes."

Housing Preservation Grants are provided to intermediaries such as town or county governments, public agencies, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and non-profit and faith-based organizations. The grants are then distributed to qualified homeowners or owners of multi-family rental properties or cooperative dwellings who rent to low- and very-low-income residents. Funding is not provided directly to homeowners by USDA under this program.

The grants can be used to weatherize and repair existing structures, install or improve plumbing or provide access to people with disabilities. For example, in 2009, The Jefferson County Board of Supervisors in Fayette, Miss. received a \$75,000 Housing Preservation Grant, along with funds from the Mississippi Development Authority to repair and rehabilitate homes. With these funds, the agency was able provide a \$15,000 grant to help homeowner Willie Henry Reed make his bathroom and kitchen handicap-accessible. Funds were also used to repair a leaking roof.

The USDA may award up to \$9.8 million in competitive grants through the [Housing Preservation Grant](#) program. Applications are due on August 22, 2011. For more information about application details, please view the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published in the July 7, 2011 [Federal Register](#).

Contact: Dane Henshall (202) 260-0996
For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

GRILLING SEAFOOD TO SPICE UP BACKYARD COOKING

Seafood offers variety and nutrition when cooked over the outdoor grill. Grilling shellfish can also give seafood such as crabs and shrimp that open pit flavor. Rod Bain spoke with Beth Reames of Louisiana State University Extension.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15751>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15753>

(July 21)

USDA ANNOUNCES PROPOSED RULE TO BETTER LABEL RAW MEAT AND POULTRY CONTAINING ADDED SOLUTIONS

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is proposing a new rule to establish common, easy-to-understand names for raw meat and poultry products that include injections, marinades, or have otherwise incorporated added solutions which may not be visible to the consumer. FSIS has determined that some labels do not clearly identify if a solution has been added to a raw product to enhance flavor or texture. As a result, consumers may be purchasing raw meat and poultry products with higher sodium content than they realize. The agency invites comments on the proposed rule, which is intended to clarify these products' labels so consumers can easily distinguish them from raw meat and poultry that do not contain added solutions.

"Consumers should be able to make an informed choice in the store, which is why we need to provide clear, informative labels that will help consumers make the best decisions about feeding their families," says Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen. "It has become evident that some raw meat and poultry labels, even those that follow our current guidelines, may not be clear."

Currently, raw meat and poultry products that contain added solutions such as water, teriyaki sauce, salt, or a mixture thereof may have the same name on their labels as products that do not contain added solutions. For example, a single-ingredient chicken breast and a chicken breast with added solution both may be labeled as "chicken breast," even though one package contains purely chicken breast and one may be comprised of 60 percent chicken breast and 40 percent solution. While the label of the chicken breast with added solution must state that it contains solution, consumers may not notice such information if it is not a part of the product's name. An example of a product name under the proposed rule would be: "chicken breast - 40% added solution of water and teriyaki sauce."

The agency has tentatively concluded that, without specific, clear, and conspicuous information about the percentage of added solution incorporated into the product, the labeling of these raw meat or poultry products is likely to mislead consumers. The proposed rule would require that the common or usual name of these products include an accurate description of the raw meat or poultry component, the percentage of added solution, and the individual or multi-ingredient components in the added solution. The print for such labels would be presented in a font, size, and color that are easily visible to consumers.

Click here [www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations & policies/Proposed Rules/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/regulations_and_policies/Proposed_Rules/index.asp) to see the details of the proposed rule appearing in the Federal Register. Comments must be received on or before 60 days from publication in the Federal Register and may be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov, or by mail to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, FSIS Docket Clerk, Room 2-2127, George Washington Carver Center, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Mailstop 5272, Beltsville, M.D. 20705. All comments must identify FSIS and docket number FSIS-2010-0012.

Contact: Catherine Cochran, Congressional and Public Affairs (202) 720-9113
For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY AND MARYLAND GOVERNOR HOST FOURTH ANNUAL "BUY LOCAL" COOKOUT

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley kicked-off "Buy Local Challenge" for the week of July 23-31. The event features locally grown recipes created by selected chefs and showcases the diversity of local products available in Maryland. The recipes were submitted by chef/producer teams and selected for their creativity, availability of ingredients, geographic representation, and maximum use of local ingredients. The goal is to encourage Marylanders to incorporate at least one locally-grown, produced or harvested product into their meals each day.

Making reference to Maryland's First Lady O'Malley says, "Katie and I challenge all Maryland residents, institutions and organizations to expand their purchases of locally grown products for their favorite dishes and to try some new ones. Buying locally is key to ensuring a Smart, Green and Growing future for Maryland families. It preserves farmland, protects the environment, keeps our money in Maryland while creating and saving jobs, and provides fresh, nutritious food for a healthy diet. We are committed to the success of our agricultural industry and are delighted to host this cookout to make Marylanders aware of all of the locally-grown options our State has to offer."

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

THIS YEAR COULD BE A BIG YEAR FOR CROP INSURANCE CLAIMS

This growing season is proving to be a major test for farmers and for the nation's crop insurance system. Bill Murphy, Administrator of the USDA's Risk Management Agency, saying this growing season has brought many disasters and unique situations for the crop insurance system to handle.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15792>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15791>

SNAP BENEFITS TAKE CENTER STAGE AT AUDIT HEARING

Audit hearings continued Thursday on Capitol Hill as lawmakers discussed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program which is part of the 2012 Farm Bill. The long recession has some families struggling financially and putting even more strain on their ability to buy food. That's what fueled Capitol Hill testimony on the need to fully fund the food stamp program or SNAP. Oklahoma Congressman Frank Lucas outlines what he thinks the House Ag Committee needs to know as it determines what should be cut and by how much in the 2012 Farm Bill.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15794>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15795>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15796>

(July 20)

USDA LAUNCHES CONTEST TO CELEBRATE SUCCESS IN THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service launched a photo contest to look for and promote best practices in the [Summer Food Service Program](#) (SFSP). The competition, *Food, Fun and Sun! The*

Summer Food Service Program Story and Photo Contest, is open to sponsors and sites participating in the SFSP, which provides free, healthy meals to children in low-income areas during the summer. "We must do all we can to ensure that children get nutritious food during the summer so they are ready to learn and succeed during the school year," says Kevin Concannon, USDA Undersecretary for Food Nutrition and Consumer Services. "This contest helps highlight the critical role of summer meals and summer feeding programs in ending childhood hunger and providing our children the nutrition needed to be healthy, active and ready to win the future."

Food, Fun and Sun! highlights successful programs in four categories to share with SFSP sponsors and sites across the country. Contest winners will be recognized nationally.

Photo contest categories include:

- Volunteers: Examples of programs that use volunteers to support their work.
- Older Children: Examples of successful programs that address hunger among older kids, aged 12-18.
- Rural: Examples of successful programs in rural areas.
- Creative: Examples of the best creative programs that "think outside the box" to serve kids and teens.

For more details about the Food, Fun and Sun! The Summer Food Service Program Story and Photo Contest including submission guidelines and contest rules, please visit the competition webpage at <http://challenge.gov/USDA/195-food-fun-and-sun-story-and-photo-challenge>.

Contact: FNS Communications (703) 305-2281

DISASTER VICTIMS GETTING FOOD AND NUTRITION HELP

One of the USDA agencies on the front line during the tornadoes and flooding that devastated parts of Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee was the Food and Nutrition Service. FNS provided thousands with emergency food aid. Richard Dobbs Tennessee SNAP Policy Director gives details on people who have been hit hard by a tornado and flooding and who have been helped with emergency food aid.

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15785>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15786>

STREAMWATER SEDIMENT COULD BE AN E COLI HOST

A recent USDA study shows stream sediment could host significant amounts of the E coli pathogen for several months. USDA researcher Yakov Pachepsky explains the importance of a recent study on stream sediment and its contribution to E coli pathogens in surface water.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15659>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15664>

(July 19)

CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE SHARE INNOVATIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Everyday residents in rural American share their best practices and ideas for improving their quality of life and that of others. Krysta Harden, Chief of Staff at USDA, talks about what policymakers are doing

to expand the ideas and programs developed by those who are a part of the group, The Champions of Change.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15771>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15774>

A USDA OFFICIAL MEETS OHIO BUSINESS LEADERS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator Jonathan Adelstein met with local business leaders to explore ways federal, state and local officials can work together to improve economic conditions and create jobs. The meeting was part of a series of roundtable discussions that are being held across the country this summer with senior Administration officials on behalf of the White House Business Council and White House Rural Council. The meeting host was David Wilhelm, Co-founder and CEO of New Harvest Ventures, an alternative energy development company with headquarters in Gahanna, Ohio. "I'm glad that the White House Business Council chose Nelsonville and southeastern Ohio as one of the places across the country where it is conducting meetings to drill down on the specific economic needs and opportunities in rural America," says Adelstein. "This meeting is an opportunity to better understand the challenges and economic potential in the Appalachian Ohio Region, and to discuss ways that the federal government can help the people of this area create jobs."

The White House Business Council's Winning the Future Roundtable with American Business is an opportunity for government leaders to hear directly from business leaders around the country about their ideas on how to grow the economy. This exchange also is intended to educate business and community leaders about USDA programs and other the resources within the federal government to help them compete and expand.

Adelstein shared recommendations provided by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, chair of the White House Rural Council. They called for investment in rural areas and federal engagement with a variety of rural stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, small businesses, and state, local and tribal governments.

Contact: Heather Hartley, Public Information Coordinator 614-255-2394

HEAT AND HUMIDITY MAY BE STARTING TO CUT CROP YIELD POTENTIAL

The current wave of high heat and humidity across the Midwest is beginning to take a toll on crops. USDA Meteorologist Brad Rippey offers an alternate take on the reason that high humidity, coupled with high heat, can take a toll on yield potential for crops.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15773>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15767>

(July 18)

NATION'S COTTON CROP IMPROVES SLIGHTLY OVER THE LAST WEEK

The cotton crop is still in what some say is horrible condition, but not quite as horrible as a week ago. Gary Crawford was told by USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15758>

A ROBUST MILK PRODUCTION EXPECTED

The USDA is forecasting strong milk production for 2011 and 2012. Susan Carter spoke with World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15752>

USDA HAS LOWERED ITS 2012 OVERALL MEAT PRODUCTION FORECAST

The nation may produce less beef this year and less meat, overall, next year than had been predicted earlier. World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange explains why the pork production next year may be higher than expected.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15750>
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15749>

MANY WAYS PRODUCERS CAN PROPERLY STORE HAY

While indoor storage is preferred, there are options for producers to keep their large round bales of hay outdoors. Rod Bain talked to Ron Lemenager of Purdue University Extension to get the details.

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 # 30.11 – The bison industry is poised for growth as demand is skyrocketing. Gary Crawford visits a bison operation to get the details.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 30.11 – Helping Americans Reconnect to the Outdoors. USDA Increases Ag. Academic Opportunities for Hispanic Students. Some Unusual Materials Are Being Studied to Make Biofuels. Some Tips and Tricks for Grilling Seafood. Just What Is Ice Cream?

AG UPDATE CD # 30.11 – Weather Pounding a Lot of the U.S. Cotton Crop. There Are Corn Crop Concerns on Several Fronts. Helping Nations Prepare for and Cope with Drought. A Continuing Look at GIPSA Rule Comments. The Benefits and Drawbacks of Raising Bison.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – Mon. July 25, Crop Progress. First Retail Food Price Forecast for 2012. Tues. July 26, Crop/Weather Update. Fri. July 29, Agricultural Price Report for July. Mon. Aug. 1, Crop Progress. Tues. Aug. 2, Crop/Weather Update. Farm Production Expenditures. Thurs. Aug. 4, Land Values. Mon. Aug. 8, Crop Progress. **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 Newslines 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 – USDA Meteorologist Comments On Heat Wave

New actualities are available on the USDA FTP site

Download instructions:

Filename: Rippey On Heatwave

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

BUMPER CROP OF WINTER WHEAT IN VIRGINIA – The small grain producers could possibly bring a new record yield of 70 bushels per acre. **Jeff Ishee** (WSVA Radio 550 – Harrisonburg, Virginia <http://www.wsvaonline.com/>, www.virginiafarming.com, www.onthefarmradio.com) says 19% of the state is currently suffering drought conditions (primarily around the Chesapeake Bay region), but farmers in other parts of the state report excellent crop conditions. **Ishee** tells about problems with the brown marmorated stink bug which continues to cause significant damage in peaches and apples. “The EPA recently authorized a one-year exemption for the use of the pesticide dinotefuran in seven Mid-Atlantic states, with tree fruit growers hoping this chemical will provide effective crop protection. According to apple industry statistics, the pest caused approximately \$37 million in damage to Virginia’s apple crop in 2010. Some experts worry that the pest could spread to cotton, soybeans and corn.”

THE KANSAS WHEAT HARVEST IS WRAPPED UP – **Larry Steckline** (KWLS Radio – Wichita. Kansas <http://www.kwlsradio.com/>) reports there are good quality wheat yields, but they are down from the average, but better than many farmers expected. **Steckline** says spring crops are in terrible shape in the worst drought in years, even affecting irrigated crops with over 100 degree day temperatures day after day.

In other news the state of Kansas is celebrating 150 years as a state. A big October 8 event is in the works with such bells and whistles as a parade, food displays and more. **Steckline** is on the state planning committee and says one of the interesting things to look for is the farm equipment in the parade and on display from beginning of statehood to today's best.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MICHIGAN AG EXPO – The three day event wrapped up July 21 at Michigan State University (MSU). **Rob Buttery** (Michigan Farm Radio Network - Lansing, Michigan <http://www.mfrn.com/>) says, “Even with temperatures reaching record highs for the show, many of the state’s agricultural producers and community members braved the heat to attend the state’s largest

outdoor farm show. Keeping in tradition with past years, Ag Expo 2011 featured many educational opportunities for visitors.” The demonstrations ranged from sprayer calibration and managing animal mortality to garden soil testing and basic horse health management offered something for every type of visitor, regardless of farm size.

The Michigan Ag Expo 2011 drew more than 250 commercial vendors and featured about 30 educational exhibitors, many of whom showcased MSU research, teaching and Extension work in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) tent.” For those planning who plan ahead and a want to attend the Michigan Ag Expo 2012, **Buttery** reminds us the fun filled annual event is set for July 17–19 once again on the show grounds at MSU. The Michigan Ag Expo is sponsored by the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. For more information click on this link www.agexpo.msu.edu.

STRANGENESS IN MINNESOTA, TALK ABOUT WEIRD WEATHER – Here’s how **Tom Rothman** (Minnesota Farm Network – Minneapolis, Minnesota <http://www.minnesotafarmnetwork.com/>) describes the intense heat. “It felt like a tropical rain forest in Minnesota this week with western counties recording a heat index of 130 degrees. Temperatures close to 100 and dew points in the 80’s took their toll on crops and livestock.” Rothman says The Minnesota Turkey Growers Association is reporting as many as 90,000 turkeys have perished from the heat and humidity and that number will likely go higher. Some cattle, swine and other livestock deaths have also been reported. “Milk production has shrunk from dairy cows stressed by the oppressive conditions. Fortunately most of the state’s cropland has plenty of moisture which should help crops deal with the heat.”

THE NORTHERN AG NETWORK GIVES AWAY A FREE TRIP – The prize was a 10-day trip to China and there’s a twist. **Haylie Shipp** (Northern Ag Network - Billings, Montana www.NorthernAg.NET) says after a month of online registration, it was the first person to sign up that won! “He couldn’t have been more deserving.” He’s **Steve Graff**, a rancher from Broadus, Montana. **Graff** missed the winning phone call because, “As are most folks in our region, he was outside haying.” The win couldn’t have come at a better time. “It was a bright spot in an otherwise dark summer as his family was in the midst of saying goodbye to Steve’s wife. Cindy was very ill and, with the help of hospice, her family had been preparing for her passing.” **Graff’s** wife’s passing took place just two days after it was announced that Steve had won the trip. “Calling us a “welcome diversion” in such a time of tragedy, Steve is now planning on taking his two young daughters with him to China this October. When discussing with his wife hours before her death whether the girls should miss that much school, he said that Cindy just looked at him like he was crazy. Life is too short not to live it,” says **Shipp**.



Rancher **Steve Graff** from Broadus, Montana

***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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