



Letter No. 3657
Friday, March 16, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3657

Friday, March 16, 2012

(March 15)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ON THE ENFORCING OF THE U.S. - KOREA TRADE AGREEMENT

"Today is a monumental day for American farmers and ranchers. Under the new U.S.-Korea trade agreement, two-thirds of the tariffs imposed on U.S. food and agricultural products exported to South Korea are being eliminated. Over the next few years, as additional barriers fall and more U.S. businesses market products to Korea's expanding economy, American agricultural exports should grow by \$1.9 billion and help support nearly 16,000 jobs here at home. The trade agreement with Korea is the most significant for the United States in decades. Now the world's 12th largest economy, with a GDP of over \$1.4 trillion and a population of about 49 million, Korea is already the fifth largest export market for U.S. farm products.

"For America's farmers, ranchers, and agricultural businesses the timing could not be better. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its best periods in history thanks to the productivity and resourcefulness of American farmers and agribusinesses.

"Much of the record growth these past few years is related to President Obama's leadership on trade. Last year, the President insisted that we get this agreement with Korea right—alongside pacts with Colombia and Panama—forging a better deal for America's workers and businesses that led to strong bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. In 2010, the President committed to double U.S. exports in five years. Two years later, we are on pace to meet that goal. Recent figures show the number of jobs supported by American exports have grown 1.2 million since 2009, while total U.S. exports hit a record \$2.1 trillion last year, up 34 percent from 2009.

"Strengthening our partnership with growing markets in the Asia Pacific region, such as South Korea, is integral to the strength of the U.S. economy in the decades ahead. Along with other efforts to promote American exports, the trade deal with South Korea helps level the playing field for American businesses and will help put folks back to work. Across the economy, it will add \$10 billion to \$12 billion to annual U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Increased exports mean higher incomes for farmers and ranchers, more opportunities for small businesses owners, and jobs for people in rural communities and port cities—the people who grow, package, ship and market American agricultural products."

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)
For Radio Story: [The U.S. and Korea Reach a Trade Agreement](#)
[ACTUALITY: What to Expect From the Korus Free Trade Agreement](#)

USDA ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL CHOICES FOR BEEF PRODUCTS IN THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR

The USDA affirms the safety of lean finely textured beef products for consumers. In response to requests from school districts across the country, the USDA announced today that it will offer more choices to schools in the National School Lunch Program when it comes to purchases of ground beef products.

USDA only purchases products for the school lunch program that are safe, nutritious and affordable – including all products containing Lean Finely Textured Beef. However, due to customer demand, the department will be adjusting procurement specifications for the next school year so schools can have additional options in procuring ground beef products. USDA will provide schools with a choice to order product either with or without Lean Finely Textured Beef.

USDA continues to affirm the safety of Lean Finely Textured Beef product for all consumers and urges customers to consult science based information on the safety and quality of this product. Lean Finely Textured Beef is a meat product derived from a process which separates fatty pieces from beef trimmings to reduce the overall fat content.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

THE VALUE OF CROP INSURANCE IN FARM SAFETY NET

Some ag producers recently told a Senate Committee that crop insurance must remain a vital part of any future farm risk management program.

For Radio Story: [The Value of Crop Insurance in Farm Safety Net](#)

RISK MANAGEMENT AND THE 2012 FARM BILL

USDA's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services told a Senate committee what he would like to for risk management policy per the new Farm Bill.

For Radio Story: [Risk Management and the 2012 Farm Bill](#)

(March 14)

USDA ANNOUNCES ASSISTANCE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY RECENT TORNADOES

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced comprehensive outreach efforts are underway to assess damage and assist rural Midwest and Southern communities in the wake of recent deadly storms. "These storms struck the very heart of rural America," said Vilsack. "USDA regional and local staff members are

on the front lines, have worked each day since the storms hit, and for many it's personal: they live and work alongside the victims. I've directed our expertise and resources be put to the fullest possible use."

In addition to assessing the damage to USDA Rural Development-funded projects encompassing the agency's Business and Industry, Energy, Housing and Community Facilities programs, Agency officials are looking at ways to help hundreds of people displaced from their homes. In rural communities, USDA Rural Development provides the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with regular information concerning the availability of vacant units in multi-family housing complexes financed by the agency. In the case of disasters, displaced residents can receive priority placement in vacant units.

Vilsack said USDA Rural Water Circuit Riders are working with national and state rural water association's staff throughout the tornado-ravaged states to assist in assessing damage and helping communities get their systems back online. This is critical to the health and safety of rural communities.

The incident is now predicted to be the first billion-dollar disaster of 2012. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's current count of confirmed tornadoes from the March 2 outbreak stands at 42, with damage reported in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Wind speeds ranged from 60 miles an hour to 174 miles an hour in Jefferson County, Indiana, where the National Weather Service reported a large factory was "cleared to its foundation slab with anchoring bolts bent in the direction of the storm."

USDA [Rural Development](#) offers a variety of resources for states and individuals affected by the recent disasters. Individuals can also apply for other types of federal disaster assistance at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Contact: Jay Fletcher (202) 690-0498

For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

For Radio Story: [USDA Announces More Help for Rural Areas Hit By Recent Tornadoes](#)

HOW RUSSIA WTO MEMBERSHIP WILL BENEFIT UNITED STATES AG EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES

An agricultural trade analyst recently gave his take on chances for increased U.S. trade with Russia when Russia becomes a member of the World Trade Organization. Agricultural trade analyst Eric Trachtenberg looks at how U.S. ag export products will stand to benefit from Russia's membership in the World Trade Organization.

For Radio Story: [How Russia WTO Membership Will Benefit U.S. Ag Export Opportunities](#)

[ACTUALITY: Russian WTO Membership And Export Opportunities](#)

USDA WORKING ON DATA COLLECTION FOR UPCOMING PLANTINGS REPORT

The USDA should be wrapping up its survey of farmers and their planting plans this week for the highly anticipated Prospective Plantings report coming at the end of this month. Lance Honig, Chief of the Crops Branch of USDA's Agricultural Statistics Service, saying that the upcoming report on prospective plantings will include acres already planted as of this week, but will still be reflecting planting "intentions" for most farmers in most areas of the country.

For Radio Story: [USDA Working On Data Collection For Upcoming Plantings Report](#)

[ACTUALITY: Upcoming USDA Report Will Reflect Planting Intentions](#)

(March 13)

**STUDY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND
IMPACTS ON AG ECONOMY IMPACTS COMPLEX**

A multitude of factors make up the study of how potential climate change could affect the economies of agriculture. A USDA Economic Researcher explains how potential climate change could affect the agricultural economy.

For Radio Story: [Study of Climate Change and Impacts on Ag Economy Impacts Complex Climate Change and Economic Impacts on Agriculture](#)

**WARM WEATHER HAS CROPS LIKE
CORN ALREADY MATURING**

Corn planting is already underway in the South and it's begun to germinate along with a few other crops.

For Radio Story: [Warm Weather Has Crops Like Corn Already Maturing](#)

**NEEDED STORMY WEATHER
HEADED TO CALIFORNIA**

The west is bracing for stormy weather which may turn out not to be so bad. USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey says the rainfall headed to the west will be good for winter grains, pastures and range lands, but a late freeze could be damaging.

For Radio Story: [Needed Stormy Weather Headed to California](#)
[ACTUALITY: Rain Good for the West, But a Freeze Could Wreak Havoc](#)

(March 12)

**AGRICULTURE SECRETARY COMMENTS
ON THE MARCH JOBS REPORT**

The latest employment figures show nonfarm payroll employment continues to rise.

For Radio Story: [Agriculture Secretary Comments on Last Week's Jobs Report](#)

**LATEST CRP
SIGN-OFF KICKS UP**

The 43rd general enrollment period for USDA's Conservation Reserve Program runs for a four week period starting this week. A USDA official offers a reminder about sign up of both its Direct and Counter Cyclical and Average Crop Revenue Programs.

For Radio Story: [Latest CRP Sign Off Kicks UP](#)
[Two Farm Program Signups Continue to June](#)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARIES AND COPING WITH CHALLENGES

A legendary farm broadcaster says he has great respect for the way Secretaries of Agriculture and USDA handle various challenges.

For Radio Story: [Agriculture Secretaries and Coping with Challenges](#)

For more agriculture news visit USDA.gov and click Newsroom on the toolbar



Foreign Agricultural Service Streamlines Service with New Trade Facilitation Desk (**FAS**)

FSIS Blueprint

CNPP 150th

FAS Blueprint

ERS 150th

Industry Insight: Create a New Market for Cotton? No Sweat. (**AMS**)

US Forest Service women: opportunities are endless (**FS**)

Georgia school kids plant trees while meeting Olympians (**FS**)

One Pumpkin Seed Was Start to Educating a Community (**FSA**)

Salsa, Sabor y Salud: MiPlato Celebrates the Strengths of Latino Traditions (**Faith-Based**)

US Forest Service's Fort Valley Experimental Forest first in the nation to discover the affects of a changing climate on pines (**FS**)

Tuskegee Airmen (**FS**)

Georgia school kids plant trees while meeting Olympians (**FS**)

Turkish Delegation Tours Rural Nebraska (**RD**)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On March 20)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 12.12 – A collaboration between USDA and exhibitors across the country brings the story, the purpose, and the importance of butterflies to life. Rod Bain looks at such conservatories and exhibits in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 12.12 – Beware Of Fly By Night Or Fraudulent Tax Preparers, There Is Free Tax Help Out There, Wake Up Those Houseplants After Their Winter Slumber, Having A Staycation

During Spring Break, The Nature Of Butterfly Conservatories.

AG UPDATE CD # 12.12 – The New Working Lands For Wildlife Program, Sign Up Going On For USDA Farm Programs, Pork Producers Skittish About Expanding Despite Rising Export, The Growing Importance Of The BRIC Nations, Using A Hybrid Mulching Technique.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – March 20 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB), Cattle On Feed Report (NASS).

These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The USDA Radio Newsline carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.

USDA Radio Newsline, 202-720-6776, 5:00pm ET

Or go to www.usda.gov, click on Newsroom at top of the page, scroll down on right side of page until you see Radio and TV. Then click on Daily Radio News Service or Weekly Radio Feature Service.

For questions about USDA Radio's Features, fax name, station, and address to 202-690-2165.

[USDA Radio and TV Programming](#)

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

USDA Assists Kickapoo Indian Tribe

A USDA program is helping an American Indian tribe in Texas get more water for agriculture production and to grow organic crops

FTP Download instructions:

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

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: kickapoo

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264), MPEG 4, MPEG2 and HDV

YouTube: [USDA Assists Kickapoo](#)

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

CATCHING UP WITH NAFB FARM BROADCAST COLLEAGUES ANYWHERE – Max Armstrong (Farm Progress Companies - This Week In AgriBusiness) shares the story of being in Yuma, Arizona for the the Southwest Ag Summit. "I was asked by philanthropist and farmer Howard Buffett to moderate his presentation on National Agriculture Day. George Gatley's smiling face was a welcome sight when I got there, and it was obvious that the growers in that region have a great respect for George. Then I got him to stamp my passport so I could eventually get out of Yuma!!"

DISCOVERING USDA'S RADIO PROGRAMMING – Gary Crawford (USDA Radio News Team- Washington, DC [USDA RADIO and TV BROADCASTS](#)) says it's always nice when we the USDA Radio News Team gets broadcasters who have just discovered "our USDA radio programming...and want to use some of our material." Such is the case with **Erin O'Toole** (KUNC, a public radio station in North Colorado). She was "poking around" the USDA website and came across the USDA radio section and called **Crawford** to ask if there were any limits to how the material could be used. So you'll know, (there are no limits or restrictions for broadcasters). "She loved some of our stories that she heard. Erin is a news and feature producer/reporter/host at KUNC and tells us that she does quite a bit of reporting on farm issues in that area." Wheat and millet are two of the most important crops there in O'Toole's coverage area. She deals quite often with the Colorado Wheat Growers Association. "She says our radio news and features will help her with her programs ...and that's what we are here for."

***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



United States Department of Agriculture
Office of Communications
Room 402-A
Washington, DC 20250-1300

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USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or
call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).*