



Letter No. 3660
Friday, April 6, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
202-720-7079

BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3660

Friday, April 6, 2012

(April 5)

SIGNUP DEADLINE FOR S.U.R.E. PROGRAM FOR 2010 CROPS IS LOOMING

Farmers still have a little more time to sign up for S.U.R.E. program payments for disaster losses suffered back in 2010.

For Radio Story: [Signup Deadline For S.U.R.E. Program For 2010 Crops Is Looming](#)

NOT MUCH TIME TO SIGN UP 2012 CROPS FOR USDA'S PAYMENT PROGRAMS

USDA officials say the deadline for signing up this year's crops for USDA payment programs will be here sooner than you think.

For Radio Story: [Not Much Time To Sign Up 2012 Crops For USDA's Payment Programs](#)

FOOD SAFETY APPLIES TO HOLIDAY MEAL HARD COOKED EGGS

Both Easter and Passover have traditional meals with hard cooked eggs, and food safety tips to make sure those eggs are safe to consume. Even with Kosher food preparation guidelines in place, there are still some food safety tips all can observe for this traditional Jewish meal.

For Radio Story: [Food Safety Applies To Holiday Meal Hard Cooked Eggs
Food Safety And Passover Seder](#)

(April 4)

**USDA AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO EDUCATION,
WHICH UNDERSCORES RURAL COUNCIL GOAL TO STRENGTHEN
THE RURAL ECONOMY**

Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Dallas Tonsager today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the American Association of Community Colleges that is designed to highlight one of the goals of the White House Rural Council—to expand access to training and higher education for rural citizens and strengthen the rural economy.

"The Obama Administration and USDA recognize that an educated and skilled workforce is essential to helping businesses grow and create jobs in rural areas," said Tonsager. "The Rural Council recognizes that stronger education is vital to better jobs, and this MOU is an important step toward strengthening our rural economy by developing a stronger, more competitive workforce that businesses must have in order to succeed."

The agreement, formally referred to as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), spells out ways that community colleges and USDA will work together to provide training and higher educational opportunities to rural residents and work to build sustainable regional economies.

The MOU calls for the participants to:

- Facilitate increased cooperation between USDA Rural Development and the rural community colleges, to leverage partnerships and work together to strengthen the rural economy;
- Establish working groups to coordinate Rural Development's financial and technical resources with private sources of assistance to better serve educational institutions;
- Develop outreach and technical assistance models for rural educational institutions;
- Co-sponsor events such as conferences, seminars, webinars and other networking events;
- Hold joint events to identify and remove potential barriers to resources or services.

The agreement continues the work of USDA Rural Development in assisting rural colleges, students and rural communities. For example, through the Community Facilities Program, USDA can provide colleges with loans and grants to construct and renovate classrooms and dormitories, and to purchase school transportation vehicles. Distance Learning and Telemedicine grants can cover the cost of video conferencing and distance learning equipment. The Community Connect program provides grants to build broadband infrastructure and establish community centers that offer free public access in rural areas where broadband service is least likely to be available. Each of these programs helps meet President Obama's objective to grow the economy by out-building and out-educating our nation's competitors.

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is a non-profit organization representing almost 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 11 million students. It was founded in 1920 for charitable and educational purposes to support the nation's community colleges. AACC is the second organization representing community colleges to sign this MOU. Last month the Rural Community College Association, a non-profit organization that helps colleges partner with their communities to improve education access and local economic conditions, signed the agreement with USDA.

Since taking office, President Obama's Administration has taken historic steps to improve the lives of rural Americans, put people back to work and build thriving economies in rural communities. From proposing the American Jobs Act to establishing the first-ever White House Rural Council – chaired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack – the President is committed to a smarter use of existing Federal resources to foster sustainable economic prosperity and ensure the government is a strong partner for businesses, entrepreneurs and working families in rural communities.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices. Rural Development has an active portfolio of more than \$165 billion in loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural areas.

Contact: Weldon Freeman (202) 690-1384
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

(April 3)

USDA EXTENDS CONSERVATION RESERVE SIGNUP DEADLINE ONE WEEK

USDA is extending the Conservation Reserve Program signup period.

For Radio Story: [USDA Extends Conservation Reserve Signup Deadline One Week](#)

**AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES
ADVANCED BIOFUELS INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture - along with the Department of Energy, and the Department of Navy - will co-host an Advanced Biofuels Industry Roundtable in Washington D.C. on May 18, 2012 as the next step in the partnership with the private sector to produce advanced biofuels to power military and commercial transportation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the announcement today during his keynote address to the Advanced Biofuels Leadership Conference.

"Advanced biofuels are a key component of President Obama's 'all-of-the-above' energy strategy to limit the impact that foreign oil has on our economy and take control of our energy future," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "By bringing together farmers, scientists, and the private sector to produce fuel for the American military, we can help spur an industry producing biofuels from non-food feedstocks all over the nation, strengthen our middle class, and help create an economy built to last."

"The Biofuels Industry Roundtable will produce the market and industry expertise necessary to develop a domestic biofuel market capable of producing alternative fuel that is cost-competitive with traditional fuel," stated Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. "The Departments of Navy, Agriculture, and Energy are investing in an existing private industry to spur growth, and each department will closely monitor how that investment is used to achieve the president's objectives."

The May 18, 2012 roundtable will focus on efforts to accelerate the production of bio-based fuels for military and commercial purposes. Last year, USDA, and the Departments of Energy and the Navy announced that – through the Defense Production Act – they will collaborate to accelerate the development of advanced, drop-in aviation and marine biofuels and marine diesel to help power our military. Participants in this roundtable will discuss next steps for those interested in pursuing the production of aviation biofuels and marine diesel. Topics will include production, distribution and contracting, and best practices. This roundtable follows a "match making" event hosted last week at USDA headquarters to promote connections between agricultural producers of energy feedstocks, and biorefineries.

In 2008, America imported 11 million barrels of oil a day. By the end of last year, that number dropped to 8.4 million barrels per day. In the last year alone, in part because of booming U.S. oil and gas production,

more efficient cars and trucks, and a world-class refining sector that last year was a net exporter for the first time in sixty years, we have cut net imports by ten percent – a million barrels a day. And with the new fuel economy standards the President announced last year, we are on pace to meet our goal by the end of the decade. Developing advanced drop-in biofuels is another part of this comprehensive strategy to reduce America's dependence of foreign oil.

As part of that strategy, and at Secretary Vilsack's direction, USDA is working to develop the national biofuels industry producing energy from non-food sources in every region of the country. We are conducting and encouraging research into innovative new energy technologies and processes, helping companies build biorefineries – including the first ever commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol facilities – and supporting farmers, ranchers, and businesses taking risks to pursue new opportunities in biofuels. Along with Federal partners, we're establishing an aviation biofuels economy, and have expedited rules and efforts to promote production and commercialization of biofuels.

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

USDA CONTINUES TO INVESTIGATE THOSE FAKE USDA LETTERS TO FARMERS

The Agriculture Department's Inspector General's office is still investigating those letters farmers have been getting--letters claiming to be from USDA. Juan Garcia, Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs in USDA's Farm Service Agency, giving a short description of the fake USDA letters that some farmers have gotten.

For Radio Story: [USDA Continues To Investigate Those Fake USDA Letters To Farmers](#)
[ACTUALITY: A Short Description Of The Fake USDA Letters](#)

(April 2)

SIGN UP DEADLINE FOR CRP ENROLLMENT IS FRIDAY, APRIL 6

April 6th is the last day ag producers and landowners can enroll in this current Conservation Reserve Program general sign up. Farm Service Administrator Bruce Nelson explains eligibility requirements for the latest Conservation Reserve Program sign up, and offers a reminder of the upcoming enrollment deadline.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623
For Radio Story: [Sign Up Deadline For CRP Enrollment Is This Friday](#)
[ACTUALITY: On CRP Enrollment Deadline And Details](#)

KEEPING THE EASTER EGG SAFE FROM FOOD BORNE ILLNESS

An USDA food safety expert provides tips in preparing, handling, and storing Easter Eggs to prevent food borne illness. Keeping raw and cooked eggs safe from food borne illness is a food safety tradition that should be in place this Easter.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623
For Radio Story: [Keeping The Easter Egg Safe From Food Borne Illness](#)

**USDA 2012 FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO
BENEFIT NEARLY 10 MILLION WORLDWIDE**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that international food assistance in fiscal year 2012 will benefit more than 9.7 million people worldwide under USDA's Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition programs.

"These two international food assistance programs are important tools in the U.S. effort to support global food security and sustainable agriculture production through President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative," said Michael Scuse, Acting Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. "With the world's population expected to top 9.3 billion by 2050, these programs lay the foundation on which food-insecure nations can meet the needs of their citizens and build more vibrant economies."

Under the programs, USDA purchases U.S. commodities and donates them to government agencies and private-voluntary organizations in targeted countries. Food for Progress recipients in developing countries and emerging democracies sell the commodities and use the funds to introduce and expand free enterprise in the agricultural sector. For example, a past Food for Progress [program in Bangladesh trained farmers to develop prawn nurseries](#), which generated more than \$1 million in farmer income over two years. The McGovern-Dole Program focuses on low-income, food-deficit countries that are committed to universal education. Participants either use or sell the donated U.S. commodities to support education, child development, and food security. For example, in Mali, [more than 45,000 children and adults in 120 schools](#) have been fed by Catholic Relief Services with help from the program.

The commodities USDA is donating include U.S.-produced corn-soy blend, cornmeal, dehydrated potato flakes, dried beans, lentils, rice, sorghum, soy oil, soybeans, soybean meal, vegetable oil and wheat.

USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service administers both the Food for Progress and McGovern-Dole programs. More information can be found at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp>.

USDA's food aid programs contribute to the goals of President Obama's global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future. Feed the Future is part of a multilateral effort launched at the L'Aquila World Summit on Food Security in 2009 to accelerate progress toward the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015. More information on Feed the Future can be found at: <http://www.feedthefuture.gov>.

Contact: Linda Habenstreit (202) 720-9442
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

**USDA URGES AMERICANS TO PREVENT INVASIVE PESTS
TO PROTECT AMERICAN AGRICULTURE**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced that it is dedicating the month of April to sharing information about the threat that [invasive plant pests, diseases and harmful weeds](#) pose to America's fruits, vegetables, trees, and other plants—and how the public can help prevent their spread. APHIS works each day to promote U.S. agricultural health and safeguard the nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries.

"Invasive pests hit close to home and threaten the things we value," said Rebecca A. Blue, Deputy Under Secretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs. "We need the public's help because these hungry pests can have a huge impact on the items we use in everyday life, from the fabric in our clothing, the food on our table, the lumber used to build our home and the flowers in our garden. During one of the

most successful periods in history for U.S. agriculture, it is important that we step-up our efforts to educate Americans about USDA's good work to protect our nation's food, fiber, feed and fuel from invasive pests."

Invasive pests are non-native species that feed on America's agricultural crops, trees and other plants. These "hungry pests" have cost the United States billions of dollars and wreak havoc on the environment. USDA and U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection-working closely with state agriculture departments and industry-are dedicated to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests. The goal is to safeguard agriculture and natural resources from the entry, establishment and spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds.

But federal and state agencies can't do it alone. It requires everyone's help to stop the unintended introduction and spread of invasive pests. The number-one action someone can take is to leave hungry pests behind. USDA urges the public to visit www.HungryPests.com to learn more about invasive pests and what they can do to protect American agricultural resources by preventing the spread of these threats. Here are a few actions that people can take today:

- **Buy Local, Burn Local.** Invasive pests and larvae can hide and ride long distances in firewood. Don't give them a free ride to start a new infestation-buy firewood where you burn it.
- **Plant Carefully.** Buy your plants from a reputable source and avoid using invasive plant species at all costs.
- **Do Not Bring or Mail** fresh fruits, vegetables, or plants into your state or another state unless agricultural inspectors have cleared them beforehand.
- **Cooperate** with any agricultural quarantine restrictions and allow authorized agricultural workers access to your property for pest or disease surveys.
- **Keep It Clean.** Wash outdoor gear and tires between fishing, hunting or camping trips. Clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items when moving from one home to another.
- **Learn To Identify.** If you see signs of an invasive pest or disease, write down or take a picture of what you see, and then report it at www.HungryPests.com.
- **Speak Up.** Declare all agricultural items to customs officials when returning from international travel. Call USDA to find out what's allowed:
(301) 851-2046 for questions about plants
(301) 851-3300 for questions about animals

At www.HungryPests.com, a website available in both English and Spanish, visitors can access the interactive Pest Tracker to see what pests are threatening in a selected state, and to learn how to report suspected invasive pests. The public can also engage on the invasive pests issue via Facebook and Twitter. HungryPests.com is optimized for mobile devices. Public service announcements in both English and Spanish will air on television and radio throughout April and at peak times for domestic travel this summer. APHIS has also been actively collaborating with a number of state partners who will conduct targeted stakeholder engagement on invasive pest issues with state-specific outreach materials.

Added Blue: "The USDA and its partners are fighting invasive pests on three fronts: abroad, at the border, and across the homeland. We're also developing new tools, improving our systems, and working hard to educate the public on how they can join the fight and help stop the spread of invasive pests."

There has been success in the fight against invasive pests. The Asian longhorned beetle, detected in Illinois in 1998, was declared eradicated from Illinois in 2008 with the help of local, state and federal partners and Illinois residents. The beetle was also declared eradicated from Hudson County, NJ; and Islip, NY. Extensive efforts by USDA and its partners in California reduced European grapevine moth populations in 2011 by 99.9 percent. That pest was first detected in California in 2009.

Contact: USDA APHIS Greg Rosenthal (301) 851-4054 Suzanne Bond (301) 851-4070
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

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



Community Baby Cafés: A Great Benefit for Moms, Children and Families (**FNS**)
Fiber Artists (**AMS**)
Domestic Energy in 140 Characters or Less (**OC/OSEC**)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On April 10)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 15.12 – One of the fastest growing sectors in the global ag economy could mean significant export opportunities for US agricultural goods. Rod Bain looks at the potential of Brazil, Russia, India, and China as US markets going forward in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 15.12 – A Legend Covers USDA History; The Wild, The Weird, And The Wonderful, Part Two; Indoor Overwintering Of Honeybee Colonies And Bee Health; The Benefits Of Mustard Seed Meal; The Nature Of Butterfly Conservatories.

AG UPDATE CD # 15.12 – USDA Continuing To Investigate Fake Letters Sent To Farmers; The Growing Importance Of The BRIC Nations; Partnership Extends Extension Globally; Using A Hybrid Mulching Technique; Alka Seltzer Relieves More Than Just Heartburn.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – April 10 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB); Crop Production Report (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS – WAOB). April 11 – Oilseed, Cotton, and Rice Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). April 12 – Wheat and Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). April 16 – Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlooks (ERS – WAOB); Crop Progress 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

Ag Sec Tom Vilsack Touts Targeted and Efficient USDA Spending During Budget Hearing

FTP Download instructions:

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

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: vilsack on fy13

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

YouTube: [Vilsack Testifies](#)

Video Podcast: [Vilsack Testifies Podcast](#)

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



4-H ASKING TEXANS TO 'PURPLE UP' APRIL 13 TO HONOR MILITARY FAMILIES – It is to honor the children for the sacrifices they make while their parents serve their country abroad and as a sign of solidarity and support. “This is a Texas initiative called Purple Up for Military Kids,” said **Luis Saldana**, a Texas AgriLife Extension Service program specialist for 4-H. “It’s a partnership among the United States Army, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the 4-H and youth development.”

Purple represents said **Saldana** the mixing of the traditional colors of all the armed services in this country, including the green of the Army, the red of the Marines, the orange of the Coast Guard and the blue of the Navy and Air Force. “We’re asking everybody to wear purple next week, on Friday the 13th, to honor and recognize the sacrifice and contributions that children of deployed personnel make — children who are oftentimes overlooked by the public.”

Find more stories, photos, videos and audio at agrilife.org/today and view this story at:

<http://tinyurl.com/7eaz56u>.

**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

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write:
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).*