



Letter No. 3664  
Friday, May 4, 2012  
Creative Media & Broadcast Center  
202-720-7079

## **BROADCASTERS LETTER**

#3664

Friday, May 4, 2012

**(May 4)**

### **USDA FUNDING TO IMPROVE RURAL ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAKE THE 'GRID' MORE RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that rural electric cooperative utilities in 10 states will receive loans to install smart grid technologies and make improvements to generation and transmission facilities. Examples of funding announced today include a \$102.8 million guaranteed loan to the Jackson Electric Membership Corporation in Jefferson, Georgia, to build and improve over 850 miles of distribution line and make other system improvements. The loan also includes \$7.2 million in smart grid projects.

"A 21st century electric grid is essential to America's ability to create jobs in the clean energy economy of the future," said Vilsack. "These investments enable consumers and businesses to better manage their use of electricity and help maintain affordable rates. Building transmission infrastructure that employs smart grid technologies will make it easier to add renewable sources of electricity into the grid and also improve reliability."

With this funding, USDA Rural Development moves closer to reaching Secretary Vilsack's goal to fund more than \$250 million for Smart Grid technologies. The \$334 million in loans are provided by USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The funding helps electric utilities upgrade, expand, maintain and replace rural America's electric infrastructure. USDA Rural Development also funds energy conservation and renewable energy projects. Click [here](#) for a list of the rural utilities that will receive USDA funding.

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

**(May 3)**

### **BSE INVESTIGATION UPDATE**

USDA's Chief Veterinary Officer provides the latest information in the investigation of a case of BSE announced last week. Clifford explains the system of safeguards that have been in place to detect cases of BSE in cows and to keep infected product out of the food supply.

For Radio Story: [Update On BSE Investigation](#)  
[ACTUALITY: On Interlocking BSE Safeguards](#)

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### **IMPROVING SUPERMARKET RECORD KEEPING ON SOURCES OF MEAT**

Grocery stores may soon be required to keep better records of where ground meat components came from. Elisabeth Hagen, USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety gives the objective for developing updated policies to test meat earlier for E. coli. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service Assistant Administrator Daniel Engeljohn gives insight into the number of meat samples tested every year for the presence of E. coli and the percentage that test positive.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

For More Story Info:

For Radio Story: [Improving Supermarket Record Keeping On Sources Of Meat](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Reason For Updating Testing Process Of Meat](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Sample Numbers Of Annually Tested Meat For E. Coli](#)

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### **AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK URGES PETROLEUM COMPANIES TO INCREASE ADOPTION OF AMERICAN MADE RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The USDA maintains that by increasing the blend rate to e15, petroleum companies can help decrease reliance on foreign oil and increase economic opportunity in rural America. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is urging petroleum companies to help increase the percentage of ethanol in America's gas tanks in order to reduce dependence on foreign oil, boost job creation and promote development of renewable energy from farm-produced feedstocks. Recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action approved the use of E15, a fuel blend that is 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline, up from the current 10 percent blend level. "The availability of E15 will increase America's energy security and spur additional job creation," said Vilsack. "The Obama Administration has an 'all-of-the-above' to promoting domestic energy security, and increasing the percentage of ethanol to be blended with gasoline will help boost economic growth while lessening the nation's dependence on foreign oil."

The Renewable Fuel Standard, a long-term renewable fuel mandate established by Congress requires the use of 36 billion gallons of renewable transportation fuel by 2022. Advanced, low-carbon renewable fuels such as cellulosic biofuel must make up 21 billion gallons of this mandate. Achieving this mandate will help speed the transition to cleaner, more secure sources of energy in the transportation sector, helping our nation address the challenges of climate change, dependence on oil, and job creation. Increasing the amount of ethanol that is allowed to be blended in the fuel supply of cars to 15 percent is an important step in the effort to reach this goal.

"When we get to 36 billion gallons, that's going to mean that we will be importing fewer barrels of oil. That means that the wealth that we are currently transferring into those countries that don't necessarily agree with us and are from an unstable part of the world can be redirected into creating rural opportunities and jobs."

To enable widespread use of E15, the Obama Administration has set a goal to help fueling station owners install 10,000 blender pumps over the next 5 years. In addition, both through the Recovery Act and the 2008 Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and U.S. Department of Agriculture have provided grants, loans and loan guarantees to spur American ingenuity on the next generation of biofuels. Before it can be sold, manufacturers must first take additional measures to help ensure retail stations and other gasoline distributors understand and implement labeling rules and other E15-related requirements.

With a focus on helping the country reach 36 billion gallons by 2022, USDA, in collaboration with DOE and EPA, developed the Growing America's Fuels strategy. The USDA said this plan will help ensure that dependable supplies of feedstock are available for the production of advanced biofuels to meet legislated goals and market demand, as well to enhance rural economic sustainability. Toward that end, Department is supporting the establishment of five Regional Biomass Research Centers and has published a Biofuels Production Roadmap addressing regional variations in feedstock availability and biorefinery locations. In addition, USDA continues to implement bioenergy programs from the 2008 Farm Bill.

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. Working with private and government partners, USDA is supporting research into innovative 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.

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

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## **USDA INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS TO PROVIDE BROADBAND SERVICE TO REMOTE RURAL COMMUNITIES**

USDA is accepting applications through the Community Connect Broadband program for grants to provide broadband service to residents of remote, rural communities. "Ensuring that all Americans have access to reliable broadband is a key part of the Obama Administration's effort to help create jobs and expand economic opportunities in rural areas," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said. "These grants not only are critical for businesses and residents, they also help first responders, educators and health care professionals by providing them with access to broadband service."

Community Connect grants are made available to the most rural, unserved and economically challenged areas. The funds are used to build broadband infrastructure. Awardees are also required to establish community centers that offer free public access to broadband.

Information on available funding and application requirements are published on page 26241 of the May 3, 2012 [Federal Register](#). More information on [Community Connect Grants](#), including the application guide, can be viewed from the USDA Rural Development website. Applications must be received by June 18, 2012.

Contact: Dane Henshall (202) 260-0996  
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)  
For Radio Story: [Rural Broadband Efforts Continuing To Bear Fruit](#)

**(May 2)**

**AGRICULTURE SECRETARY AND COLORADO GOVERNOR RELEASE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE COLORADO ROADLESS RULE**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper today announced the release of the final Environmental Impact Statement for the final Colorado Roadless Rule. The preferred alternative identified in the impact statement provides conservation for 4.2 million acres of National Forest roadless areas within Colorado. Today's announcement is the culmination of a seven-year collaborative process between the US Forest Service and State of Colorado.

"When finalized, this rule will provide a lasting commitment for the protection of roadless areas on our national forests, areas vital for water conservation, wildlife and for outdoor recreation," said Vilsack. "Colorado's roadless areas are also important for economic growth and development, providing opportunity for tourism and job development in rural communities."

"The new roadless rule represents a characteristically Colorado achievement," said Hickenlooper. "The rule adds landmark protections to millions of acres of our state's spectacular national forests by incorporating the diverse views of people and businesses across Colorado. The rule enhances all that makes Colorado special while at the same time providing a measure of flexibility that supports local economies and ensures communities can take steps to protect themselves from threats of wildfire."

"The alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the associated final rule language would increase protection for the unique values of Colorado's treasured roadless areas while providing flexibility in management to address the State's interests," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "Through extensive collaboration, the U.S. Forest Service and State of Colorado have developed a final rule that is the right prescription for the State's highly-valued forested lands."

Click [here](#) for details for the preferred alternative for the Colorado Roadless Rule.

The preferred alternative reflects the views and concerns of thousands of people who expressed interest during the rule-making process. From July 2006 to April 2011 there were five public comment periods resulting in more than 310,000 comments from people throughout the country. The final Colorado Roadless Rule will be finalized a minimum of 30 days after the Final Environmental Impact Statement is published in the Federal Register.

There are 363 roadless areas across 4.2 million acres throughout Colorado located in eight National Forests, which would now be managed under the 2012 Colorado Roadless Rule. Future forest plans and revisions will be consistent with the provisions of the Colorado Roadless Rule.

Contact: Forest Service Press Office (202) 205-1134  
Colorado Governor's Office (303) 547-5308  
For More Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

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**USDA ANNOUNCES NEW SAFEGUARDS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM FOODBORNE ILLNESS**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced a series of prevention-based policy measures that will better protect consumers from foodborne illness in meat and poultry products. These measures will significantly improve the ability of both plants and USDA to trace contaminated food materials in the supply chain, to act against contaminated products sooner, and to establish the effectiveness of food safety systems.

"The additional safeguards we are announcing today will improve our ability to prevent foodborne illness by strengthening our food safety infrastructure," said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Elisabeth Hagen. "Together, these measures will provide us with more tools to protect our food supply, resulting in stronger public health protections for consumers."

The policy measures include implementation of new traceback measures in order to control pathogens earlier and prevent them from triggering foodborne illnesses and outbreaks. FSIS is proposing to launch traceback investigations earlier and identify additional potentially contaminated product when the Agency finds *E. coli* O157:H7 through its routine sampling program. When FSIS receives an indication of contamination through presumptive positive test results for *E. coli*, the Agency will move quickly to identify the supplier of the product and any processors who received contaminated product from the supplier, once confirmation is received. This proposed change in policy gives FSIS the opportunity to better prevent contaminated product from reaching consumers. [Traceback proposed change in policy information.](#)

FSIS is also implementing three provisions included in the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 ([the 2008 Farm Bill](#)). The new regulations, published as a Final Rule and directed by Congress, require establishments to prepare and maintain recall procedures, to notify FSIS within 24 hours that a meat or poultry product that could harm consumers has been shipped into commerce, and to document each reassessment of their Hazard Control and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system food safety plans. [Learn more about the Farm Bill provisions.](#)

Guidance is also available for meat processing plants on the steps that are necessary to establish that their HACCP food safety systems will work as designed to control the food safety hazards that they confront. This process, called "validation," enables companies to ensure that their food safety systems are effective for preventing foodborne illness. This notice announces that the draft guidance document is available for comment. [Learn more about HACCP validation draft guidance.](#)

Contact: Congressional and Public Affairs Neil Gaffney (202) 720-9113

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

For Radio Story: [New Rules Could Mean Faster Tracking of E. Coli Contaminated Meat New Food Safety Rules Taking Effect](#)

[ACTUALITY: New Trace Back Process In Detecting Meat Contamination](#)

[ACTUALITY: How Will Imported Meat Be Affected By New Policies?](#)

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## USING RIPARIAN AREAS TO IMPROVE STREAM HEALTH

A recent seminar in Texas gave landowners perspective on management practices to conserve rangeland waterways. Rangeland owners and managers in the Lone Star State are learning how important riparian areas along waterways could be during times of drought. Texas riparian ecologist Steve Leonard explains the purpose behind a two day seminar sponsored by USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service and other stakeholders in rangeland management.

For Radio Story: [Using Riparian Areas To Improve Stream Health](#)

[Riparian Areas A Big Help To Drought Plagued Texas Ranchers](#)

[ACTUALITY: On Riparian Area Grazing Land Management Course](#)

**(May 1)**

## **NEW PROPOSED BIOPREFERRED REGULATION TO EXPAND BIOBASED PRODUCTS FOR FEDERAL PURCHASE**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the publication in the [Federal Register](#) of new proposed guidelines for the USDA BioPreferred program that could expand the ability of USDA to designate biobased products for Federal purchase. USDA is proposing to allow for the designation of intermediate ingredients such as fibers, resins, and chemicals so that the products made from them could more easily be designated for preferred Federal procurement.

"USDA and the Obama administration are working with private industry to pursue an 'all of the above' energy strategy," said Vilsack. "These proposed guidelines are another example of the way the BioPreferred program is being tailored to supplement production of products from new farm-based sources, supporting economic expansion, and creating jobs from the farm to the finished product. Today, the development of both biofuels and bioproducts, using not just corn, but corn stover, soybeans, switchgrass, wood, camelina, energy cane, municipal solid waste, yellow oils, algae, and a host of other non-food feedstocks growing across the country are reducing our reliance on foreign oil."

The new regulation also allows for the designation of complex assemblies that contain one or more components made from biobased ingredients. These provisions are necessary because such finished products cannot be tested for biobased content using the procedures spelled out in the existing guidelines.

USDA is also proposing to revise some of the definitions and terminology used in the existing guidelines to clarify the operating procedures. Vilsack said these actions will incorporate statutory changes to the 2008 Farm Bill and will make improvements to the existing guidelines based on ten years of operating experience.

The one year anniversary of USDA's voluntary biobased product certification and labeling just came around. As of March, 2012, USDA has certified over 670 biobased products from more than 200 companies. Vilsack pointed out those USDA Certified Biobased Products are available to consumers and are now appearing on the shelves of supermarkets and other businesses across the country.

This Federal Register publication comes just days after the April 26 White House bioeconomy announcement to lay out a strategy to increase the use of agricultural products to improve rural economies and decrease dependence on oil imports. The proposed regulation can be read by going to: [Federal Register Guidelines For Designating Biobased Products For Federal Procurement](#).

Contact: Ron Buckhalt (202) 205-4008

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

For Radio Story: [Top Leaders Give A New Boost To Biobased Products](#)

[New Proposals To Expand Biobased Products For Federal Purchase](#)

[ACTUALITY: USDA'S BiopREFERRED Program Explained](#)

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## **SUITABILITY MAPPING HELPS DETERMINE FEEDSTOCK LOCATIONS FOR BIOFUELS**

The Risk Management Agency is using 'suitability mapping' to assist producers interested in growing feedstock for biofuels. David Hannaway, forage agronomist at Oregon State University, explains the elements needed to create a suitability mapping program for a given crop in a given location.

For Radio Story: [Suitability Mapping Helps Determine Feedstock Locations For Biofuels](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Elements Needed To Create A Suitability Mapping Program](#)

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**SOME SOUTHERN AREAS  
STILL FLIRTING WITH DROUGHT**

Drought concerns are mounting in some areas of the southern U.S.

For Radio Story: [Some Southern Areas Still Flirting With Drought](#)

**(April 30)**

**U.S. AND JAPAN WILL CONTINUE  
TO BOOST TWO-WAY TRADE**

The U.S. and Japan will continue to do what it takes to boost trade between the two nations.

For Radio Story: [U.S. and Japan Will Continue to Boost Two-Way Trade](#)

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**CELLULOSIC ETHANOL MAKING PROGRESS,  
BUT FACES HURDLES**

It's taking longer than expected, but there is progress on making ethanol from things other than corn. Under Secretary of Agriculture Dallas Tonsager telling a group of reporters that home grown energy is going to become critical for the revival of rural economies.

For Radio Story: [Cellulosic Ethanol Making Progress, But Faces Hurdles](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Home Grown Energy Viewed As Critical To Rural Areas](#)

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**REPORT SHOWS GENERAL TREND OF  
FALLING FARM PRODUCT PRICES**

April was not such a great month for farm product prices, at least for the farmers selling those products.

For Radio Story: [Report Shows General Trend Of Falling Farm Product Prices](#)

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## [USDA Celebrates 150 Years](#)

### FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

*(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On May 8, 2012)*

**AGRICULTURE USA CD # 19.12** – Abraham Lincoln's vision for a government department covering all aspects of agriculture led to the formation of the US Department of Agriculture 150 years ago. Rod Bain looks at some of the history, and Lincoln's support, of the "People's Department" in this edition of "Agriculture USA."

**CONSUMER TIME CD # 19.12** – G 20 And Food Security Issues, Lyme Disease Symptoms Are Hard To Spot, Experts Say Cooking Is Becoming A Lost Art In This Country, Seeking Alternatives To Gluten Based Products, EFNEP And Nutrition Education.

**AG UPDATE CD # 19.12** – USDA Celebrates 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Expanding Federal Purchases Of Biobased Products, Crop Germplasms Key To Fight Food Insecurity, Germplasm Research Examples In War Against Food Insecurity, What Row Crop Conservation Means For Crop Savings.

**UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** – May 8 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB). May 10 - Crop Production Report (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS – WAOB). May 11 – Oilseed, Rice, and Cotton Outlooks (ERS – WOAB). May 14 – Wheat And Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS – WOAB); Crop Progress Report (NASS). **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The USDA Radio Newslines carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.**

#### **USDA Radio Newslines, 202-720-6776, 5:00pm ET**

Or go to [www.usda.gov](http://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

## FARMERS MARKET

Learn the benefits of buying fresh, nutritious, delicious and locally grown fruits and vegetables. Hear a Nutrition.gov registered dietitian talk with shoppers and farmers. Then go visit your local farmers' market for the freshest produce in season and cooking tips. There is something for everyone!

YouTube: [FARMERS MARKET](#)

Please email [bob.ellison@usda.gov](mailto: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



**IOWA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET INSIDE LOOK AT GLOBAL CAREERS IN SCIENCE** – This opportunity came at the First Annual World Food Prize Iowa Youth Institute. The event connected the next generation of Iowa scientists, humanitarians and business executives with current leaders in these. More than 250 high school students and teachers from across the state gathered on the Iowa State University campus for a day of events focused on inspiring youth to pursue educational and career opportunities in science, agriculture, engineering and other areas on a global level.

The day was filled with interactive workshops. Students discussed their own solutions for global problems such as water scarcity and climate change in countries ranging from Kenya to Bangladesh, and how to feed 9 billion global citizens by the year 2050. They also discovered how their interests, whether in science or the humanities, intersect with current research endeavors and ongoing efforts to solve global challenges through tours of labs and interactive activities with faculty.

Governor **Terry Branstad**, Lieutenant Governor **Kim Reynolds**, Iowa State University President **Steven Leath**, and World Food Prize President Ambassador **Kenneth M. Quinn** all spoke at the event, which was made possible by generous support from **Paul and Claudia Schickler**, who also addressed the students.

“The World Food Prize is among my favorite ‘extra’ activities for my students,” said **Gail Kunch**, an AP Environmental Science teacher from Holy Trinity Catholic School in Fort Madison. “This program introduces students to broader subject areas and allows them to use their critical thinking skills to understand global issues and begin to make assessments on how they can solve world problems. The World Food Prize fits into all areas of my curricula and exemplifies and enhances my teaching of 21st Century Skills and Iowa Core.”

Student **Hannah Pagel**, a junior from Sumner-Fredericksburg High School, said she got involved and wrote the required five-page research paper because she wants to help others and find careers that will help her do that. “I decided to participate in the Iowa Youth Institute because I have always been interested in agriculture and how it impacts my life and others around me,” said **Hannah**. “This program is very unique because it is designed to have teenagers like myself be educated about global issues. I learned a lot through my research of Ghana. Allowing youth to participate in these events will allow a different perspective to help stop world hunger. I also will be able to connect with professionals in the agriculture industry, such as leaders in agriculture and professors.”

"The World Food Prize Iowa Youth Institute is exactly the kind of innovative program we need in Iowa to help young people explore the wonderful career opportunities we have available right here at home, which can have a worldwide impact," said **Branstad**. Lt. Gov. **Kim Reynolds** added, "Listening to these very bright young students talk about these complex issues so eloquently is impressive, and this program truly shows what can happen when the private, public and nonprofit sectors come together around education." **Ambassador Quinn**, president of the World Food Prize, explained that the primary goal of the event is to get students excited about the huge variety of career paths available to them, and to show them how they can make a difference in the world. "The goal of this program is to inspire the next generation of scientific and humanitarian heroes to help solve global issues, just like our Iowa hero Dr. Norman Borlaug did."

**Steven Leath**, the new president of Iowa State University, hosted the daylong event. "Iowa State has enjoyed a wonderful partnership with the World Food Prize for over two decades, and this institute involving Iowa youth is one of the most important things we've done together. "Our young people have a critical role to play in meeting the world's food challenges, and we want them to be exposed to the many different careers options available."

"Engaging the next generation of leaders is critical to bringing new ideas and solutions to solving global food security issues," said **Paul Schickler**. "Programs like the World Food Prize Youth Institute support youth in achieving their vision for the future of agriculture by providing unique experiences and supporting teachers. Claudia and I are confident that what we see and hear today from the students is just a first glimpse of what they will accomplish in the future."

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***Broadcasters if you have any humanitarian or community service events  
you'd like to share please forward to [susan.carter@oc.usda.gov](mailto: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  
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