



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Broadcasters Letter

Office of Communications

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Friday, August 3, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3677.2012

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(August 2)

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EXTENDS DISASTER AID TO LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

Debate over extending livestock disaster programs was finalized with passage of a measure in a 223-197 vote to revive expired disaster relief programs for cattle and sheep producers. Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE) said, "The bill passed by the House would provide assistance to producers affected by the drought and wildfires devastating farms and ranches. Until the House and Senate come to an agreement on long-term farm policy, this legislation would ensure struggling producers are not left with more uncertainty."

Meantime, other lawmakers say producers would not get instant relief. Representatives Collin Peterson and Frank Lucas, during the House debate on the livestock disaster bill, took the opportunity to make the case for passage of a comprehensive five year Food, Farm and Jobs bill.

Radio Story: [Livestock Disaster Bill Would Be No Quick Fix For Producers](#)
[ACTUALITY: Lawmakers Plead For Comprehensive Farm Bill Passage](#)

DON'T EXPECT MUCH RELIEF FROM THE DROUGHT DESPITE FORECASTS FOR RAIN

Farmers in drought areas would certainly love to have a tropical storm bring needed rains to the Plains and Midwest, but what are the chances of that happening? The latest assessment of the U.S. drought situation has very little good news. Brad Rippey, USDA meteorologist, saying that rains accompanying a cold front will not help most of the driest areas.

Radio Story: [Don't Pin All Your Hopes On A Tropical Storm Breaking The Drought](#)
[Drought Area Slightly Smaller, But Much More Intense](#)
[ACTUALITY: Cold Front Won't Help Hardest Hit Drought Areas](#)

USDA PROVIDES FUNDING TO CREATE JOBS AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the selection of projects in 12 states for loans and grants to support job creation efforts, business development and strengthen economic growth in rural communities.

"These investments will give businesses access to capital and new markets, allowing them to expand and increase hiring" said Vilsack. "The Obama Administration is making historic investments in rural America and working to grow our economy, so middle class families feel confident in their futures and their children's futures.

Funding is being provided through USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG), which provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which, in turn, provide funds to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas.

USDA is investing nearly \$13 million to spur economic growth. A list of rural utilities that will receive funding can be found by clicking [here](#).

Contact: Candice Celestin (202) 690-2385

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [Rural Utilities Get Money To Spur Rural Job And Economic Growth](#)

[ACTUALITY: An Extended Rural Development Role For Rural Utilities](#)

(August 1)

USDA'S NEW DROUGHT ASSISTANCE DESIGNATES AN ADDITIONAL 218 COUNTIES AS PRIMARY NATURAL DISASTER AREAS; NEARLY 4 MILLION ACRES OF LAND OPEN TO HAYING AND GRAZING

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced two new pieces of disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers impacted by the nation's worsening drought. Vilsack first is expanding emergency haying and grazing on approximately 3.8 million acres of conservation land to bring greater relief to livestock producers dealing with shortages of hay and pastureland. Second, he announced that crop insurance companies have agreed to provide a short grace period for farmers on insurance premiums in 2012. This move gives farming families an extra 30 days to make payments without incurring interest penalties on unpaid premiums.

The Secretary also signed disaster designations for an additional 218 counties in 12 states as primary natural disaster areas due to damage and losses caused by drought and excessive heat. The latest counties designated are in the states of Arkansas, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wyoming. More than half - 50.3% of all counties in the United States have been designated disaster areas by USDA this year mainly due to drought.

"President Obama and I will continue to take swift action to get help to America's farmers and ranchers through this difficult time," said Vilsack. "The assistance will help U.S. livestock

producers dealing with climbing feed prices, critical shortages of hay and deteriorating pasturelands. Responding to my request, crop insurance companies indicated that producers can forgo interest penalties to help our nation's farm families struggling with cash flow challenges. The Obama Administration intends to continue helping those who farm or ranch and live and work in rural America through this period of hardship."

For the most current drought disaster designations click [USDA drought response](#).

***** Watch for updates in the Obama Administration's drought response *****

Contact: Office of Communications (202)720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

THE 2012 DROUGHT IS BRINGING MORE THAN JUST CROP PROBLEMS TO MANY AFFECTED AREAS

This summer people in the Midwest and Mid-South are faced with having to cope with a danger that is normally associated more with western states.

Radio Story: [Drought Bringing More Than Just Crop Problems To Many Areas](#)

\$9 MILLION INVESTED IN MULTI-AGENCY RURAL JOBS AND INNOVATION ACCELERATOR CHALLENGE

Thirteen projects in 12 states are the winners of a \$9 million investment in rural communities aimed at fostering job creation and innovation through a public private partnership. The Commerce Department's Matt Erskine talking about the numbers of jobs expected to be created as a result the Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge. USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien explaining how the rural jobs and innovation accelerator challenge fits into the farm bill debate.

Radio Story: [Rural Jobs And Innovation Are The Objectives Of New Projects](#)

[ACTUALITY: Rural Jobs Created From The Accelerator Challenge](#)

[ACTUALITY: Impact Of Farm Bill On Rural Job Accelerator Projects](#)

USDA APHIS REMOVES BARRIERS TO TRADE AND EXPANDS MARKET ACCESS FOR U.S. FARM EXPORTS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has worked in conjunction with federal, international and industry partners to arrange for the release of 209 shipments of American products valued at more than \$39 million. The goods had been detained at foreign ports of entry pending resolution of various animal and plant health questions. Additionally, APHIS has helped to open or maintain more than \$51 million in overseas markets for U.S. agricultural products. Since 2009, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels. The work of USDA agencies, including APHIS, and other federal partners helps to prevent and remove unwarranted barriers to trade,

saving and securing American jobs and businesses, and supporting President Obama's goal of doubling American exports by the end of 2014.

"APHIS works diligently every day to help ensure overseas markets for our country's agricultural products," said Rebecca Blue, deputy undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs. "In the past six months, APHIS has negotiated to reopen the Chinese market for U.S. log exports in a six-month pilot program, facilitated the first export of 1,400 cattle to Angola, helped California producers ship their stonefruit to important markets in Mexico, and arranged for the release of six shipments of cherries and \$1.5 million of cotton held at Chinese ports."

APHIS has launched a new website that will contain trade related information and accomplishments. The website will help exporters find information on APHIS's services, including trade information and regulations. It also serves as the news hub for APHIS trade updates, with links to trade-related feeds from the APHIS' Newsroom, Twitter, and the USDA blog. The website is located at: www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/trade/index.shtml

Contact: Joelle Hayden (301) 851-4040 or Lyndsay Cole (970) 494-7410
Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

(July 31)

USDA ANNOUNCES PROJECTS TO CREATE JOBS AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACROSS RURAL IOWA

Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien announced the selection of projects in Iowa for loans and grants supporting job creation efforts, business development and strengthening economic growth in rural communities across the state.

"We are pleased to be helping with efforts around the state that will strengthen the economy, create jobs, support business growth and expand opportunity for rural Iowans," said O'Brien. "The Obama Administration is committed to ensuring that rural communities are economically vibrant and successful in their business-development and job-creation efforts."

Funding is being provided through USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG), which provides zero-interest loans to local utilities which they, in turn, pass through to local businesses (ultimate recipients) for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas.

USDA is investing nearly \$2.5 million to spur economic growth. For a list of the rural utilities in Iowa that will receive funding for projects click [here](#).

Contact: Darin Leach 515-284-4747
Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

**THE AG SECRETARY URGES CONGRESS TO PASS
A FIVE YEAR FARM BILL THIS YEAR**

The extensive drought and its impact on American agriculture has the Agriculture Secretary pushing even more for a new five year Food, Farm and Jobs Bill to be passed this year. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack responds to producer concerns about the length of time it will take USDA to implement new programs set up by a new farm bill.

Radio Story: [Vilsack Urges Congress To Pass A Five Year Farm Bill This Year](#)
[ACTUALITY: Timeline To Administer Programs Of A New Farm Bill](#)

**IT APPEARS WEATHER TRENDS WILL CALL FOR
MORE CUTS IN CROP CONDITION AND PROSPECTS**

Will crop conditions worsen further over this week and could crop production prospects also decline? Meantime, the U.S. is setting new records for low soil moisture.

Radio Story: [Weather Trends Suggest More Cuts In Crop Condition And Prospects](#)
[Report Shows Soil Moisture Conditions Worsening](#)

**LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS ARE SCRAMBLING BIG
FOR HAY AS PASTURE CONDITIONS WORSEN**

Hay is becoming a much sought after commodity this summer and there is not that much hay out there to be had. Brad Rippey, USDA meteorologist, says the drought is expanding and threatening pastures in the south central U.S. and the northern high plains.

Radio Story: [A Big Scramble For Hay As Pastures Worsen](#)
[ACTUALITY: Pastures Declining In South Central Us. And High Plains](#)

(July 30)

**THE DIRE DROUGHT CONDITIONS ARE DESCRIBED
BY AN ARKANSAS EXTENSION AGENT**

Several counties in Arkansas are not classified to be in the worst drought category there is and it's taking its toll. Phil Sims, extension agent in Pope County, Arkansas, outlines what his cattle producers are doing in the face of the current drought and the high cost of feed. Many producers all across the drought zone are doing the same thing. Sims repeats a common story being told by cattle producers all over the drought areas. They are scrambling to find hay.

Radio Story: [Arkansas Extension Agents Describe Dire Drought Conditions](#)
[ACTUALITY: Cattle Producers Trying The Best To Maintain Herds](#)
[ACTUALITY: Cattle Producers Scrambling For Hay](#)

THE STORY FOR CORN AND SOYBEAN CROPS IS THEY CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE

The intense dry conditions and heat keep the corn and soybean crops spiraling on a downward slope. Brad Rippey USDA Meteorologist says the cotton crop continues to falter as well.

Radio Story: [Corn And Soybean Crops Continue To Deteriorate](#)
[ACTUALITY: On The Cotton Front There's Bad News](#)

NOT ALL OF THE NATION'S CROPS ARE BEING NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY THE HEAT AND DROUGHT

USDA Meteorologist Brad Rippey says wheat is doing pretty well. Rippey adds there are parts of the South where conditions are a bit more positive in the crop conditions for peanuts and rice.

Radio Story: [ACTUALITY: Small Grains Are Coming Along Quite Nicely](#)
[ACTUALITY: Some Southern Areas Have Decent Crop Conditions](#)

For more agriculture news visit www.USDA.gov



[The Latest USDA Blog Posts](#)

Business and Cooperative Programs Administrator Visits
White House Recognized Wisconsin Sausage Plant (RD)

North Valley Health Center in Minnesota Expected to Improve Rural Quality of Life (RD)

Regional Innovation Effort Creates Jobs in South Dakota (RD)



Learn more about President Lincoln's agricultural legacy [here](#).

[USDA Celebrates 150 Years](#)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On August 7, 2012)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 32.12 – The World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates is one of USDA's most important monthly reports, yet as more private commodity forecasting services are available, there are questions about the usefulness of the WASDE. Rod Bain looks at the history of the WASDE and a recent study on its impacts on commodity markets in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 32.12 – Forests Are More Than Lovely Places To Play, More Severe Storms Means More Need For Ways To Be Warned, Tribal Colleges Connect The Past To The Future, EFNEP And Nutrition Education, Plastic Bags Are Convenient For People, Bad For Animals.

AG UPDATE CD # 32.12 – Major Crop Report Coming This Week, The Construction Of The WASDE Report, A Wetlands Program To Protect Against The Storm, A Tough Choice For Cotton Growers In One Texas County, DNA Barcoding Deciphers Beneficial Insects.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – August 7 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB). August 10 – Crop Production Report (NASS) and World Agriculture Supply and Demand Estimates (ERS – WOAB). August 13 – Oilseed, Rice, and Cotton Outlooks (ERS – WAOB); 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

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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

ACTUALITIES – Crop Conditions Worsen In Most Areas as Drought Holding Steady In Areas Already Affected

A USDA meteorologist says crops and pastures have gotten worse in most areas across the nation because of the ongoing drought

Filename: rippey crop conditions

Download instructions:

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

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264)

USDA on YouTube: [Drought Holding Steady In Areas Already Affected](#)

Please email Bob.Ellison@OC.USDA.gov if you have problems or suggestions

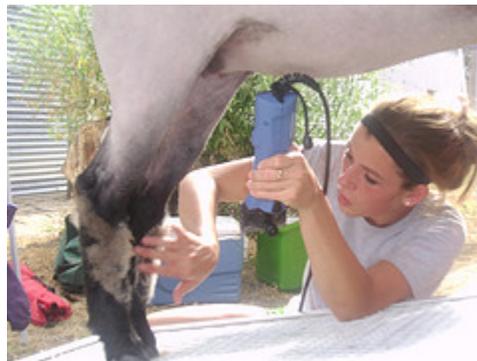
Also, use this free ftp client if you have problems

<http://filezilla-project.org/download.php?type+client>

OFF MIKE



IT'S A COUNTY AF-FAIR IN WESTERN NEBRASKA – Leslie Smith (KNEB Radio-Scottsbluff, Nebraska KNEB.COM) tells us she will cover 7 county fairs over three weeks for KNEB. “So far animals have gained better than anticipated with the especially hot and dry weather his summer. One of our listeners and long time weather observer who lives just northwest of Scottsbluff reports of 61 days in June and July, 47 were 90 degrees or more and 21 days were 100 plus temps!”



When it comes to crops most are suffering from drought stress and insect pressure which **Smith** said has been more intense than normal. Adding that at this point, the most promising crop for

yields are with the sugar beet crop. “Unfortunately beet armyworms are showing up in fields, something farmers in this area haven't seen in this region in 30 years or longer. Also, it seems hard to believe, but dry bean harvest will begin in the next 20 days. Pastures are in tough conditions, most ranchers are weaning early and the area sale barns have also seen yearlings being sold a month plus earlier than a normal year. Like the farmers and ranchers, I am looking forward to cooler weather and hopefully some much needed precipitation.”

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

Compiled and Edited by **Susan Carter**
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