



Letter No. 3629  
Friday, August 12, 2011  
Creative Media & Broadcast Center  
202-215-3931

## **BROADCASTERS LETTER**

#3629

Friday, August 12, 2011

**(August 12)**

### **NEW WHITE HOUSE RURAL COUNCIL REPORT FOCUSING ON JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY IN RURAL AMERICA**

White House Communications Director Dan Pfeiffer and Secretary of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack release the White House Rural Council's new report *Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America*. The report lays out the economic landscape rural Americans face today and highlights the Obama Administration's key accomplishments in rural communities. The *Jobs and Economic Security for Rural America* report focuses on 5 critical areas: creating jobs and promoting economic growth, improving access to quality health care and education, fostering innovation, expanding outdoor opportunities and supporting veterans and military families.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623  
For More Story Info: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/rural-council>

**(August 11)**

### **MAJOR EFFORTS WITH FARMERS AND RANCHERS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY; ENHANCE WILDLIFE IN THE NORTHERN EVERGLADES WATERSHED**

The USDA funds the purchase of easements on nearly 24,000 acres of agricultural land in four counties. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced \$100 million in financial assistance to acquire the permanent easements from eligible landowners to assist with wetland restoration on agricultural land in the Northern Everglades Watershed of Florida. The wetland restoration will reduce the amount of surface water leaving the land, slowing water runoff and the concentration of nutrients entering the public water management system and ultimately Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades. This is the largest amount of funding Florida has ever received for projects in the same watershed through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in a single year. "Protecting and restoring the Northern Everglades is critical not just to Floridians, but to all Americans," says Vilsack.

The Secretary also participated in a signing ceremony with A.J. Suarez of Hendry County Nursery Farms-a landowner who will benefit from the funding. Suarez signed an agreement with USDA to start the process to acquire the easement rights to 3,782 acres. After the signing ceremony, Vilsack toured the 550-acre Winding Waters Natural Area, a site restored with \$1.5 million from WRP in 2007. The nature area, owned by Palm Beach County, is home to bird species such as little blue heron, snowy egret and great egret, white ibis and Florida sandhill crane. It also contains large areas of pine flatwoods, Cyprus forests, freshwater marshes and wet prairies.

"Our working lands provide abundant food, fuel and fiber and are an essential piece of vibrant and diverse rural communities that are part of the fabric of our nation," Vilsack says. "Well-managed private lands also support healthy ecosystems that provide clean water, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and other environmental services that benefit the public."

For information about WRP, please visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). Click on Programs and Services on the left side of the page. Click on Alphabetical Listing of Programs and scroll down to the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15963>

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## **USDA GIVES ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO WYOMING RANCHERS TO INCREASE SAGE-GROUSE POPULATIONS AND ENHANCE HABITATS ON 38,000 ACRES**

Two-year sage grouse initiative spans 11 western states and maintains working lands approach to conservation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced \$21.8 million in additional financial assistance to help eligible farmers and ranchers in Wyoming conserve critical Greater Sage-grouse habitat. Working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), conservation partners such as land trusts will help eligible ranchers permanently protect large working ranches, and the associated Greater Sage-grouse habitat. USDA's support aims to keep farmers and ranchers in Wyoming working on their land, while maintaining the land's economic viability. Over the past two years, USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service's (NRCS) Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) has obligated \$112 million in financial assistance to conserve sage-grouse in 11 states, including California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

"Instead of trying to tackle all of the threats to sage-grouse in a massive land area, NRCS and its partners are prioritizing assistance in core areas of high sage-grouse abundance to ensure that enough of the right conservation practices are implemented in the right landscapes," says Vilsack. "By proactively working with farmers and ranchers to ensure that sage-grouse flourish and are provided with habitats, we are keeping agricultural lands productive and enhancing the economies of Western states. Moreover, our conservation partners are demonstrating their commitment to SGI's success by providing additional resources to help us with this effort."

The USDA and its partners will continue to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of applied conservation practices, quantify the resulting benefits, and provide a scientific basis for SGI improvements. Thus far, USDA has invested \$94 million in the SGI in 2011 and \$18 million in 2010. States are using a combination of programs to provide the financial and technical assistance required to implement the initiative, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Please click on [Sage Grouse Initiative](#) to view a list of each state's funding by program.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15959>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15957>

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## **USDA AND DOE FUND 10 RESEARCH PROJECTS TO ACCELERATE BIOENERGY CROP PRODUCTION AND SPUR ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack visited a waste-to-energy bioprocessing facility under construction in Florida today to announce that the Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Energy (DOE) have awarded 10 grants totaling \$12.2 million to spur research into improving the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of growing biofuel and bioenergy crops. The grants are part of a broader effort by the Obama administration to develop domestic renewable energy and advanced biofuels, providing a more secure future for America's energy needs and creating new opportunities for the American farming industry.

"USDA is helping our nation develop the next generation of biofuels to grow jobs and generate energy from new, homegrown sources," says Vilsack. "Combining DOE's leadership in genome-scale technologies with USDA's experience in crop improvement will accelerate the efficient production of biofuels."

"Biofuels, along with other advanced vehicle technologies, hold the potential to help reduce our oil imports while adding new jobs and driving wealth creation in rural America," says Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "This investment in research will be instrumental in developing the best possible crops to produce biofuels."

Overall, the USDA and DOE projects are designed to improve special crops to be grown for biofuels—including selected trees and grasses—by increasing their yield, quality and ability to adapt to extreme environments. Researchers will rely on the most advanced techniques of modern genomics to develop breeding and other strategies to improve the crops. The research will be conducted on switchgrass, poplar, Miscanthus and Brachypodium, among other plants.

The potential benefits of this research range from decreasing oil imports to increasing options for American farmers. Because these crops will be optimized to tolerate conditions such as drought and poor soils, they can be grown on marginal lands unsuitable for food crops, thereby avoiding competition with food production. Farmers will have the option to grow bioenergy crops in addition to other existing crop choices.

The 10 projects are located in California, Colorado, Illinois, Florida, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Virginia. The full list can be found online at:

<http://genomicscience.energy.gov/research/DOEUSDA/#page=news>.

The announcement was made at the INEOS New Planet BioEnergy facility in Vero Beach, Florida, which was granted a conditional USDA loan guarantee earlier this year to help build and operate a biorefinery capable of producing 8 million gallons per year of cellulosic ethanol and 6 megawatts of electricity. The USDA and DOE joint announcement will also benefit Florida by providing grant funding to the University of Florida in Gainesville to improve energy production from cane biomass. The project will produce a range of foundational genetic resources and genetic makers for energy cane breeders to efficiently develop energy cane cultivars with increased biomass production and reduced input requirement.

Contact: DOE: (202) 586-4940 USDA Office of Communications: (202) 720-4623

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15968>

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**(August 10)**

**FSA ADMINISTRATOR TOURS AREAS OF TEXAS  
STRUCK BY WORST DROUGHT IN STATE HISTORY**

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Bruce Nelson traveled to Texas to tour areas of the southern parts of the state devastated by drought and wildfires. Nelson said that USDA would continue to work to deliver assistance to those impacted by drought and encouraged producers to contact their local county or state USDA Service Center or Farm Service Agency office. Nelson also highlighted an announcement offering additional flexibility in the Conservation Reserve Program to assist producers struggling from drought.

"Our top priority is to make sure that all farmers and ranchers know that we are here for them and that FSA provides programs to help them through one of the worst disasters in this state's history," says Nelson. Texas State Executive Director and acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs Juan Garcia says, "As a native Texan, I have experienced extremely high temperatures and relatively dry conditions, but never anything of this magnitude," Garcia said. "I have no doubt that with help, Texas producers will bounce back and continue to be one of the driving forces in American agriculture."

In June, the drought — which has plagued the state since January — caused Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to name 213 counties in Texas as primary natural disaster areas. In an effort to further help producers, Vilsack relaxed rules governing the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) earlier this week by extending the emergency grazing period to Oct. 31, 2011, without an additional payment reduction.

Generally, land enrolled in CRP cannot be used for grazing unless special circumstances warrant the land to be opened for that purpose. Texas, along with Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma has been approved for emergency grazing.

Fact sheets for all FSA programs can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov); click on Newsroom, then Fact Sheets. To find the USDA Service Center nearest you, please visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>. To learn more about USDA's disaster assistance, please visit [www.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.usda.gov/disaster).

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

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**DROUGHT IS DAMAGING PASTURES AND  
RANGELANDS OVER A WIDER AREA**

This week's pasture and rangeland report brought some good and bad news. USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey talks about the negative impact of the drought on pasture and rangeland.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15928>  
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15927>

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**FORECASTERS UP THEIR PROJECTIONS  
FOR HURRICANE ACTIVITY**

The nation is poised for yet another active hurricane season--more active than had been predicted earlier. Brad Rippey, USDA meteorologist says this past July went down in the history books.

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15926>  
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15929>

**(August 9)**

**STRONG CONTINUED ECONOMIC IMPACT AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
OF AMERICA'S NATIONAL FORESTS AND GRASSLANDS**

Recreational activities on national forests and grasslands continue to make large economic impacts on America's rural communities, contributing \$14.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The National Visitor Use Monitoring report by Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, says national forests attracted 170.8 million recreational visitors and sustained approximately 223,000 jobs in rural communities this past year.

"This data shows once again just what a boon our forests are to local economies," says Tidwell. "Because of forest activities, thousands of jobs are supported in hundreds of rural communities. We are proud of helping to put a paycheck into the pockets of so many hardworking Americans."

National forests also provide economic relief for vacationers. Fewer than half of the U.S. Forest Service's 17,000 developed sites charge any fees for visitors. The report reveals that 94 percent of visitors were satisfied with their experience on the national forests. "Our national forests are some of the most beautiful and adventure-filled places in the world," said Tidwell. "The national forests give Americans a chance to build life-long memories for the price of food and gas. You'd be hard pressed to find any vacation destinations that offer better value."

The findings of the report support the efforts of President Obama's [America's Great Outdoors Initiative](#) that seeks to connect people with conservation issues as well as the First Lady's [Let's Move! Outside](#) campaign that aims to get more kids and their families physically active by exploring the outdoors. Recreational activities such as hiking, camping, boating and skiing instill a healthier lifestyle and a deeper appreciation of nature.

Researchers interviewed 44,700 visitors to the forests in 2010, ranging from commuters to wilderness trekkers. Overall, some 72 percent of those interviewed were in the forest for recreation. For details of the report findings visit <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>.

"We can't rest with the release of this report. We need to work hard to maintain our infrastructure across the country," says Tidwell. "And we need to continue to work with our partners to protect and restore our natural landscapes in a time of development, pest infestation and a changing climate."

Descriptions of visitation to national forests and grasslands from the report are available at: <http://apps.fs.usda.gov/nrm/nvum/results>

Contact: Forest Service Press Office (202) 205-1134  
For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

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**USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED RULE  
FOR ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued a proposed rule to establish general regulations for improving the traceability of U.S. livestock moving interstate when animal disease events take place. "Through the past two years, I have listened carefully to stakeholders throughout the country about how to reach effective animal disease traceability in a transparent manner without additional burden," says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "We are proposing a flexible approach in which states and tribes can develop systems for tracing animals that work best for them and for producers in their jurisdiction. This approach offers great flexibility at the state and local level and addresses gaps in our disease response efforts."

Under the proposed rule, unless specifically exempted, livestock moved interstate would have to be officially identified and accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection or other documentation, such as owner-shipper statements or brand certificates. The proposed rule encourages the use of low-cost technology and specifies approved forms of official identification for each species, such as metal ear tags for cattle. However, recognizing the importance and prevalence of other identifications in certain regions, shipping and receiving states or tribes are permitted to agree upon alternative forms of identification such as brands or tattoos.

"Our proposal strives to meet the diverse needs of the animal agriculture industry and our State and tribal partners, while also helping us all reach our goal of increased animal disease traceability," says chief veterinary officer for the United States, Dr. John Clifford. "We believe reaching our goals on traceability will help save the industry and American taxpayer's money in the long term." Animal disease traceability, or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they've been, and when, is very important to make sure there can be a rapid response when animal disease events take place. An efficient and accurate animal disease traceability system helps reduce the number of animals involved in an investigation, reduces the time needed to respond, and decreases the cost to producers and the government.

This notice will be published in the Aug. 11 Federal Register. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Nov. 9. You may submit comments by either of the following methods: Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to [http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2011-20281\\_PI.pdf](http://www.ofr.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2011-20281_PI.pdf).

Contact: Workabeba Yigzaw (301) 734-7255 or Lyndsay Cole (970) 494-7410

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15933>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15935>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15934>

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## **MINORITY FARMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING TO DISCUSS CONTINUED EFFORTS FOR INCREASING MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN USDA PROGRAMS**

This Thursday and Friday, August 11-12, the members of USDA's Minority Farmer Advisory Committee will meet for the first time to discuss efforts to increase minority participation in Department programs and services. The establishment of this committee builds upon existing cultural transformation initiatives underway and will help ensure fair and equal access to USDA services. Members will advise Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on additional ways the Department can continue building an inclusive future with targeted outreach and assistance to minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

The Minority Farmer Advisory Committee is authorized under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) and will advise the Secretary on "implementation of section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990; methods of maximizing the participation of minority farmers and ranchers in USDA programs; and civil rights activities within the Department as such activities relate to participants in such programs."

Members of the committee are appointed for two year terms by the Secretary. The nominees include socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers; representatives of nonprofit organizations that work with minority farmers and ranchers; civil rights professionals; representatives from institutions of higher learning; and other persons the Secretary deems appropriate. For a listing of the individuals appointed to the Advisory Committee visit <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>.

Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA is addressing civil rights complaints that go back decades to resolve allegations of past discrimination and usher in "a new era of civil rights" for the Department. In February 2010, the Secretary announced the *Pigford II* settlement with African American farmers, and in October 2010, he announced the *Keepseagle* settlement with Native American farmers. In February 2011, Secretary Vilsack announced the establishment of a process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. An overview of Secretary Vilsack's comprehensive efforts is available [here](#).

An internal working group chaired by Secretary Vilsack has been established to implement many of the recommendations within the framework of cultural transformation. While many recommendations can be implemented administratively, some of the recommendations will require policy or statutory changes, and others will need to be considered as part of the 2012 Farm Bill deliberations.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, August 11, 2011, and Friday, August 12, 2011, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., respectively. The meeting will be open to the public for public comment on August 11, 2011, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The meeting will be located at the Crowne Plaza, 300 North Second Street, Memphis, TN 38105. Written comments may be submitted to: Henry Searcy, Jr.,

Designated Federal Officer, OAO, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Whitten Bldg., 520-A, Washington, DC 20250, 202-692-4119.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623  
For More Story Info: <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>

**(August 8)**

## **THE USDA AND EPA CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIP IMPROVING DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS AND DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have a new national partnership to improve rural drinking water and wastewater systems. Across the country, small water and sewage treatment facilities with limited funding and resources often face challenges due to rising costs and aging equipment and pipes. The agreement targets federal resources and provides training to support communities that need assistance most.

"The agreement we are announcing today represents an exciting partnership between USDA and EPA that will greatly enhance our investments in water systems and also develop a skilled workforce to oversee them," says USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator Jonathan Adelstein. "By working together, our agencies will strengthen their capacity to provide rural residents with safe, clean, well-managed water and wastewater systems for years to come." "EPA and USDA have joined forces to leverage our expertise and resources to improve drinking water and wastewater systems in small towns across the country," says EPA Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, Nancy Stoner. "A critical part of this agreement is to ensure that we have a well trained, professional workforce available to replace workers when they leave or retire."

Under the agreement, EPA and USDA will work together to promote jobs by targeting specific audiences, providing training for new water careers and coordinating outreach efforts that will bring greater public visibility to the workforce needs of the industry, and develop a new generation of trained water professionals. EPA and USDA will also facilitate the exchange of successful recruitment and training strategies among stakeholders including states and water industries. For the full story go to <http://www.usda.gov/newsroom>.

For more information about the EPA-USDA agreement visit:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/index.cfm>

Information about USDA's Water and Environmental Programs for rural communities:

[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWEP\\_HomePage.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/UWEP_HomePage.html)

Information on EPA's programs and tools for small water systems:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/drink/pws/smallsystems/index.cfm>

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15912>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15911>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15910>

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## **THE AG SEC ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO CRP TO ASSIST PRODUCERS IMPACTED BY SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the Farm Service Agency (FSA) is modifying its Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) policies to help those affected by sustained drought conditions. Throughout this year of extreme weather, USDA has supported and delivered assistance to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities across the country. "We continue to do all we can to help thousands of

farmers and ranchers in the southwestern United States who are struggling from drought," says Vilsack. "Many ranchers have been or will be forced to sell livestock due to drought and USDA will do what we can to help our farmers and ranchers during these challenging times."

The policy changes influence FSA rules governing emergency grazing. The period normally allowed for emergency grazing lasts through Sept. 30, 2011. FSA is permitting farmers and ranchers in drought stricken states who have been approved for emergency grazing, including those in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, to extend the emergency grazing period to Oct. 31, 2011, without an additional payment reduction.

As a second condition designed to help livestock producers, FSA will allow producers nationwide to utilize harvested hay from expiring CRP acres when those acres are being prepared for fall seeded crops. Prior to this modification, all mechanically harvested hay was required to be destroyed. This change enables livestock producers to feed the hay that is mechanically harvested to their own livestock or to sell or donate hay. Consistent with existing policy for managed or emergency haying and grazing of eligible CRP acres, rental payments will be reduced by 25 percent for those utilizing this option.

"We are eager to do all we can in the face of this drought crisis across the southern plains," says FSA Administrator Bruce Nelson. "This has been one of the worst dry and hot spells since the Dust Bowl era of the '30s."

Producers wishing to participate in emergency grazing must first request permission from the FSA county office by indicating the acreage to be grazed. For further information about the Conservation Reserve Program and Emergency Haying and Grazing, producers are encouraged to visit their USDA Service Centers or go online to [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov). Search under Conservation Programs and Disaster Assistance.

Contact: Kent Politsch (202) 720-7163 or [kent.politsch@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:kent.politsch@wdc.usda.gov)

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15917>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15916>

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## **Ag SEC REASSURES FARMERS AND RANCHERS IN STATES AFFECTED BY EXTREME WEATHER**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack pledges his commitment to the nation's farmers, ranchers and rural communities that the USDA would continue to work to deliver assistance to those affected by recent extreme weather, including floods, drought, fires and tornadoes. Vilsack assured the USDA will work to offer flexibility to producers and encourage producers to contact their local county or state USDA Service Center or Farm Service Agency office for assistance. He also says there will be additional flexibility in the Conservation Reserve Program that will assist producers struggling from drought in a number of states.

"America's farmers and rural communities are vitally important to our nation's economy and our values, and my heart goes out to all who are facing hardships because of severe weather and natural disasters," says Vilsack. "At the USDA, we are working tirelessly to get assistance to folks who need it and are searching for flexibility in our programs to help farmers and ranchers in these difficult times. We will continue to listen to producers' concerns and, whenever possible, offer assistance to help put people on the road to recovery as quickly as possible."

This year, the Secretary has issued disaster designations for 547 counties in 30 states. So far, producers have received \$693 million in indemnity payments to help recover from disasters, including more than \$520 million to those affected by drought and \$88 million to those affected by flooding. Additional assistance for livestock producers affected by the drought comes from the Livestock Forage Program which has already provided \$114 million nationwide and over \$50 million in Texas, \$24 million in Oklahoma, and \$11 million in New Mexico. This timely assistance helps ranchers purchase feed for their livestock when they need it most.

To find the USDA Service Center nearest you, please visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa>.

To learn more about USDA's disaster assistance, please visit [www.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.usda.gov/disaster).

Contact: USDA Office of Communications 202-720-4623

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

For Radio Story: <http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15916>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15913>

<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=15915>

For more agriculture news go to [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) and click Newsroom on the toolbar.

Also, check out the [USDA Blog](#)



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA CD # 33.11** – Record setting heat in many parts of the country has led to livestock deaths and illness, and producers finding ways to help their animals cope. In this edition of "Agriculture USA", Gary Crawford and Rod Bain look at various USDA programs and pieces of advice to help affected producers.

**CONSUMER TIME CD # 33.11** – That Recall Of Ground Turkey. The Future Of Farming And Related Industries. Think Clearly Before Making Post Disaster Repairs. A Healthy Way To Brown Bag A Lunch. Older Women And Birth Defect Incident Rate Studied.

**AG UPDATE CD # 33.11** – A Huge Spike In Farm Real Estate Values. Lates On Farm Production Spending. Cutting Red Tape For Farmers. Help For Livestock Producers Hit By Heat And Drought. Helping Susceptible Cattle Through Heat Stress.

**UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** – August 16 - Crop Weather (WAOB). August 17 – Livestock, Dairy, And Poultry Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). August 19 – Cattle On Feed Report (NASS). August 12 – Crop Progress Report (NASS). **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 Newsline at 202-720-6776, 5PM ET or go to [www.usda.gov](http://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

### Cleaning Waterways In The Mississippi River Basin

The USDA is working with Illinois landowners in the Mississippi River Basin to reduce agricultural runoff into waterways

YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIC3K3oNWJY&feature=channel\\_video\\_title](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIC3K3oNWJY&feature=channel_video_title)

**A new TV feature is available on the USDA FTP site**  
**Filename: illinois mrbi**

**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](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

**A MIX OF EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS IN ILLINOIS** – **Carrie Muehling** (WJBC Radio – Bloomington, Illinois <http://wjbc.com/>) says the entire state of Illinois has been the land of extremes when it comes to weather this year. “Parts of northern Illinois are still very **wet**, but in the central and eastern parts of the state we are now experiencing drought conditions.” **Muehling** adds, “I attended a field event at the Pioneer Hi-Bred facility near Champaign, Illinois on Wednesday where they received less than an inch of rain for the entire month of July.” The percentage of corn rated good to excellent in Illinois this past week dropped by 12 points. The hot and dry conditions, and especially warm nights, have not allowed corn to adequately uptake nitrogen, and agronomists tell me they believe lots of kernel abortion is taking place.

**STINK BUGS WREAK HAVOC** – An insect that has taken center stage over the last couple of years here in the United States is the infamous marmorated stink bug. The Asian critter is native to China, Japan and Korea was first spotted stateside in Allentown, Pennsylvania in the late 1990’s. **Jeff Ishee** (WSVA Radio 550 – Harrisonburg, Virginia <http://www.wsvaonline.com/>) talked with **Dr. Chris Bergh**, Virginia Tech Entomologist says the stink bug has been detected in 33 states so far who says the stink bug is quite prevalent in the Mid Atlantic region. **Bergh** says peak population of the stink bugs is expected in late summer. Already they have attacked orchards to include, apples, peaches and wine grapes.



Damage caused in apples by brown marmorated stink bugs (Photo provided by Virginia Tech)



Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (Photo provided by Susan Ellis)



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211.mp3

Click here to hear **Jeff Ishee's** report and discussion with **Dr. Chris Bergh**.

**SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF ILLINOIS' MCLEAN COUNTY FAIR** – This is where **Carrie Muehling** (WJBC Radio – Bloomington, Illinois <http://wjbc.com/>) has spent a lot of time lately. “My live reports originated from the Food and Family Farmer Exhibit, which is an educational exhibit put together by our county Farm Bureau,” reports **Muehling**. “While I don't know how many people went through the exhibit in total, one day a group of nearly 40 people from one of our urban districts went through with 29th District State Representative Thaddeus Jones as a part of the Adopt-A-Legislator program through the Illinois Farm Bureau. Jones told me some of the kids from his district were seeing live farm animals for the first time.” The McLean County Fair is sort of a precursor to the Illinois State Fair which opens this week in Springfield, Illinois.



**Carrie Muehling's** two little ones driving the combine simulator that is a part of the Food and Family Farmer Exhibit

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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



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