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BROADCASTERS LETTER

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(September 29)

U.S. FOREST SERVICE REPORT DOCUMENTS ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF WOOD AS A GREEN BUILDING MATERIAL

The authors of *Science Supporting the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Using Wood and Wood Products in Green Building Construction* reviewed the scientific literature and found that using wood in building products yields fewer greenhouse gases than using other common materials. The findings of the study indicates that wood should factor as a primary building material in green building said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This study confirms what many environmental scientists have been saying for years. Wood should be a major component of American building and energy design. The use of wood provides substantial environmental benefits, provides incentives for private landowners to maintain forest land, and provides a critical source of jobs in rural America."

The Forest Service report also points out that greater use of life cycle analysis in building codes and standards would improve the scientific underpinning of building codes and standards and thereby benefit the environment. A combination of scientific advancement in the areas of life cycle analysis and the development of new technologies for improved and extended wood utilization are needed to continue to advance wood as a green construction material. Sustainability of forest products can be verified using any credible third-party rating system, such as Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council or American Tree Farm System certification.

"The argument that somehow non-wood construction materials are ultimately better for carbon emissions than wood products is not supported by our research," said David Cleaves, the U.S. Forest Service Climate Change Advisor. "Trees removed in an environmentally responsible way allow forests to continue to sequester carbon through new forest growth. Wood products continue to benefit the environment by storing carbon long after the building has been constructed."

The use of forest products in the United States currently supports more than one million direct jobs, particularly in rural areas, and contributes more than \$100 billion to the country's gross domestic product. "In the Rockies alone, we have hundreds of thousands of dead trees killed by bark beetles that could find their way into the building supply chain for all types of buildings," said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "Taking a harder look at wood as a green building source could reduce the damages posed by future fires, maintain overall forest health and provide much-needed jobs in local communities."

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

FARM PRICE INDEX STILL FAR AHEAD OF 2010, ALTHOUGH PRICES DROP IN SEPTEMBER

Farm product prices were generally weaker over the last month, but prices are still far above last year.

For Radio Story: [Despite Sept. Price Drops, Farm Price Index Still Far Ahead Of 2010](#)

THE HEAT AND DROUGHT IN THE SOUTH WILL BE FELT AT LEAST THROUGH YEAR'S END

The hot and dry weather conditions this season are translating into a poor crop outlook for some areas. USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey says as the days get shorter, the high heat will subside somewhat, but the dry conditions will linger in the Southwest due to a La Nina weather pattern.

For Radio Story: [Southern Heat and Drought Will Be Felt Through the End of the Year, ACTUALITY: Fall Means Slight Temperature Drop, But No Rain Increase](#)

FARMERS AND RANCHERS BEWARE, THEFTS OF FARM EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS AND WIRE ON THE UPSWING

More farmers are losing equipment, tools and even copper wire from irrigation units to thieves. The thieves are getting more brazen and doing more of their dirty work in broad daylight. Kenny Perry, Extension agent in Graves County, Kentucky has some tips on how to lower the chances of things being stolen off your farm.

For Radio Story: [Thefts of Farm Equipment and Tools and Wire on the Upswing, ACTUALITY: Some Tips on Preventing Thefts from Your Farm, ACTUALITY: Farm Thieves More Brazen Now With More Daylight Thefts](#)

(September 28)

USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY DECREASES COMPLAINT RATE TO LOWEST LEVEL IN HISTORY

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has significantly reduced the number of civil rights complaints in fiscal year 2010 to the lowest level in the agency's history, while increasing the number of loans and dollar amount obligated to programs dedicated to minority and women farmers for fiscal year 2011. Administrator Bruce Nelson said, "The loan numbers reflect the significant progress we have made in the effort to equally serve all eligible applicants for FSA program support. Under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Vilsack, the Farm Service Agency is committed to diversity, inclusion and performance like never before, for the benefit of our customers and our employees. At USDA, we understand that the work we do makes a positive impact on the lives of the American people every single day, in so many ways."

Over the last fiscal year, FSA's loan division conducted business with 70,000 borrowers and provided support to 1.9 million producers through its farm programs. Out of the nearly 2 million producers the agency has served, 37 complaints were received — the lowest number filed since the agency began. During the same year, more than 5,650 loans and \$509 million in support were obligated to minority and women farmers under FSA's loan programs.

Funding obligated for minority and women farmers has increased in fiscal year 2011 by 9 percent over the same period last year, to \$554 million as of September 27, 2011. The largest increase has come in guaranteed farm ownership loans. These loans, which help producers obtain commercial credit to establish or maintain a family farm or ranch, have increased 40 percent to \$161.8 million for minority and women farmers.

In addition to improvements in lending practices to minority and women producers, FSA has seen an overall improvement in its loan portfolio. Losses in the direct loan program fell to 1.2 percent, its second lowest level since 1986, while direct loan delinquency has been at historic lows not seen for the past two decades, resting at 5.9 percent. Delinquency rates for fiscal year 2010 under the guaranteed loan program were at 1.69 percent, the second lowest since 1995. Foreclosure rates remain low with just 64 completed in fiscal year 2010. That represents less than one-tenth of one percent of the agency's direct loan caseload.

As a result of this progress, USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Joe Leonard presented FSA with a "Job Well Done" award in December 2010. The award underscores efforts made by USDA to improve its service after years of litigation alleging unfair treatment to women and minority farmers and ranchers.

The FY2010 Report of Civil Rights Complaints, Resolutions, and Actions is available [here](#).

Contact: Tanya Brown 202-690-4585

For More Story Info: [Latest USDA News Releases](#)

USDA MAKES MAJOR INVESTMENTS TO SPUR INNOVATION AND JOB CREATION IN RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF NEXT GENERATION BIOFUELS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced five major agricultural research projects aimed at developing regional, renewable energy markets, generating rural jobs, and decreasing America's dependence on foreign oil. In total the five-year program will deliver more than \$136 million in research and development grants to public and private sector partners in 22 states. University partners from the states of Washington, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Iowa will lead the projects, which focus in part on developing aviation biofuels from tall grasses, crop residues and forest resources.

"We have an incredible opportunity to create thousands of new jobs and drive economic development in rural communities across America by continuing to build the framework for a competitively-priced, American-made biofuels industry," said Vilsack. "Over the past two years, USDA has worked to help our nation develop a national biofuels economy that continues to help us out-innovate and out-compete the rest of the world while moving our nation toward a clean energy economy."

The grants announced by Vilsack in Seattle today came through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The projects will address needs across regional supply chains and will complement existing bioenergy efforts across government, academia, and the private sector. Summaries of the five projects can be found [here](#).

The Ag Secretary also highlighted how the USDA is working with federal partners like the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of the Navy and the Federal Aviation Administration to improve our country's energy security and provide sustainable jobs in communities across the country. Last month, President Obama announced a partnership between USDA, DOE and Navy to invest up to \$510 million during the next three years in partnership with the private sector to produce advanced, drop-in aviation and marine biofuels to power military and commercial transportation.

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

For More Story Info: [Latest USDA News Releases](#)

HISTORIC TRADE MISSION TO VIETNAM

The first ever US agriculture trade mission to a fast growing customer of our nation's goods took place this week. A recent US agricultural trade mission in Vietnam could help to continue the expansion of beef exports to that country. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Acting Administrator Suzanne Heinen discusses US agricultural products that are desired by Vietnam.

For Radio Story: [Historic Trade Mission to Vietnam](#), [Building upon Us Beef Trade In Vietnam](#)
[ACTUALITY: On Us Ag Products of Interest to Vietnam](#)

HIGHER ENERGY PRICES HAS THE AG SECTOR MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

How is the U.S. agricultural sector adjusting to higher energy prices? Paul Westcott of Economic Research Service tells how.

For Radio Story: [How the Ag Sector Adjusts To Higher Energy Prices](#)

(September 27)

USDA TO GIVE PAYMENTS TO PRODUCERS IN 41 STATES TO EXPAND THE PRODUCTION AND AVAILABILITY OF ADVANCED BIOFUELS

The USDA will make payments to more than 160 energy producers. "Renewable energy production will create tens of thousands of direct, American jobs; thousands more indirect jobs, and clean electricity to power millions of homes. The payments represent the continuing commitment of the Obama administration to work with producers to provide the biofuel necessary to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign energy sources," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The payments support America's growing advanced biofuel industry."

The payments are authorized under the [Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels](#) (Section 9005 of the 2008 Farm Bill) and are made to eligible producers to support and ensure an expanding production of advanced biofuels. Payments are based on the amount of biofuels a recipient produces from renewable biomass, other than corn kernel starch. Eligible examples include biofuels derived from cellulose, crop residue, animal, food and yard waste material, biogas (landfill and sewage waste treatment gas), vegetable oil and animal fat. To see a list of the recipients [click here](#).

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

For More Story Info: [Latest USDA News Releases](#)

THE LATEST TROPICAL WEATHER PATTERN WON'T IMPACT THE U.S. MUCH AT ALL

The tropics remain fairly active, but don't expect storms to impact the U.S. anytime soon. For the foreseeable future, USDA meteorologist Brady Rippey says the current storms will have little or no effect stateside.

For Radio Story: [The U.S. Pretty Much Safe from Latest Tropical Weather Pattern](#)

TEXAS AND THE SOUTHWEST CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS

Record setting temperatures may dissipate, but the dry conditions in Texas and the Southwest will continue.

For Radio Story: [Drought Lingers In Texas and Southwest](#)

(September 26)

USDA HIGHLIGHTS MYPLATE: MAKE HALF YOUR PLATE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The United States Department of Agriculture and nutrition advocates launched a campaign to encourage Americans to fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables. 'Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables,' is part of the first themed message supporting the new MyPlate food icon. Support for MyPlate reached a historic milestone with more than 4,000 organizations joining the MyPlate Nutrition Communicators Network, thereby doubling the number of partners announced in July.

"By tapping into American creativity we can help families focus on healthier food choices and to make half their plate fruit and vegetables," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "America's abundant and nutritious food supply is one of the most affordable in the world, and increasing our consumption of fruits and vegetables will go a long way toward reversing overweight and obesity, not only for children but for all Americans."

Vilsack is urging partners across the nation to keep the enthusiasm and momentum going by participating in the [MyPlate Fruits and Veggies Video Challenge](#). Individuals and teams can submit inspiring and instructive videos that provide innovative, easy, and practical tips on how to 'Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables.'

The videos can be songs, skits, or how-to videos, as long as they include useful information on how to add more fruits and vegetables to the diet on a budget. Each video should feature one tip, must include the message "Make half your plate fruits and vegetables," and should direct viewers to visit the [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#) website.

A total of \$9,000 in prize money will be awarded for three categories: (1) Tips for Kids, (2) Tips When Eating at Home, and (3) Tips When Eating Away from Home. As with other similar competitions, there will be a Popular Choice Award. Judging will be done through a combination of USDA panels and public voting. Winning submissions will be used on the [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#) website and will be highlighted by MyPlate communications partners. Administration of the video challenge is provided by USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Winners will be announced on December 14th. For more details on the video challenge, go to [FruitsAndVeggies.challenge.gov](#).

Between September 2011 and December 2013, USDA will lead a coordinated, multi-year, multi-modal, messaging approach among public and private sector partners to help USDA amplify the consumer themes and related nutrition messages outlined in the Dietary Guidelines. Resources, such as "how-tos," supporting messages, and educational materials, will be provided to support each message at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](#). Communication themes include: Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables, Enjoy Your Food But Eat Less of It, Make at least half your grains whole grains, and Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

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For More Story Info: [Latest USDA News Releases](#)

2011 CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS AWARDED

A program designed to foster creative conservation practices recently announced its annual grant awards. Gregorio Cruz of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service explains the purpose and some examples of a grant program designed to foster creative conservation projects.

For Radio Story: [Conservation Innovation Grants Awarded For 2011](#),
[ACTUALITY: On Conservation Innovation Grants](#)

IN 2012 EXPECT FOOD PRICES TO GO UP AGAIN, BUT MAYBE AT A SLOWER PACE

Food prices for every food item are higher than they were last year, but what's in store for next year? Ricky Volpe, USDA food price economist, says that bread and cereal products are costing about 4.5% more this year than last, but could go up even more than that next year.

For Radio Story: [Food Prices Going Up Again In 2012, But Maybe At a Slower Pace](#),
[ACTUALITY: Bread and Cereal Could Lead the Price Hikes In 2012](#)

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

LATEST BLOG POSTS



[USDA Blog](#)

- Resilient like a Fox (FS)
- U.S. Agribusinesses Build Trade Relationships, Seek Export Success in Vietnam (FAS)
- World Vet Year: Dr. Nora Wineland on World Veterinary Year 2011 (APHIS)
- Deputy's Travel in Massachusetts (RD)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On October 4)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 40.11 – The results of a new USDA report show that putting food on the table is challenging for many Americans. In this edition of Agriculture USA, Susan Carter talks with the report's lead author and the man at the helm of the country's federal food aid programs.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 40.11 – Small Food Producers Have Big Impact On Consumers. Food Prices Rising And Will Keep Rising In 2012. Do We Believe We Are Eating Better Than We Already Are? Creating A Buzz About Creating Rural Wealth. Tips To Harvest And Store Pome Fruit.

AG UPDATE CD # 40.11 – The New Purpose Of The AC21. High Cattle Prices Don't Always Bring Rosy Times. Hog Industry Seems To Be On A Watch And Wait Basis. Thefts Of Farm Tools And Equipment On The Rise. Creating Energy Efficient Jobs.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – October 10 – NO NEWSLINE (Columbus Day Federal Holiday). October 11 – Crop Progress Report (NASS). October 12 – Crop Production Reports (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS-WAOB); Crop Weather (WAOB). October 13 – Oilseed, Cotton, and Rice Outlooks (ERS-WAOB). October 14 – Wheat and Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS-WAOB); Agricultural Trade Update (ERS). October 17 – 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

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FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

Applying Nutrients So As To Limit Runoff

USDA is helping farmers learn the best time to apply nutrients in order to limit runoff

YouTube: [USDA on YouTube/Applying Nutrients So As To Limit Runoff](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USDAonYouTube/ApplyingNutrientsSoAsToLimitRunoff)

Video Podcast: [USDA iTunes Video Podcast/Applying Nutrients So As To Limit Runoff](http://www.usda.gov/USDAiTunesVideoPodcast/ApplyingNutrientsSoAsToLimitRunoff)

RSS Feed: [USDA RSS Feed/Applying Nutrients So As To Limit Runoff](http://www.usda.gov/USDA RSS Feed/Applying Nutrients So As To Limit Runoff)

**A new TV feature is available on the USDA FTP site
Filename: iowa sidedressing**

Download instructions:

The host: [USDA CMBC Download Instructions](http://www.usda.gov/USDA CMBC Download Instructions)

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 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

HAY TO THE RESCUE FOR THE SOUTHWEST – For nearly three straight months farmers, ranchers and producers in Texas and the Southwest have been dealing with 100 plus degree heat. The arid dry weather has all but depleted the hay supply. In Texas alone economists say agriculture losses have surpassed the 5 billion dollar mark. **Sarah Gustin** (KXMB TV – Bismarck, North Dakota www.kxnet.com) reports on how ranchers in western North Dakota where “plenty of rain has made for plenty of hay,” have been shipping hay to fellow ranchers in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Farmer and rancher **Kevin Thompson** of North Dakota said, “What we see right here is really green right now, but I know it’s really terrible down there and our heart goes out to those people that is for sure.” Trucker **Mark Geil** said, “The price of hay got high enough and it got so dry in Texas that they started hauling hay down into Texas, so we are back hauling hay to pay for fuel, insurance, and maintenance costs.” Gustin reports that, “Thompson predicts they’ll send about 36-hundred square bales south.” Already so far 27 loads of hay have left the farm.”

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR AND HARVESTING GETS UNDERWAY – The wheat harvest is done and producers are just really getting going harvesting soybeans and some corn reports **Jody Heemstra** (KWAT Radio 950 – Watertown, South Dakota www.kwat950.com). “Some are pleasantly surprised by their yields, others, disappointed. We haven’t had much rain to speak of since August, so pastures are showing major stress.” **Heemstra** also took a herd tour of the Custer State Park Buffalo. Park officials say approximately 14-thousand people watched the herd come in during the 46th Annual Custer State Park Buffalo Round-Up.

KWMT LAUNCHES FALL 2011 EDITION OF "FEED THE FARMER" – The eight week program has kicked into full gear says **Von Ketelsen** (KWMT - Fort Dodge, Iowa www.kwmt.com). The fall and spring program highlights eight lucky farmers each week. KWMT selects a winning farm family and takes lunch for up to eight people to their farm.

ALLTECH NORTH AMERICA IS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS – The global animal health and nutrition company is on the hunt for more than 20 new team members. They’re needed to participate in algae projects, life sciences and solutions for feeding a global population of 9 billion. **Geoff Frank**, Alltech’s sales manager for North America said, “Squeezed by raw material shortages, volatile weather, and record commodity prices, today’s farmer is facing dire threats to his business.” **Frank** adds Alltech believes it is critical to provide greater local support to farms. Alltech plans to increase their field staff by 30% over the next year as the company expands its reach in local markets.

***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



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