



Broadcasters Letter

Office of Communications

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Letter No. 3645
Friday, December 2, 2011
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
202-720-7079

BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3645

Friday, December 2, 2011

(December 1)

VILSACK REACTS TO JOBS REPORT

How is the top Agriculture Department official reacting to Friday's job numbers?

For Radio Story: [Vilsack Reacts To Jobs Report](#)

CHANGES IN US AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION STUDIED

USDA recently completed a look at how farm operation practices have changed during a period of a quarter century. Erik O'Donoghue of the Economic Research Service addresses, what has changed, and what trends have been revealed about ag operations through output and input data over the last twenty five years.

For Radio Story: [Changes In US Agricultural Organization Studied](#)
[Changes In Ag Operation Outputs And Inputs](#)

FUEL UP TO PLAY 60 TWO YEARS LATER

A campaign to promote better nutrition and physical activity in school age children is gained national prominence. Although a well-known national program in schools, it doesn't take much for school aged children to adhere to proper nutrition and physical activity. Rod Bain talks to Bridgette Sheehan of Midwest Dairy Council.

For Radio Story: [Fuel Up To Play 60 Two Years Later](#)
[Simple Steps To Fuel Up To Play 60](#)

(November 30)

**USDA ANNOUNCES RANKING DATES FOR
FOUR MAJOR CONSERVATION INITIATIVES**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the ranking dates for the On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel and Air Quality conservation initiatives. All four initiatives offer technical and financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#).

"Producers tell us they want to apply for these initiatives, but many want more time to make sure they choose the one that's right for their operation," said Vilsack. "Moving to multiple ranking dates for each initiative is going to make it easier for more producers to apply and help them get started with implementing the practices they need to benefit the natural resources on their operations."

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. There will be three ranking periods for the Organic, On-Farm Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives, all ending on February 3, March 30 and June 1, 2012. Ranking periods for the Air Quality Initiative end February 3 and March 30, 2012. At the end of a ranking period, NRCS ranks all submitted proposals for funding consideration. NRCS will notify all applicants of the results of the rankings and begin developing contracts with selected applicants.

The On-Farm Energy, Organic and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives are available in all 50 states, the Caribbean Area and the Pacific Basin. The Air Quality Initiative is available in Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, Montana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas. Air Quality funding is limited to counties within these nine States that have serious air quality resource concerns related to non-attainment for Ozone and Particulate Matter.

For information on the Initiative Overviews go to [Latest USDA Press Releases](#). Visit the [NRCS National Web site](#) for more information on how to apply for these initiatives and connect with an NRCS office near you.

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

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

**USDA ANNOUNCES NEW INSURANCE PILOT PROGRAM FOR BIOFUEL-
FRIENDLY OILSEED CROP WITH POTENTIAL
TO CREATE JOBS AND STIMULATE RURAL ECONOMIES**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced a new pilot program of insurance for camelina beginning with the 2012 crop year. Camelina is an oilseed crop with the potential to create new renewable energy markets in the United States, generate rural jobs here at home, and decrease America's dependence on foreign oil. The new pilot program will be available in selected counties in Montana and North Dakota for the 2012 crop year, with a sales closing date of February 1, 2012.

"This pilot program will help our farmers produce biomass which will be converted to renewable fuel and increase America's energy independence, creating jobs and stimulating rural economies across the nation," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The camelina plan of insurance is Actual Production History, which insures a grower's yield. The pilot product for camelina was developed through the 508(h) process and submitted by Great Plains Oil and Exploration, LLC – The Camelina Company and Crop Insurance Systems, Inc. Only spring-planted camelina grown under contract with a processor will be eligible for coverage. To be eligible, the contract must state: 1) the producer's commitment to plant and grow camelina and to deliver the production to the processor, 2) the processor's commitment to purchase all production stated in the processor contract, and 3) a base contract price not to exceed an amount specified in the Special Provisions. A single basic unit will be offered; multiple basic units or optional units are not available.

Insurable causes of loss will include: adverse weather, fire, wildlife, earthquake, volcanic eruption, and insect and plant disease but not damage due to insufficient or improper application of pest or disease control measures. Neither written agreements nor prevented planting will be available for camelina. Coverage levels offered will be from the catastrophic level to 65 percent.

Camelina, an oilseed, is a rotation crop for wheat that can be established on marginally productive land. It is an annual, short season plant. Biofuel from camelina is an ideal jet fuel substitute. USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists have long-term studies underway to examine ways to use camelina as a bioenergy crop for producing jet fuel for the military and the aviation industry. In addition, earlier this year USDA announced two Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) project areas devoted to developing camelina as biofuel in several states, including Montana. USDA is also part of several partnerships to develop oilseeds and native and perennial grasses as a biofuels, including:

Contact: Michelle Bouchard (202) 720-5846

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

FY 2012 AG EXPORT ESTIMATES EXPECTED DOWN

USDA's latest ag export forecasts for this fiscal year show a decline from 2011. USDA Chief Economist Joe Glauber discusses the latest ag import numbers and how those are currently impacting the agricultural trade balance.

For Radio Story: [Ag Exports Estimates Down For FY 2012
ACTUALITY: On Import Forecast And Ag Trade Balance](#)

(November 29)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ON STRONG 2011 FARM INCOME FORECAST AND CONTINUED STRENGTH OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack commented on USDA's 2011 Farm Income Forecast, which forecast net farm income at \$100.9 billion for 2011, up \$21.8 billion or 28 percent from 2010.

"Today's farm income forecast shows that the American brand of agriculture continues to be a bright spot in our nation's economy. Following on a strong 2010, all three measures of farm sector earnings again experienced strong growth in 2011. According to today's numbers, farmers are earning 28 percent more for their products than they made last year. And it is making a real difference for America's farm families, whose household income was up 3.1 percent in 2010 and is forecasted to increase 1.2 percent in 2011. This is good news for rural America and for our national economy.

"A combination of factors has made these numbers possible including growth in cash receipts, off-farm employment, and a record high of \$137.4 billion in FY 2011 farm exports—which continues U.S. agriculture's year over year trade surplus.

"A strong U.S. agricultural economy means more opportunities for small businesses owners and jobs for folks who package, ship, and market agricultural products. Our farmers and ranchers have worked hard to keep their debt low and to capitalize on a broader economic recovery. Their willingness to adapt, innovate and embrace new research and technologies has ensured their success and can be a blueprint for the rest of the country's economic recovery.

"The Obama Administration will continue to maintain a strong safety net, expand bio-based product opportunities and local and regional food systems, and promote greater export opportunities for U.S. agriculture, all designed to increase incomes for America's farm families."

The Farm Income Forecast can be found [here](#).

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623
For Radio Story: [Vilsack Pleased With Latest Farm Income Numbers](#)

NOMINAL RECORD FOR NET CASH INCOME REPORTED

The latest USDA Farm Income reports show a record for annual net cash income for agricultural producers. USDA Chief Economist Joe Glauber breaks down by commodity changes in net farm cash receipts in the latest Farm Income Forecast.

For Radio Story: [Nominal Record For Net Cash Income Reported](#)
ACTUALITY: On Farm Cash Receipts

COLD WEATHER GRIPS THE COUNTRY AND LATE NOVEMBER MOISTURE IS WELCOMED IN THE SOUTHERN PLAINS

A cold front works its way from the West and should envelope most of the nation with colder than normal temperatures by the weekend. Most of the drought stricken Southern Plains has benefited from a month full of moisture.

For Radio Story: [First Major Cold Weather Grips Country This Week](#)
[November Moisture Brings Relief In Southern Plains](#)

(November 28)

PIGFORD SETTLEMENT CLAIMS FILING PERIOD OPENS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The deadline for African American farmers and ranchers eligible for the Pigford Settlement must file claims no later than May 11 of next year. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the period to file a claim has opened. "With the opening of the claims process, African American farmers and ranchers who believe they are entitled to compensation under the Pigford II settlement must file a claim within 180 days in order to receive cash payment or loan forgiveness," said Secretary Vilsack. "The opening of this claims process marks another milestone in USDA's efforts to correct the wrongs of the past and ensure fair treatment to all current and future customers."

In February, USDA and Department of Justice announced an agreement with African American farmers to settle the Pigford II litigation for \$1.25 billion. Congress passed the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 that funded the settlement in November 2010, and the bill was signed by President Obama in December 2010.

The settlement arises from a class action lawsuit against USDA that alleges the Department discriminated against African-Americans who applied for or attempted to apply for farm loans or other farm benefits between January 1, 1981 and December 31, 1996. The settlement applies only to African-American farmers who meet specific eligibility requirements, including the requirement that they previously submitted a request to file a late claim in the 1999 *Pigford I* class action Consent Decree. **The filing period opened November 14, 2011, and continues for 180 days, until May 11, 2012.** Claimant services representatives can also be reached through calling 1-877-810-8110 or 1-866-950-5547. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants. All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims packages are encouraged to attend a meeting and contact the website or claims telephone number. The website is: www.blackfarmercase.com
The call number is: 1-877-810-8110 or 1-866-950-5547.

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

USDA AND FELD ENTERTAINMENT INC. REACH A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Feld Entertainment, Inc., doing business as Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus (Feld), have reached a settlement agreement in which Feld has paid a civil penalty of \$270,000 for alleged violations of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) dating from June 2007 to August 2011.

"This settlement sends a direct message to the public and to those who exhibit animals that USDA will take all necessary steps to protect animals regulated under the Animal Welfare Act," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The civil penalty and other stipulations in the settlement agreement will promote a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all exhibitors in maintaining and caring for animals under their care."

USDA is authorized to assess a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 for each AWA violation occurring after June 2008. In addition to paying the \$270,000 civil penalty, the largest assessed against an exhibitor under the AWA, Feld waived the opportunity for a hearing and agreed to develop and implement annual AWA compliance training for all employees who work with and handle animals, including trainers, handlers, attendants and veterinarians. This goes into effect March 31, 2012. A copy of the full settlement agreement can be found at [APHIS Animal Welfare FEI Signed Agreement](#).

Contact: David Sacks (301) 734-5271 or Lyndsay Cole (970) 494-7410
For More Story Info: [Latest USDA Press Releases](#)

USDA MOVING TO LOWER CORN AND SOYBEAN INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Corn and soybean producers may be pleasantly surprised at what they may be paying to insure next year's crop. Bill Murphy, Administrator of USDA's Risk Management Agency, saying that prior to 1995, the crop insurance system was paying out more than it took in from premiums, but that has reversed itself in the last 16 years. Murphy adds that, besides corn and soybeans, USDA will be looking at changing crop insurance premium rates for other crops.

For Radio Story: [USDA Moving To Lower Corn And Soybean Insurance Premiums](#)
[ACTUALITY: One Reason Crop Insurance Rates Are Changing](#)
[ACTUALITY: USDA To Work On Adjusting More Crop Premium Rates](#)

WINTER WHEAT CONDITION IMPROVES

As the winter wheat crop prepares for a long winter's nap, the condition of that crop is a little better than last year. Brad Rippey, USDA meteorologist, with USDA's final report on winter wheat emergence.

For Radio Story: [Winter Wheat Condition Improves](#)
[ACTUALITY: A Final Report On Winter Wheat Emergence](#)

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



[The Latest USDA Blog Posts](#)

- World Vet Year: Dr. David Dargatz on World Veterinary Year 2011 **(APHIS)**
- The Food Safety Discovery Zone Cooks Up Food Safety with Culinary Stars at the Metropolitan Cooking and Entertaining Show **(FSIS)**
- USDA and Alaska Tribal Governments – Teamwork at Its Best **(RD)**
- USDA role for climate change efforts in the Feed the Future program
- Secretary's Column **(OC)**
- New Center Provides Animal Health Assistance in Armenia **(FAS)**
- USDA role for climate change efforts in the Feed the Future program **(OC)**
- NRCS Reduces Waste for Mississippi Chicken Farmer **(NRCS)**
- USDA a Leader in Aerial Photography, Mapping for U.S. Agriculture **(FSA)**
- The Food Safety Discovery Zone Cooks Up Food Safety with Culinary Stars at the Metropolitan Cooking and Entertaining Show **(FSIS)**
- USDA and Alaska Tribal Governments – Teamwork at Its Best **(RD)**
- USDA role for climate change efforts in the Feed the Future program
- USDA role for climate change efforts in the Feed the Future program
- Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Moderate a Panel of Former Secretaries of Agriculture at USDA's 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum
- Secretary's Column **(OC)**
- World Vet Year **(APHIS)**
- Science Tuesday **(REE)**
- A Unique Urban Garden in the Heart of Atlanta **(FNS)**
- DC students acting out(side) in search of urban forests **(FS)**
- Earth Team Volunteer Brings Home the FFA National Proficiency Award in Vegetable Production **(NRCS)**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On December 6)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 49.11 – Digital cameras and aerial technology are among the ways surveying and land use monitoring for agricultural fields, rangelands, and public lands are improving for researchers studying such changes. Rod Bain takes a look at these advances in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 49.11 – Journey Of The 2012 Capitol Christmas Tree, The "Green" Christmas Tree, Holiday Buffets And Food Safety Tips, Some Land Grants Present Seafood Health Facts, Tips To Tackle Pet Medical Emergencies.

AG UPDATE CD # 49.11 – Positive Farm Income Numbers In Latest USDA Report. Two Products Promoted Under One Checkoff. Flying Into The Digital Age Of Land Monitoring. A Panoramic View Of Changing Landscapes. Alka Seltzer Relieves More Than Just Heartburn.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE –December 6 – Crop Weather (WAOB); December 9 – Crop Production Report (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS-WAOB). December 12 – Oilseed, Rice, And Cotton Outlooks (ERS-WAOB); US Ag Trade Data Update (ERS)
These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The USDA Radio Newsline carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.

USDA Radio Newsline, 202-720-6776, 5:00pm ET

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FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

USDA At Anuga 2011

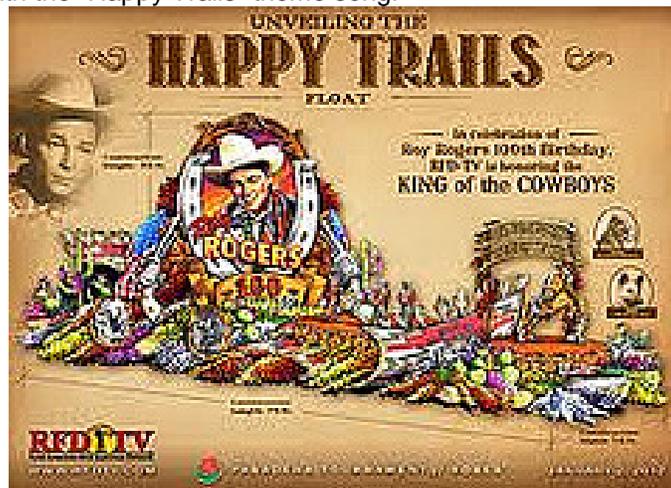
This is the German Trade Shows which is a gateway to global food sales

[USDA At Anuga 2011](#)

OFF MIKE



RFD-TV FLOAT HONORS ROY ROGERS' 100TH BIRTHDAY – The float is a part of the 123rd Tournament of Roses[®] Parade. It will be a parade finale tribute to the “King of the Cowboys” featuring Trigger “The Golden Palomino” and Bullet “The Wonder Dog” and will be led by 100 Golden Palominos. The massive 75 foot float will also feature Roy Rogers, Jr. along with his son Dustin Rogers, serenading the crowd with the “Happy Trails” theme song.



Patrick Gottsch, founder and president (RFD-TV - Omaha, Nebraska and Nashville, Tennessee www.rfdtv.com) said “No one challenged the imagination of millions of baby boomers more than Roy

Rogers. Whether it was playing cowboy in the back yard or dreaming of having a palomino horse or German shepherd dog of their own after watching one of the 88 movies or 100 episodes of the Roy Rogers Show, young minds were inspired for decades to just imagine.”

Roy Rogers would have been 100 years old on November 5, 2011 but he passed away in 1998 at a time when The “Happy Trails” float is designed and built by Phoenix Decorating in a mix of organic materials that mimic what Roy Rogers would’ve seen on the trails.

The parade takes place on January 2, 2012 in Pasadena, California. RFD-TV is broadcasting the Tournament of Rose® Parade “live” and streaming the coverage online at www.rfdtv.com beginning with a one-hour pre-parade broadcast at 10 a.m. EST.

***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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