

# "Ag Notes"

A SUMMARY OF NEWS, EVENTS AND FACTS FROM USDA

## VENEMAN HEADS WORLD FOOD SUMMIT DELEGATION



Secretary Ann M. Veneman in Rome, Italy for the World Food Summit, organized a meeting with counselors from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss regional cooperation on many issues important to U.S. agriculture.



The World Food Summit: Five Years later June 10-13, 2002



**It's Here!**

Get all the info at:  
[www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill)

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman told delegates from over 180 countries meeting in Rome, Italy that the United States remains committed to cut by half the number of people suffering from chronic hunger, goals first agreed to at the 1996 World Food Summit.

"President Bush views the alleviation of hunger and poverty throughout the world as a moral imperative," Veneman said. While the U.S. is well on its way to meeting the domestic goal of reducing hunger by half by 2010, "unfortunately the global picture is far less encouraging, particularly in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, parts of South Asia and some other regions."

To ensure the goals of the 1996 Summit are met, the Secretary said the U.S. proposes to focus on three priorities in partnership with other donors and developing countries: reducing hunger by increasing agricultural productivity; ending famine and improving nutrition.

Veneman pointed out that the U.S. is the world's largest donor of food aid and that President Bush's Compact for Development, announced in March, calls for a 50 percent increase in development efforts to raise harvests where hunger is greatest." For more go to [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

## FARM BILL IMPLEMENTATION NEWS

Secretary Veneman has announced a series of actions designed to speed farm bill implementation which include: hiring 1,000 additional Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees; announcement of the 2002 crop county loan rates; and streamlining approval processes at the county level for farmers wishing to participate in the Conservation Reserve Program or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The new hires account for about 40 percent of the additional employees needed to implement the new law. Putting the programs in place, most of which are applicable to 2002 crops, significantly increases the FSA workload, which has steadily reduced staff since 1996. "These new employees will go to the offices with the least staff where the workload will be greatest," said FSA Administrator James Little.

County loan rates for 2002 crops have been restructured as called for in the new law, effective June 10. For county-by-county rates go to [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/loanrate.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/loanrate.htm).

The streamlined concurrence process between the Natural Resources Conservation Service and FSA will allow each agency the flexibility to proceed without the formal approval of the other agency.

"We are trying to cut the red tape to get the job done and enable producers to participate in our conservation programs in a timely manner," Veneman said.

## Quotables...

**Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the release of more than \$43 million in state grants and cooperative agreements to bolster food and agricultural homeland security protections. The resources are part of \$328 million approved by President Bush and the Congress earlier this year to strengthen USDA's homeland security preparedness.**

~~~~~  
*"Secretary Veneman and the department have given Kansas agriculture the means to take the real initiative and leadership in protecting our state's economy and our nation's food supply." Sen. Pat Roberts in Wichita upon release of \$1.67 million in homeland security funds for Kansas, AP, 5/31*

~~~~~  
*"The benefits of this funding are too far-reaching to be measured today. But I can assure you, in the months and years to come, we will be grateful for the protection and preparedness this funding will supply," Rep. Henry Bonilla, in San Antonio upon release of \$4.6 million in homeland security funds for Texas, AP 5/31*

## VENEMAN HOLDS BILATERALS WITH KEY TRADING PARTNERS

Secretary Veneman met with more than a dozen foreign representatives, holding bilateral talks to discuss global hunger as well as trade and other agricultural issues while in Rome for the World Food Summit. During the Summit, the Secretary invited Ministers from around the world to participate in an International Conference on Agricultural Science and Technology to be hosted by the U.S. early next year.

"During this Summit we had the opportunity to meet with several foreign leaders to discuss world hunger, as well as other food, trade and agricultural issues," said Veneman. "These meetings were very productive as we continued to advance partnerships and cooperation."

Specific meetings were held with heads of delegations from Russia, China, Uganda, Mauritius, Italy, Denmark, South Africa, Australia and the EU, as well as 23 Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

### Russian Delegation Meeting:

Secretary Veneman held an important first meeting with her counterpart Russian Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture Aleksey Gordeyev. Both sides remain optimistic that their technical specialists can quickly conclude negotiation of a protocol covering future poultry trade. US-Russia trade is slowly recommencing, but levels currently remain far below those achieved last year.

### Chinese Delegation Meeting:

Veneman reported a useful exchange of views with Chinese Vice Premier Wen Jiabao and Minister of Agriculture Du Qing Lin. The Chinese assured her that they intend to fully meet their WTO obligations. This was in response to Veneman's query about tariff rate quota implementation and issuance of biotechnology regulations. Vice Premier Wen indicated that TRQs would be appropriately and punctually administered and that GMO regulations would not be a trade impediment.

### Latin-American / Caribbean Ministers Session:

Secretary Veneman hosted a meeting for agriculture ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss more effective regional cooperation on trade and regulatory issues. Noting the rise in cross-border sanitary and phytosanitary issues and growing confusion over conflicting biotechnology regulations, Veneman urged the Ministers to explore more cooperation in these areas. One means discussed was a greater role for the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in facilitating regional cooperation and harmonization of regulations and procedures. Veneman was joined by counterparts from Brazil and Mexico in leading the discussions.

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**