



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Broadcasters Letter

Office of Communications

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Friday, June 15, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
202-720-7079

BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3670.2012

Friday, June 15, 2012

(June 14)

THE 2012 FARM BILL LOSES STEAM IN THE SENATE

Movement on the farm bill in the Senate slowed to a crawl Thursday, with most of the action taking place behind the scenes.

Radio Story: [Farm, Food And Jobs Bill Action Slows To A Crawl In The Senate](#)

A NEW USDA REPORT FINDS A CHILD BORN IN 2011 WILL COST NEARLY \$235,000 TO RAISE

The USDA annual report, *Expenditures on Children by Families*, finds that a middle-income family with a child born in 2011 can expect to spend about \$234,900 (\$295,560 if projected inflation costs are factored in) for food, shelter, and other necessities to raise that child over the next 17 years. This represents a 3.5 percent increase from 2010. Expenses for transportation, child care, education, and food saw the largest percentage increases related to child rearing from 2010. There were smaller increases in housing, clothing, health care, and miscellaneous expenses on a child during the same period.

The annual report issued since 1960 is a resource to courts and state governments in determining child support guidelines and foster care payments. The report is based on data from the Federal government's Consumer Expenditure Survey, the most comprehensive source of information available on household expenditures. For the year 2011, annual child-rearing expenses per child for a middle-income, two-parent family ranged from \$12,290 to \$14,320, depending on the age of the child.

The report, developed by the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, notes that family income affects child rearing costs. A family earning less than \$59,410 per year can expect to spend a total of \$169,080 (in 2011 dollars) on a child from birth through high school. Similarly, middle-income parents with an income between \$59,410 and \$102,870 can expect to spend \$234,900 and a family earning more than \$102,870 can expect to spend \$389,670. For middle-income families, housing costs are the single largest expenditure on a child, averaging \$70,560 or 30 percent of the total cost over 17 years. Child care and education (for those incurring these expenses) and food were the next two largest expenses, accounting for 18 and 16 percent of the total cost over 17 years. These estimates do not include costs associated with pregnancy or the cost of a college education or education beyond high school.

The report notes geographic variations in the cost of raising a child, with expenses the highest for families living in the urban Northeast, followed by the urban West and urban Midwest. Families living in the urban South and rural areas have cheaper child-rearing expenses.

Expenses per child decrease as a family has more children. Families with three or more children spend 22 percent less per child than families with two children. As families have more children, the children can share bedrooms, clothing and toys can be handed down to younger children, food can be purchased in larger and more economical quantities, and private schools or child care centers may offer sibling discounts.

The full report, *Expenditures on Children by Families (2011)*, is available on the web at www.cnpp.usda.gov. In addition, an interactive web version of the report is available where families can enter the number and ages of their children to obtain an estimate of costs.

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [How Much Does It Cost To Raise A Child?](#)

FOOD PRICE HIKES SLOWING DOWN

If you think you've noticed that your spending on food has not been going up as much lately, you are not alone and probably not wrong. Ricky Volpe, USDA food price economist, with a list of a few of the grocery items that fell in price last month.

Radio Story: [Food Price Hikes Slowing Down](#)

[ACTUALITY: Prices For Many Foods Actually Fell During May](#)

(June 13)

AG SEC VILSACK ANNOUNCED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND FOSTER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced new measures that will make it easier for individuals living in Substantially Underserved Trust Areas (SUTA) to obtain USDA funding to improve basic services, including water and sewer systems, broadband and electric infrastructure. "These measures are a crucial step for American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders to build modern utility infrastructure, create jobs and improve their quality of life," said Vilsack. "The changes will put resources where they are most needed and will give USDA Rural Development added flexibility that will help tribes located in Trust Areas."

A Substantially Underserved Trust Area is any land that: (1) is held in trust by the United States for Native Americans; (2) is subject to restrictions on alienation imposed by the United States on Indian lands (including Native Hawaiian homelands); (3) is owned by a Regional Corporation or a Village Corporation as defined in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; or (4) is on any island in the Pacific Ocean if such land is communally-owned land by cultural tradition. The changes, which apply to the Rural Utilities Service program area (RUS) give the Secretary of Agriculture authority to:

- Make loans and issue loan guarantees with interest rates as low as 2 percent and with extended repayment terms;
- Waive certain matching fund or credit support requirements for loans and grants. This will facilitate infrastructure construction, acquisition or improvements;
- Give highest priority to designated projects on Substantially Underserved Trust Areas.

The enhancements are being implemented through a final regulation published on page 35245 of the June 13, 2012 Federal Register, [Substantially Underserved Trust Areas \(SUTA\)](#).

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [Improving The Quality Of Life For Tribal Communities](#)

[ACTUALITY: New Provisions To Enhance Programs For Native Americans](#)

THE USDA ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL 9,000 ACRES FOR NON-FOOD ENERGY CROP PRODUCTION

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced \$9.6 million for the creation of two new Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) project areas in New York and North Carolina, and the expansion of an already established BCAP project area in Arkansas. The announcement provides the opportunity to expand the nation's non-food, energy crops used in the manufacturing of liquid biofuels and to help meet state mandated Renewal Portfolio Standards (RPS).

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers BCAP. BCAP, created in the 2008 Farm Bill, helps farmers and forest land owners with start-up costs of planting new energy crops that can take several years to reach maturity until harvest, a timeline designed to parallel the construction schedule of commercial-scale energy facilities that will use these crops. BCAP is

the only federal program that ensures sufficient biomass is available to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil, improve domestic energy security, reduce pollution and spur rural economic development and job creation.

One of the two new BCAP project areas is sponsored by Chemtex International Inc., targeted for the heart of North Carolina, where it will grow more than 4,000 acres of Freedom® Giant Miscanthus and switch grass. Enrolled producers will receive establishment assistance and five years of annual production support under BCAP. The second new BCAP project area ramps up efforts in upstate New York to meet the state's goal of sourcing 24 percent of electric and power generation from renewables by 2013. The BCAP project area, sponsored by ReEnergy Holdings LLC, seeks to enroll up to 3,500 acres in fast growing shrub willow to generate more than 100 megawatts of electricity. Additionally, BCAP Project Area 2 in northeast Arkansas will expand its area within three counties, bringing enrollment up to nearly 8,000 acres of Giant Miscanthus. This Arkansas BCAP project area is sponsored by MFA Oil Biomass LLC, in Columbia, Missouri. MFA Oil Biomass and partner Aloterra Energy LLC, operating in Ohio, will continue to coordinate the crop propagations, planting and mitigation and monitoring plan.

On Nov. 18, 2011, Congress enacted the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, limiting the total amount of funding available for BCAP to \$17 million, a reduction of 96 percent from funding levels available last spring.

Producers in these 28 counties throughout Arkansas, North Carolina and New York who voluntarily sign up and enter into BCAP contracts are eligible for reimbursements of up to 75 percent of the establishment costs of the perennial energy crop, and up to five years of annual maintenance payments for herbaceous crops and up to 11 years for woody crops.

Contact: Isabel Benemelis 202-720-7809

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [More Acres Eligible For BCAP Program](#)

[ACTUALITY: On Intent Of BCAP](#)

[ACTUALITY: On BCAP Projects For FY 2012](#)

**LAUREATE ANNOUNCED FOR
2012 WORLD FOOD PRIZE AWARD**

A person who been helping bring micro-irrigation to Middle Eastern deserts, is the recipient of the World Food Prize this year.

Radio Story: [2012 WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATE ANNOUNCED](#)

(June 12)

**THE SENATE FARM BILL PROCESS
ENTERS THE NEXT PHASE**

The Senate is wasting no time in working on a new farm bill. Senate lawmakers are continuing to work on the so called "farm" bill, with some actions being taken on Wednesday.

Radio Story: [Senate Farm Bill Process Enters The Next Phase](#)
[Senate Continues Work On The Food, Farm And Jobs Bill](#)

**FEDERAL PARTNERS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT
RESPONSE TO WESTERN FIRES**

Among the federal partners assisting in controlling and putting out the massive wildfires in the West are the Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They are helping to provide firefighters, aircraft, and federal grants to local partners in the affected areas. The federal partners are working closely with first responders and firefighters from local, state, and tribal agencies to combat and monitor wildfires in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, as well as other states.

Currently, 19 active large fires are burning in nine states, including one of the largest wildfire in New Mexico history and one of the largest wildfires in Colorado history. To help fight these damaging fires, federal agencies have made approximately 4,500 firefighters available to aid in efforts to suppress and contain the fires.

The Forest Service announced the agency has mobilized eight additional aircraft to its firefighting fleet to ensure that an adequate number of airtankers are available for wildland firefighting efforts. With these additional airtankers, the Forest Service has 16 large airtankers and one very large airtanker available immediately for wildfire suppression. The Forest Service has the capability to mobilize an additional 11 large airtankers, should circumstances require it.

Additionally, the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior fire agencies can mobilize hundreds of helicopters and dozens of smaller aircraft, called "single-engine airtankers."

To ensure states have the financial support they need, FEMA has provided Fire Management Assistance Grants to states with active large fires. These grants help cover eligible costs, on a 75 percent cost share basis, and can reimburse state and local costs associated with personnel and equipment used to combat fires. FEMA has authorized the use of federal funds, through the Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAG), to help with eligible firefighting costs for the High Park Fire located in Larimer County, Colorado and the Little Bear Fire located in Lincoln County, New Mexico. Back in May an FMAG was approved for the Whitewater-Baldy Complex fire located in New Mexico.

While extremely serious fires are burning in several states, to date the season has been below average, meaning that additional resources remain available should they be necessary.

Contact: Office of Communications (202)720-4623
Story Info: [USDA Newsroom Story 1](#) [USDA Newsroom Story 2](#)
Radio Story: [New Fire Fighting Air Tankers Could Be On The Way Soon](#)

THE USDA FOREST SERVICE SEEKS COMMENTS ON EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF FOREST CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

The Department of Agriculture announced a proposed rule to streamline and shorten categories of environmental review for certain restoration projects on National Forests. The proposed rule will allow the Forest Service to more efficiently implement projects related to improving water flow and the restoration of land and habitat.

"We are gaining efficiencies that allow us to move more rapidly through the environmental review process while reducing the cost to the taxpayers of unnecessary documentation," said Harris Sherman, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. "These projects are really a win-win for the environment and the public and will result in positive environmental outcomes."

The three proposed categorical exclusions published in today's Federal Register facilitate the Forest Service to:

- Restore the flow of waters into natural channels and floodplains by removing, replacing or modifying water control structures;
- Restore lands and habitat to pre-disturbance conditions by removing debris and sediment conditions following natural or human-caused events; and
- Restore, rehabilitate or stabilize lands occupied by non-National Forest System roads and trails to a more natural condition.

"These proposed changes will allow us to be more responsive and do a better job of working with local governments, Tribes and communities to move forward important on-the-ground projects," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell.

The proposed rule accelerates the pace of restoration and calls for a three- to five-page decision documentation process, which is less costly to write and review and can reduce the timeframe by as much as nine months compared to a typical environmental assessments which can be hundreds of pages long. This process retains the public notice, comment and appeals procedures that currently apply to categorical exclusions.

Contact: Office of Communications (202)720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

(June 11)

USDA INVEST MORE THAN \$2 BILLION IN RURAL SMALL BUSINESSES

The White House report [Strengthening Rural Communities: Lessons From A Growing Farm Economy](#) details efforts that have been made in the agricultural economy. The focus is on investments to help rural small businesses expand and hire. The report emphasizes that rural communities and the country's agriculture industry are vital contributors to employment and exports from the United States. "Strong and secure rural communities are essential to creating an economy built to last that rewards hard work and responsibility-not outsourcing, loopholes, and risky financial deals. While the security of the middle class has been threatened by the

irresponsible financial collapse and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, rural Americans continue to come together to buckle down and make ends meet. The values that have helped hard-working, responsible families weather the storm continue to move our economy forward,” said President Barak Obama. Highlights from the report include:

- **Innovation:** Innovation in U.S. agriculture has kept America's farms among the most productive in the world. U.S. farm sector income reached a nominal record of \$98.1 billion in 2011. Adjusting for general inflation, real farm income in 2011 recorded its 3rd highest level in the last 50 years.
- **Exports:** While many sectors of our economy are running trade deficits, American agriculture has enjoyed a trade surplus, with record levels of farm exports at \$137.4 billion for fiscal year 2011. Yet, it is clear that still more can and should be done to boost agriculture exports. The President's National Export Initiative has opened new markets for U.S. agricultural products and services and contributed to a historic level of agricultural exports. Once fully implemented, free trade agreements passed under this Administration with Korea, Panama, and Colombia are projected to boost U.S. agricultural exports by \$2.3 billion per year.
- **Clean Energy:** The Administration has pursued policies that promote domestic energy alternatives like biofuels, bioenergy, and wind power to provide new opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and forest managers. Pursuit of an all-of-the-above clean energy and energy efficiency strategy saved Americans a projected 6.5 billion kWh – enough energy to power over 590,000 homes for a year – and nearly doubled the amount of installed wind energy generation in the U.S. over the past three years from about 25,000 MW in 2008 to 47,000 MW in 2011.
- **New Industries:** The Administration has supported new industry diversification within the agricultural economy. The retail value of the organic industry grew to \$31.4 billion in 2011, up from \$21.1 billion in 2008. The number of operations certified organic grew by 1,109 – or more than 6% – between 2009 and 2011.
- **Community Investment:** The rural economy has been strengthened by investments in over 6,250 new community facilities. Additionally, over the last three years, 12,000 USDA grants and loans have been issued to assist over 50,000 rural small businesses.

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

RURAL AND AGRICULTURE ECONOMIES PROGRESS REPORT RELEASED

A joint report issued Monday by the White House Rural Council and USDA among partners focused on progress in rural based economies. USDA is soliciting input on the timing of its major commodity reports as it relates to expanded commodity market trading hours. Trading for some commodities will occur prior to the release of USDA's monthly production and supply and demand reports for the first time.

Radio Story: [Progress Report On Rural And Ag Economies Released
Comment Period Underway On USDA Market Reports
Commodity Reports And Timing With The Markets](#)

USDA'S UPCOMING CROP REPORT WILL HAVE FEW CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS REPORT

Those looking for some dramatic changes in USDA's crop forecasts will be doomed to disappointment this month.

Radio Story: [Few Changes To USDA's Previous Crop Forecasts](#)

For more agriculture news visit www.USDA.gov



[The Latest USDA Blog Posts](#)

USDA Helps Improve Native Health Care in Rural Alaska (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 June 19, 2012)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 25.12 – Further development of and collaboration between crop plant germplasm databanks around the world could help resolve some of the many issues involving global food insecurity. Rod Bain looks at some examples in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 25.12 – More Tools To Combat Food Assistance Program Fraud. Expenses Up For Raising A Child. Tips For Food Safety For That Cookout Away From Home. Taking The Buzz Out Of Mosquitoes. Gardening Without A Yard.

AG UPDATE CD # 25.12 – Farmers Urged To Use The Four "R's" Of Fertilizer Management. Latest News From June Crop Reports. Measures For Accepting CRP Offers. Latest On GE Sugar Beet Deregulation Process. \$-H Plays A Part In Assuring Global Food Security.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – June 19 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB). June 22 – Cattle On Feed Report (NASS). June 25 – Crop Progress Report (NASS). **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

or

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Then click on Daily Radio News Service or Weekly Radio Feature Service.

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

Saving The Lesser Prairie Chicken

USDA is working with landowners in five states to protect an increasingly rare bird and its habitat

FTP Download instructions:

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

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: lesser prairie chicken

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264), MPEG 4, MPEG2 and HDV

YouTube: [lesser prairie chicken](#)

Video Podcast: [lesser prairie chicken video podcast](#)

RSS Page: [lesser prairie chicken](#)

USDA is working with landowners in five states to protect an increasingly rare bird and its habitat.

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



HOOSIER AG TODAY PARTNERS WITH GROWERS EDGE – The new partnership will bring Growers Edge grain marketing tool and content to the Hoosier State, said **Gary Truitt** (HAT - Indianapolis, Indiana www.hoosieragtoday.com). Using the *Best Price Look Up* growers can access cash grain quotes from a variety of sources in their area and calculate which offer is the most profitable. **Truitt** said, "At Hoosier Ag Today we are all about local information," said Gary Truitt, President of HAT. We bring growers Indiana crop conditions, news, weather, and now cash grain prices." The Growers Edge tool is accessible on the HAT web site as well as the HAT daily e-newsletter. All a grower has to do is simply enter their zip code and the program will collect the 5 local current cash grain prices from the location entered and indicate if there is a better net price bid from a grain elevators, processors, and ethanol biorefineries. "Once a grower has an account, they can view a Regional Basis Activity Map of the state that tracks basis levels and grain demand in different areas of the state as well as surrounding states." Other Growers Edge tools include local agricultural weather and climate data and Grain TV, a video presentation analyzing current cash grain and futures trends.



CHARLIE HIGDON NAMED NATIONAL SALES MANAGER FOR AGRICULTURE – **Charlie Higdon** (iHigh.com - Lexington, Kentucky iHigh.com) has been employed in the agriculture industry for over 25 years, so it seems only natural that he's has been named National Sales Manager for Agriculture. **Higdon's** agriculture experience ranges from production to sales and sales and marketing management.

"Charlie's extensive knowledge, experience, and passion for agriculture makes him an ideal fit for iHigh.com and we are very excited about the future," said **Billy Frey**, Senior Vice President, [Alltech Ag Network](http://AlltechAgNetwork.com). "People want to know what's going on in rural America, yet most

mainstream media outlets refuse to cover the exciting events in the world of agriculture. By using the iHigh.com platform, agriculture now has a voice and Charlie will be instrumental in helping them use this new media platform to speak to consumers across the globe.”

A graduate of Oklahoma State University with a BS in Animal Science and obtained his MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management, **Higdon** will work with current partners including the [National High School Rodeo Association](#), [FFA](#), and [Rural TV](#) among others to help them broadcast their events, while at the same time engage those in agribusiness who might want to target the agriculture audience.

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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