UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
USDA
Broadcasters Letter
Office of Communications
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Friday, September 7, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3682.2012

Friday, September 7, 2012

(September 7)

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK'S MONTHLY CROP REPORT

Have prospects for corn and soybeans declined even further over the last month? We'll get a better idea about that in just a few days.

Radio Story: New Round Of USDA Crop Reports Coming Soon

USDA REACHES ITS GOAL TO FUND $250 MILLION IN SMART GRID IMPROVEMENTS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA has reached its $250 million goal to finance smart grid technologies. Vilsack also announced nine rural electric cooperatives and utilities in 10. "Grid modernization and deployment of 'smart grid' technology will increase the reliability and efficiency of electric power generation," said Vilsack. "Providing reliable, affordable electrical service contributes to stronger rural economies and is the backbone for a prosperous rural America. These loans will help ensure that rural areas can retain existing businesses, support new ones and have reliable, up-to-date infrastructure."

As part of President Obama's *Blueprint for a Secure Energy Future*, the Administration has outlined a framework for a modernized electric system that will benefit all Americans. This framework lays out a number of public and private initiatives, including a goal of $250 million in loans for smart-grid technology deployment as part of the USDA's Rural Utility Service, which is focused on upgrading the electric grid in rural America.

This latest announcement of more than $27 million in smart grid investments has enabled USDA to meet President Obama's goal and further facilitated rural utilities to make efficiency

improvements to the electric grid that will help consumers lower their electric bills by reducing energy use in homes and businesses.

Vilsack said this $250 million investment in loan funds for smart grid technologies means infrastructure investment at virtually no cost to the taxpayer. These technologies will facilitate the integration of renewable sources of electricity into the grid, help avoid blackouts and restore power quicker when outages occur, and reduce the need for new power plants. Smart grid technologies also provide a foundation for innovation by entrepreneurs and others who can develop tools to empower consumers and help them make informed decisions. A first generation of innovative consumer products and services—such as thermostats that can be controlled from a smart phone, or websites that show how much energy a house is using—can continue to help Americans save money on their electricity bills.

Contact: Weldon Freeman (202) 690-1384
Story Info: USDA Newsroom
Radio Story: USDA Makes New Loans For Smart Grid Improvements

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EXPERTS EXTEND A HAND TO TEXAS CATTLE PRODUCERS TO HELP THEM SURVIVE CONTINUED DROUGHT

U.S. Department of Agriculture range experts are trying to help Texas cattle producers handle what is now two years of drought, which has left over half that state's pastures in poor to very poor condition. Kent Ferguson, rangeland specialist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Temple, Texas, explained how experts like himself are trying to help cattle producers get through two years of drought and limited pasture.

Radio Story: Experts Helping Texas Cattle Producers Survive Continued Drought
ACTUALITY: How USDA Range Specialists Help Cattle Producers

RESEARCHERS ARE STUDYING A NEW WAY TO DEVELOP ANTIMICROBIALS

USDA researchers are among those looking at new ways to create antimicrobials that will counter disease causing pathogens in livestock.

Radio Story: Studying A New Way To Develop Antimicrobials

(September 6)

USDA MAKES GRANTS AVAILABILE TO IMPROVE HOUSING FOR FARM WORKERS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is accepting applications for technical assistance grants to develop domestic and migrant farm labor housing. "These grants will help communities submit quality applications to increase their chances of getting funding to build much-needed affordable housing for farm workers," said Vilsack. "Increasing the supply of affordable housing in rural communities not only helps the residents, it helps the entire community."

Grants are available to organizations that will help housing authorities, state and local governments, Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and community- and faith-based groups apply for loans and grants to build farmworker housing. The purpose of the grants is to increase the number of high-quality applications USDA receives. Vilsack announced on July 18 the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for loans and grants to build or preserve affordable rental farm worker housing. This technical assistance funding is to organizations that assist potential borrowers under that NOFA.

Technical assistance grantees must have the knowledge, ability, expertise or practical experience necessary to develop and package farm labor housing loan and grant applications. They also will be required to submit a minimum number of applications to USDA, based on their location. For additional information, see page 54877 of the September 6 Federal Register, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-09-06/html/2012-21885.htm. The deadline for submitting applications is November 5, 2012. Visit the Rural Development's new interactive web map featuring program funding and success stories for fiscal years 2009-2011.

Contact: Jay Fletcher 202-690-0498
Story Info: USDA Newsroom

U.S. HOUSEHOLDS STUDIED TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF FOOD SECURITY

What percentage of American households have trouble putting enough food on the table? Economist Alisha Coleman-Jensen gives some insight.

Radio Story: Food Security In U.S. Households Studied

CONSUMERS ADVISED TO BEWARE OF HURRICANE HOME REPAIR SCHEMES AND SCAMS

In areas hit by the winds and floods of Isaac, homeowners may be hit by another kind of disaster … a manmade disaster

Radio Story: Hurricane Home Repair Schemes And Scams

USDA'S SUPERTRACKER DIET PLANNING AND TRACKING TOOL REACHES ONE MILLION REGISTERED USERS

USDA's SuperTracker diet planning and tracking tool is a resource to help individuals make healthy lifestyle choices to improve their dietary pattern, maintain a healthy weight, track their level of physical activity, and reduce their risk of chronic disease. "*SuperTracker* allows Americans to build a healthier diet based on individual needs and personal preferences," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Overcoming the health and nutrition challenges we face as a nation is critical. I am thrilled that so many people, particularly young people, are taking advantage of this resource to improve their overall health and well-being."

Built and maintained by USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), *SuperTracker* is free to use and available at ChooseMyPlate.gov. CNPP continues to update *SuperTracker's* features based on user feedback, including:

- Updated food and physical activity databases that allow users to track foods and activities as accurately as possible
- An enhancement to allow users to set a personal calorie goal using the My Top 5 Goals feature
- Additional capabilities planned for release in 2013

The *SuperTracker's* million-user milestone comes as USDA highlights the fourth in a series of quarterly consumer messages supporting the MyPlate icon – *Make at Least Half Your Grains Whole Grains* – that USDA is promoting in conjunction with more than 6,000 organizations participating in the MyPlate Nutrition Communicators Network.. Consumers can use *SuperTracker* to monitor their whole grain intake and receive tips and support to optimize their choices.

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

(September 5)

RECENT RAINS PROVIDES LITTLE TO NO NATIONAL RECOVERY OF U.S. PASTURES AND RANGELANDS

Did rains from hurricane Isaac do much to improve pasture conditions? USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey offers some insight.

Radio Story: Not Much National Recovery Of Pastures And Rangelands

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IT APPEARS THIS WEEK'S REPRIEVE FROM THE HEAT WON'T LAST LONG

The heat continues to scorch many areas of the country, but there will be a short break from the heat as the week wears on.

Radio Story: This Week's Break From Heat Will Be Short Lived

DAIRY COWS THAT CONSUME AFLATOXIN INFECTED CORN COULD PASS IT TO MILK

There's a good reason why corn fed to dairy cows must be totally free of aflatoxin.

Radio Story: Dairy Cows Fed Aflatoxin Infected Corn Can Pass It To Milk

(September 4)

AFLATOXIN IN CORN COULD BE A BIGGER PROBLEM THIS YEAR

If you are a corn grower in an area not usually bothered by aflatoxin problems, you may be bothered this year, but you can run an informal check of your crop for that fungus. More growers and more marketers of corn could face more problems this year with aflatoxin. Dr. Kitty Cardwell, USDA plant pathologist, explained about how the fungus that produces aflatoxin goes from the soil into the ears of corn.

Radio Story: Corn Farmers Can Make A Quick Informal Check For Aflatoxin
Aflatoxin In Corn Could Be A Bigger Problem This Year
ACTUALITY: How The Aflatoxin Fungus Gets Into The Corn Ear

BE JUDICIOUS WHEN DONATING MONEY TO VICTIMS OF HURRICANE ISAAC

Once again the scam artists are coming out of the woodwork to take advantage of those who want to donate money to help victims of Isaac. Steve Hannan, consumer affairs expert in Howard County, Maryland, giving some advice on how to make sure your donation to help storm victims actually goes to those victims.

Radio Story: Be Careful When Donating Money To Help Isaac Victims
http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov/radnewsdetail.asp?ID=18949

FALL COLORS AND WHY THE CHANGE STARTS WHEN IT DOES

A Forest Service expert says there are two components to the changing of the fall colors every year, regardless of when the season starts. Paul Schaberg of USDA's Forest Service explained the whens and whys of fall color change, and the purpose of the Fall Colors Hotline.

Radio Story: Fall Colors And Why The Change Starts When It Does
ACTUALITY: Two Reasons For The Fall Color Change

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Click To Access Latest USDA Blog Posts

A Colorado Child Care Center Expands with Support from USDA Rural Development (**RD**)
Getting It Done Through Partnerships: Two Maine Towns Unite To Improve Water Quality (**RD**)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's Weekly Radio Address
TV #35 Ag Sec Weekly Address – Research Strengthens Agriculture

Learn more about President Lincoln's agricultural legacy here.

Click To Access Stories on USDA Celebrating 150 Years

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On September 11, 2012)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 37.12 – A SWAT team of the four-legged variety is on the case to rid areas of overrun vegetation. In this edition of Agriculture USA, Susan Carter introduces us to a man that has a crew with a hearty appetite to gnaw away at and successfully control invasive plants.

CONSUMER TIME CD # 37.12 – Be Careful When You Donate Money To Help Disaster Victims, USDA Helps Expand Wireless Technology At Farmer's Markets, Dealing With Stink Bugs At Home, Faith Based Organizations Part Of Global Food Aid Efforts, Holiday Layaway Grows And Expands In 2012.

AG UPDATE CD # 37.12 – Aflatoxin Could Be A More Widespread Problem This Season, Impacts Of Isaac On Louisiana Ag Crops Still Preliminary, A Tip For Livestock Producers: Keep Good Records, Last Change To Apply For Organic Certification Cost Share Program, First Aid Kit Essential Part Of Farm Safety.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – September 11 – Crop Weather Report (WAOB). September 12 – Crop Production Reports (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS – WAOB). September 13 – Oilseed, Cotton, and Rice Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). September 14 – Wheat and Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). September 17 – 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
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FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

USDA Taste-Tests Healthy School Meals

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is taste-testing healthy options for school meals, as part of a new effort to improve nutrition

FTP Download Instructions:
The host: ftp://ocbmtcmedia.download.akamai.com
User name: usdanews
Password: Newscontent1
Filename for **TV Feature**: school taste test
The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264)

USDA YouTube: School Taste Test

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

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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.
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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