



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Broadcasters Letter

Office of Communications

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Friday, October 5, 2012
Creative Media & Broadcast Center
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BROADCASTERS LETTER

#3686.2012

Friday, October 5, 2012

(October 5)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY PLEASSED WITH LATEST JOBLESS NUMBERS

The Agriculture Secretary provided his comments on news the nation's unemployment rate reached its lowest level since January 2009.

Radio Story: [Vilsack - Lower Jobless Rate Is Good News For Ag](#)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK FULFILLS COMMITMENT TO DESIGNATE 1 MILLION ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION ACRES TO SUPPORT WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the allocation of 400,000 acres to support conservation and restoration of wildlife and their habitats as part of the Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP. Under Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's leadership, the USDA has enrolled more than 12 million acres in CRP, a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them use marginal and environmentally sensitive land to bring conservation and economic benefits for their land and communities. The announcement of 400,000 state acres for wildlife enhancement (SAFE acres), fulfills Vilsack's commitment made last spring to commit 1 million acres for special initiatives to restore grasslands, wetlands and wildlife habitat.

"Since 2009, USDA has worked with producers and private landowners to enroll a record number of acres in conservation programs," said Vilsack. "These efforts have not only conserved our natural resources, but bolstered rural economies for current and future generations. That's why it's important for Congress to pass comprehensive, multi-year food, farm and jobs legislation—so that America's rural communities have certainty that millions of

acres of conservation lands will be there tomorrow to sustain and create jobs in the small businesses that reinforce our tourism and recreation industry."

With 400,000 SAFE acres available, USDA will work with producers and landowners to target habitat for high-priority species like the lesser prairie chicken and sage grouse, as well as game species like pheasants and quail that providing hunting opportunities and support rural jobs. Existing projects in 20 states will be able to add up to 280,000 combined acres for all projects, including prairie, wetlands, forest and savanna habitat restoration. In addition, more than 100,000 acres were added to target species as diverse as northern scarlet snakes, ferruginous hawks and the American woodcock.

SAFE is a voluntary continuous CRP practice that conserves and restores habitat for wildlife species that are threatened or endangered, have suffered significant population declines or are important environmentally, economically or socially. SAFE is currently capped at 1.25 million acres nationally. Acres are now allocated across 97 SAFE projects located in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

Under SAFE, state fish and wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations and other conservation partners work collaboratively to target CRP delivery to specific conservation practices and geographic areas where enrollment of eligible farm land in continuous CRP will provide significant wildlife value. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) monitors SAFE and other continuous CRP activity and manages available acres to ensure that CRP goals and objectives are being met.

The Food Security Act of 1985, Section 1231(a), as amended, provides authority to enroll land in CRP through September 30, 2012. However, no legislation has been enacted to reauthorize or extend this authority; therefore, CRP currently is unable to enroll new acres.

In March, Secretary Vilsack announced USDA's intent to enroll up to 1 million acres in a new CRP grasslands and wetlands initiative meant to target environmentally sensitive land through continuous signups. FSA has set aside acres within CRP for specific enrollments that benefit duck nesting habitat, upland birds, wetlands, pollinators and wildlife. In addition, USDA announced a continuous sign-up of highly erodible cropland, which seeks to protect the nation's most environmentally sensitive lands. The Highly Erodible Cropland initiative permits landowners to enroll up to 750,000 acres of land with an Erodibility Index (EI) of 20 or greater.

CRP is one of America's most valuable and vital conservation efforts, ensuring cleaner air and water, preventing soil erosion, and enhancing economic opportunity in rural America by supporting recreation and tourism. The approach to target the most sensitive lands is essential to maintain the substantial benefits of CRP while ensuring that productive farmlands continue to produce America's food, feed, fiber and renewable fuel. Highlights of CRP [include](#)

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-3088

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

THE OCTOBER CROP REPORT WILL INCORPORATE NEW ACREAGE NUMBERS

USDA's next crop report will incorporate acreage numbers from a different source that was used for the September report.

Radio Story: [Crop Report Will Incorporate New Acreage Numbers](#)

(October 4)

EXPECT A LOT OF EYEING OF THE UPCOMING USDA CROP REPORT WHERE THE INTEREST IS INTENSE

We may have a much better idea of the potential supply of new crop corn and beans on October 11th. The Agriculture Department is wrapping up data collection for its next crop production report.

Radio Story: [Intense Interest In Upcoming USDA Crop Report
USDA Wrapping Up Data Collection For Oct 11th Crop Report](#)

THERE ARE SOME NEW USES TO OLD TECHNOLOGY WHICH MAY BOOST BIOFUEL PRODUCTION

USDA researchers are looking at ways to improve the quality and quantity of harvested canola and other oilseeds used in biofuel production. Dan Long of USDA's Agricultural Research Service shared the potential of remote sensing tools can be applied in a new way - improving efficiencies of oilseed biofuel production.

Radio Story: [New Uses To Old Technology May Boost Biofuel Production](#)
[ACTUALITY: On New Uses For Old Tools For Biofuel Production](#)

TIPS FOR PREPARING DROUGHT STRESSED TREES FOR THE WINTER

What are some of the ways to assure trees in drought stressed areas will survive the freeze of winter? Joe Zeleznik of North Dakota State University Extension provided tips on how to help trees impacted by this summer's drought survive through the winter months. One way to keep enough moisture for drought stressed trees during the winter freeze is a mulch cover. Zeleznik explained how this year's drought plaguing much of the country will impact trees.

Radio Story: [Preparing Drought Stressed Trees For Winter
How To Retain Water For Drought Plagued Trees During Winter](#)
[ACTUALITY: On Drought Impacts On Trees](#)
[Using Mulch To Retain Moisture For Trees During Winter](#)

(October 3)

SURE SIGN UP COMING SOON

The start date for the latest round of signups for USDA's Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment Program is set for later this month. USDA Farm Service Agency Administrator Juan Garcia discussed eligibility requirements for this latest round of Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program signups.

Radio Story: [SURE Sign Up To Start Soon For Sure](#)
[ACTUALITY: On SURE Sign Up Eligibility Requirements](#)

NEXT WEEK OCTOBER 9TH IS WHEN THE FIRST REGIONAL DROUGHT MEETING WILL BE HELD

USDA will be hosting regional drought meetings, starting next week.

Radio Story: [First Regional Drought Meeting Scheduled For Oct. 9th](#)

SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AT USDA

If you're a small business and looking for opportunities in government, USDA may have something to offer. Acting Director for USDA's Office of Small Business Joe Ware talked about the challenges a small business can face when working with the Department of Agriculture.

Radio Story: [Small Business Opportunities At USDA](#)
[ACTUALITY: Challenges To Small Business At USDA](#)

(October 2)

SOME ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATION'S CORN SUPPLY

Is there enough corn to last through the next harvest? What, if any, will be the impact of smaller grain stocks on the renewable fuels standard? Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack talked about the importance of the growth of organic agriculture to farmers and the economy.

Radio Story: [What's Going On With The Corn Supply?](#)
[Connection Between Less Corn And The Renewable Fuels Standard](#)
[ACTUALITY: Significance Of The Growth In Organic Agriculture](#)

AMERICA'S FARM CO-OPS SET RECORDS IN 2011

October is National Cooperative Month and with that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that farmer, rancher and fishery cooperatives posted record sales and income in 2011, surpassing the previous record sales year of 2008 by \$10 billion while besting the old income record by \$500 million. Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary for Rural Development, made the announcement on the Secretary's behalf, kicking-off National Cooperative Month. Tonsager said co-op employment levels remained strong, with cooperatives employing 184,000 full-time, part-time and seasonal workers, up slightly from 2010.

"These new cooperative sales and income records for 2011 underscore the strength and productivity of the nation's farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives, and the vital role they play in the nation's economy," said Tonsager. "Primarily because of mergers, the number of farm co-ops continued to decline, but memberships and asset values are up."

Net income before taxes for all agricultural co-ops was a record \$5.4 billion, eclipsing the previous high of \$4.9 billion, set in 2008. Net income was up more than 25 percent, or \$1 billion, from 2010.

The year also saw double-digit increases in prices for dairy products, cotton, livestock and grains and oilseeds. Further, farm production expenses increased by double-digits in 2011, with feed, fertilizer and fuel prices leading the upward trend. The 2,285 surveyed cooperatives had sales of \$213 billion, exceeding 2010 sales by more than \$40 billion.

USDA's annual list of the nation's [100 largest agricultural cooperatives](#), was also released that shows they too had record sales and income in 2011. The 100 largest ag co-ops reported revenue of \$148 billion in 2011, an increase of almost 30 percent over 2010, when revenue totaled \$113 billion. Net income for the 100 top co-ops was \$3.17 billion, up from \$2.35 billion in 2010. The previous top 100 co-op records were \$130 billion for sales and \$2.42 billion for income, both marks set in 2008.

Contact: Dane Henshall (202) 260-0996

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [Record Sales And Income For Ag. Cooperatives Last Year](#)

[ACTUALITY: Highlights Of 2011 Ag. Cooperative Performance Report](#)

USDA GRANTS SUPPORT MARKETING INNOVATION FOR AMERICAN FARMERS AND RANCHERS

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA will award matching grants for 22 projects under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program to help create economic opportunities for American farmers and ranchers.

USDA will match nearly \$1.2 million in grants for state departments of agriculture and state universities in 18 states and the District of Columbia. The projects will enable states to research new opportunities, and spark innovation in the marketing, transportation and distribution of U.S. agricultural products.

"The agricultural economy is resilient and remains strong and these investments will help increase economic opportunity for producers and increase access to healthy food for

consumers," said Vilsack. "By partnering with states and universities on these projects, we hope to generate new ideas and create new marketing channels that will help our farmers and ranchers and create an even stronger rural America."

More than half of the 22 projects focus on increasing sales of value added meat products, aquaculture products, and fresh and processed produce in local and regional food systems. Other research topics include forestry, bioenergy and horticulture.

In New Mexico, the state university and the department of agriculture will work with the cattle growers' association and others to survey ranchers about their marketing practices. The project will examine marketing barriers and challenges created by the ongoing drought. Researchers will use the information to identify marketing best practices.

Expanding vegetable options in the United States is an emphasis for projects from the universities of District of Columbia (UDC) and Hawaii. The UDC will measure the demand for traditional African vegetables grown by local farmers to determine the economic viability of producing those crops on a regular basis. In Hawaii, the university will work with West coast retailers to develop a strategy for marketing three varieties of local vegetables to consumers. The project will also identify the best packing methods for preserving quality and nutritional content over long distances.

Farm to school is the focus for grants awarded in New Jersey and Montana. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture will continue its work with Rutgers University to develop affordable food products tailored for the state's school lunch program that will provide a new and sustainable market for New Jersey growers. The Montana Department of Agriculture and its partners will explore ways to ensure K-12 schools have access to fruits and vegetables year-round.

Contact: Office of Communication (202)720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

(October 1)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK ON THE EXPIRATION OF AUTHORITY FOR 2008 FARM BILL PROGRAMS

"Many programs and policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture were authorized under the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 ("2008 Farm Bill") through September 30, 2012. These include a great number of critical programs impacting millions of Americans, including programs for farm commodity and price support, conservation, research, nutrition, food safety, and agricultural trade. As of today, USDA's authority or funding to deliver many of these programs has expired, leaving USDA with far fewer tools to help strengthen American agriculture and grow a rural economy that supports 1 in 12 American jobs. Authority and funding for additional programs is set to expire in the coming months. Without action by the House of Representatives on a multi-year Food, Farm and Jobs bill, rural communities are today being asked to shoulder additional burdens and additional uncertainty in a tough time. As we continue to urge Congress to give USDA more tools to grow the rural economy, USDA will work hard to

keep producers and farm families informed regarding those programs which are no longer available to them."

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

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

**AG SECRETARY VILSACK SAYS
ACROSS THE BOARD GOVERNMENT CUTS
ARE NOT A WISE IDEA**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says a mandated across the board cut to government could cause problems in the area of food safety. Secretary Vilsack told reporters Monday that he expects some budget cuts over the next few years and that USDA has been busy preparing for them ahead of time.

Radio Story: [Vilsack Says Across The Board Government Cuts Not A Wise Idea](#)
[ACTUALITY: USDA Has Been Preparing For Budget Cuts](#)

**INVESTMENTS IN SPECIALTY CROPS HELP TO STRENGTHEN NEW MARKETS
AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
FOR FARMERS AND RANCHERS**

The USDA announced \$101 million in grants to support America's specialty crops producers, who provide the fruits, vegetables, nuts and other nutritious foods for millions of healthy American meals each day. Approximately \$55 million of the total will be invested in 56 specialty crop block grants to states that fund 748 initiatives across the country to strengthen markets and expand economic opportunities for local and regional producers. An additional \$46 million will go to support new and continuing research and extension activities to address challenges and opportunities for growers and businesses that rely on a sustainable, profitable specialty crops industry. Vilsack made the announcement before touring the Catholic Multicultural Center in Madison, Wis., which prepares food, including fresh fruit and vegetables, for delivery to local public schools.

Under Vilsack's leadership, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has supported efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems for farmers of all types and sizes, helping them take advantage of new opportunities and succeed in today's marketplace. Thanks to this support for the diversity of American agriculture, the sector is experiencing one of its best periods in history. Today, both agricultural exports and net farm income are at record levels, while farm debt has been cut in half since the 1980s. Overall, American agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs in the United States.

"By investing in projects that stimulate growth and development for specialty crop growers of all sizes, we're helping American farmers establish a marketplace for new businesses opportunities in each region of the country," said Vilsack. "These investments will support local and regional markets, and improve access to healthy food for millions of children and supply thousands of farmers markets, restaurants and other businesses with fresh, high-quality fruits and vegetables. The grants also help growers solve technology needs or make better informed decisions on profitability and sustainability, leading to stronger rural American communities and businesses."

The goal of USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is to promote and increase opportunities for specialty crop producers. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands received grants this year, totaling \$55 million. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/scbgbp to review the 2012 project summaries and view a list of awards by location. For a full list of awards, visit http://www.nifa.usda.gov/newsroom/news/2012news/scr_i_award_descriptions.html

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [The Latest Investments In Specialty Crops](#)

[ACTUALITY: Specialty Crop Projects For Strengthening New Markets](#)

[ACTUALITY: Research And Extension For The Specialty Crops Industry](#)

[ACTUALITY: What The Lack Of A Farm Bill Means](#)

For more agriculture news visit www.USDA.gov



[Read USDA's Latest Blog Posts](#)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS

[TV #39 Ag Sec Weekly Address - Partnering With Communities In Drought Response](#)



[USDA Celebrates 150 Years](#)

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

(Feature Line-Up Subject To Change Prior to Update On October 9, 2012)

AGRICULTURE USA CD # 41.12 – A recently established network of USDA Agricultural Research Service watershed research and experimental range stations hopes to improve problem solving in rangelands and watersheds. Rod Bain looks at this network and its purpose in this edition of "Agriculture USA".

CONSUMER TIME CD # 41.12 – The Impacts Of The New School Meals Standard, Meat Characteristics Determined By Technology, Slow Cookers And Food Safety, Boosting The Nutrition In Food Aid Products, The Outlook For The Rest Of The Atlantic Hurricane Season.

AG UPDATE CD # 41.12 – Agricultural Cooperatives Surpass Themselves, Sign Up For Program Is A SURE Thing, What Has Changed Crop Forecast Wise Since February, Winter Wheat Crop Planting Concerns Grow, Protection Tips For Hay Against Imported Fire Ants.

UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE – October 10 - Crop Weather Report (WAOB). October 11 – Crop Production Reports (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Reports (ERS-WAOB). October 12 – Oilseed, Cotton, And Rice Outlooks (ERS-WAOB). October 15 – Wheat And Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS-WAOB); 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

Go to www.usda.gov, click on Newsroom at top of the page, scroll down on right side of page until you see Radio and TV.

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.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

Preserving Green Grazing Even During Drought

USDA is helping ranchers learn to keep some green on their land even during drought

FTP Download instructions:

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

Username: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: healthy riparian areas

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264)

YouTube: [healthy riparian areas](#)

Video Podcast: [healthy riparian areas iTunes](#)

RSS Page: [healthy riparian areas RSS](#)

U.S. Forest Service To Protect Native American Site

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack joined state, local, and tribal leaders in Colorado to celebrate the designation of a new national monument in that state

FTP Download instructions:

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User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: chimney rock

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264)

YouTube: [Chimney Rock](#)

Video Podcast: [Chimney Rock iTunes](#)

RSS Page: [Chimney Rock RSS](#)

Public Service Announcements: Hispanic And Women Farmer Claims Process

FTP Download instructions:

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User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filenames for PSA's:

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process Spanish 60

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process Spanish 30

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims English Process 60

Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims English Process 30

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

THE WORLD DAIRY EXPO IN MADISON, WISCONSIN DRAWS HUGE CROWD – Tom Cassidy (Ag Radio Network, Inc. – Utica, New York) attended the expo. Cassidy said there were 2600 elite dairy cows from across the country, 65,000 guests from over 70 countries, almost 900 companies displaying the latest innovations in the industry makes for a lot of learning. “Even with tough times for dairy producers, Expo is a great time to meet old friends and make new ones.”



THE IOWA HUNGER SUMMIT IS COMING OCTOBER 16TH – The sixth annual Iowa Hunger Summit will be held at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. This year's Summit focuses on coalitions and collaborations to end hunger, with a special emphasis on senior hunger. The event is free and open to the public. It brings together community, business, civic and religious leaders from across Iowa who are united by their interest and involvement in the fight against hunger. [There's still time to register!](#) The Iowa Hunger Summit is organized by the [World Food Prize Foundation](#) and sponsored by [FBL Financial Group, Inc.](#) and [Iowa Farm Bureau](#).

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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