



Letter No. 3695.2012  
Friday, December 7, 2012  
Creative Media & Broadcast Center  
202-720-7079

**BROADCASTERS LETTER**  
#3695.2012  
Friday, December 7, 2012

**(December 7)**

**USDA AND USAID COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE  
COMMON BEAN TO STRENGTHEN GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded five grants totaling \$4.5 million in support of research to improve the production of the common bean, a main staple produced throughout food insecure areas of the world, including East and Southern Africa. The awards were made by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID provided the funds for the grants.

"Over the next 50 years, we will need to produce roughly as much food for the world's population as has been produced in the entire history of mankind," said Catherine Woteki, USDA's Chief Scientist and Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics. "A challenge this serious and urgent requires the best and brightest ideas in food and agricultural science. The projects awarded today have the potential to unlock those ideas and improve the production of one of the world's most vital food crops."

The funded projects will work to address challenges to common bean production faced by smallholder producers. The program is part of the government-wide [Feed the Future Initiative](#), President Obama's whole-of-government global hunger and food security initiative which supports country-driven approaches to address the root causes of hunger and poverty and forge long-term solutions to chronic food insecurity and under-nutrition. The partnership is also part of the USAID-USDA Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative, which addresses food security needs by linking U.S. research and scientific innovations to effective adaptations in the fields across developing countries.

"This new research will help us solve critical production and disease constraints in common bean, the most important grain legume in human diets," said Julie Howard, Chief Scientist with USAID's Bureau for Food Security. "Because common bean is the primary staple crop for over 200 million Africans and cultivated mostly by women, the potential impact of more productive, disease-resistant varieties on household nutrition and incomes in our Feed the Future countries is substantial. We are pleased to support this collaborative approach to tackling some of the most challenging problems affecting legume productivity, one of Feed the Future's primary research themes." Visit [USDA Newsroom](#) for the five projects awarded which will provide research for two core focus areas and the institutions awarded funding in fiscal year 2012.

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

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### **USDA, GULF STATE PRODUCERS AND PARTNERS TAKE ON THE 'INITIATIVE' FOR GULF OF MEXICO CONSERVATION**

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack announced the release of a new USDA report highlighting crucial ways farmers, ranchers and landowners are participating in USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partnership initiatives to improve ecosystems, wildlife habitat and water quality on private lands in the Gulf of Mexico region.

"USDA conservation efforts have improved water quality, enhanced wildlife habitats and bolstered agricultural operations in coastal communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The report shows the importance of continued partnerships, restoration and conservation of natural resources as they are key to the recovery of American ecosystems and rural economies.

The [report](#) spotlights more than 20 successful conservation projects put into action by Gulf region producers and forest owners with assistance from NRCS and its partners. For more information on NRCS' initiatives and programs, visit [nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov) or your local USDA service center. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service helps America's farmers and ranchers conserve the Nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

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

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## **MEMORANDUM SIGNED TO COLLABORATE TO PROTECT INDIAN SACRED SITES**

Four cabinet-level departments joined the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation today in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to improve the protection of Indian sacred sites. The MOU also calls for improving tribal access to the sites. It was signed by cabinet secretaries from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy and Interior. It was also signed by the chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

"The President is insistent that these Sacred Sites be protected and preserved: treated with dignity and respect. That is also my commitment as Secretary of USDA," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "I know my fellow Secretaries share in this commitment. We understand the importance of these sites and will do our best to make sure they are protected and respected."

"American Indian service members are fighting to protect America on distant battlefields," said Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. "I'm pleased this new agreement will help protect Indian sacred sites here at home."

"Protecting America's air and water and our nation's heritage is an important part of the Energy Department's commitment to Tribal Nations across the country, particularly those that are neighbors to the Department's National Laboratories, sites and facilities," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "I look forward to continuing this important work and collaborating with other federal agencies and Tribal Nations to protect Indian sacred sites throughout the United States."

"We have a special, shared responsibility to respect and foster American Indian and Alaska Native cultural and religious heritage, and today's agreement recognizes that important role," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "Inter-agency cooperation fosters our nation-to-nation relationship with tribes, and that's certainly true when it comes to identifying and avoiding impacts to the sites that tribes hold sacred."

"Through collaboration and consultation, the signatory agencies will work to raise awareness about Indian sacred sites and the importance of maintaining their integrity. The tools to be developed under this MOU will help agencies meet their Section 106 responsibilities," said Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, ACHP chairman. "The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is very pleased to be part of this historic initiative to address the protection and preservation of Indian sacred sites."

The MOU will be in effect for five years and requires participating agencies to determine inter-agency measures to protect sacred sites. It also sets up a framework for consultation with tribes, creation of a training program for federal employees to provide educational opportunities concerning legal protections and limitations related to protection of the sites, creation of a website that includes links to federal agency

responsibilities regarding sacred sites and the establishment of management practices that could include collaborative stewardship of those sites.

The MOU calls for development of guidance for management and treatment of sacred sites including creation of sample tribal-agency agreements. It sets up a public outreach plan to maintain, protect and preserve the sites, and calls for identification of impediments to federal-level protection of the sites. Additionally, the MOU provides for outreach to non-federal partners, tribal capacity-building efforts and it establishes a working group to implement the terms of the agreement.

Secretary Vilsack released a [report](#) calling for USDA and the U.S. Forest Service to work more closely with tribal governments in the protection, respectful interpretation and appropriate access to Indian sacred sites. The report recommends steps the Forest Service should take to strengthen the partnerships between the agency, tribal governments, and American Indian and Alaska Native communities to help preserve America's rich native traditions.

Contact: USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623  
Story Info: [USDA Newsroom 1](#) and [USDA Newsroom 2](#)

## **(December 6)**

### **THE FARM BILL COULD BE LINKED TO THE FISCAL CLIFF AVOIDANCE PACKAGE**

Could any possible agreement on the fiscal cliff be used as a vehicle for passage of a farm bill? Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said if an immediate across the board budget cut were to be triggered, it would be the worst thing that could happen to his department.

Radio Story: [Farm Bill Might Be Linked To Fiscal Cliff Avoidance Package](#)  
[Budget Sequester Would Be Bad For USDA](#)

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### **PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA APPROVED BY THE U.S. SENATE**

Both houses of Congress have now approved giving Russia most favored nation trade status, which should boost ag exports. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's commented on passage of Permanent Normal Trade Relations with Russia. He made the remarks at the Farm Journal forum in Washington, DC on Thursday.

Most experts agree that sales of U.S. agricultural products to Russia will increase over the next few years, but how much of that increase will be able to be attributed to Permanent Normal Trade Relations status with Russia is hard to know.

Radio Story: [Senate Approves Permanent Normal Trade Relations With Russia](#)  
[Actualty: Vilsack On Russia Permanent Normal Trade Relations](#)  
[Opinions Vary On Actual Future Farm Trade Effects Of Russia PNTR](#)

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**NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET DIRECTORY SEES  
52 PERCENT SPIKE IN WINTER LISTINGS**

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that the number of winter markets listed in USDA's National Farmers Market Directory has increased 52 percent, from 1,225 in 2011 to 1,864 in 2012. Winter markets now account for roughly 24 percent of the 7,865 farmers markets listed in the USDA national directory. Markets operating at least once between November and March are considered winter farmers markets.

"Each winter farmers market offers additional opportunities for farmers to generate income year round," said Merrigan. "These investments are a win-win. Farmers have more stability, and consumers have a reliable supply of local food, regardless of the season." The 2012 top 10 states for winter farmers markets are:

1. California with 284
2. New York with 196
3. Florida with 105
4. Maryland with 70
5. Texas with 63 (New to the top 10 list)
6. North Carolina with 62

Cost effective options, such as hoop houses and eco-friendly greenhouse energy use, have helped many small and mid-sized farmers expand their growing season while keeping overhead costs down. Many local markets also launch targeted marketing campaigns to raise community awareness of the extended farmers market season and product offerings. According to USDA's most recent National Farmers Market Manager Survey, markets operating seven months or more each year often see a sizable difference in revenue.

Consumers can find a variety of products such as fresh or preserved fruit, root vegetables, hearty greens, tree nuts, meat, poultry, eggs, honey, herbs, handmade soaps, baked goods, pumpkins, ornamental crops like Christmas trees, gourds and other holiday foods or decorative items.

"Winter markets are a great way to support local farms and businesses year-round," said Merrigan. "As you celebrate the holiday season and bring in the New Year,

more farmers markets are there to provide fresh ingredients for your favorite holiday dishes and offer unique gift options for family and friends."

An interactive view of USDA programs that support local and regional foods including Specialty Crop Block Grant awards, Farmers Market Promotion Program and more, is available at the [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass](#). [The KYF Compass](#) is a digital guide to USDA resources related to local and regional food systems. The Compass consists of an [interactive U.S. map](#) USDA-supported local and regional food projects and an [accompanying narrative](#) documenting the results of this work through case studies, photos and video content.

Contact: Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

Radio Story: [The Number Of Winter Farmers Markets Sees A Spike](#)  
[More Communities Warm Up To Winter Farmers Markets](#)

## **(December 5)**

### **THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION COMPLIANCE MOVES FORWARD**

The U.S. has until late May to comply with a World Trade Organization rulings pertaining to Country of Origin Labeling for meat. The Chief Counsel of the U.S. Trade Representative's Office, Tim Reif, explained a recent World Trade Organization ruling on administering U.S. Country of Origin Labeling of meat.

Radio Story: [Moving Forward With Country Of Origin WTO Compliance](#)  
[ACTUALITY: WTO Country Of Origin Ruling Explained](#)

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### **LIVESTOCK FEED IMPACTED BY WINTER WHEAT CONDITION**

In parts of the Southern Plains, winter wheat used as livestock feed could be in short supply this season due to adverse weather.

Radio Story: [Winter Wheat Condition Impacts Livestock Feed](#)

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### **CHRISTMAS TREE DATA PART OF THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE**

The Christmas tree industry is eagerly awaiting results from this upcoming Census of Agriculture, but first growers will need to respond to the questionnaire that's heading their way. Renee Picanso, who directs the census operation for USDA's

National Agricultural Statistics Service, related some Christmas tree production data from a special 2009 survey.

Radio Story: [Ag. Census Will Gather Much Needed Data On Christmas Trees](#)  
[Actualty: Latest Christmas Tree Data Is From 2009](#)

## **(December 4)**

### **CONCERN OVER THIS YEAR'S WINTER WHEAT CROP**

Weather conditions across much of the nation's winter wheat belt continue to raise concerns about the condition of this year's crop. The condition of this year's winter wheat crop is already raising talk of another season that featured drought and high abandonment rates for the crop.

Radio Story: [Continued Concern About The Winter Wheat Crop](#)  
[Winter Wheat Crop And 1988-89 Comparisons](#)

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### **SNOW IS BEGINNING TO BUILD UP ON THE WESTERN SNOWPACK WHILE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA IS BEING FLOODED**

Many mountains in the West are starting to accumulate snowpack for the upcoming irrigation season. Meantime, a day long series of storms saturated soils and caused flooding in parts of Northern California, but there may be a break soon. USDA meteorologist, Brad Rippey, notes that colder air coming in the West Coast will slow down flooding in Northern California.

Radio Story: [Western Snowpack Starting To Build](#)  
[Golden State Rains Continue As Does Flooding](#)  
[ACTUALITY: On Change In West Coast Weather](#)

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### **CHAMPIONS OF ENSURING OTHERS' ARE FOOD SECURE**

Innovative approaches to ensure that no one goes hungry are why a small community grocery store got the White House Champions of Change award. The White House recently recognized community leaders for their efforts to increase food security and improve the nutrition for those in need.

This holiday season it seems a number of shoppers say they are giving food as holiday gifts. This is the highest rate in food gift giving in 6 years. Kathy Grannis with

the National Retail Federation saying more people are giving grocery store and gas station gift cards this season.

Radio Story: [Strengthening U.S. Food Security Through Grassroots Efforts](#)  
[Champions Of Change Work To Strengthen Food Security](#)  
[Food Is Growing As A Holiday Gift Idea](#)  
[ACTUALITY: More People Giving Grocery Store Gift Cards This Year](#)

## **(December 3)**

### **USDA GRANTS SUPPORT RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND EXTENSION ACTIVITIES AT TRIBAL LAND-GRANT COLLEGES**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced nearly \$17 million in grants to tribal colleges and universities to support research, education and extension activities to support schools in American Indian communities focused on bolstering their students' learning in the areas of science and mathematics. The announcement comes as individuals, families and communities across the nation celebrated Native American Heritage Month during November.

"For many Native American students, tribal colleges and universities are a critical option for moving beyond a high school education," said Sonny Ramaswamy, NIFA director. "We are proud to sponsor these tribal land-grant colleges and enable them to better serve the students who attend them as well as tribal communities."

Tribal land-grant colleges and universities infuse components of Native American culture in their teaching curriculum. For example, an environmental biology class may be combined with studies of native plant species. Through the tribal research grants, tribal colleges partner with other land-grant universities to address issues of interest to the local Native American communities, such as preserving tribal forests or protecting water quality. Tribal college extension services reach out to Native American ranchers and farmers to improve farm profitability. They also provide vital health, safety and economic development information to tribal communities. The Tribal College Endowment supports facilities and other critical needs at these schools.

NIFA awarded \$1.9 million in new grants through the Tribal College Research Grants program in fiscal year 2012. The program was designed to assist 1994 land-grant institutions (tribal colleges) build institutional research capacity through applied projects that address student educational needs and solve community, reservation or regional problems. In addition, NIFA made \$10.4 million in continuation grants for education and extension activities along with facility improvements and other critical needs at tribal colleges. For a list of the FY 2012 awards visit [USDA Newsroom](#). For more information about NIFA visit [www.nifa.usda.gov](http://www.nifa.usda.gov).

Contact: Jennifer Martin (202) 720-8188  
Story Info: [USDA Newsroom](#)

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## **DROUGHT: IT'S EXPANDING, NOT SHRINKING**

Not so good news for farmers and ranchers when it comes to be what seems the never ending drought. USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey says the drought is beginning to expand again in both area and severity. The already parched Plains states are getting drier by the day.

Radio Story: [Drought Area Is Not Shrinking. It's Expanding Northwest Getting Too Much Rain. Plains Being Left Out](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Some Examples Of How The Drought Is Expanding](#)  
[ACTUALITY: Cattle, Wheat And Hay Area In Drought On The Rise](#)

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## **BUSY BEES PLAY AN INTEGRAL IN POLLINATOR PLOTS**

Having plots of flowers and plants already planted near crop fields could have many advantages for pollination of next season's crops. Native bee species are responsible for pollinating crops that honey bees cannot. And some of those crops may be surprising to some.

Radio Story: [Planting A Pollinator Plot Now For Next Year's Crops](#)  
[Native Bees Are Important Pollinators](#)

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## **AMMONIA EMISSIONS USED AS A FERTILIZER**

USDA researchers have patented technology that will take ammonia emissions from livestock manure and create a value added product.

Radio Story: [A Way To Turn Ammonia Emissions Into A Fertilizer Product](#)

For more agriculture news visit [www.USDA.gov](http://www.USDA.gov)



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

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's  
**WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS**

[TV #48 Ag Sec Weekly Address – Abundant, Affordable And Safe Food Supply](#)



[USDA Celebrates 150 Years](#)

**FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE**

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

**AGRICULTURE USA CD # 50.12** – As the holiday shopping season winds down, there are still bargains to be had and there are still plenty of us who haven't even started to do our shopping yet. Gary Crawford has a look at this holiday season and some tips for keeping spending under control on this edition of AGRICULTURE USA.

**CONSUMER TIME CD # 50.12** – A White House Holiday 2012, Controlling Your Weight During The Holiday Party Season, Christmas Tree Goofs And Gaffes, More People Than Ever Are Giving Gifts Of Food, Consider Going To The Farmer's Market Year Round.

**AG UPDATE CD # 50.12** – The Growing Concern About The Winter Wheat Crop, Calculating New Crop Insurance Rates, Christmas Tree Farmers Optimistic About Sales, Want To Work Hard – Try Christmas Tree Farming, Planting Pollination Plots Early For Crop Fields.

**UPCOMING ON THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** – December 11 - Crop Weather Report (WAOB), Crop Production Reports (NASS) and World Agricultural Supply And Demand Estimates (ERS – WAOB). December 12 – Oilcrops, Rice, and Cotton Outlooks (ERS – WAOB); US Agricultural Trade Data Update (ERS). December 13 – Wheat and Feed Grain Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). December 17 – Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlooks (ERS – WAOB). **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 Newslines, 202-720-6776, 5:00pm ET

or

Go to [www.usda.gov](http://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

### USDA Working With Louisiana Farmers To Reduce Run-Off Into Gulf Of Mexico

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has launched a water and wildlife conservation effort along the Gulf Coast of the United States. In the second of a five part series on five different states, USDA TV reporter Bob Ellison has more on efforts in Louisiana.

YouTube: [GOMI Louisiana](#)

Video Podcast: [GOMI Louisiana iTunes](#)

RSS Page: [GOMI Louisiana RSS](#)

FTP Download instructions:

The host: [ftp://ocbmtcmedia.download.akamai.com/23747/TV Features](ftp://ocbmtcmedia.download.akamai.com/23747/TV%20Features)

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: GOMI Louisiana

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

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### 2012 US Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting

Scenes from the ceremony to light the US Capitol Christmas Tree, from the Blanco Ranger District of the White River National Forest near Meeker, CO and decorated with hand-made ornaments. The 73-foot Englemann spruce tree was switched on by Colorado Springs high school student Ryan Shuster and House Speaker John Boehner on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC.

YouTube: [2012 US Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting](#)

Please email [bob.ellison@usda.gov](mailto: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

Please forward items to be included. This space is designated for stories related to what's going on in the farm broadcasting community around the country.

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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](mailto: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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