

## **FEATURE – USDA KEEPS INFO LOCKED UP SAFE**

INTRO: U-S-D-A monthly lockup deals with information that can affect food prices around the world. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more on what's done to make sure that information is secure and accurate. (1:36)

ONCE A MONTH WE HEAR ABOUT THE U-S-D-A LOCK-UP, BUT WHAT IS IT? THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE LOCK-UP OCCURS BEFORE MARKET SENSITIVE DATA LIKE THE MONTHLY CROP PRODUCTION REPORT IS RELEASED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

Hubert Hamer, Chairman, USDA NASS Agriculture Statistics Board: We have full physical security, a perimeter around the space that we work within, and we also have some other surveillance technology in place to detect any other transmission signals and the like. That information is not revealed until we are in full lock-up situation where all of the blinds are closed; all of the outside communications have been disabled. Once we are within that space we're able to take the information and populate it on a local area network within the lock-up space.

THIS INFORMATION IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE BECAUSE IT CAN AFFECT CROP PRICES ACROSS THE NATION AND AROUND THE WORLD. AN ACCIDENTAL INFORMATION LEAK COULD GIVE CERTAIN PARTIES AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE IN FINANCIAL TRADING.

Hamer: We collect this valuable information from the farmers and ranchers from across the country and the first thing that we want to make sure is that it's handled in a secure environment.

THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO REPORTERS IN THE LOCK-UP HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND COMPILED BY U-S-D-A PERSONNEL. THE REPORTS SHOW HOW CROPS WILL BE USED IN THE U-S AND IN KEY FOREIGN NATIONS.

Hamer: We value the information that they provide, that we analyze and protect that information to the best of our abilities, that this is the work that we do.

IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON.