



# Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture \* Office of Communications \* Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

Letter No. 3020

August 20, 1999

**MORE DISASTER AREAS DECLARED** - Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman (August 13 and 17) declared all of Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, 13 counties in Arizona, and five counties in Virginia as agricultural disaster areas due to drought. The declaration makes farmers in those areas and all contiguous counties eligible for emergency low-interest loans and other assistance to help cover losses from the drought. Farmers have eight months to apply for emergency, low-interest loans to help cover part of their actual losses. To be eligible, farmers must have suffered at least a 30 percent loss of normal production in a single enterprise, be able to repay the loan and any other loans, be unable to obtain credit elsewhere, and have adequate security. **Contact: Matt Kilbourne (202) 720-5239.**

**TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY FARM LOANS** - Demand for USDA's Emergency Farm Loans, the low-interest loans used to assist farmers who have been hit by the drought and other disasters, is up dramatically this year. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman said, (August 13), "We have already made nearly \$287 million in Emergency Loans so far this year, an increase of 222 percent over last year. In order to help meet the unprecedented demand for these loans, I am transferring funds to the Emergency Loan Program. This money will permit USDA to fund an additional \$50 million in Emergency Loans. I also intend to continue working with the Congress on appropriate additional funding to ensure that we are doing all we can to help America's farmers during these difficult times." **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

**NATIONWIDE FOOD STAMP EDUCATION CAMPAIGN** - Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman unveiled (August 17) a nationwide food stamp public education campaign and challenged the nation's governors, mayors, and anti-hunger advocacy groups to reach out to individuals and families who are eligible for, but not receiving, food stamp benefits. Glickman said, "Despite the booming economy, hunger persists in America. Almost one third of Americans eligible for food stamps don't receive them." The USDA campaign includes posters, flyers, and brochures in English and Spanish. It centers around five compelling images targeting the three groups most under represented among food stamp recipients -- the working poor, the elderly, and legal immigrants. Campaign materials are available on CD-ROM so that partner organizations can customize them. **Contact: Jean Daniels (703) 305-2286.**

**HOLD ON BELGIUM PORK PRODUCTS LIFTED** - Agriculture Department Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Administrator Thomas Billy stated (August 16) that FSIS has released from port-of-entry hold all pork products exported from Belgium. Billy said, "This action was based on information provided by Belgium and the test results for PCBs and dioxin. Between January 1 and May 31, 4,366,442 pounds of pork came to the U.S. from Belgium. Meat and poultry products produced in European Union member states have been on hold at U.S. ports-of-entry since June 3, because feed contaminated with dioxin and PCBs may have been fed to animals in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. The Belgian government has documented that all pork used in products processed for the U.S. market originates in Denmark, the Netherlands or other approved countries-no Belgian meat was used

in products exported to the U.S. **Contact: Carol Blake (202) 720-9113.**

**CONTINUED FOOD INSECURITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES** - According to a new report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, over two-thirds of 66 vulnerable developing countries will face declining per capita food consumption through 2008, by which time well over half of the countries are projected to be unable to meet minimum nutritional food requirements. "Food Security Assessment: Why Countries Are at Risk" evaluates two aspects of food security--food availability and distribution--and analyzes their trends through 2008 for 66 countries that have been or are potential food aid recipients. Food Security Assessment: Why Countries Are at Risk (AIB-754) is available through Internet at [www.econ.ag.gov](http://www.econ.ag.gov). To obtain printed copies by mail, call 1-202-694-5139 (News Media) or 1-800-999-6779 (Non-News Media). **Contact: John Snyder (202) 694-5138.**

**USDA TO DECREASE ASSESSMENTS ON IMPORTED PORK** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture is decreasing assessments on imported pork and pork products. The decrease is sixteen-hundredths of a cent per pound, or the equivalent of thirty-five-hundredths of a cent per kilogram. Kathleen A. Morrigan, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service said, "The decrease reflects the 38 percent decrease in hog prices paid at major U.S. markets last year. The rate of assessment, which was increased from 0.35 to 0.45 of 1 percent of market price effective September 3, 1995, remains unchanged. This change will bring importer assessments more in line with those being paid by domestic producers." Assessments on imported pork and pork products are established by formula each year, based on U.S. market prices for hogs. **Contact: Lena Hogan (202) 720-8998.**

**HIGH CO<sub>2</sub> STIMULATES SOIL-BUILDING "GLUE"** - In the first examination of the effects of high atmospheric carbon dioxide levels on soil structure, a USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientist and cooperators found that the gas stimulates soil-dwelling fungi to produce more of a unique protein that greatly amplifies a soil's ability to store carbon. ARS soil scientist Sara F. Wright, previously discovered the protein and named it glomalin. She suspects it may be the primary glue that holds soil together. Now it appears that a little of this glue goes a long way toward helping soils keep carbon out of the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas contributing to possible global warming. Three different ecosystems were studied: two grasslands in northern California and chaparral in southern California. In all three, scientists found that glomalin levels rose, along with soil stability. The high carbon dioxide levels in the air increase the amount of carbon taken in by plant roots. That gives the fungi more food and enables them to produce more glomalin. The glomalin glues soil particles together and helps them clump, improving soil structure. This eases the passage of air and water through soil, boosting plant yields. It also helps soil resist erosion and hold in soil carbon--valuable organic matter that holds nutrients to recycle slowly to plants. **Contact: Sara Wright (301) 504-8156.**

**THIS CORN DEFIES THE DROUGHT** - Despite soil-parching drought, green sweet-corn plants tower six feet above protective organic mulch in a cornfield in Beltsville, Maryland. Nearby, corn planted in bare soil won't be worth harvesting. Both fields are at the Beltsville, Maryland, Agricultural Research Center (BARC), part of the Agricultural Research Service, USDA's chief scientific agency. Key to sustaining the corn through the drought is hairy vetch, a legume grown as a cover crop. The vetch--killed before researchers planted the corn--forms a dense mat. It helps rain or irrigation water seep in rather than flow across fields and erode the soil. The mulch also slows evaporation and supplies natural nitrogen fertilizer. The 7,000-acre BARC now uses hairy vetch to grow much of the corn needed for its livestock. The researchers have already developed vetch systems for tomatoes--now being adopted by some growers--and

are testing similar cover crops with peppers, cantaloupes, snap beans and other vegetables. **Contact: Ronald Korcak (301) 504-5193.**

**Edited by Leslie Parker**

## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #2202** - Need help in solving home gardening problems with eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers, and roses? In this edition of Agriculture USA, Brenda Curtis talks with a Master Gardener about what to do about gardening disasters. **(Weekly cassette - five minute documentary).**

**CONSUMER TIME #1689** - IPM in your home garden. Heat advisory for animal owners traveling with pets. Food Stamp education campaign. A Millennium tree story. What comes after school, but before dinner? **(Weekly cassette - consumer features).**

**AGRITAPE #2191** - EU heavily subsidizing pork. A record breaking soybean year. Rice prices on the way down. Disaster loans explained. Crop report offers little price hope. **(Weekly cassette - news features).**

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** - Monday, August 30, crop progress report and U.S. agricultural trade outlook. Tuesday, August 31, weekly weather and crop outlook, agricultural prices, and tobacco: world markets and trade. Wednesday, September 1, world horticultural trade and U.S. export opportunities. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. The newslines carries many stories every day that are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES: (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

**COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.**

Material changed at 5:00 p.m., ET, each working day and 10:30 a.m. on crop report days.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

### Features:

*Clinton Signs Bio-Mass Executive Order.* President Clinton signed an Executive Order (8/12) to promote the use of agricultural materials for fuels and other industrial applications. Patrick O'Leary reports from Washington.

*Processing Improves Health Benefits of Bran.* It's long been known that raw wheat bran can help the body fight colon cancer, but what about the processed bran found in most cereals? Dave Carter has the answer from the USDA Research Lab in Albany, California.

### Actualities:

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman spoke to reporters in Baltimore, Maryland (August 17). Topics include: Status of farm aid proposal in Congress. Aid package must contain disaster relief. Are low interest loans enough for drought-plagued farmers? Food aid for Russia and Cuba.

Glickman tells bio-mass roundtable at USDA (August 12) that he is exploring possibility of a program to supply ethanol plants with additional bushels of corn and soybeans when they increase their purchases from year to year.

**SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWS FEEDS:** Available Thursdays, 4:15-4:30 p.m. ET Galaxy 6 (C-Band), Transponder 11-Horizontal, Downlink Frequency 3920 MHZ, Audio 6.2/6.8.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry Quinn, (202) 720-6072, or write: Mail Stop 1360, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1360. Internet e-mail: Larry Quinn @ USDA.GOV.

## OFF MIKE

**A RADIO STATION FIELD DAY . . .** is scheduled August 26 by KWOA/KITN (Worthington, MN), reports **Matthew Widboom**. An 18-acre research plot, owned by the stations, was planted with seed provided by a seed company using a variety of herbicide treatments. This is the second year that research plot results will be shared with farmers. The local Worthington FFA Chapter handles the harvesting and marketing of the crops and is permitted to keep any profits it can generate. Matt is in his third year as farm director for KWOA/KITN. A native of Worthington, he farms with his father -- feeding cattle and raising corn and soybeans when he's not on-the-air.

**IN THE BOOT HEEL . . .** of Missouri, hot weather and low rainfall are causing crops to suffer, reports **Bill Wagner** (KBXB, Sikeston, MO), associate farm director. They were on track for a boom year, then rain stopped about a month ago. Bill and Farm Director **Hugh Robinson** both report that the corn still looks good despite hot and dry conditions. Even first crop soybeans are doing well, but soybeans planted after this year's wheat crop are not doing well. Cotton is showing heat stress with bolls opening early on 25-30 percent of the acreage. Six counties composing the Missouri boot heel account for 33 percent of the state's total agricultural revenue. Bill and Hugh produce nine daily radio programs at 45 minutes past the hour, starting at 6:45 a.m. Five-minute shows are aired at 6:45, 7:45 and 8:45 a.m. with a 10-minute program on at 12:45 p.m. Hugh moved to KBXB about a year ago, and Bill joined him six months later.

**CATTLE LOSSES . . .** and outstanding crops are resulting from unusual weather conditions in northeast Nebraska. **Susan Risinger** (WJAG, Norfolk, NE) said in late July, 5,000 cattle were lost in feedlots due to high temperatures, high humidity and no winds. Also, 10-head of cattle were lost on one ranch from an outbreak of Anthrax that resulted from dormant spores in the soil being activated by unusual weather. Vaccinations and other precautions were taken to guard against spread to other cattle or humans. On the other hand, corn is expected to reach outstanding yields due to excellent crop conditions over most of the area with rainfall saving irrigation systems this year. After completing coverage of nine county fairs this summer, Susan says she and her colleagues may be ready for "fair goes anonymous."

**LARRY A. QUINN, Director**  
**Video, Teleconference & Radio Center**