



January 2005

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)
Office of Outreach and Exporter Assistance (OOEA)

Vol. 3



**Hot
News
Issues!**

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The entire FAS Outreach and Exporter Assistance Staff wishes you the very best in 2005!



Nebraska Governor Michael Johanns was Unanimously Recommended to the Senate for Confirmation as Secretary



A Canadian Dairy Cow Tests Positive for BSE



FAS Works With Other Agencies in Tsunami Assistance



Jamaica Lifts Ban on U.S. Beef Products



U.S. and Korea Reach Agreement on Rice Imports



USDA Awards \$1 Million In Food Stamp Grants to Faith and Community-based Organizations



USDA and DOE Announce \$15 Million for Renewable Energy

Shrimp Producers in Alabama and Louisiana Granted TAA Assistance
USDA provides cash and technical assistance if imports result in a decline in prices or income.

USDA Invites State Participation in the Federal Market Improvement Program

For assistance in exporting your food products, contact your state department of agriculture.

Click Your  Button on the NASDA Directory to Locate Your State

FAS Web:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/>

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ [Senator Chambliss is the new Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry](#)
- ▶ [Gene Millard, Veteran Manager and Broadcaster, New Executive Director of the NAFB](#)
- ▶ Click Your  Button on FAS Upcoming Events for Trade Shows
- ▶ [USDA Launches a Nutrition Website as a Healthy Eating Guide](#)
- ▶ [Members Appointed to Serve on the Emerging Markets Committee](#)
- ▶ [The Convention of the American Frozen Foods Institute Scheduled for February in California](#)
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Links to Upcoming Events

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**Director's
Column**

OOEA will continue to build partnerships and to enhance the local benefits of trade. [Director of OOEA Dale Miller explains.](#)

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[Links to Regional Trade Groups](#)



TAPO Mailbox
Trade Promotion and
Assistance Office

[How can successful market research assist in targeting exports more efficiently?](#)

Email export questions to FAS Trade Assistance and Promotion Office at:

tapo@fas.usda.gov
Phone: (202) 720-7420

Confirmation Hearing



(Photo from the Nebraska Governor's Home Page at <http://gov.nol.org/>)

Nebraska Governor Johanns and First Lady Stephanie at a December news conference in Lincoln, Nebraska. The news conference, held in the State Capitol, was an opportunity for the Governor to discuss his recent nomination by President Bush as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture with the Nebraska press.

On Thursday, January 6, 2005, the U.S. Senate's Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee unanimously recommended Michael Johanns of Nebraska to the Senate for confirmation as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

For more information, open your web browser and click on the U.S. Senate Website at <http://agriculture.senate.gov/>



STATEMENT

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: oc.news@usda.gov • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0011.05

by
Dr. Ron DeHaven,
Administrator,
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
January 11, 2005

“Today, Canada announced that a six year, nine month old cow has tested positive for BSE. We remain confident that the animal and public health measures that Canada has in place to prevent BSE, combined with existing U.S. domestic safeguards, provide the utmost protections to U.S. consumers and livestock.

“However, since this animal was born shortly after the implementation of Canada’s feed ban and to determine if there are any potential links among the positive animals, we will expedite sending a technical team to Canada to evaluate the circumstances surrounding these recent finds. We appreciate Canada’s willingness to cooperate and assist us in these efforts. We will continue our ongoing work with Canadian officials in their epidemiological investigations to determine the facts of these cases.

“As always, protection of public and animal health is our top priority. The result of our investigation and analysis will be used to evaluate appropriate next steps in regard to the minimal risk rule published last week.”

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STATEMENT

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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Release No. 0007.05

by
Dr. Ron DeHaven
Administrator, Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
January 7, 2005

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture is working closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in their investigation of the Canadian dairy cow that recently tested positive for BSE. This investigation is focused on identifying birth cohorts – animals born in the same herd within one year of the affected animal. The preliminary investigation has shown that one of these birth cohorts was imported into the United States in February 2002 for immediate slaughter. USDA, in collaboration with FDA, is currently tracing the disposition of this animal and will provide further details as the investigation evolves.

“Even at the height of BSE infection in Europe and the United Kingdom, it was extremely rare to have more than one animal in the same herd affected with BSE, therefore USDA believes it is extremely unlikely that this imported cow would have been infected. Nevertheless, as was the case in May 2003, when Canada had its first case of BSE and a small number of birth cohorts were traced to the United States, USDA will make every reasonable effort to obtain and provide information about the disposition of this animal as well as any other birth cohorts that are traced to the United States through Canada’s epidemiological investigation.

“USDA and FDA have had a strong program in place for years to protect the U.S. livestock population from BSE. Import controls on live cattle and certain ruminant products from countries at high risk of BSE were put in place more than 15 years ago. In 1997, both the United States and Canada finalized animal feed bans, which are the single most important safeguard to prevent the spread of the disease through the cattle population. Public and animal health in the United States and Canada have also been protected through ongoing surveillance efforts and inspection of animals at slaughter for neurological signs, and now by the removal of specified risk materials from the human food supply.

“USDA also continues the enhanced BSE surveillance program that began in June 2004. To date, more than 170,000 targeted animals have been tested for BSE. All samples have been negative.”

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Relief and Reconstruction for Victims of the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami



USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service is working with other government agencies to provide assistance in the recovery from the tsunami that struck South Asia and Eastern Africa. Much of that assistance involves providing emergency food supplies made possible by the great productivity of U.S. farms. Beyond the emergency activities and supplies, the FAS international development staff will be involved with other U.S. government agencies in planning for the longer term reconstruction and development of the devastated regions. (Open your web browser and click on the sites below or click onto www.fas.usda.gov)

- Information from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
 - [USAID Tsunami Relief Page](#) - Contains updates and information about the disaster, the current situation and relief efforts.
 - [Guidance for firms and Individuals Offering Commodities and Transportation Services](#)
- U.S. Department of State
 - [Tsunami Relief Efforts](#)
 - [U.S. Response to Tsunami and Earthquake in Asia](#)
 - [State Department Travel Web Page Asian Tsunami Crisis Information](#)
- [Center for International Disaster Information](#)
 - [Register Offers of Goods and Services](#)
- United Nations - [Tsunami in South Asia: UN Responds to Tsunami Disaster](#)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations - [Tsunami: Helping Rural People Rebuild Their Lives](#)
- United Nations Environment Programme - [Asian Tsunami Disaster](#)

- From the White House - "[US Support for Tsunami for Earthquake and Tsunami Victims](#)"
- Tsunami [Information from the U.S. Department of Defense](#)
- Tsunami [Information from FirstGov, the official Web portal of the Federal government](#)
- [United Nations World Food Programme](#)
- World Health Organization - [South Asia Earthquake and Tsunamis](#)
- Asian Development Bank - [Helping Rebuild Lives and Communities in the Tsunami Aftermath](#)
- [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#)

Photo courtesy of the United States Navy.



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Release No. 0513.04

Julie Quick (202) 720-4623
Harold Kanarek (202) 720-0328

JAMAICA LIFTS BAN ON U.S. BEEF PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6, 2004 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that the Jamaican Ministry of Agriculture has lifted its ban on U.S. beef products.

“We are very pleased with this agreement with Jamaica because it marks an important step forward in getting U.S. beef markets opened,” Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said. “We are continuing our market-opening efforts in other countries. Our goal continues to be the resumption of normal beef trade throughout the world, and we are working tirelessly on that effort.”

“This action demonstrates Jamaica’s commitment to trade in beef and beef products based on internationally accepted scientific standards for human and animal health,” Veneman said.

In response to a finding of BSE in December 2003, the United States has implemented several new regulatory measures to further strengthen the food safety system and assure consumers of wholesome meat products. These include immediately banning non-ambulatory animals for human consumption, prohibiting specified risk materials and strengthening meat-processing safeguards.

Prior to the ban, U.S. beef and beef products exports to Jamaica totaled \$4.3 million in 2003.

Exporters interested in shipping beef to Jamaica can find country requirements on the USDA website at

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations & Policies/Export Information/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations%20&%20Policies/Export%20Information/index.asp).



News Release



United States Department of Agriculture - Office of Communications - News Distribution
Room 460-A - 1400 Independence Avenue, SW - Washington, DC 20250-1350
Voice: (202) 720-9035 - Internet: news@usda.gov - World Wide Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508
World Wide Web: <http://www.ustr.gov/>

Release No. 0527.04

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508**

USTR PRESS RELEASES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE USTR WEBSITE AT WWW.USTR.GOV

2004-89

For Immediate Release:
December 30, 2004

Contact: **Richard Mills / Neena Moorjani**
(202) 395-3230

United States and Republic of Korea Reach Agreement on Rice Imports

Washington, DC – U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced today that they have reached agreement with the Republic of Korea to obtain greater market access opportunities for U.S. rice exporters. As a result of these negotiations, Korea will double the amount of rice it imports over the next 10 years, provide guaranteed access for 50,000 metric tons of U.S. rice each year, and make imported rice available directly to Korean consumers.

“In negotiating the agreement, we focused on improving the quantity and quality of the openings for U.S. rice exporters in the Korean market,” said Zoellick. “This will allow our competitive rice industry to make significant gains in the Korean market. Not only will U.S. rice imports increase, but the quality of access will be substantially improved -- Korean consumers will now be able to buy rice from the United States at the retail level.”

"This agreement will give U.S. farmers an opportunity to expand sales to Korea, and it will allow Korean consumers access to a high-quality American product. This marks yet another step in gaining greater access for our growers to expanding markets across the Asian region," Veneman said.

To qualify for continued ‘special treatment’ under the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Korea is required to notify the WTO of the results of these negotiations by the end of this year. The terms agreed upon during the negotiation will be reviewed by WTO Members. If the Members approve these terms by consensus, Korea will implement them in 2005.

Background

Under WTO rules established during the Uruguay Round, Korea designated rice as a sensitive product. Instead of liberalizing its rice import regime by establishing a tariff-rate quota, Korea committed to import a specific level of rice imports for a period of 10 years. That period ends on December 31, 2004.

The WTO rules also provided that Korea's market access quota for rice, known as "special treatment," could continue for an additional length of time, but only after individual WTO Members had the opportunity to negotiate concessions in terms of how Korea would continue the 'special treatment' arrangement. Earlier this year, Korea notified its trading partners that it sought an extension of the 'special treatment' for rice, and the Korean government began negotiating with the United States and eight other countries that formally expressed interest.

Release No. 0517.04

Julie Quick (202) 720-4623
Angela Harless (202) 720-4623

USDA AWARDS \$1 MILLION IN FOOD STAMP OUTREACH GRANTS TO FAITH AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15, 2004 -- Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today awarded an additional \$1 million in food stamp outreach grants to eight additional faith and community-based organizations. These organizations will use the awards to improve awareness and access to USDA's Food Stamp Program among eligible low-income households.

“USDA’s nutrition assistance programs are an important safety net for those in need,” said Veneman. “These grants provide another opportunity to improve access for low-income Americans to a nutritious diet.”

The outreach grants are designed to test innovative food stamp outreach strategies to underserved, eligible, low-income individuals and families. Grantees will use this funding to establish partnerships with employers, food retailers and other USDA Food and Nutrition Service programs, as well as provide outreach services at alternate work or community sites to reach those who are eligible. The maximum award for each grant is \$125,000. These awards are in addition to the eight outreach grants awarded in Sept. 2004.

The outreach strategies will be customized to fit the needs of each community. USDA plans to study the effectiveness of these strategies to educate eligible people about the nutrition benefits of the program, eligibility rules and application guidelines.

Grant opportunities were made available to public, private and non-profit organizations, including faith and community-based organizations across the nation to assist in educating eligible low-income people who are not currently participating in the Food Stamp Program.

The eight grantees are:

| Name of Grantee (FY05) | Location | Amount |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| Community Food Bank, Inc. | Tucson, Ariz. | \$125,000 |
| Good Faith Fund | Pine Bluff, Ark. | \$125,000 |
| City of Oakland | Oakland, Calif. | \$125,000 |
| Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc. | San Pedro, Calif. | \$121,687 |
| Worcester Community Action Council | Worcester, Mass. | \$125,000 |
| Food Bank of Northern Nevada | Sparks, Nev. | \$125,000 |
| Congreso de Latinos Unidos | Philadelphia, Pa. | \$125,000 |
| Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee | Milwaukee, Wis. | \$125,000 |

The Food Stamp Program, administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, is the cornerstone of federal nutrition assistance programs and provides crucial support to working poor and needy households. For more information about the food stamp program and outreach grants, visit USDA's Food and Nutrition Service Web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>.

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Release No. 0523.04

Julie Quick (202) 720-4623
Mary Cressel (202) 690-0547

USDA AND DOE ANNOUNCE UP TO \$15 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR BIOMASS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21, 2004—The U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the availability of up to \$15 million in grants to support President Bush's energy plan to develop renewable energy and expand the economic prospects and environmental benefits of biomass.

“Our nation can benefit greatly from the conversion of biomass into biobased products, fuels and energy,” Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said. “Biomass use strengthens rural economies, decreases America's dependence on foreign energy supplies, reduces air and water pollution and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. These grants will help fund important research projects.”

Through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, these grants are available to eligible entities to carry out research, development and demonstrations on biobased products, bioenergy, biofuels, biopower and related processes.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, on behalf of USDA and DOE, is requesting proposals for biomass research, development and demonstration projects. The solicitation package (USDA-GRANTS-67-3A75-5-22) was posted on the federal funding opportunities website at <http://www.Fedgrants.gov> on Dec. 17, 2004, and in more detail at <http://www.bioproducts-bioenergy.gov>.

Pre-applications for this joint solicitation must be submitted by Feb. 15, 2005, to USDA-NRCS, Management Services Division, P.O. Box 2890, Washington DC 20013-2890, Attn: Sheila Leonard. Approximately 400 applications were submitted for this solicitation in both fiscal years 2003 and 2004.

Eligible applicants include private sector entities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, national laboratories, federal and state research agencies and consortiums consisting of two or more of these entities. Grants will be awarded competitively based on technical merit and program priorities identified in the solicitation package.

For this solicitation, a minimum nonfederal share of 20 percent of the total project cost is required. The federal share of each grant is expected to range from \$250,000 to \$2 million, with the work proposed to be completed within a three-year timeframe.

Information on energy and agriculture is available at <http://www.usda.gov/energy>.

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January Director's Column
DIRECTOR=S COLUMN



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year!

For 2005, the FAS Office of Outreach & Exporter Assistance will stay focused on creating more partnerships and enhancing communication. In 2004 we found that partnerships with trade associations, farm groups, universities, traditionally underserved organizations, youth groups and the media created a very effective outreach network. We have been promoting the fact that trade opportunities exist in the global market, agricultural exports are very important to the national and local economy, and USDA has export assistance programs and an overseas network to help small and new-to-export companies be successful in exporting. The most effective means of expanding foreign market opportunities is through new trade agreements that increase market access and reduce trade impediments.

Public support for trade can only be enhanced by creating awareness of the local benefits of trade and that the future of American agriculture is tied to trade. American agriculture is highly reliant on foreign markets (twice as reliant as the general economy) and to that end the Foreign Agricultural Service plays a big supporting role. FAS, as the international arm of the USDA, works to improve market access for U.S. products, build new markets, improve the competitive position of American agriculture in the global marketplace and provide food aid and technical assistance to foreign countries. FAS brings global market opportunities home to U.S. businesses that result in export sales that benefit families in both the urban and rural sectors.

Recent trade agreements have freed American businesses to compete in the global market place where quality, availability, price and customer service determine what sells. Under those terms, the U.S. exports over \$1 billion of agricultural products each week.

This month I am highlighting three different outreach partners (below) in hopes you will visit their Web site to learn more about their mission, and role to support trade education and exports.

World Trade Centers Association [wtca.org]

North American Small Business International Trade Educators [nasbite.org]

Small Business Exporters Association [sbea.org]

The “S” in FAS stands for “Service” and we would like a chance to prove that to you. Please take a look at our web site (www.fas.usda.gov) and/or call our Trade Assistance and Promotion Office for exporter assistance at (202) 720-7420. We look forward to hearing from you on how we can better serve you.

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,

Dale Miller

Director
FAS Office of Outreach & Exporter Assistance

Unsubscribe Newsletter

To unsubscribe to “Outreach Notes” or to change your email address contact USDA-FAS, the Office of Outreach and Exporter Assistance by sending a short email to the Editor of “Outreach Notes” at outreach@fas.usda.gov.

Update Email Address

To unsubscribe to “Outreach Notes” or to change your email address contact USDA-FAS, the Office of Outreach and Exporter Assistance by sending a short email to the Editor of “Outreach Notes” at outreach@fas.usda.gov.



USDA GRANTS ASSISTANCE TO SHRIMP PRODUCERS IN ALABAMA UNDER TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 2004 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service today re-certified a petition for shrimp producers in Alabama under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers program. They become eligible to re-apply for adjustment assistance on Jan. 10, 2005.

Under the TAA program, USDA provides technical assistance and cash benefits to farmers and certain fishermen if increasing imports of a like or directly competitive commodity contributed importantly to a decline in producer prices and a loss of net farm or fishing income.

After an investigation, FAS determined that increasing imports of frozen and fresh whole shrimp contributed importantly to a decline in the landed price of shrimp in Alabama during 2003 when compared to the applicable 1997-2001 base period.

Shrimpers who land and market their shrimp in Alabama must apply for TAA benefits between Jan. 10 and April 11, 2005. They may obtain an application for TAA benefits (form FSA-229) from <http://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainervlet> or from their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center. They can check their local phone listings for the closest service center or go to <http://fsa.usda.gov> and click on "your local office" for contact information. General information about the TAA program can be found on the program's Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/itp/taa/taaindex.htm>.

As part of the 2005 TAA program, shrimpers and shrimp farmers who apply for TAA benefits are eligible for a variety of technical courses at no cost. Applicants who did not receive technical assistance under the fiscal 2004 TAA program must obtain technical assistance prior to July 11, 2005, in order to be eligible for financial payments. Financial payments will not be made until after applications are certified.

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USDA GRANTS ASSISTANCE TO SHRIMP PRODUCERS IN LOUISIANA UNDER TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 2004 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service today certified a petition for shrimp producers in Louisiana under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers program. They become eligible to apply for TAA benefits on Jan. 10, 2005.

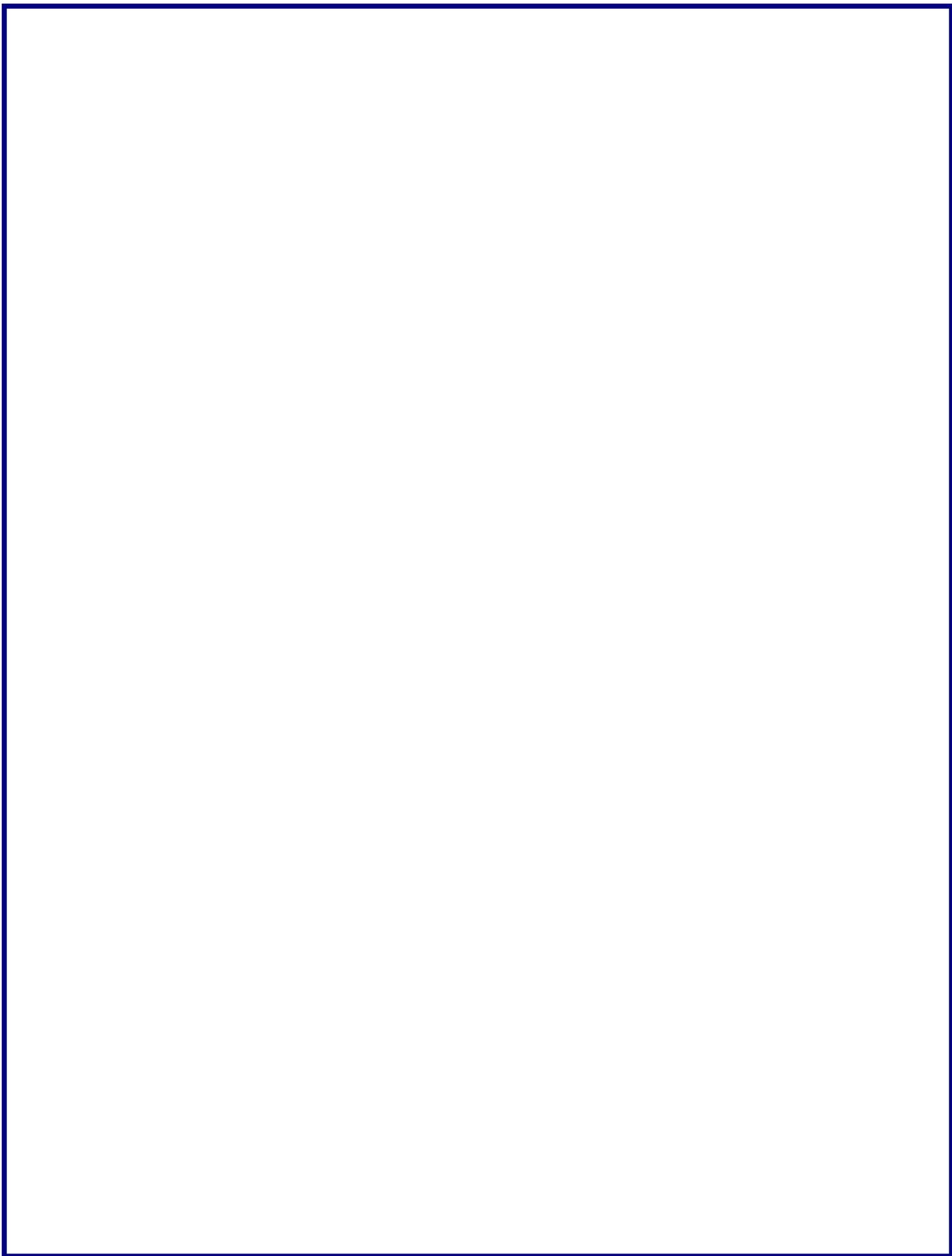
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Federal Market Improvement Program

USDA INVITES STATE PARTICIPATION IN MARKET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

USDA is inviting state departments of agriculture and other appropriate state agencies to submit proposals for matching grant funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP). For FY05, USDA anticipates that approximately \$1.3 million will be available for FSMIP grants. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) administers this program.

FSMIP funds may be requested for a wide range of marketing research or projects aimed at exploring new market opportunities for agricultural products or improving the efficiency and performance of food marketing systems. Federal funds awarded to any project must be equally matched by non-Federal funds or in-kind resources.

AMS is particularly interested in proposals that reflect a collaborative approach among the states, academia, and the farm sector. States are also urged to consider developing proposals that have regional or national significance, and that address challenges and opportunities in following areas: market analysis; transportation and distribution; competitiveness and new markets; and food quality and variety.

FSMIP funds will be allocated on the basis of one round of competition. The deadline for submitting FY05 FSMIP applications is February 11, 2005. States interested in applying for the funds may submit proposals to FSMIP Staff, USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 4009-South, Washington, D.C. 20250, or call 202/720-2704. Program guidelines, application forms, and other related information are posted on the Internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/fsmip.htm>. Applicants have the option of submitting their applications through the federal grants website: <http://www.grants.gov>. (Contact: Jennifer Yezak)

Locating Your State Department of Agriculture

Locate your State Department of Agriculture office by clicking on the National Association of the State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) website at the following address: Open your web browser and click on:

<http://www2.nasda.org/NR/exeres/FAF683C2-6CFA-432C-B416-465EF9BE1267.htm>

or by clicking on <http://www2.nasda.org>

Links to State Regional Trade Groups

The State Regional Trade Groups (STRG) are four regionally located, non-profit trade development organizations that help U.S. food producers and processors sell their products overseas. The STRGs receive funds from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the State Departments of Agriculture and private industry.

They carry out promotional activities that increase exports of U.S. high-value food and agricultural products. Activities of the organizations are directed by the State Departments of Agriculture, state agricultural promotion agencies, and coordinated with FAS' Washington and country offices overseas including international trade exhibitions, overseas trade missions, reverse trade missions, export education, in-country research, and point-of-sale promotions in foreign food chains and restaurants in markets around the world. The STRGs also administer a cost-share funding program called the Brand Program that supports promotion of brand name food and agricultural products in overseas markets. The STRGs include:



The Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association (WUSATA) is located in Vancouver, Washington. <http://www.wusata.org>

Calendar of events: http://www.wusata.org/events_calendar/default.asp



The Mid-America International Agri-Trade Council (MIATCO) is based in Chicago, Illinois. <http://www.miatco.org>

Calendar of events: http://www.miatco.org/us_food/events_calendar/index.htm



The Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA) is located in New Orleans, Louisiana. <http://www.susta.org>.

For the calendar of events click onto: <http://www.susta.org/events/index.html>

(MORE)



The Food Export USA-NE is located in the Northeast at:

<http://www.foodexportusa.org>

Calendar of events: <http://www.foodexportusa.org/calendar/index.cfm>

For more information on the State Regional Trade Groups click:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/psinfo.html>



For export assistance click on USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service

at: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/exporter.html>



The U.S. Commercial Service Export Assistance link:

<http://www.export.gov>.

New Chairman for US Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry

***CHAMBLISS TO SERVE AS CHAIRMAN OF
THE SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE***

Wednesday, January 5, 2005

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., has been selected by his colleagues to serve as the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

For more information, open your web browser and click on the U.S. Senate site at

<http://agriculture.senate.gov/news/record.cfm?id=230428>

New Executive Director of the NAFB

News Release
National Association of Farm Broadcasters
For more information contact:
Emery Kleven, NAFB President
ekleven@koilcountry1020.com
402-827-2415

January 5, 2005
(Kansas City, Missouri)

Gene Millard named NAFB Executive Director

Veteran broadcaster, manager and marketer, Gene Millard, has been named the new Executive Director of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters according to Emery Kleven, Farm Director for the Waitt Farm Network and 2005 president of NAFB.

Millard is a Missouri native, growing up on a family farm near Osborn, Missouri. He took his first job in farm broadcasting in 1964 at KFEQ radio in St. Joseph, Missouri. He served as General Manager of KFEQ from 1976 to 1999 and was instrumental in developing and implementing the NAFB Sales and Marketing project which allowed the association to conduct independent research to show the radio listening preferences of farmers and ranchers.

Gene Millard retired from Eagle Radio as Vice President of St. Joseph operations in 2002. He entered into a consultant role as Director of Marketing for NAFB. During the past two years he has worked to expand and strengthen the ties between NAFB broadcast ers and Agri-Marketers.

“I believe this is an exciting time in a rapidly evolving industry,” says Millard, “NAFB has become a focal point for the interaction of Agribusiness and NAFB farm broadcasters who have a personal relationship with farmers and the entire agribusiness community.

Kleven lead the search effort with the help of several NAFB members from stations and networks. He commented: "The NAFB executive director search committee had goals of finding a person who could 'hit the ground running' but also find a person who comes with integrity, credibility and confidence. For us, Gene Millard matched these goals. His experience and expertise in this business will lend itself well to NAFB staying on the forefront of agri-business marketing."

Millard is currently on the board of directors of Citizens Bank and Trust based in Chillicothe, Missouri, Chairman of the board of United Cooperative, Inc. based in Plattsburg, Missouri and a member of the board of Golden Triangle Ethanol Cooperative based in Craig, Missouri.

The NAFB office will remain in the Kansas City suburb of Platte City.
Millard and his wife Sharon live in St. Joseph, Missouri.

FAS Trade Show Calendar

USDA-FAS Trade Show Calendar

Locate a variety of trade show opportunities through the USDA-FAS website by opening your web browser and clicking on the FAS “Upcoming Events” listed on the FAS Web Page:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov>



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Release No. 0524.04

Julie Quick (202) 720-4623
Len Carey (301) 504-6778

NUTRITION.GOV WEBSITE PROVIDES RELIABLE INFORMATION ON HEALTHY EATING, NUTRITION, OBESITY PREVENTION

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman today announced the launch of a new nutrition website designed to help people find answers to nutrition and food related questions.

The site, <http://www.nutrition.gov/>, is a comprehensive source of information on nutrition and dietary guidance from multiple government agencies.

“Health solutions begin with the availability of reliable nutrition and physical activity information the public can use to make good health choices and maintain a healthy weight,” Veneman said. “Nutrition.gov is a web based resource that includes databases, recipes, interactive tools and specialized information for infants and children, adult women and men and seniors.”

Nutrition.gov supports the President’s *HealthierUS* Initiative and expands on the nutrition information available on the *healthierus.gov* website, which also includes information on physical fitness, prevention and making healthy choices.

Nutrition.gov includes information provided by USDA, the Department of Health and Human Services, and others. USDA’s National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board recommended in 2003 that USDA develop food- and exercise-based strategies for obesity prevention, and coordinate with other Federal agencies toward a national prevention effort. Nutrition.gov is an important tool in that effort.

The nutrition.gov site is maintained by a team of Registered Dietitians and nutrition information specialists at the Food and Nutrition Information Center of USDA’s National Agricultural Library (NAL). The team works in cooperation with scientists and professionals at USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other Federal partners.

The website also links to information on the Food Guide Pyramid, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, dietary supplements, fitness, and how to keep food safe.

The National Agricultural Library (www.nal.usda.gov), in Beltsville, Md., is part of the Agricultural Research Service, a USDA scientific research agency.



NEWS RELEASE

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Release No. 0521.04

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VENEMAN APPOINTS NEW MEMBERS TO EMERGING MARKETS COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21, 2004 -- Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the appointment of 15 new members to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Emerging Markets.

"We appreciate the contribution that these individuals are making to serve on this committee," Veneman said. "Their expertise and advice is invaluable in helping develop market economies for American producers, processors and exporters."

Newly appointed are: Julie Adams, Modesto, Calif.; Robert Bignami, Orland, Calif.; Carol Chandler, Selma, Calif.; Janice Cooper, Walnut Grove, Calif.; Robert Craig, Lansing, Mich.; Howard Gochberg, White Bear Lake, Minn.; Edgar Hicks, West Des Moines, Iowa; Edwin Jewett, Jr., Baton Rouge, La.; Mark Kuechler, Spotsylvania, Va.; David Lyons, Washington, D.C.; Jenifer McBeath, Fairbanks, Alaska; George Obernagel, Waterloo, Ill.; Russell Redding, Harrisburg, Pa.; Alex Sou, Kapolei, Hawaii; and Bonnie Wolfe, Potomac Falls, Va. The 15 newly appointed members will serve until the end of 2006.

They will join five other members who were appointed to 2-year terms in May 2003: Gail Carlson, Arlington, Va.; Geralyn Contini, Baton Rouge, La.; Harriett Paul, Tallahassee, Fla.; John Tarburton, Dover, Del.; and James Willrett, Malta, Ill.

The committee reviews funding proposals under the Emerging Markets Program, which is administered by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service. The program supports private and governmental projects to promote U.S. agricultural exports in emerging economies. Congress reauthorized the program in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The committee also advises USDA on private sector efforts to enhance food and rural business systems in developing countries.

Committee members have expertise in international agriculture, trade and marketing, especially as they relate to emerging market economies. They serve without compensation.

For more information on the Emerging Markets Program, contact Douglas Freeman at (202) 720-4327; fax: (202) 720-9361; e-mail: emo@fas.usda.gov. Information on the advisory committee and the Emerging Markets Program is also available on the Web at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/em-markets/em-markets.html>.

American Frozen Foods Institute Meeting

7/1/2004

Contact Lucas Darnell (703) 821-0770

AFFI Announces 2005 Western Frozen Food Convention San Francisco to serve as host to premier frozen food industry event

McLean, VA- The American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI) announced the 2005 Western Frozen Food Convention, which will be held February 12 – 16, 2005, at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco, Embarcadero Center, in San Francisco, California.

In announcing the Western Convention, AFFI President and Chief Executive Officer Leslie G. Sarasin said, "With more than 1,400 attendees, last year's Western Convention was a tremendous success. AFFI's Western Frozen Food Convention has always been regarded as THE place to be for frozen food companies to conduct business. 2005 should be no different."

In addition to myriad educational options, AFFI's Western Frozen Food Convention presents premier business opportunities for companies throughout the entire frozen food industry.

Located on the stunning Embarcadero waterfront of downtown San Francisco, the Hyatt Regency is within five minutes of Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, Union Square, the Moscone Convention Center, Ghiradelli Square and North Beach.

Registration materials will be mailed and available on AFFI's website, <http://www.affi.com>, in September. For more information, contact Jenny Mitchell or Kainoa Trotter, AFFI's managers of conventions and meetings, at (703) 821-0770.

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The American Frozen Food Institute is the national trade association that promotes and represents the interests of all segments of the frozen food industry. The Institute fosters industry development and growth, advocates on behalf of the industry before legislative and regulatory entities, and provides additional value-added services for its members and for the benefit of consumers. For more information, visit www.affi.com.

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For more information, contact <http://www.affi.com/>



TRANSCRIPT

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Release No. 0003.05

**U.S. Farm Report, Town and Country Living
with Orion Samuelson and Max Armstrong
Year-end interview with Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman
as Aired January 1, 2005 on RFD-TV**

MAX ARMSTRONG: "Welcome to this week's U.S. Farm Report Town and Country Living. It was quite a year for American agriculture with the finding of the so-called mad cow disease just a few days before the year began with some extremely wet weather brought on by the hurricanes that hit repeatedly in parts of the United States and also with a brand new disease arriving on our shores, a concern to the soybean producers, quite a year indeed.

"As we start each year on U.S. Farm Report, we stop at the Secretary of Agriculture's office at the nation's capital. Orion Samuelson visits with Ann Veneman as she prepares to leave the post she's held for the past four years."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Madam Secretary, four years now that we've had the opportunity to do this; and I think each year I begin by saying let's look at the last 12 months. What kind of activities have involved your time in the last 12 months?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, first I think as we look back at the last 12 months we really need to recognize what a historic time in agriculture we have seen. We talked a lot about record net cash farm income in 2003. And we said it would be strong in 2004, and yet we're exceeding the 2003 number by \$7 billion. So 2004, again we're going to see record net cash farm income at over \$77 billion. That is very significant.

"Net equity on the part of farmers and record exports for 2004 at \$62 billion-plus for the 2004 year. So it's a year of historic strength in agriculture, a year of records.

"Obviously my time has been spent in large part on continuing on the BSE crisis that we encountered."

MR. SAMUELSON: "That happened just before Christmas a year ago."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Exactly. And after our interview, there we were, the cow who stole Christmas, December 23rd. And we've spent a lot of time working through all of the issues-- increased strength of our regulations, implementing animal ID, implementing an enhanced testing program. There's been a whole host of issues we've had to deal with. And that's taken a lot of time.

"And so we continue with those kinds of pest and disease issues that have been around for most of the four years we've been here."

MR. SAMUELSON: "But the new one, Asian rust-- that has now made its appearance in 2004."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. We were watching for this. We knew it would be windborne. And frankly after the four hurricanes we had the wind did bring it to the southern part of the United States. But fortunately it came at a time when the harvest was over, when we have time to look at what our control measures will be for next year's crop. And our scientists are working together with our Animal and Plant Health Inspection people to make sure that we can take all measures appropriate to control the rust."

"**MR. SAMUELSON:** "Finally, back to BSE for a moment. You mentioned animal identification. Are we

making progress on that program?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. We are working closely with states and organizations to implement premise ID, individual animal ID, and to put it into a national database. Obviously this is a voluntary program as we get it up and running, but we expect over time that it will become a mandatory program that will allow us to trace back animals in the event of a disease outbreak, particularly of disease like foot and mouth disease where it spreads very, very quickly, and it's important to quickly be able to see where the animals have gone so that we can see where the disease might spread."

MR. SAMUELSON: "We'll continue our visit with the Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and look back over the last four years when we continue."

(break in program)

MAX: "For the woman from California who's been a Secretary of Agriculture, these have been four very busy years. Let's go back to the USDA now as Orion visits with Secretary Ann Veneman."

MR. SAMUELSON: "We continue our year-end visit with Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, and this will be our last as Secretary. So let's look back over the last four years. Exciting time for you?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. There's been so much that's happened while we've been here at USDA. And I'll continue to be proud of the record that we have."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Let's talk about some of the activities. Of course 9/11 happened not too long after you came on board. That probably changed a lot of things."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. We came on board, and within a couple of weeks we had the horrific pictures of foot and mouth disease outbreak in Europe. Then of course we had 9/11. All of this was requiring us to look very carefully at the way we were implementing our pest and disease prevention programs, how we would react to such a challenge. And then of course we started worrying about intentional threats to the food supply after 9/11.

We then continued to encounter disease issue after disease issue with avian influenza, exotic New Castle disease. All of these have also trade implications. We had to work on keeping our markets open with other countries."

MR. SAMUELSON: "And then there was the Farm Bill."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. We implemented a farm bill that we got in 2002 in record time because we had to implement it in the same year that it was passed. We put together an organized effort to make that happen, and I think we implemented it efficiently and effectively. And our employees deserve a tremendous amount of credit for that.

"This is a historic Farm Bill too because it had the highest level of funding ever for conservation programs, and I know those have been very well-received by farmers and ranchers all around the country."

MR. SAMUELSON: "And also APHIS came in for additional funding during your four years."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. With all of the issues that have come up in terms of the crises we faced, from BSE to foot and mouth threats to all these other diseases -- we have seen since this administration came in office an 86 percent increase in our funding for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, which is very significant."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Talk for a moment about the Healthy Forest Initiative-- because that came from the White House, did it not?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. We worked very closely with the Interior Department and the foresters. The career foresters feel very strongly about needing the tools to actively manage forests so that we can prevent these horrific fires, protect communities, protect people and protect the environment. And that's really what the Healthy Forests Initiative is all about. We've seen great success since it was signed into law just a year ago by the President, here at USDA."

MR. SAMUELSON: "We could spend another hour just talking about the last four years because of all the significant things that have happened in agriculture, but there's some other things that we do want to talk to you about

in this annual year-end visit with the Secretary of Agriculture.

So don't go away. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman will be back with us here on U.S. Farm Report, Town and Country Living."

(break)

MAX ARMSTRONG: "Samuelson Says, views and comments by Orion Samuelson."

MR. SAMUELSON: "It's that one time of the year when it's not really Samuelson Says; it's the Secretary Says. And we turn to Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman to talk about the young people you've worked with and met during your time as Secretary."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, that's been a very satisfying part of my time here at USDA. One of the programs that we started early in 2002 was called Leaders of Tomorrow. And we worked closely with 4-H and FFA. I had young people often join me in my appearances around the country, got the opportunity to meet some terrific young people. We worked closely with FFA. In fact I had the FFA leadership in my office just this week thanking me for what we've done to promote youth programs."

"We see youth as the future of this country. They are the leaders of tomorrow, and it's in our country's best interest, it's in agriculture's best interest, and it's in all of our best interest to make sure that we develop those young people and give them opportunities for the future."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Your appearance at the FFA Convention had to be one of the speaking highlights of your career."

SEC. VENEMAN: "I had the opportunity to appear there two of the four years I was here, and it was absolutely a highlight."

MR. SAMUELSON: "So you feel the country and the world is in good hands?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. These young people give you so much hope for the future."

MR. SAMUELSON: "And that's Our Secretary Says with the Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. More to come here on U.S. Farm Report, Town and Country Living."

(station break)

MR. SAMUELSON: "As we continue our visit with Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and we continue to look back over the last four years-- Secretary, tell me about your most satisfying events during your time as Secretary."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, obviously it's been a great honor to serve in this administration, to serve this President, and to work with the outstanding people that have been part of this administration. That's certainly been a very satisfying part of the job."

"But I also think it's satisfying to look back over the past four years and say, hopefully we've made a difference. I think we've made a difference in the way we've implemented programs, whether it's the Farm Bill or the Healthy Forests Initiative or the Rural Development Programs or the Conservation Programs or the reauthorization or our Nutrition Programs."

"But also we tried to leave the Department a better-run organization. We've gotten a clean audit for three years in a row, the first time in the Department's history. We've implemented e-government in a way that we hope will have a lasting impact in terms of the way we serve farmers and ranchers and other constituencies all around the country. You can now get e-LDPs. You can get all your programs on-line, you can look at your maps of your farms, both FSA and NRCS."

"What it's doing is, allowing us to better deliver services to those we serve, helping our FSA offices to be more efficient in terms of the services that they deliver as well as our NRCS offices. And hopefully that will continue to be something that serves our farmers and ranchers well into the future."

MR. SAMUELSON: "What about challenges?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, when I think about challenges over the last four years I think of two days. I think of 9/11 and how much that changed not only the way the country lives but the way government does business, including those of us here at the Department of Agriculture.

"The other day is December 23, 2003, the day that we discovered we had our first case of BSE. And we then of course had to deal with the cow who stole Christmas. And that took up a lot of what we did all of this year in terms of implementing the programs in the aftermath of that."

MR. SAMUELSON: "But I give you high marks -- the cattle industry and you as Secretary and your staff -- because we didn't go through the difficult times that the Canadian growers went through."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, that's absolutely true. We kept demand high, prices have stayed high. The cattle industry is in good shape, and that's because consumer confidence remained strong."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman. Our annual year-end visit with the Secretary, at the office at U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, DC.

"There is more to come from Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, so don't go away."

MAX ARMSTRONG: "The job of Agriculture Secretary is a challenging one as you try to balance all of the varied interests from those who are purely consumers to those who are producers and consumers as well.

And coming up in a few minutes we'll go back to the Department of Agriculture as Orion shares a year-end visit with outgoing Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman."

(station break)

MAX ARMSTRONG: "It's great to be back with you on this week's USFR Town and Country Living.

"The Secretary of Agriculture of the United States is a very important job. The agency headed by that individual has more than 100,000 employees and the lives of all citizens of this country are touched every day by the work of the USDA.

"Ann Veneman has held that job for the past four years representing California very well there to be sure, but serving the interests of agriculture and consumers all across the United States and many of them around the globe too. As one year ends and another one begins, our Orion Samuelson is in Washington with the outgoing Ag Secretary.

MR. SAMUELSON: "Max, it's time now for our Global Ag Report. It's brought to you by 'ADM, Resourceful by Nature.'

"Let's talk globally with Secretary Veneman because of an event that happened in this country but was truly global in Sacramento, California. Let's talk about that."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, last year in 2003 we hosted a Global Conference on Science and Technology, particularly as that can help feed the 800 million hungry people in the world. And we worked with ministers from all around the world. We had 1,000 participants, 120 countries.

"And I think that Norman Borlaug's speech was one of the most effective when he really targeted his comments to Africa and he said, 'You missed the Green Revolution,' which he was the father of --"

MR. SAMUELSON: "Yes."

SEC. VENEMAN: "'You cannot afford to miss the gene revolution,' -- talking about the promise of biotechnology.

"I think that was a very well-received message and in fact we're beginning to see strong signs that Africa is recognizing that they need to do the research on the crops that they depend upon for biotechnology for the future to find drought-resistance, to find the nutritious crops, to find ways that they can grow crops that are disease and drought-resistant."

MR. SAMUELSON: "This would be a turnaround because it was an African nation that turned away

genetically-modified food aid."

SEC. VENEMAN: "That's correct. But I think people are beginning to recognize the promise of technology for the future of feeding the world."

MR. SAMUELSON: "And then we have to see if we can change the minds of the European Union."

"Looking globally, Secretary, thank you for our Global Ag Report brought to you by ADM, Resourceful by Nature."

"Max?"

MAX ARMSTRONG: "When we return to Washington in a few minutes we'll seek some insight into the challenges to be faced by the next Secretary of Agriculture there in Washington."

(station break)

MAX ARMSTRONG: "Well, the hearings will start in a few days on the nomination of the person selected by President Bush to be the next Secretary of Agriculture. Let's go back to Washington now to join Orion Samuelson for some insight in the challenges that individual will face on the job."

MR. SAMUELSON: "We certainly wish Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman as she continues, I hope, to serve American agriculture and world agriculture. But let's look at future issues facing America's farmers and ranchers."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, I think there are a number of them. Obviously there are issues of homeland security that I think are going to continue to be on the front burner, not just for agriculture but for our country as a whole. But these have been important issues we've tried very hard to implement programs that will protect agriculture from a homeland security perspective, and I see those issues as continuing."

"I think many of the trade issues will continue to be on the front burner. CAFTA has to get through the Congress. There's going to be the need to get trade promotion authority reauthorized. There are market maintenance issues, the things we call market maintenance, making sure we get the market open in Japan for our beef, for example, and throughout Asia. So the trade issues are important."

"Also I think there will continue to be budget constraints. We're living in a time of having to pull back on many of the government expenditures, and I think agriculture will be facing those issues."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Let's talk about energy for a moment because during your four years the use of corn for ethanol has just jumped dramatically."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Absolutely. And that is one of the things we like to talk about as being a real success story. We're now going to -- we have a record corn crop for 2004, and we will use 12 percent of that crop, it's projected, in the production of ethanol. We've seen a 40-fold increase in the production of biodiesel, and that's an industry now with the tax credits they just got we expect to take off and do tremendously well also in this market."

"And so, and there's other alternative uses-- plastics and so forth. And I think agriculture holds great promise from the standpoint of alternative uses for the future, which will really be excellent for the bottom lines of our farmers."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Back to trade for just a moment. Will we get the world trade talks going and doing something in the next year?"

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, I think we've made very good progress. We've made the next steps in terms of the global agreement to go forward. And hopefully we can have countries come together and agree on from the framework now on the specific commitments that countries are going to make. I think it's very important -- as you know we depend upon exports for one in three acres that we produce in this country. So it's very important that we continue to open up new markets, we maintain the ones we have abroad because our farmers and ranchers depend on it."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Well, it's been a great four years visiting with you. And as a media person, thank you for always being available to comment."

SEC. VENEMAN: "Well, thank you."

MR. SAMUELSON: "Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman on our annual year-end visit with the Secretary in Washington, DC."

MAX ARMSTRONG: "Thank you much, Orion. And our best wishes to Secretary Veneman as well, as we are sure we will see her from time to time. We often get to visit with former Secretaries of Agriculture at agricultural meetings."

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USDA PROVIDES UP TO \$1 MILLION AND REQUESTS PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Dec.17, 2004—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that up to \$1 million is available in fiscal year 2005 Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) grants for state and local governments, tribes and nongovernmental organizations that have a history of working with agricultural producers.

CPI is a voluntary program that fosters conservation partnerships and funds projects that focus technical and financial resources on conservation priorities in watersheds and airsheds of special significance. In recent years, the term *airshed* has been used to describe a geographical area that shares the same air mass due to topography, meteorology and climate. The grants also support the President's executive order promoting cooperative conservation.

“This program helps farmers and ranchers achieve critical conservation goals and protect natural resources. These grants encourage partnerships to devise and implement regional solutions to pressing natural resource priorities associated with agriculture and rural settings,” Veneman said.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) that is available on the agency's website and the Federal eGrants website at <http://www.grants.gov>. Applicants will have 60 days to submit proposals. Funds will be awarded through a nationwide competition.

CPI is carried out through two phases. First, applicants must submit proposals for project planning funds to the appropriate NRCS state office. Applicants may request between \$50,000 and \$200,000 in funding through CPI for the project planning phase and must provide a 1:1 match using non-NRCS funding. Up to 100 percent of the match may come from in-kind contributions.

Applications must address at least one of the five CPI conservation priorities for 2005: terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat, invasive species, agricultural air quality, livestock nutrient management and minor/specialty crop pest management.

In addition, CPI projects must be consistent with the following four CPI objectives.

Projects must encourage:

Producers to cooperate in project planning and the establishment of project goals, as well as the installation and maintenance of conservation practices that affect multiple agricultural operations, Producers to share information and technical and financial resources,

Cumulative conservation benefits in geographic areas, and

Development and demonstration of innovative conservation methods.

Selected applicants will have up to 18 months to develop the partnership, generate producer interest and participation, and prepare a final project plan. Following completion and approval of the final project plan, the project implementation phase may begin. Applicants are expected to secure project implementation funds from a wide range of potential partners including local, state and Federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

Additional information on CPI including the RFP is at

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpi>.

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USDA Ag Calendar of Events

**For information on the latest calendar of events through USDA's
Agricultural Library, open your web browser and click on the
following:**

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/calendar/>

World Trade Centers Association:

Find out about upcoming events at World Trade Centers around the globe! The World Trade Center Association has a Calendar of Events that is loaded with seminars, conferences, trade fairs, exhibitions and other events for the international business community. For more information, click on the following link:

<http://world.wtca.org/portal/index.jsp>

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January TAPO Mailbox

Successful exporting does not happen without product market planning and preparation. For preparing export marketing plans or make key product decisions, U.S. exporters need current information on foreign market conditions by product and industry sector. They also require trade and price information to evaluate trends in overseas markets, as well as to develop competitive pricing strategies.

FAS provides U.S. exporters with a number of resources to aid them in obtaining up-to-date information on their market and product sectors, such as Attach, Reports. For a step by step guide, open your web browser and click on <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/markresea.html>