

BEEF BUSINESS



Compiled by Shauna Rose Hermel, editor

Through this column our editors provide highlights of industry news that may impact our business directly or indirectly.

Census forms due Feb. 5

Forms for USDA's 2017 Census of Agriculture are due Feb. 5. It can be returned by mail or submitted online at agcensus.usda.gov.

University of Missouri (MU) Extension economist Ryan Milhollin says federal, state and local governments, as well as agribusinesses, researchers, trade

associations and others, use the data to serve farmers and rural communities.

It is the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial data for every county in the United States, Milhollin says. USDA conducts the survey every five years.

Law requires response.

"Even if you are no longer farming,

please return the census form," says Robert Garino, USDA statistician based in Columbia.

Otherwise, USDA follows up with mailed questionnaires, phone calls or visits from a USDA enumerator.

Milhollin says information from the Census of Agriculture shapes programs, including Extension programs, that benefit many farm

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groups. It gives a picture of the economic impact of agriculture in the country.

Milhollin says data helps policymakers see emerging trends such as young and beginning farmers and ranchers; women, veteran and minority farmers and ranchers; specialty crops; and organic production. This helps legislators make decisions that protect the future of agriculture, he says.

For more information, call 1-888-424-7828 (toll-free) or contact Garino at 573-876-0950.

Source: University of Missouri.

GRSB announces leaders

The Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) announces the election of Nicole Johnson-Hoffman, chief sustainability officer and senior vice president for OSI Group, as president of the GRSB.

Leon Mol, director of product safety and social compliance for Ahold Delhaize has been elected vice president, and Cameron Bruett, head of corporate affairs for JBS, has been re-elected Executive Committee member at-large.

Dennis Laycraft of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association will now formally serve as past president.

Mol and Bruett join Carlos Saviani of World Wildlife Fund, who is the secretary-treasurer, and Ignacio Blanco-Traba of McDonald's Global on the 2018 GRSB Executive Committee.

See more about GRSB leadership at <https://grsbeef.org/Leadership/>.

Source: GRSB.

MDA awarded grant

The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) has been awarded \$52,158 from USDA's Quality Samples Program (QSP) to further develop the market for U.S. beef genetics in

Nicaragua. Through January 2020, MDA will use the funds to send semen and embryos from Montana ranches to Nicaragua.

The award comes on the heels of a series of successful MDA trade missions with Nicaragua. In March 2017, MDA staff accompanied Montana ranchers on an outbound trade mission to Nicaragua. The trip included visits with feedlot owners, slaughterhouse operators and ranchers, who discussed the need for higher-quality meat and faster processing times. Then, in October 2017, MDA hosted Nicaraguan cattlemen for visits to several Montana ranches and a stop at the Northern International Livestock Exposition (NILE), where they viewed the high-quality genetics firsthand.

The QSP enables potential customers around the world to discover the quality and benefits of U.S. agricultural products. For more on the program, visit: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/quality-samples-program-qsp>.

Source: Montana Department of Agriculture.

CCC January lending rate

USDA's Commodity Credit Corp. Jan. 2 announced interest rates for January 2018. Its borrowing rate-based charge for January was 1.625%, up from 1.500% in December.

Source: USDA.

Identifying USA beef

On Jan. 5, Colorado State Representative Kimmi Lewis and State Senator Vicki Marble introduced in Colorado's 2018 General Assembly a bill titled the *Beef Country of Origin Recognition System* also referred to as the *Beef COORS* bill by the sponsors.

If passed, the bill would require

Colorado retailers to place a placard in the immediate vicinity of beef products, including ground beef, that informs consumers as to whether the beef was derived exclusively from animals that were born, raised and slaughtered in the United States, or



whether the beef was imported or derived from imported animals.

"The *Beef COORS* bill corrects the federal government's deceptive labeling scheme by reserving the 'USA Beef' placard only for beef exclusively derived from animals that were born, raised and slaughtered in the United States," said Lewis, who also owns and operates the Muddy Valley Ranch in Kim, Colo.

Source: R-CALF USA.

Wildfire mitigation

USDA will invest nearly \$32 million this year to mitigate wildfire risk, improve water quality and restore healthy forest ecosystems in 24 states and Puerto Rico. Since 2014, USDA has invested \$176 million in 56 Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Projects, which focus on areas where public forests and grasslands intersect with privately owned lands.

"Through Joint Chiefs, the Natural

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Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with agricultural producers and forest landowners to improve forest health using available Farm Bill conservation programs, and the Forest Service enhances forest health on public lands — stitching together a larger footprint of healthy ecosystems in priority areas,” said Leonard Jordan, acting NRCS chief.



This year the Joint Chiefs’ partner USDA agencies are providing \$2.9 million to fund seven new projects and \$29 million to support 21 ongoing partnership projects. Federal, state and local partners will bring an additional \$12 million through financial and in-kind contributions over three years to implement the newly added projects. These contribute to jobs and economic benefits that sustain rural communities.

“Wildfires are a serious and ongoing threat to forests and communities alike, as we’ve seen in California and throughout the nation this past year,” said Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke. “Through these Joint Chief’s projects, USDA will be working with local partners in high-risk project areas to control invasive species, install fire breaks

and implement other targeted forest management practices to help mitigate the risk of widespread wildfires.”

Along with mitigating fire risk, Joint Chiefs’ projects work to improve water quality by restoring healthy forests and grasslands.

For full project descriptions and information on completed projects, visit the Joint Chiefs’ Landscape Restoration Partnership website.

Source: Public Lands Council.

New features at NIAA

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) will fuse new features into this year’s conference, titled Livestock Traceability: Opportunities for Animal Agriculture, April 10-12 at the Renaissance Denver Stapleton Hotel in Denver, Colo.

Livestock traceability affects all of animal agriculture. Possible disease outbreaks, international trade concerns, biosecurity issues, food globalization, and place-of-origin labeling discussions influence consumers, policy makers, producers and distribution industries.

To maximize the effectiveness of the meeting, the NIAA Species Committee members will be included into the Issue Council discussions. All the issues that matter to individual species groups will now be part of the larger conversation in the six different councils’ meetings on animal health emergency management, global animal health and emerging disease, antibiotics, animal care, animal ID and information systems, food security, regulatory and trade, and a special meeting of the Aquatic Livestock Committee.

Also new this year will be a trade show/technology showcase.

NIAA will host an interactive workshop titled: Traceability and the

Real World on Thursday, April 12, immediately following the conference. This workshop will focus on economics, technology, data management, action items and next steps.

For more, visit the NIAA website, www.animalagriculture.org.

PLC takes On Patagonia

The Public Lands Council (PLC) launched a campaign to support rural communities and raise awareness of critical facts in the national monuments debate. The move responds to marketing efforts of multinational retail corporation Patagonia, which promoted false claims about national monuments in the wake of the recent decision to scale Bears Ears and Grand-Staircase Escalante.

The PLC campaign features the distribution of iron-on clothing patches designed to cover the logo on Patagonia merchandise.

“Patagonia’s actions are a pure marketing play disguised as concern for western landscapes,” said Ethan Lane, PLC executive director.

Patagonia’s public opposition to the national monument modifications — which included a pop-up banner on the corporate website titled “The President Stole Your Land” — led to an invitation for the founder to testify in front of the House Natural Resources Committee. Patagonia refused.

Contrary to Patagonia’s claims, all land removed from national monument designations remains under federal control and management.

High-O beans approved

High-oleic soybeans have crossed their final regulatory hurdle, clearing the way for farmers to plant more

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acres of high-oleic soybeans in 2018. Full global regulatory approval can help expand the market for high-oleic soy and create opportunities to increase U.S. soybean value and competitiveness in the global marketplace.

“Achieving high-oleic global regulatory approval enables us to meet end-user needs with a product they want and increase the use of U.S. soybean oil,” says Lewis Bainbridge, United Soybean Board chair and farmer from Ethan, S.D.

The soy checkoff has invested in research to ensure that high-oleic soybeans deliver the qualities required by oil end users. These varieties produce a more stable oil for food industry use in restaurants and packaged goods. The oil also expands uses for non-food applications, such as synthetic motor oil and automotive lubricants.

For farmers, checkoff-supported research has helped ensure that high-oleic soybeans perform the same as other soybean varieties and that variety development expanded to a wider range of maturity groups.

“For high-oleic soybeans to be successful, we can’t sacrifice performance in the field or limit the geographies where they are grown,” says Bainbridge.

High-oleic soybean varieties are now grown in 13 states. Acreage of high-oleic soybean varieties has grown from 50,000 acres in 2013 to more than 625,000 acres in 2017.

High-oleic soybeans are expected to become the fourth-largest grain and oilseed crop in the United States, with a goal of planting 18 million acres of high-oleic soybeans.

For more information, visit www.soyinnovation.com.

Source: United Soybean Board.

Ag outlook conference

USDA’s Agricultural Outlook

Forum (AOF) will be at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va., Feb. 22-23.

The Agricultural Outlook Forum is the USDA’s largest annual meeting, attracting as many as 2,000 attendees. The Forum highlights key issues and topics within the agricultural community, offering a platform for conversation among producers, processors, policymakers, government officials, and nongovernmental organizations, both foreign and domestic.

The theme for this year’s forum is “The Roots of Prosperity.” Along with a host of prestigious plenary speakers and discussions, attendees may choose from 30 informational sessions with more than 80 speakers and a host of agriculture-related exhibits to visit.

Source: USDA.

Bill fosters conservation

The Healthy Fields and Farm Economies Act, a bipartisan bill introduced Jan. 10 in the House by Reps. John Faso (R-NY) and Marcia Fudge (D-OH), would improve USDA conservation programs for American farmers and ensure the most efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars, according to a release by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). Specifically, the bill strengthens federal conservation programs by authorizing and providing funding for the measurement, evaluation and reporting of USDA conservation program outcomes.

USDA invests billions of conservation dollars each year in programs that support farmers and ranchers in adopting conservation activities. These programs — including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agricultural Conservation

Easement Program (ACEP), and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) — are utilized across millions of acres of land and help farmers to invest in soil health, air and water quality, water conservation, and wildlife habitat.

“Farmers need programs and practices that they can rely on, particularly when it comes to conservation,” said Alyssa Charney, NSAC policy specialist. “*The Healthy Fields and Farm Economies Act* will ensure that American family farmers are getting the absolute best conservation programs and practice recommendations from USDA.

“By implementing these tracking and evaluation measures, Congress can make federal conservation programs more accountable to American taxpayers and better performing for American farmers,” she continued. “Thanks to this bill, USDA will finally be able to point to hard data showing just how successful conservation efforts have been.”

Federal conservation programs play a significant role in protecting and enhancing our shared natural resources, as well improving farms’ long-term sustainability. However, because USDA has historically lacked the ability to report on the conservation outcomes of these programs, they have increasingly been threatened with budget cuts and even wholesale elimination. With new evaluation and reporting tools in place, USDA will be able to prove the effectiveness of popular conservation programs. When programs aren’t working well, they’ll be able to identify the issues and come up with targeted solutions quickly.

More information on the *Healthy Fields and Farm Economies Act* is available on the NSAC website, <http://bit.ly/2CXaXL5>. 