



# E-newsletter

**June 15, 2015**

## Juneteenth

**EDITION 111**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

### Juneteenth

Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19, is the name given to emancipation day by African-Americans in Texas. On that day in 1865 Union Major-General Gordon Granger read General Orders, No.3 to the people of Galveston. It stated

"The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor.

The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere."

Large celebrations on June 19 began in 1866 and continued regularly into the early 20th century. The African-

Americans treated this day like the Fourth of July and the celebrations contained similar events. In the early days, the celebration included a prayer service, speakers with inspirational messages, reading of the emancipation proclamation, stories from former slaves, food, red soda water, games, rodeos and dances.

The celebration of June 19 as emancipation day spread from Texas to the neighboring states of Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. It has also appeared in Alabama, Florida, and California as African-American Texans migrated.

In many parts of Texas, ex-slaves purchased land, or "emancipation grounds," for the Juneteenth gathering. Examples include: Emancipation Park in Houston, purchased in 1872; what is now Booker T. Washington Park in Mexia; and Emancipation Park in East Austin.

Celebration of Juneteenth declined during World War II but revived in 1950 at the Texas State Fair Grounds in Dallas. Interest and participation fell away during the late 1950's and

1960's as attention focused on expansion of freedom for African-Americans. In the 1970's Juneteenth revived in some communities. For example, in Austin the Juneteenth celebration returned in 1976 after a 25 year hiatus. House Bill no.1016 passed in the 66th Legislature, Regular Session, declared June 19, "Emancipation Day in Texas," a legal state holiday effective January 1, 1980. Since that time, the celebration of Juneteenth continues across the state of Texas with parades, picnics and dancing.

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## First Push for African-American Rights



Washington Edwards, 103 years old, 1889, Prints & Photographs, 1905/011-1. Edwards was a former slave brought to the United States from Africa. He arrived in Texas prior to the Mexican War and lived near Columbia, Texas

While African-Americans were granted freedom from slavery toward the end of the Civil War, after the war they faced an uphill battle to obtain basic citizenship rights. In order to meet the minimum requirements for readmission to the Union, Texas held a constitutional convention in 1866, passing a constitution which allowed African-American men the right to sue, contract, acquire and transmit property, receive equal criminal prosecution and testify orally in any case involving another African-American. The 1866 constitution did not give African-Americans the right to vote or hold public office.

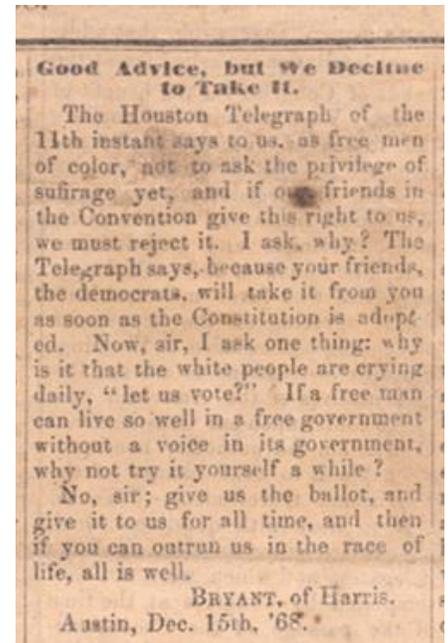
Following the dictates of the U.S. First Reconstruction Act in 1867, Texas held another constitutional convention in 1868-1869 at which ten African-Americans served as

delegates. Five of those men agreed to sign the document while the other five refused, saying it was too lenient toward the previous Confederate government. The new state constitution, ratified in November 1869, gave support to public education and granted the right to vote to adult male African-Americans.

The Union League, organized in 1863 in the North to support the policies of President Lincoln, was a secret, primarily political organization, whose members were to support only Republicans for public office. The League established its first local council in Texas in 1865 and mobilized African-American voters, who were now able to elect African-American legislators to represent them. Those legislators fought for the most basic needs of their specific communities as well as for what would benefit all Texans, regardless of race. In total, 52 African-American men served as state legislative members or constitutional convention delegates in Texas during the 19th century, with most being active in the late 1860s to mid-1870s. One major accomplishment was the eventual passage of a bill creating a state-supported university for African-Americans, known today as Prairie View A&M University.

**Senator Matthew Gaines**, portrait of 13th Texas Legislature by H.B. Hillyer, 1873.

Senator Matthew Gaines supported the Free School Bill of the 12th Legislature which became law formalizing the public school system. Considered a radical at the time, Gaines also supported full racial integration of schools.



Editorial by C.W. Bryant, in the Weekly Austin Republican, December 23, 1868. Newspaper collection, 2-5/584. C.W. Bryant was an African-American delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1868-1869 representing Harris County.

With the rise of racism and white supremacy, the rights granted to African-Americans through the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments began to be curtailed. They faced segregation in many aspects of life, including education, religion, dining establishments, jobs and transportation, as evidenced by the bill passed in 1889 by the 21st Legislature allowing for separate railroad coaches for passengers of different races. African-Americans lived through segregation by establishing their own schools, businesses, dining establishments and churches within their communities. By the late 1960s, the Civil Rights movement was underway, eventually removing segregation of the races from public life.

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## Avian flu hits four more turkey farms in Midwest

Robert Roos | News Editor | CIDRAP News



Courtesy of Minnesota Board of Animal Health

Avian influenza has invaded four more turkey farms in the Upper Midwest: two in Iowa, one in Minnesota, and one in South Dakota, according to state and media reports. The Iowa and Minnesota incidents were announced today, and the South Dakota was revealed late last week.

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### Two Iowa counties affected



In Iowa, the virus hit turkey farms in Hamilton and Calhoun counties, marking the second outbreak in each, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) said today. Hamilton is in central Iowa, and Calhoun lies two counties to the west.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confirmed the "highly

pathogenic H5 virus" on the Hamilton County farm, which has 36,000 turkeys, the IDALS said, without mentioning H5N2 specifically. At the Calhoun County farm, with 21,000 birds, initial testing showed the H5 virus, and confirmatory test results from the USDA are awaited.

Iowa has now had 65 outbreaks in 18 counties, with 28.6 million poultry affected, according to IDALS data.

### Minnesota outbreaks reach 103

In Minnesota, the affected farm is in the south-central county of Brown, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) reported today. The outbreak is listed as a presumptive positive, and the size of the flock is not yet available.

Minnesota now has 103 farms hit by avian flu in 23 counties, the DPS said. More than 8.3 million birds have been affected, not counting farms for which flock size estimates are not yet available.

### South Dakota reports 10th event

The South Dakota outbreak was reported May 29 in Moody County, which borders Minnesota.

South Dakota State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven, DVM, said a farm with about 50,000 birds had a presumptive positive test for avian flu, according to a May 29 Associated Press (AP) story. He said officials were waiting for confirmation of the H5N2 virus and that crews would soon start euthanizing the surviving turkeys to stop the virus's spread.

The outbreak is South Dakota's 10th recent avian flu incident and the second in Moody County, according to a chart maintained by the South Dakota Animal Industry Board (AIB). The previous outbreak,

reported May 14, involved an egg farm with 1.3 million chickens.

The South Dakota outbreaks have affected a total of 1.7 million birds, according to the AIB and other developments, the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) today announced the end of a ban on poultry movements in control zones around the two farms in Dickey and LaMoure counties that were hit by H5N2 in April.

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### New flock under bird flu quarantine

Lincoln Journal Star

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture said it has identified and quarantined another flock of poultry in Dixon County suspected of being infected with bird flu.

Dixon 4 is a small flock of mixed fowl that is within the 6.2-mile radius of three other Dixon County locations previously confirmed as infected and in the process of being destroyed; the department said in what it expects to be a weekly update.

The new flock was under quarantine and tested as part of NDA's surveillance, the department said. The flock will remain under quarantine as the department said it waits for final confirmation testing from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Owners of Dixon 4 are not the same as the two other Dixon county flocks of 3.5 million layers and a flock of a half-million pullets, which were owned by M.G. Waldbaum, the egg farms now a part of Post Brands.

A Knox County flock owned by Waldbaum, 3 million laying hens, remains under quarantine based on a presumptive positive test last week.

Subsequent testing has not confirmed the presumptive positive, the department said. It will remain under quarantine and continue to be tested, in consultation with USDA, the department determined the site will require 21 days of negative testing before the quarantine can be released. As part of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture's surveillance within 6.2 miles of the affected farms, there have been 23 additional farms with poultry quarantined in Dixon County and 29 additional farms with poultry quarantined in Knox County.

NDA said it is working with the Dixon County producers to test their flocks. Testing is on hold at the 29 farms in Knox County due to the lack of USDA confirmation testing at the Knox 1 facility at this time, NDA said. These farms will remain under quarantine until further notice, the department said.

## First Lady Boosts Pollinating Insects at Garden Harvest

**DARLENE SUPERVILLE,**  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Michelle Obama said Wednesday that it's important to help bees, butterflies and other creatures that spread the pollen that helps food grow.

She also announced that a network of conservation and gardening groups has launched a nationwide campaign to create 1 million pollinator gardens by the end of next year. Such gardens are one way to help reverse the decline in pollinating insects by offering food, water and shelter.

Last year, the first lady added a pollinator garden to her vegetable garden on the South Lawn of the White House.

Separately, President Barack Obama recently released a plan to help reverse the decline in the population of pollinators by making millions of acres of federal land more bee-friendly, spending more money on research and considering the use of fewer pesticides.

Pollinators are responsible for one out of every three bites of food eaten daily in the U.S., Mrs. Obama said.



"Bats, bees, birds, all of those, they get attracted to the gardens and they go and sprinkle life around so that food grows," she said at the annual spring harvest of her garden. The threat of rain forced the event to be moved indoors to the White House East Room.

Staff harvested the garden earlier Wednesday, so all that was left for the first lady and two dozen students to do was to prepare the waiting baskets and bowls of cauliflower, kohlrabi, broccoli, fennel and lettuce.



The vegetables went into a grilled soba chicken salad, dressed with vinaigrette made with honey from the White House beehive that Mrs. Obama and the students then ate.

## 7 Projects to Make Progress on Global Food Security in 5 Years

JOHN HOPKINS MEDICINE



"With the world's population likely to exceed 9.5 billion by 2050, the global community

faces an enormous challenge -- how to ensure everyone will have enough nutritious and safe food to secure a desirable level of health." --So begins a landmark report issued from an international working group with expertise ranging from agronomy to bioethics to climate science, outlining the initial steps they believe must be taken toward solving one of society's most fundamental public policy challenges, and doing so ethically.

"Today over 800 million people are undernourished and two billion are obese or overweight, all of them at risk of poor health and quality of life," says Ruth Faden, PhD, MPH, Director of the Johns Hopkins Berman Institute of Bioethics, which spearheaded the ambitious project.

"There is wide agreement that this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue, but making real progress, progress that lasts and is fair, requires confronting some extremely difficult ethical issues."

"The challenge of global food security is too urgent to ignore these ethical issues, but deciding which issues are the most important, and which ones can actually be resolved, is not obvious," Faden says.

The report is the product of a 2014 meeting of 23 diverse subject-matter

experts in Rancho, Italy. It outlines distinct next steps: seven projects that reflect the breadth and complexity of global food ethics. While ambitious, each pointedly has a practical five-year timeline.

The report, titled "7 by 5 Agenda for Ethics and Global Food Security: 7 Projects to Make Progress on Ethics and Global Food Security in 5 Years," details motivation and plans for each project, which in brief are:

### **1. Ethical Challenges in Projections of Global Food Demand, Supply, and Prices**

Identify and make concrete recommendations to decrease bias, increase accuracy, and enhance the integrity of projections of food demand, supply, and prices upon which food and agricultural policy decisions are based.

### **2. The Food Sovereignty Movement and the Exceptionality of Food and Agriculture**

Identify and narrow disagreements over the rights of peoples to democratic control over food, agricultural, and resource policy that are specifically rooted in different views about what makes food and agriculture distinct from other economic sectors.

### **3. The Case for the Professionalization of Farming**

Reframe farming as a service-oriented profession in which farmers as professionals have obligations to the public to use their specialized skills to meet legitimate expectations for food safety and environmental, worker, and farm animal protection.

### **4. Global Agricultural Research and Development: Ethics, Priorities, and Funders**

Develop reform oriented recommendations to help ensure that a fair share of agricultural research and development is directly responsive to the needs and preferences of disadvantaged farmers in low-income countries.

### **5. Climate-Smart and Climate-Just Agriculture**

Demonstrate why and how "climate-smart agriculture" must also be "climate-just," distributing its benefits and burdens fairly across geographic regions and generations.

### **6. Ethics of Meat Consumption in High-Income and Middle-Income Countries**

Make specific recommendations about the ethics of public and private interventions to alter meat-consumption patterns in high- and middle-income countries.

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### **7. Consumers, Certifications, and Labels: Ethically Benchmarking Food Systems**

Develop the first integrated labeling system that will offer consumers easy access to trustworthy ethical information on environmental

sustainability, animal welfare, labor standards, public health, and food safety.

"We are committed to making these projects a reality. It is possible to make progress on divisive ethical issues in global food security and food systems by focusing on a set of problems that are both significant and tractable," says Yashar Saghai, PhD, the project director. "Our group presents a cohesive research and policy agenda that paves the way for a new approach to food and agricultural ethics on a global scale." "This is just the beginning, and while the challenge is huge, so is the moral obligation," says Alan Goldberg, PhD, a member of the Global Food Ethics Project leadership team and the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing.

The 7 by 5 Agenda is collaboration between faculty of the Berman Institute, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and was funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

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## **Canada Seeks \$3B in US Tariffs as Meat Labeling Fight Continues**

The Associated Press

**TORONTO (AP)** — Canada has filed a request to impose more than \$3 billion a year in tariffs on the United States in the latest move in an ongoing trade dispute.

The Canadian government asked the World Trade Organization on Thursday to authorize the punitive measures on a range of American goods.

The action hinges on whether the United States Congress amends a law at the center of a three-country trade dispute.

Canada and Mexico are fighting U.S. meat-labelling rules requiring a sticker identifying where livestock was born, raised and slaughtered.

Backers say consumers should know where their food comes from. But Canada and Mexico call it a thinly disguised protectionist measure that complicates the sorting process for Americans who import foreign meat.

The WTO has repeatedly sided with Canada and Mexico.

### Food Safety News

(New York) **Tyson's Fresh Meats recalls 8 tons of lean ground beef for possible E.coli risk.** The U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service announced June 3 that Tyson Fresh Meats of Dakota City, Nebraska, is recalling approximately 16,000 pounds of "80% Lean Ground Beef" products that may contain E.coli O157:H7. The products were shipped to one distribution location in New York.

Source:

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2015/06/tyson-fresh-meats-recalls-8-tons-of-lean-ground-beef-for-potential-e-coli-contamination/#.VXBC3iTD-Uk>

*KTVI 2 St. Louis* – (Washington, D.C.) **Turkey and cheese lunch packages recalled for misbranding and undeclared allergen.** The U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service reported May 30 Total Packaging of KY, Inc., an Owensboro, KY., establishment, is recalling approximately 18,000

pounds of Anytime Foods Turkey and Cheese Lunch Kits due to misbranding and an undeclared egg allergen. The packages were produced May 4, 5, 12, and 18. Source:

<http://fox2now.com/2015/05/30/turkey-and-cheese-lunch-packages-recalled-for-misbranding-and-undeclared-allergen/>

*June 3, Food Safety News* – (New York) **Tyson's Fresh Meats recalls 8 tons of lean ground beef for possible E.Coli risk.** The U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service announced June 3 that Tyson Fresh Meats of Dakota City, Nebraska, is recalling approximately 16,000 pounds of "80% Lean Ground Beef" products that may contain E.coli O157:H7. The products were shipped to one distribution location in New York.

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### Water Transfer Major Topic of Legislative Water Committee



On June 1, 2015, the Water and Natural Resource Legislative Interim Committee met for their annual organizational

meeting. It included a presentation entitled "Introduction to New Mexico Water Law" given by Reed Benson, UNM Law Professor, and David Benavides, NM Legal Aid. The other presenter was Tom Blaine, who was appointed as State Engineer in late 2014.

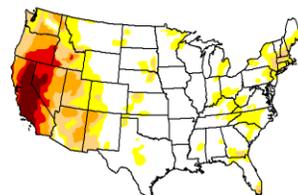
The committee has numerous members from both the House and Senate, which is an indication of the high degree of interest among legislators in the subject of water policy. The overview of NM water law was covered comprehensively by Professor Benson and David Benavides focused his comments on the significance of water transfers in New Mexico water policy. State Engineer Tom Blaine addressed several questions from the committee on a range of topics.

David's prefaced his presentation with a fundamental explanation of water law as a code aimed at protecting and enforcing existing water rights:

- 1) By not allowing water right owners to exceed their water rights.
- 2) By not allowing new rights when a stream or basin is fully appropriated.
- 3) By curtailing junior water rights when senior water rights are not getting enough water.
- 4) By not allowing water rights to be changed in a way that is detrimental to other.

U.S. Drought Monitor  
CONUS

June 9, 2015  
(Released Thursday, Jun. 11, 2015)  
Valid 6 a.m. EDT



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Current	98.93	40.87	23.29	13.71	6.91	1.07
Last Week	98.75	43.25	24.57	14.18	7.59	3.13
3 Months Ago	97.36	52.64	31.60	15.73	8.39	3.17
Start of Calendar Year	83.20	46.80	26.68	16.93	8.96	2.54
Start of Water Year	52.22	47.78	30.57	18.86	9.41	3.85
One Year Ago	23.91	46.69	36.15	25.97	12.18	2.88

Legend:  
 None  
 D0: Abnormal Dry  
 D1: Moderate Drought  
 D2: Severe Drought  
 D3: Extreme Drought  
 D4: Exceptional Drought  
 D5: Catastrophic Drought

Author(s):  
 David M. Legler  
 NOAA/NWS/NCEP/PCP

USDA  
 http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/

David Benavides focused on the subject of water transfers by framing the issue in a historical perspective. He noted that many of the water rights in New Mexico originated before statehood, particularly those of Pueblos, tribes, and acequias. He also noted that New Mexico is in an era in which all water rights are appropriated and can be characterized as an "era of reallocation" in which new uses of water can come about through the transfer of existing water rights. He noted that this is one of the great water policy challenges of our time.

He added that New Mexico enacted protections from water rights to protect other wealthier and water-hungry states from acquiring New Mexico's water through an unfettered market. Courts have ruled that criteria that apply to out-of-state transfers also apply to in-state transfers of water rights. These criteria are that the change in water right would not 1) impair existing water rights, 2) be contrary to conservation of water, or 3) be detrimental to the public welfare.

He added that local and regional community leaders would argue that the same concerns of moving water out of state are also applicable to the community level. Specifically that the water rights base of a community is essential to its future and should not be subject to an unfettered water market.

State Engineer Tom Blaine later remarked the sentiment that water transfers are a major policy issue and noted that his goal in the agency is to process applications in a timely and efficient manner. He pointed to a goal of reducing backlog of pending applications.

However, partly in respond to earlier comments by Benavides, Blaine

suggested that his primary concern with regard to public welfare is to consider the "public welfare of the state" and implied it was an overriding concern over local or regional issues. His comments were covered briefly in an [article in the Albuquerque Journal](#).

The presentations were informative and surfaced some of the underlying and fundamental issues shaping water policy debates that may take place in the water committee. Senator Peter Wirth, who chairs the committee, noted that his goal was to present any issues that are controversial with both sides (or multiple sides) given the opportunity to share their views.

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## **Holistic healing of the body, mind and spirit using Organic Vegan Enzyme-Rich Raw and Living Foods.**

**"Let Food be thy Medicine"**

**Imhotep**

**Chris Johnson AKA Chef Fresher** is a raw vegan chef, author of the



eBook *Ready 4 Raw* and an advocate for food justice and sustainable urban agriculture. His eBook *Ready 4 Raw* is an introduction to a plant based lifestyle complete with tips on transitioning to raw living foods. This eBook is filled with Recipes, Healthy Herbs, and a 4day Juicing Detox Regime. Also included are daily meal plans, Plant based weight loss and weight gain tips as well as some information on reading labels and



foods to avoid. Chris will be in Sacramento for a 2 hour class that will provide instruction and support regarding all aspects of the raw vegan live food lifestyle. During this 2 hour Event you will be able to enjoy learning easy recipes and will try samples of each prepared food item. He will have his books and snacks available for purchase after the event. Chris specializes in preparing foods for the healing of all types of diseases including early to late stage Cancers of all types, Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, Parkinson', Lupus, Lou Gehrig Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Depression, Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, Pancreatitis, Arthritis, Lyme Disease, Heavy Metal Poisoning, Allergies, Sinusitis, Macular Degeneration, Hearing Loss, Tinnitus, Alzheimer's, Dementia, Psoriasis, Eczema, Skin Rashes, Eyesight, Mold, Fungus, Candidiasis, Back Injuries, Obesity and more. If you have questions about a particular disease, illness or injury and are wondering about how the healing properties of raw foods and how enzyme rich living foods can help you heal please call us so we can discuss your particular issue.

[eatfresherfoods@gmail.com](mailto:eatfresherfoods@gmail.com)

**Chris Johnson 770.765.7022**

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**FSA**

## Special Announcement

It's June and summer is upon us! What a difficult planting season we have been through when considering the unusual weather that we have experienced throughout the spring. Fall seeded crops such as wheat and oats have suffered significant damage as they have matured. Areas of the State have reported flash flooding of grain crops from heavy rain events and yet others are reporting backwater flooding from swollen drainages.

While owners and producers across the State deal with the difficulties associated with these weather patterns, we want to remind you that this will be a busy summer for both the agricultural community as well as FSA. This summer, we expect that enrollment in 2014 and 2015 ARCPLC will begin. While ARCPLC program elections have been finalized, each farm will be required to annually enroll in ARCPLC in order to participate. In addition, summer always means that acreage reporting is nearby. The final reporting date for spring seeded crops is July 15th. The FSA staffs are preparing to meet your needs in regards to the business that remains to be completed this year. More information on FSA programs and deadlines will be forthcoming, but the information below is provided for your review. We will continue to provide more information about issues of interest to you as they become available.

**USDA Packages Disaster Protection with Loans to Benefit Specialty Crop and Diversified Producers**

*Free basic coverage and discounted premiums available for new and underserved loan applicants*

Producers who apply for FSA farm loans also will be offered the opportunity to enroll in new disaster loss protections created by the 2014 Farm Bill. The new coverage, available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), is available to FSA loan applicants who grow non-insurable crops, so this is especially important to fruit and vegetable producers and other specialty crop growers.

New, underserved and limited income specialty growers who apply for farm loans could qualify for basic loss coverage at no cost, or higher coverage for a discounted premium.

The basic disaster coverage protects at 55 percent of the market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of production. Covered crops include "specialty" crops, for instance, vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, hay, forage, grazing and energy crops. FSA allows beginning, underserved or limited income producers to obtain NAP coverage up to 90 days after the normal application closing date when they also apply for FSA credit.

In addition to free basic coverage, beginning, underserved or limited income producers are eligible for a 50 percent discount on premiums for the higher levels of coverage that protect up to 65 percent of expected production at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also may work with FSA to protect value-added production, such as organic or direct market crops, at their fair market value in those markets. Targeted underserved groups eligible for free or discounted coverage are American Indians or

Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

FSA offers a variety of loan products, including farm ownership loans, operating loans and microloans that have a streamlined application process.

Growers need not apply for an FSA loan, nor be a beginning, limited resource, or underserved farmer, to be eligible for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program assistance. To learn more, visit:

[www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmloans), or  
contact your local FSA office at  
<https://offices.usda.gov>.

### **ARC, PLC and CTAP Acreage Maintenance**

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) or the Cotton Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC, PLC or CTAP, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

A list of noxious weeds can be found on the following website:  
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver>.

## Veteran Farmers



### Veterans Farm second Farmer/Rancher workshop

May 16th the Veterans Farm hosted our second workshop for 2015 with



guest speakers from the USDA and other agriculture organizations. Topics included funding available to start your own agro-business and also discussion topics on lending, credit, land acquisition, lease tenures



and building a sound business and marketing plan. If you'd like to find out how you can get involved in sponsoring one of our workshops or volunteering at an event please contact us at [info@veteransfarm.com](mailto:info@veteransfarm.com) You can also follow us on Facebook for daily updates and upcoming training events at:

[www.facebook.com/veterans.farm](http://www.facebook.com/veterans.farm)

We'd like to give a special thanks to the USDA (NIFA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture for their continued support.

## Feds work to make farming attractive to veterans

Brian Tumulty



Jamie Critelli, shown in 2011 at his business, Floral Beauty Greenhouses in Elmira, is advocating better coordination of federal career placement programs for veterans who want to be trained for agricultural careers. (Photo: File photo)

**WASHINGTON** – When Jamie Critelli began leasing an Elmira greenhouse in 2011, he qualified as a “young farmer” because he wasn’t over 35.

The average age of a new farmer that year was 49, and only 14 percent were 35 or younger, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has set a goal of attracting 100,000 Americans to agriculture jobs in the coming years, but it’s been a hard sell.

The work often is almost always demanding, and bad weather or changing market prices can eliminate profit margins.

That’s why military veterans like Critelli, recommissioned last year as a captain in the Army National Guard, are advocating better coordination of federal career placement programs for veterans who want to be trained for agricultural careers.

Unemployment among veterans between 25 and 34 years old averaged around 7 percent last year, compared to just over 6 percent for non-veterans in the same age group, according to the U.S. Labor Department.

And a high percentage of veterans grew up in rural America.

The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 offers paid training for professions such as unionized plumbing and firefighting. It doesn’t cover agricultural apprenticeships, but it does cover college programs.

“If there is an academic institution that offers training, you can pretty much get it, no questions asked,” said Critelli, 38, who has a degree in horticulture from Cornell University. Critelli was in Washington this week to lobby New York’s two senators and members of the House Agriculture Committee to take make it easier for military veterans and active-duty National Guard members like him to begin careers in agriculture.

“Personally speaking, on the training and technical assistance side, there’s not a whole lot out there,” he said.

Critelli has used his horticultural degree and experience growing up in a family greenhouse business in the Hudson Valley to start his own business in Elmira. It sells flowers wholesale to retail garden centers, nonprofits and farm stands.

About three dozen veterans from the Farmers Veterans Coalition ([farmvetco.org](http://farmvetco.org)), including Critelli, met with Vilsack on Wednesday to talk about getting the USDA to do more outreach on military bases about their agency’s programs. One loan program, for instance, will waive application fees and expedite processing for veterans.

The veterans said local USDA officials often aren't acquainted with the programs cited by senior officials in Washington as helpful for veterans.

Vilsack said raising awareness among veterans is important for the USDA. "We want to give them an opportunity if they want to return to a small town," he said. USDA can even use rural development loans to help military families purchase homes, he said.

"In all sincerity, we do understand," Vilsack said. "Make no mistake. There are now many programs that didn't exist five or six years ago."

Vilsack cited efforts to expand farmers markets and the farm-to-school program as examples of how new farmers can establish markets for their products.

**Follow Brian Tumulty on Twitter @NYinDC.**

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## LETTER: Undermining farming

**IF AGRICULTURE**, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Senzeni Zokwana carries through his proposal to treat farmland like mining rights, agriculture will face a catastrophe.

Farming is not like mining. The viability of farming is bound up with the value of land. Most farming enterprises operate on outside credit. This credit is extended on the security of the land.

If land has no value, the banking system will face collapse. Loans to farmers will be rendered worthless.

Second, many farmers will face bankruptcy as their debt will be called up. They may be unable to pay and will be financially destroyed. So there

will be a huge loss of farming expertise.



Third, those farmers who manage to hang on may be unable to withstand droughts and other calamities. They may well be forced out of farming. The loss of expertise will render it impossible to develop black farmers. Hundreds of thousands of farm workers could join the unemployed.

Fourth, food prices will rocket as many farms go out of production. Finally, land will become degraded as farms are abandoned and the remaining farmers concentrate on survival, lacking the means or incentive to protect the environment. We must do our best to ensure that sanity prevails.

Willem Cronje

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## Lawsuit Alleges Organic Infant Formula Contains Non-Organic Ingredients

Andy Szal, Digital Reporter

The organic version of a popular baby formula contains dozens of ingredients that are not permitted in organic food, according to a [class action lawsuit filed last month](#).

The lawsuit, filed in the eastern New York federal court on behalf of parents in New York and California, alleges that 26 of the 49 ingredients in Abbott Laboratories' Similac Advance Organic formula "are not

allowed in organic foods," while at least one additional component includes genetically modified foods in violation of federal organic standards.

The filing seeks more than \$5 million in damages and suggests the "false and misleading" labeling allowed Abbott to realize substantial profits. Chicago-based Abbott dismissed the allegations and said its formula remains in [compliance with organic standards](#) set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Abbott announced late last month that it would begin selling versions of Similac Advance -- the nation's top-selling formula -- and Similac Sensitive without genetically modified ingredients.



A company spokeswoman said although [Abbott considers GMOs safe](#) and has no plans to phase modified corn and soy out of all Similac products, "we've had a lot of parents ask us to make a non-GMO version of Similac."

## Coming Soon



## "ACRE BY ACRE" TV SHOW

*Educating our community through the art of film*