

December 12, 2011



This week's issue of the AgNews Update is sponsored by The NC Growers Association (NCGA), a non-profit cooperative that consists of approximately 750 North Carolina grower-members who grow a wide variety of diversified crops from flowers, turfgrass, and Christmas trees to tobacco, cucumbers and sweet potatoes. NCGA provides its members a labor force via the H-2a program, which is a legal guestworker program, authorized by the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. H-2a enables farmers to secure a legal and adequate labor force that is available and capable of assisting with the seasonal/temporary manual labor associated with some agricultural crops. In order to utilize the H-2a program, growers must certify with USDOL they have first engage in independent positive recruitment of US workers through the local employment security commission, word of mouth with other growers and by placing ads in newspapers and on the radio, as well as soliciting the return of any former, qualified workers..

Weather & Drought NEWS

Gov. Perdue Provides Funding To Aid Farmers: Gov. Bev Perdue announced that the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources is providing more than \$600,000 to fund debris removal from streams and drainage ways in portions of eastern N.C. and in Transylvania County. The grant money comes from water resource development project funds managed by the Division of Water Resources. The bulk of the funding – \$600,000 – will be provided to NCD&CS, who will sponsor clean-up and restoration efforts in the following counties impacted by Hurricane Irene and the spring tornadoes: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell and Washington. Additionally, NCDENR will provide \$25,000 in financial assistance to aid in the removal of a logjam on the French Broad River near the Transylvania County Airport that is diverting the river's flow and causing severe stream bank erosion. The blockage has eroded more than 2,000 tons of soil, causing a loss of productive agricultural land, as well as harm to water quality and aquatic life with the resulting sediment.

Campaign NEWS

Poll Shows Gingrich Leading in N.C.: A new poll by Public Policy Polling shows that Newt Gingrich is leading the GOP field in N.C. The poll shows Gingrich with 51 percent of Republican voter support, Mitt Romney with 14 percent, Michele Bachmann with 8 percent, and Ron Paul with 7 percent. Public Policy Polling attributes this surge to the exit of Herman Cain from the race. Last month in N.C., Gingrich was in second place with 22 percent but is now up 29 points, nearly equal Cain's lead. Cain was leading the race in the late October poll by 30 percent.

Washington NEWS

US Senator Kay Hagan Stands Up For Farmers: This past week, Senator Mike Crapo and Senator Kay Hagan delivered a bipartisan letter urging Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell to allot floor time for the Senate to consider proposals to prevent the EPA from proceeding with a new Clean Water Act permitting system for pesticide applications. In these hyper-partisan times, I am proud that a total of 11 Democrats and 14 Republicans signed this letter. I believe this show of bipartisanship demonstrates that a common sense solution can be found that will protect the environment without burdening our farmers and rural communities with undue costs. Senate Democrats signing the letter include: Hagan, Carper, Ben Nelson, Baucus, Landrieu, Conrad, McCaskill, Johnson, Coons, Manchin, Klobuchar. Senate Republicans signing the letter include: Republicans - Crapo, Rubio, Burr, Vitter, Risch, Boozman, Johanns,

Blunt, Portman, Lugar, Hoeven, Thune, Hatch and Alexander. [Click here](#) to see BiPartisan Letter.

House Passes REINS Act: The U.S. House voted for H.R. 10, also known as the REINS (Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny) Act. The measure would require Congress to approve every major rule proposed by the Executive branch before it can be imposed on American taxpayers. The REINS Act requires Congress to take an up-or-down vote on regulations to rein in costly overreach of federal agencies that stifles job creation and hinders economic growth. The bill passed by a vote of 241 to 184. It now goes to the Senate for further consideration. N.C. congressional members voting for the bill include: Howard Coble (R, NC-6), Renee Ellmers (R, NC-2), Virginia Foxx (R, NC -5), Walter B. Jones (R, NC-3), Patrick McHenry (R, NC-10), Mike McIntyre (D, NC-7). Members voting against the measure include: G.K. Butterfield (D, NC-1), Larry Kissell (D, NC-8), Brad Miller (D, NC-13), David Price (D, NC-4), Heath Shuler (D, NC-11), Mel Watt (D, NC-12). Sue Myrick (R, NC-9) did not vote.

U.S. House Passes Regulation Bills: The House passed by a vote of 253 to 167, H.R. 3010. H.R. 3010 requires that agencies do a better job of determining what regulations are needed before implementing new rules. It also requires agencies to assess both the costs and benefits of regulations and possible alternatives. Also, the House passed H.R. 527 by a vote of 263 to 159. H.R. 527 requires federal agencies to analyze fully the impact a new regulation would have on small businesses before adopting new regulations.

Bill Passed to Amend National Labor Relations Act: The U.S. House passed H.R. 3094, The [Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act](#), by a vote of 235 to 188. The bill amends the National Labor Relations Act with respect to representation hearings and the timing of elections of labor organizations. The bill would prevent the National Labor Relations Board from reducing the amount of time employers have during an organizing drive to make their case to employees. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Immigration NEWS

N.C. House Immigration Committee Holds First Meeting: The N.C. House Committee on the State's Role in Immigration Policy held its first meeting last week and many on both sides of the issue showed up to listen. Now that Republicans hold the majority, there is a renewed push to pass immigration legislation. And while no specific legislation was discussed, legislators have their eyes on other states, like Arizona and Alabama, which are enacting tough laws. The committee did hear from two sheriffs, one from Alamance County and one from Rockingham County. The committee can recommend legislation for next year and is chaired by Rep. Iler and Rep. H.

Warren. Members include Rep. Brisson, Rep. Faircloth, Rep. Folwell, Rep. Pierce, Rep. Starnes, Rep. Stevens, and Rep. Wray.

Animal Activism NEWS

Smithfield to Meet Sow Stall Conversion Target: Smithfield CEO C. Larry Pope announced that the company is now confident that by December 31, 2011, they will have completed conversions for 30% of the sows on their farms. While the conversion from individual gestation stalls to group housing arrangements for pregnant sows on company farms slowed during the recent recession, Smithfield announced that significant resources had again been committed to the conversion. Smithfield will continue the conversion as planned with the goal of completing conversion for all sows on company farms by the end of 2017. The HSUS' president and CEO, Wayne Pacelle, released the following statement: "Smithfield's recommitment is an important and welcome move. With the company back on track with its phase-out, we're getting closer to the day when the cruel confinement of pigs in gestation crates will be a bygone era for the entire hog industry." Pacelle continued, "We recognize Smithfield's recommitment as progress and urge its competitors such as Tyson, Hormel, Triumph, Prestage, Seaboard, and others to stop lagging behind and follow suit by adopting similar policies."

Environmental NEWS

House Passes Farm Dust Act: The U.S. House passed H.R. 1633 by a vote of 268 to 150, which would block the EPA from imposing new regulations on rural America. H.R. 1633, Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act, would prohibit the EPA from issuing any new standard for coarse particulate matter for at least one year from the date of enactment of the legislation. H.R. 1633 would also limit federal regulation of nuisance dust by the EPA to areas in which it is not regulated under state, tribal, or local law, where the nuisance dust causes substantial adverse effects, and the benefits of federal regulation outweigh the costs. The bill now goes to the Senate. N.C. congressional members voting for the bill include: Renee Ellmers (R, NC-2), Virginia Foxx (R, NC-5), Walter B. Jones (R, NC-3), Larry Kissell (D, NC-8), Patrick McHenry (R, NC-10), Mike McIntyre (D, NC-7), Heath Shuler (D, NC-11). N.C. congressional members voting against the bill include: G.K. Butterfield (D, NC-1), Brad Miller (D, NC-13), David Price (D, NC-4), Mel Watt (D, NC-12). Howard Coble (R, NC-6) and Sue Myrick (R, NC-9) did not vote.

Commodity NEWS

House of Raeford Recalls Chicken Breast for Possible Listeria Contamination: House of Raeford Farms, a Raeford, N.C. establishment, is recalling approximately 4,140 pounds of cooked chicken breasts that may be contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced. The products subject to recall include: 18 to 22-lb boxes containing two 9 to 11-lb. "BONELESS OVEN ROASTED CHICKEN BREAST" The recalled products bear the establishment number "P-239A" inside the USDA mark of inspection along with a product code of "94268" and a package date of "1270" (Sept. 27, 2011). The products were shipped to delicatessens and food service institutions for further processing in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

N.C. Christmas Tree Growers Disappointed that Checkoff Program Pulled: N.C. Ag Commissioner Steve Troxler talks each week with Rhonda Garrison, Ag News Director with the Southern Farm Network, to discuss "Today's Topic." [Click here for more.](#)

White Paper on Antibiotic Use in Food Animals: The National Institute for Animal Agriculture released a white paper on the use of antibiotics in food animals. The paper reports that "resistance to antimicrobials continues to evolve, with many types of resistance

mechanisms. As such, it is imperative that antibiotics be used appropriately not only in animal agriculture but also in the human population. [Click here](#) to read full paper.

People NEWS

Food Safety Leader Joins N.C. State Faculty: N.C. State's College of Ag & Life Sciences (CALs) announced the addition of Dr. Barbara Kowalczyk as a member of the CALs faculty. Kowalczyk is well known in the food safety community as the chief executive officer of the Center for Foodborne Illness Research and Prevention, a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing foodborne illness. Kowalczyk will serve as an assistant research professor in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences as a half-time faculty member, continuing to serve as CEO of the Center for Foodborne Illness Research and Prevention. The center has moved from Pennsylvania and will be housed on N.C. State's Centennial Campus.

Business NEWS

Gov. Perdue Signs Bill Aimed at Expanding Craft Brewery Industry: Gov. Bev Perdue signed H796, which will help expand the craft brewery industry in N.C., creating new jobs and further improving the state's overall business climate. The legislation will allow all breweries to offer tastings and sell their products on site, a change aimed at drawing new breweries – and new jobs – into N.C. In recent years, the state has seen a sharp growth in small craft breweries, and the new law will help attract new operations.

University NEWS

NCSU Receives Grant to Improve Food Safety: USDA has awarded 17 grants to improve the safety of the food supply in the U.S. through research, education and extension. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded the grants, totaling \$10.4 million, to universities in 13 states to help address a broad spectrum of food safety issues. North Carolina State University received \$541,621.

NCDA NEWS

New Agronomist Serving Boone/Hickory/Morganton Area: NCDA&CS has hired Dwayne Tate as a regional agronomist to advise growers in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Mitchell, Watauga, and Wilkes counties. Tate is available for consultation beginning Dec. 12. He replaces Lynn Howard, who retired in June after 31 years of state service. Tate earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Berea College in Kentucky and has been involved in agricultural field and research studies at N.C. State University since 1982. He served most recently as agricultural research specialist at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research Station and Extension Center in Mills River. Growers in Tate's region may contact him by email at dwayne.tate@ncagr.gov or through the Agronomic Services Division's office at 919-733-2655.

USDA NEWS

USDA Publishes Final GIPSA Rule: USDA has published the final rule implementing the 2008 Farm Bill provisions under the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). The provisions being finalized have been modified from the June 22, 2010 proposed rule. The Department also planned to seek additional public comment on several other revised provisions from the June 22, 2010 proposed; however, the FY2012 Agriculture Appropriations bill passed by Congress included language prohibiting the Department from moving forward on these provisions. For more details, [click here](#).

Mark Your Calendar

To see all upcoming events - [click here for the AgCalendar.](#)