

December 5, 2011



Duke Energy, one of the largest electric power companies in the United States, supplies and delivers energy to approximately 4 million U.S. customers. The company has approximately 36,000 megawatts of electric generating capacity in the Midwest and the Carolinas, and natural gas distribution services in Ohio and Kentucky. In addition, Duke Energy has more than 4,000 megawatts of electric generation in Latin America, and is a joint-venture partner in a U.S. real estate company. Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., Duke Energy is a Fortune 500 company traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol DUK. More information about the company is available on the Internet at: www.duke-energy.com.

Washington NEWS

House Passes Regulatory Reform Bill: The House approved the Regulatory Flexibility Improvement Act (H.R. 527) by a vote of 263-159. U.S. Rep. Howard Coble (R, N.C.-6) and U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx (R, N.C.-5) cosponsored the legislation. The bill requires agencies to identify the costs new regulations could impose on small businesses and to write the regulations in ways that reduce those costs. It also gives small businesses more opportunities to be heard as regulations are written and forces agencies to look at ways to cut the costs of regulations already on the books. N.C. congressional delegation members voting yes include: Howard Coble (R, N.C. -6), Renee Ellmers (R, N.C.-2), Virginia Foxx (R, N.C.-5), Walter B. Jones (R, N.C.-3), Larry Kissell (D, N.C.-8), Patrick McHenry (R, N.C.-10), Mike McIntyre (D, N.C.-7), Sue Myrick (R, N.C.-9), Heath Shuler (D, N.C.-11). N.C. congressional delegation members voting no include: G.K. Butterfield (D, N.C.-1), Brad Miller (D, N.C.-13), David Price (D, N.C.-4), and Mel Watt (D, N.C.-12).

Bill Would Keep Farms and Ranches in the Family: Legislation aimed at reducing the barriers to pass family farm and ranch ownership to future generations has been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Idaho Senator Mike Crapo and Senator Mark Udall (D-Colorado). The American Family Farm and Ranchland Protection Act, S. 1901, would help to keep farm and ranch property under family ownership by allowing 50% of the property involved to be placed under a tax-free easement. Present law calls for a limit of 40% easement limit for agricultural estates.

Campaign NEWS

AgCommissioner Troxler Makes Announcement: Steve Troxler announced today that he is running for re-election in 2012 – to serve a 3rd term as Commissioner of Agriculture. The announcement was made in Greensboro to a crowd of farmers who had come from across North Carolina to attend the annual meeting of the North Carolina Farm Bureau.

Environmental NEWS

Committee Approves Bipartisan Farm Dust Legislation: The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved bipartisan legislation to provide much-needed certainty for rural America. H.R. 1633, the Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act, passed the full committee with bipartisan support by a vote of 33 to 16. The bill is needed to protect America's farmers, ranchers, and rural businesses from continued uncertainty around the current and future regulation of rural dust. Specifically, it prevents EPA from changing its current standard for coarse particulate matter for one year and exempts "nuisance dust" from federal regulation where such dust is already regulated under state, tribal, or local law.

EPA Schedules 2nd Webcast on Clean Water Act Permitting of Pesticide Discharges: EPA will be hosting a second webcast to discuss the implications of the Sixth Circuit Court decision on Clean Water Act NPDES permitting requirements for pesticide discharges on December 8, 2011. All participants must register in advance for this webcast. [Register here.](#)

Fuel & Energy NEWS

USDA Seeking Applications in N.C. for On-Farm Energy Initiative: N.C. farmers and organic producers can apply for technical and financial assistance to help get an energy audit for their operation. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) is seeking applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) On-Farm Energy Initiative. Funding for the initiative will be available soon. Farmers should contact their local USDA Service Center to establish eligibility and apply. The EQIP On-Farm Energy initiative will assist farmers in the development of Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) for individual on-farm energy audits. An AgEMP is an analysis of current farm infrastructure and management with recommendations to improve energy efficiency on the farm through implementing recommendations from on-farm energy audits.

University NEWS

Nickels for Know-How Referendum Passes With Overwhelming Vote: On Nov. 16, the Nickels for Know-How referendum, a voluntary assessment on feed and fertilizer produced and purchased in N.C., passed with a whopping 96 percent of the vote. The program raises about \$1.3 million annually to support agricultural research, extension, and teaching programs in NCSU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The manufacturers of feed and fertilizer build the extra cost—three nickels per ton—into the price of their products.

N.C. State, Monsanto Celebrate \$500,000 Fund for Plant Breeding and Advanced Analytics Fellows Program: The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NCSU and Monsanto Company announced a \$500,000 grant to train the next generation of plant breeding professionals. The Monsanto Fellows in Plant Breeding and Scholarships in Advanced Analytics Fund will combine education in the nation's leading public plant breeding program with learning opportunities at Monsanto.

Research Station NEWS

Troxler Names Stewart Director of Research Stations Division: Ag Commissioner Steve Troxler has appointed Dr. Alexander "Sandy" Stewart of Carthage as director of the Research Stations Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Stewart succeeds Eddie Pitzer, who retired in September. His appointment is effective Dec. 19. "Dr. Stewart has the

experience, management and research skills, and vision to lead this crucial division as it assists our research community in developing new agricultural practices and technologies that benefit our farmers and citizens,” said Troxler. Stewart earned a Bachelors of Science degree in agronomy from NCSU in 1995. He earned his master’s and doctorate degrees in crop science from NCSU. Stewart has most recently served as a research assistant professor and extension specialist with N.C. State University’s crop science department. He also helped oversee more than 40 field trials on research station sites and on-farm locations.

Business NEWS

Chiquita to Create More Than 400 Jobs in Mecklenburg County:

Chiquita Brands International Inc., will locate its global corporate headquarters in Charlotte. Chiquita expects to create more than 400 jobs over the next three years and invest \$14.1 million in the new global headquarters in Mecklenburg County. To help facilitate this expansion, the company has been awarded a grant of up to \$2.503 million from the state’s One North Carolina Fund. The company is eligible to receive a grant equal to 75 percent of the state personal income withholding taxes derived from the creation of new jobs for each of the 11 years in which the company meets annual performance targets. If Chiquita meets the targets called for under the agreement and sustains them for 11 years, the company could receive as much as \$16.13 million in maximum benefits. Chiquita is a leading international marketer and distributor of fresh produce, which is sold under the Chiquita and Fresh Express brands.

10% Campaign Reaches \$10 Million Milestone in Dollars Spent for Local Food:

In roughly 18 months, participants in the 10% Campaign have recorded over \$10 million in purchases of locally-produced foods. The 10% Campaign is a statewide effort of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems to stimulate economic development, create jobs and promote N.C.’s farms and fisheries. More than 4,400 individuals and 427 businesses, including 72 restaurants, have signed on to the campaign through the website – www.nc10percent.com -- pledging to spend 10 percent of their food budget on locally-sourced foods.

National Labor Board Approves Resolution for Election Rule:

The National Labor Relations Board has voted 2-to-1 to approve a resolution to proceed with a limited number of amendments to the NLRB election process. The amendments are drawn from a more comprehensive proposal put forward by the board in June. As a result of the vote, a final rule will be drafted containing the proposed [six amendments](#), which seek to reduce delays and unnecessary litigation in the pre-election process. The final rule is subject to board approval, and if approved, will be published in the Federal Register.

Commodity NEWS

Jones Helps Secure Opportunity For N.C. Fishermen:

The National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) filed a final rule that will give N.C. fishermen the opportunity to harvest more bluefin tuna. Congressman Walter B. Jones (N.C.-3) has been working on this issue for years. The rule, which will become effective in 30 days, will allow the bluefin tuna season for General Category permit holders to stay open through March 31 or until the full January sub-quota is caught. Under current rules, the season closes on January 31, regardless of whether the January sub-quota is fully harvested. The rule also allows for the vessel retention limit to be increased to five.

Pecans in High Demand: The damage to pecan trees from Hurricane Irene has increased demand and prices. Nationally, the price of pecans has risen to about \$11 per pound, a 22 percent increase over 2010. In Lenoir County, pecan farmers found many of their nuts on the ground before they fully matured. Smaller yields

mean that farmers are charging \$1 more per pound to about \$8 per pound locally. And the local farmers markets are selling out shortly after the doors open. Lenoir County Farmers Market manager Pat Jenkins said that people are buying all they can and often selling them out of state where the prices are even higher.

Egg Sets, Chicks Placed Continue Downward: Eggs set in incubators dropped 6 percent to 194 million eggs for the week ending Nov. 26 according to USDA. Average hatchability was 85 percent. Chicks placed for meat production dropped 5 percent to 156 million. Cumulative placements dropped to 7.76 billion, a 3 percent decrease, for Jan. 2 through Nov. 26.

USDA NEWS

USDA Document Explains Assessment Methods for the Tobacco Transition Payment Program:

FSA made available a determination document, also referred to as a statement of position, regarding tobacco payment funding. The document states the current methods used to calculate manufacturer and importer assessments that fund the Tobacco Transition Payment Program (TTPP). The determination document is in response to challenges raised in two lawsuits—Prime Time International v. Vilsack and Philip Morris v. Vilsack—involving the terms and construction of the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform Act of 2004 (FETRA). For more info, [click here](#).

USDA Lowers Insurance Premiums for Corn and Soybeans:

USDA announced it will rerate crop insurance premiums for corn and soybeans for the 2012 crop year. The average premium for corn will be lowered by 7% beginning in 2012 and soybeans will be lowered by 9%. The rate adjustment is based on findings of an independent study and peer review process. For more info, [click here](#).

Pigford Settlement Claims Filing Period Opens: U.S. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack reminded African American farmers and ranchers that the period to file a claim in the Pigford II settlement has opened. The filing period opened November 14, 2011 and continues until May 11, 2012. Claimant services representatives can also be reached through calling 1-877-810-8110 or 1-866-950-5547.

Claimants must register for a claims package which are mailed to claimants. For more info, go to www.blackfarmercase.com.

FSIS Extending Comment Period for Non-STEC Rule: FSIS is extending the comment period on the agency’s implementation plans and methods for controlling non-O157 Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli in raw, intact, and non-intact beef products and product components. The original comment period was originally set to end Nov. 21 but has been extended to Dec. 21. To submit comments [click here](#).

Commodity Credit Corporation Lending Rates for December:

USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announced interest rates for December 2011. The CCC borrowing rate-based charge for December 2011 is 0.125 percent, unchanged from 0.125 in November 2011. For 1996 and subsequent crop year commodity and marketing assistance loans, the interest rate for loans disbursed during December 2011 is 1.125 percent, unchanged from 1.125 in November 2011. Interest rates for Farm Storage Facility Loans approved for Dec. are as follows: 1.500 percent with seven-year loan terms, unchanged from November 2011; 2.125 percent with 10-year loan terms, up from 2.000 in November 2011 and; 2.375 percent with 12-year loan terms, up from 2.250 percent in November 2011. The maximum discount rate applicable for December for the Tobacco Transition Payment Program is 5 percent, unchanged from November 2011. This is based on the 3.250 percent prime rate plus 2 percent, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Mark Your Calendar

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