



Top Stories

10/14/16 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) [anticipated](#) that corn production would reach 15.1 billion bushels in 2016, an increase of 11 percent from 2015, and the highest on record.

10/13/16 – President Obama [issued](#) an executive order that seeks to organize federal efforts to prepare the nation for space weather events. The order aims to lessen economic loss, save lives and enhance national security by requiring the creation of nationwide response and recovery plans and procedures that integrate technologies that mitigate the effects of space-weather events.



10/11/16 – USDA [announced](#) plans to purchase \$20 million of cheddar cheese to reduce private cheese surpluses, which has reached record levels. The cheese will be delivered to food banks and other food assistance recipients.

From Congress

9/29/16 – The U.S. Senate [ratified](#) the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, ensuring U.S. public and private sector plant breeders have access to plant materials and seeds to develop new varieties, which are resistant to threats from pests, diseases, and global warming.

10/6/16 – Fourteen Democratic U.S. senators sent a letter [urging](#) President Obama to permanently end U.S. drilling in the Atlantic and Arctic oceans using authority granted under the

Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. Amy Pope, vice chairwoman of the White House Arctic Executive Steering Committee and deputy homeland security adviser [noted](#) that “responsibly developing Arctic oil and gas resources aligns with United States ‘all-of-the-above’ approach to developing domestic energy resources.”

From the Administration

10/20/16 – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [released](#) a report entitled “Exploring Regional Opportunities in the U.S. for Clean Energy Technology Innovation,” which summarizes the results of 14 regional forums on regional clean energy innovation.

10/19/16 – USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service is [seeking](#) a vendor to study the electronic or digital link disclosure of the presence of genetically modified ingredients in foods. This study follows the enactment of [S.764](#), which tasks the USDA with developing the formal rule for mandatory labeling of certain bioengineered products that would include what type of products would need to comply.

10/17/16 – USDA [awarded](#) more than \$62.5 million in grants to support specialty crop production including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts and nursery crops. Projects include research, agricultural extension activities and programs to increase demand and address the needs of the United States’ specialty crop industry.



10/18/16 – A White House interagency task force [announced](#) 44 [recommendations](#) to increase surveillance and response capability across the nation in response to the 90,000 ton methane leak in California during October 2015.

10/14/16 – DOE [published](#) a memorandum reminding Weatherization Assistance Program grantees that, unlike in previous years, they will not be allowed to carry over prior award funds when new grants are issued in 2017.

10/6/16 – The White House [announced](#) collaborative efforts with the USDA, the National Science and Technology Council and others to expand and diversify the U.S. agriculture workforce.

10/6/16 – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [released](#) a final supplemental environmental impact statement for the Gateway West Transmission Line Project in Wyoming and Idaho. The 30-day protest period ends Nov. 6.

10/4/16 – USDA [announced](#) \$7 billion in payments to farms under the Agriculture Risk Coverage County and Price Loss Coverage programs. The majority of the 1.7 million farms enrolled in either program are expected to receive safety-net payments.

10/3/16 – EPA [proposed](#) enhancements to its Renewable Fuel Standards and other related fuel regulations to support the market growth of ethanol and other renewable fuels in the U.S.

10/3/16 – USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) [announced](#) \$17.7 million in grant funding to train and educate through the [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#).

10/3/16 – USDA [released](#) a report showing the biobased products industry contributed \$393 billion and 4.2 million jobs to the U.S. economy in 2014. It also showed growth within the sector from 2013-2014 by creating or supporting an addition 220,000 jobs and \$24 billion over that period.

9/29/16 – USDA's NIFA [announced](#) up to \$48.1 million in available funding to support systems-based research and extension activities to accelerate science-based solutions and new technology for the specialty crop industry.

9/28/16 – The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management [announced](#) a draft programmatic environmental impact statement recommending measures to protect marine mammals and coastal environments in the Gulf of Mexico from potential impacts of geological and geophysical surveys.

9/28/16 – USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack [announced](#) more than \$56 million in grants to strengthen local and regional food systems, support farmer's markets and fund organic research.

9/15/16 – USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Service [released](#) the results of its 2015 Certified Organic Survey showing that 12,818 certified organic farms in the U.S. sold \$6.2 billion in organic products in 2015, up 13 percent from \$5.5 billion in 2014.

9/13/16 – DOE [proposed](#) a rule for walk-in coolers and freezers, which is estimated to save consumers between \$2 billion and \$4 billion and cut CO2 emissions through 2030 by 9 million metric tons.

Other

10/14/16 – The Office of Management and Budget and the Treasury Department [released](#) the details of FY 2016 final budget results. The deficit was \$587 billion, an increase of \$148 billion from FY 2015, and 3.2 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.

NCSL Resources

Register now for the NCSL Capitol Forum, Dec. 6-9, in Washington, D.C., to tackle critical state-federal issues, gain insight from national experts, and work with committees to craft the States' Agenda. [Registration and housing are now open; early bird registration deadline is Nov. 14.](#)