

NATIONAL  
**AGRICULTURE**  
*Week*

MARCH 23-29, 2014



NATIONAL AG DAY  
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2014

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Mound City  
**NEWS**



Special Section to the Mound City News  
**March 27, 2014**



March 27, 2014

PAGE 2

# NATIONAL AGRICULTURE Week

Mound City  
NEWS

## Here's to celebrating ag week

Americans need to understand the value of agriculture in their daily lives, and the following describes just a few reasons why it's important to recognize and celebrate such an important issue:

- An increased knowledge of agriculture and nutrition allows individuals to make informed personal choices about diet and health;
- Informed citizens will be able to participate in establishing policies that will support a competitive agricultural industry in this country and abroad;
- Employment opportunities exist across the board in agriculture; career choices include:
  - Farm production
  - Agribusiness management and marketing
  - Agricultural research and engineering
  - Food science
  - Processing and retailing
  - Banking
  - Education
  - Landscape architecture
  - Urban planning
  - Energy
- Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through twelfth grade, all students should receive some systematic instruction about agriculture;
- Agriculture is too important a topic to be taught only to the small percentage of students considering careers in agriculture and pursuing vocational agricultural studies; and
- Agricultural literacy includes an understanding of agriculture's history and the current economic, social and environmental significance to all Americans. Such an understanding includes some knowledge of food, fiber and renewable resource production, processing and domestic and international marketing.



## Farm technology propelled forward by population growth, maximized crop yields

Predictions by the United Nations that the world population will be 9 billion by 2050 have scientists and engineers hopping, and those at the helm of farming technology are no exception. In the next several years, farmers are expected to deliver higher yields of goods to growing communities, yet with the same amount of resources. As a result, scientists, such as those at the Graves-

Chapple Research Center near Corning, MO, are concentrating on how to fit all the pieces of crop production together without sacrificing the environment, while companies like John Deere are turning to high-tech equipment.

At Hiawatha Implement in Mound City, MO, for example, the focus is on the future.

"Land is a limited resource," Dustin Stoner said. "Yields and everything have got to go up."

With that in mind, farming equipment has steered toward the information sector; data analytics, remote sensing and GPS are becoming integral parts of machines.

"[We] can remotely monitor soil," Stoner explained, referring to how to enhance planting. "You're not just blanketing a field."

At myjohndeere.com, farmers can also share information, which, Stoner says, "saves time and resources."

News outlets, such as *Financial Times*, are also projecting advancements like self-driving cars in 2020, a potential predecessor to self-driving farming equipment. Stoner, however, said that varying ground conditions make such technology tricky, and there could be liability issues. Still, Hiawatha Implement, which sells John Deere

equipment, is gearing up for the current latest and greatest machine: a high-speed planter.

"It allows for better seed placement," Chad Gormley of Hiawatha Implement said. "It's timed to maximize crop yield."

The high-speed planter can run up to 10 miles per hour, which lets farmers not only plant faster but plant accurately.

More innovations, according to *Financial Times*, include "a system that allows the driver of a John Deere tractor to synchronize the movements of a grain cart traveling alongside it as it harvests, as well as sensors within the machines that send out alerts to the farmer, local dealer and Deere if it fails."

On the horizon as well is the use of drones, which can fly over a field, catalog the ground conditions and transmit the data to a laptop.

All in all, farming equipment continues to get faster and better, and with population growth steadily increasing, farmers will likewise have the tools to increase their crop yields accordingly.

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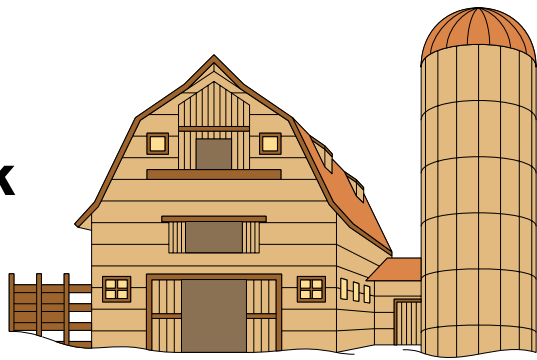


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## All about ag week

Tuesday, March 25, is National Ag Day, a time when producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America gather to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by American agriculture.

As the world population soars, there is even greater demand for the food, fiber and renewable resources produced in the United States.

The National Ag Day program believes that every American should:

- Understand how food, fiber and renewable resource products are produced;
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy;
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products; and
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, fiber and renewable resource industries.

Agriculture provides almost everything people eat, use and wear on a daily basis, and it increasingly contributes to fuel and other bio-products. Each year, members of the agricultural



industry gather together to promote American agriculture. This effort helps educate millions of consumers.

By far, the most effective part of this program is the role an individual plays in helping spread the word; a few generations ago, most Americans were directly involved in — or had relatives or friends involved in — agricultural-related endeavors. Today, such a scenario is no longer accurate, which is why it is essential that everyone joins together at the community level as all voices, in concert, become a shout that carries the message a great deal further than any single person could do alone.

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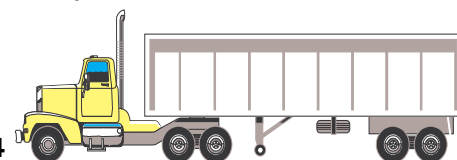
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**University of Missouri Extension Specialists Frank Wideman, left, and Willard Downs, right**  
- Demonstrate how quickly a person can be entrapped in grain wagons and bins.

## Flowing grain: A farmer's worst nightmare

A perfect storm of weather conditions might make work especially dangerous for grain producers emptying grain bins to fulfill commodity contracts and prepare for wheat harvest. In 2010, for example, there were a record 26 deaths nationwide due to grain bin accidents, according to U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports. There were just as many unreported "near misses," Willard Downs and Frank Wideman, University of Missouri (MU) Extension specialists believe.

Last fall's wet harvest and this winter's record-setting cold could result in crusted, spoiled and wet grain, which increases the danger.

"Crusting" creates a firm but unstable top layer of grain that

may feel like a hard surface for walking. Flowing grain below the crust, however, creates a cavity that can collapse in seconds.

"You may think you are standing on a firm surface, but you're not, and by the time you realize this, you're sinking," said Downs, a professor of agriculture systems management in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

"Flowing grain is a farmer's worst nightmare," added Wideman, natural resources engineer with MU Extension. He describes grain bin entrapment as similar to being caught in quicksand.

The typical round, flat-bottomed grain bin draws grain from the top center and forms a vertical cone or funnel when

emptying. The force of flowing grain makes the feet become anchors, Wideman said.

"If we keep our wits when drowning in water, we can float or tread in the water," he said. "Water will buoy you, but moving grain will suck you down."

Grain bins are larger and more dangerous than they were when farms were smaller, Wideman explained. Equipment is also larger and moves faster. Because modern equipment is more automated, farmers may tend to work alone.

Farmers would be wise to learn the following tips in case such a nightmare is realized:

- Cup hands around the mouth and nose to create an air pocket, which may provide enough air and time for someone to come to the rescue.
- If possible, move to the edge of the bin and continue moving in a spiral until the bin is empty. Try to get to the inside ladder of the bin.
- If someone else has become entrapped, do not attempt a rescue. Call 911, turn off the auger or conveyor belt and turn on fans to increase ventilation. Gather items that emergency personnel can use to keep grain away from the victim.

To prevent grain bin entrapment, Wideman and Downs also have these recommendations:

- Always check the lock-out control circuit devices on the auger before entering the bin.
- Develop a "zero entry" mentality. Stay out of the bin. If the grain has to be checked, don't go alone.
- Keep others informed of an entry into the grain bin; it will prevent them from turning on the auger while a person is in the bin.
- Wear a safety harness and have a trained observer present. Many fatal grain bin accidents involve more than one death because observers die while making a rescue attempt.
- Run ventilation equipment before entering a bin to release toxic fumes.
- Train other family members, farm workers and visitors to stay out of the bin. Children think of grain bins and wagons as big sandboxes. Keep ladders away to help children avoid the temptation to enter bins and wagons. Lock bins.

For more information, see the MU Extension publication "Safe Storage and Handling of Grain" (G1969), available for free download at [extension.missouri.edu/p/G1969](http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G1969). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) also has information on grain handling safety at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/grainhandling](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/grainhandling).

## Last call for America's Farmers Grow Rural Education grant

The deadline is fast approaching for farmers to nominate rural public school districts to compete for a grant of up to \$25,000 through America's Farmers Grow Rural Education, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund.

"As we work to grow our next generation of farmers, building a strong math and science foundation is vital," said Linda Arnold, Monsanto customer advocacy lead. "Working together with farmers and rural school districts, we are building relationships that benefit the community, with the ultimate goal of improving education."

Nominations will be accepted until Sunday, April 6. Eligible farmers can nominate their school district by visiting [www.GrowRuralEducation.com](http://www.GrowRuralEducation.com) or by calling 1-877-267-3332. Grants are awarded based on merit, need and community support. The more farmers who nominate a school district, the more it demonstrates community support and strengthens the school district's application. This year the program has expanded to 18 new counties for a total of 1,289 eligible counties across 39 states.

School administrators in nominated districts will have until Monday, April 21, to submit their applications online. The application website is also equipped to answer

specific questions about the Grow Rural Education program overall and assist with the grant writing process.

The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education Advisory Council, a group of approximately 30 farmers from across the country, will review and select the winning grant applications. Advisory Council members were selected based on their passion for farming and education, as well as their experience in rural school districts.

Last year more than 73,000 farmers nominated 4,024 school districts, which resulted in \$2.3 million in grants to improve math and science education in 181 districts across the country.

The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program is part of a broad commitment by the Monsanto Fund to strengthen farming communities. America's Farmers Grow Rural Education launched in 2012 after a successful pilot in Minnesota and Illinois and has since awarded nearly \$5 million to school districts across the country.

For more information about the America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program or to view the official rules, a list of eligible states, counties and CRDs, visit [www.GrowRuralEducation.com](http://www.GrowRuralEducation.com).

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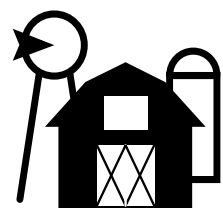
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## Graves-Chapple research tackles dry soil conditions

The name of the game when it comes to high yields is soil moisture, but Mother Nature has a way of calling the plays. With the help of researchers from Graves-Chapple Research Center, part of University of Missouri (MU) Extension, however, farmers can score one for the home team using valuable results from scientific experiments that show how to curtail the effect of weather on crop production.

Although the 2011 drought negatively affected soil moisture, and even rampant snowfall and rain have yet to return soil to its ideal moisture level, Holt County is in a relatively safe spot, according to Wayne Flanary, regional agronomist with MU Extension.

"Characteristics of different soils in northwest Missouri have to do with the impact of the drought," Flanary said. "[We're] blessed in Atchison and Holt counties with the Missouri River...the soil can withstand the drought much easier."

Farther east, Flanary explained, the drought has had more of an effect. In the Camden and Bethany, MO, area, for example, Flanary noted that soybean yields ranged from eight to 10 bushels, but in Holt County, bushels numbered up to 55, on average.

"Soil resource makes a big difference," he said.

To that end, Flanary, as well as other researchers at Graves-Chapple, have

conducted experiments on all elements affecting crop production.

"Experiments are designed to provide localized data," he said. "Agriculture moves quick right now, so there needs to be good science behind decisions."

According to the most recent Graves-Chapple research report, "Several trials and research projects were conducted at the Center to help producers maximize their yields in dry conditions. From seeding rates, fertility, planting timing, tillage methods and the use of fall-planted cover crops, several different strategies were examined."

One of those studies that most surprised Flanary was a comparison of 20-inch versus 30-inch row spacing on corn. While there were positive results for 20-inch rows in northern Iowa, researchers found that 30-inch rows delivered higher yields in Missouri. Such a result is precisely why Graves-Chapple takes on experiments.

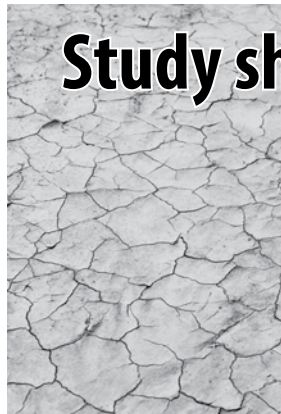
"Our goal is to teach people how to use [the results] in a win-win situation for them, financially and [in terms of



crop] growth," Flanary said.

The Graves-Chapple Research Center 2013 Annual Report is available at the Atchison and Holt County Extension offices in Rock Port, MO, and Oregon, MO, respectively, or online at <http://extension.missouri.edu/atchison>. Graves-Chapple Research Center is located near Corning, MO.

## Study shows soil has yet to recover from drought



A University of Missouri (MU) researcher says that soil in the Midwest has not recovered from the recent two-year drought despite significant precipitation this winter. Randal Miles, an associate professor of soil science at the MU School of Natural Resources, says the inadequate soil is hurting farmers. "The soil in Missouri is still dry about four to five feet down where crop roots live," Miles said. "This is an improvement from a year ago when two years of drought left many prime growing areas bone dry down to almost six feet. However, without enough moisture and nutrients, crops will produce poor yields resulting in a loss for farmers."

In order for soil to be suitable for crops, the soil moisture must "recharge," a process where water from rain and snow moves downward from the surface and fills in the space found in soil. A soil moisture recharge normally comes from snow melt and rainfall in winter and early spring.

"Much of the moisture this winter was slightly below normal with enough running into the streams and rivers and little soaking into the earth," Miles said. "Missouri needed a long-term drizzly type of rain or snow to replenish the soil for it to have enough residual moisture available for use at planting and harvest, but most of the precipitation this winter came in heavy doses."

Miles says even with heavy

amounts of snow and rainfall, moisture near the surface can evaporate with just a few days of high winds, higher than normal temperatures, low relative humidity or a combination of the three. Such conditions prevent moisture from having a chance to move deep into the soil where it is needed.

"People think that the problem is solved if we get a few good rains or some significant snowfall," Miles said. "We'll need extraordinarily persistent

rains for the moisture to get down five feet where the roots of mature plants live. It could take weeks or months for water entering the soil surface to move into the three to five feet depth of the soil."

Miles says that it could take another year of solid rain and snowfall for the soil to get back to normal moisture levels.

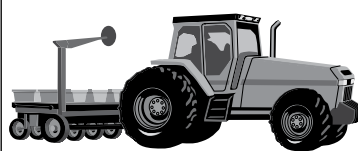
The School of Natural Resources is located in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at MU.

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## 2014 Farm Bill to save billions in taxpayer money, cut federal spending

The Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was passed in January after months of debate in Congress. The changes, while deemed problematic by some, are intended to both save taxpayers' money and provide a safety net for farmers.

One of the goals of the new bill, according to the House-Senate Conference Committee,

is to repeal or consolidate about 100 programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the bill "includes the most significant reduction to farm policy spending in history by improving agricultural programs."

Chris Rader, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) district conservationist, explained that the programs affecting farmers in Holt County the most are the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

"[Both] assist farmers in our area with conservation efforts," Rader wrote to *Mound City News*. "Those programs are still available. The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) no longer exists in the new farm bill, but now EQIP has a wildlife initiative."

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance in 10-year contracts to qualifying agricultural producers engaging in conservation practices. Similarly, CSP, according to NRCS, "helps

agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources [issues]."

To address financial concerns, the new bill strengthens crop insurance and livestock disaster assistance. It also, however, repeals direct payments, leaving producers to turn to risk-management tools for protection when significant losses occur. Previously, payments amounted to \$5 billion per year, according to *The New York Times*, and were paid to farmers whether they produced crops or not.

"The end of the direct payments may have an impact on some farmers," Rader wrote, "but I think...how they intend to implement the relationship of compliance and eligibility for crop insurance might have an impact here and everywhere."

According to *Farm Futures*, the USDA will develop an educational program with training materials on crop insurance options to ensure that not only will farmers have the opportunity to update production histories, but they will also be more informed.

Additional priorities of the new \$956 billion bill, *Farm Futures* reported, include, according to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsak: "First, continu[ing] programs that help large-scale, commercial-sized farm profitability; second, com[ing] up with new ways to create income opportunities that will preserve and expand mid-sized operations; and third, find[ing] ways to assist smaller-sized operations, beginning farmers and ranchers, women, minority farmers or returning veterans who want to farm."

Lastly, the aspect of the 2014 Farm Bill that endures the most adjustments is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as the "food stamp program." The cuts in funding total \$8 billion, *The New York Times* reported, costing 850,000 households \$90 per month in benefits. To offset the reductions, the bill does provide for an additional \$200 million to be distributed to food banks.

## USDA urges livestock producers affected by severe weather to keep records

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Juan M. Garcia, in a statement released on Thursday, March 6, repeated his appeal to livestock producers affected by natural disasters, such as the unexpected winter storm in the upper Midwest, to keep thorough records.

Records should include livestock and feed losses as well as any additional expenses experienced as a result of losses to purchased forage or feed stuff.

"The 2014 Farm Bill provides a strong farm safety net to help ranchers during these difficult times," Garcia said. "We'll provide producers with information on new program requirements, updates and signups as the information becomes available. In the meantime, I urge producers to keep thorough records. We know these disasters have caused serious economic hardships for our livestock producers. We'll do all we can to assist in their recovery."


In addition to the early winter snowstorms, farmers must endure a variety of disasters, from floods to storms to unexpected freezes and drought. Each event causes economic consequences for farm-

ers and ranchers throughout the United States. FSA recommends that owners and producers record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses;
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts;
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures;
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed;
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records;
- Pictures of on-farm storage facilities that were destroyed by wind or floodwaters; and
- Evidence of damaged farm-land.

Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or an FSA county office to learn more about FSA programs and loans.

For information about USDA's Farm Bill implementation plan, visit [www.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.usda.gov/farmbill).



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Preliminary 2012 Census of Agriculture

This preliminary 2012 Census of Agriculture report includes selected data for farmers, ranchers, and their operations for each State and the Nation. Responses were summarized at the state, and national level and no individual farm data are revealed. A comprehensive census review of all items to the county level is continuing, therefore the data in this preliminary report are subject to change when final census results are released. Finalized data are scheduled for release in May 2014. An announcement will be made on USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's website [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov) and the census website [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).



Table 1. Selected Operation and Principal Operator Characteristics: 2012 and 2007

[For meaning of abbreviations and symbols, see introductory text]

Item	United States			Missouri			Nebraska			Iowa			Kansas		
	2012		2007 total	2012		2007 total	2012		2007 total	2012		2007 total	2012		2007 total
	Total	Coefficient of variation (percent)		Total	Coefficient of variation (percent)		Total	Coefficient of variation (percent)		Total	Coefficient of variation (percent)		Total	Coefficient of variation (percent)	
FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS															
Farms .....number	2,109,363	1.6	2,204,792	99,170	2.0	107,825	49,969	5.8	47,712	88,631	2.7	92,856	61,773	5.4	65,531
Land in farms .....acres	914,603,026	0.9	922,095,840	28,266,102	1.2	29,026,573	45,331,783	1.6	45,480,358	30,615,357	1.6	30,747,550	46,137,295	2.9	46,345,827
Average size of farm .....acres	434	1.2	418	285	1.2	269	907	4.3	953	345	1.2	331	747	3.0	707
Median size of farm .....acres	80	(L)	80	120	(L)	115	280	10.7	320	136	23.2	151	200	6.9	200
Farms by size:															
1 to 9 acres .....	223,642	6.1	232,849	3,544	7.2	3,868	3,520	21.1	2,270	6,708	14.7	8,709	1,975	10.5	2,123
10 to 49 acres .....	589,571	2.2	620,283	21,705	3.3	25,186	8,125	21.8	6,581	20,660	18.2	17,824	9,776	14.0	10,041
50 to 179 acres .....	634,056	1.1	660,530	37,013	1.9	40,246	9,742	6.3	10,104	22,789	7.2	24,692	17,927	5.9	18,992
180 to 499 acres .....	346,062	2.4	368,368	23,301	2.4	24,537	9,735	9.8	9,838	18,659	24.2	22,354	12,578	4.7	14,108
500 to 999 acres .....	142,549	1.8	149,713	7,819	2.6	8,180	7,717	4.0	7,717	11,576	7.0	11,826	7,208	6.5	7,932
1,000 acres or more .....	173,483	1.1	173,049	5,788	1.4	5,808	11,130	3.2	11,202	8,239	9.8	7,451	12,309	3.4	12,335
MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD AND GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS															
Market value of agricultural products sold .....\$1,000	394,646,980	2.0	297,220,491	9,163,844	0.8	7,512,926	23,068,756	7.7	15,506,035	30,811,729	6.6	20,418,096	18,460,564	15.0	14,413,182
Average per farm .....dollars	187,093	2.0	134,807	92,405	1.7	69,677	461,661	7.7	324,992	347,641	6.6	219,890	298,845	15.0	219,944
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops .....\$1,000	212,403,631	1.6	143,657,928	4,566,953	1.0	3,494,938	11,377,933	5.4	6,843,325	17,355,391	4.7	10,343,585	6,983,993	11.9	4,887,212
Livestock, poultry, and their products .....\$1,000	182,243,350	2.8	153,562,563	4,596,891	0.9	4,017,988	11,690,823	10.1	8,662,710	13,456,337	9.2	10,074,511	11,476,571	17.3	9,525,971
Government payments .....\$1,000	8,053,137	1.0	7,983,922	323,953	0.9	319,519	392,428	2.2	387,340	782,157	8.8	706,286	442,090	4.6	427,144
Farms by economic class:															
Less than \$50,000 .....	1,578,758	1.9	1,709,509	78,515	2.2	88,587	23,001	11.5	22,429	43,853	10.4	48,893	39,602	6.5	44,864
\$50,000 to \$249,999 .....	275,687	1.4	278,173	13,732	1.8	12,833	12,321	17.5	13,271	18,014	24.6	24,186	12,425	4.8	12,499
\$250,000 to \$999,999 .....	173,284	1.3	159,818	5,019	1.5	4,999	10,185	5.6	9,359	19,414	14.1	15,443	7,318	4.2	6,331
\$1,000,000 or more .....	81,634	3.3	57,292	1,904	0.6	1,406	4,462	9.3	2,653	7,350	31.1	4,334	2,428	27.8	1,837
SELECTED PRINCIPAL OPERATOR CHARACTERISTICS															
Operators .....number	2,109,363	1.6	2,204,792	99,170	2.0	107,825	49,969	5.8	47,712	88,631	2.7	92,856	61,773	5.4	65,531
Sex of operator:															
Male .....	1,821,094	1.4	1,898,583	88,043	1.9	95,071	45,878	5.6	43,687	81,528	2.6	84,404	54,990	5.3	57,588
Female .....	288,269	3.9	306,209	11,127	3.0	12,754	4,091	9.7	4,025	7,103	4.6	8,452	6,783	7.1	7,943
Primary occupation:															
Farming .....	1,007,950	1.2	993,881	43,787	1.5	45,031	29,819	3.0	28,854	47,954	2.5	48,637	29,857	4.3	30,873
Other .....	1,101,413	1.9	1,210,911	55,383	2.4	62,794	20,150	10.3	18,858	40,677	3.4	44,219	31,916	6.6	34,658
Years on present farm:															
2 years or less .....	68,194	6.8	84,883	3,397	5.5	4,757	1,710	26.5	1,287	2,288	5.3	2,947	1,845	12.1	2,180
3 or 4 years .....	103,373	4.7	138,858	4,588	4.1	7,087	2,289	16.9	2,082	3,616	4.0	4,325	2,940	10.3	3,316
5 to 9 years .....	297,571	2.9	359,545	13,559	3.5	17,114	5,977	12.8	5,716	10,056	3.6	11,480	7,643	7.7	9,167
10 years or more .....	1,640,225	1.0	1,621,506	77,626	1.5	78,867	39,993	3.5	38,627	72,671	2.5	74,104	49,345	4.7	50,868
Age group:															
Under 25 years .....	10,719	9.0	11,878	636	6.3	704	456	18.4	378	600	5.0	686	352	11.0	417
25 to 34 years .....	109,146	6.6	106,735	5,594	6.2	5,622	4,291	13.4	2,975	5,655	7.5	5,592	3,975	10.9	3,909
35 to 44 years .....	214,135	4.6	268,818	10,182	4.8	14,034	6,199	10.6	6,168	9,824	4.1	12,358	6,383	9.8	7,141
45 to 54 years .....	466,048	2.2	565,401	22,064	2.7	26,342	11,943	6.9	13,227	20,778	3.3	25,023	13,215	6.6	16,770
55 to 64 years .....	608,060	1.6	596,306	27,040	1.7	27,936	13,903	4.1	11,902	25,692	2.2	23,201	17,351	4.7	16,232
65 to 74 years .....	443,558	0.9	412,182	20,552	1.3	20,491	8,068	4.2	7,811	16,159	2.6	15,999	11,762	3.6	11,900
75 years and over .....	257,697	0.7	243,472	13,102	1.9	12,696	5,109	4.3	5,251	9,923	3.0	9,997	8,735	3.4	9,162
Average age .....	58.3	0.3	57.1	58.3	0.3	57.1	55.7	0.8	55.9	57.1	0.2	56.1	58.2	0.5	57.7
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin .....	67,014	8.2	55,570	548	17.2	444	316	(H)	166	378	16.2	346	693	50.6	555
Race:															
American Indian or Alaska Native .....	37,857	8.1	34,706	442	14.7	397	66	57.2	33	53	18.5	44	395	42.6	297
Asian .....	13,699	18.3	11,214	235	16.2	228	16	(H)	13	72	17.2	71	165	(H)	35
Black or African American .....	33,372	11.8	30,599	176	17.2	179	25	89.3	9	28	24.0	31	165	42.3	147
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander .....	1,468	20.3	1,356	27	24.8	28	-	-	2	4	58.1	5	17	(H)	5
White .....	2,012,674	1.5	2,114,325	97,825	1.9	106,313	49,807	5.7	47,611	88,391	2.7	92,636	60,853	5.1	64,813
More than one race reported .....	10,293	9.3	12,592	465	9.1	680	55	14.1	44	83	15.8	43	272	15.2	234

2012 Census of Agriculture  
USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service

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In the 1970s, the future of the agricultural landscape looked bleak. While goods were being produced at a rapid rate, poor agricultural methods and practices damaged the land and water, resulting in hundreds of acres of infertile land. Many took notice and worked feverishly to find solutions to the problem. One of those solutions was the concept of permaculture, or agriculture that could be sustained in one place indefinitely. From this idea sprung many practical applications, including one known as forest gardening.

Essentially the creation of a sustainable food production system by patterning it on the workings of a woodland ecosystem, forest gardening was developed by Englishman Robert Hart. In order to provide for himself and his learning disabled brother, Hart designed, planted and tended to a small garden. Although the garden included all of the elements to provide Hart with almost all of the food he and his brother would need — vegetable beds, livestock and orchards — it required more work than Hart anticipated. He soon realized that he could not care for the garden alone and sought to create an environment that would help tend to itself.

While studying the problem, Hart noted that one of the areas within his garden was fairly self-sufficient. It practically took care of itself, and upon closer observation, Hart realized that all of the elements within the area worked in such a way as to sustain each other and the area as a whole, much like the elements in a woodland setting. With that goal in mind, Hart redesigned his gar-

den, planting compatible crops on every available inch to produce the greatest yield possible. The result was a forest garden, containing layer upon layer of crops that complemented each other and required far less care.

From bottom to top, Hart's forest garden read like a study in efficiency and compatibility. Running along the ground were a layer of root crops and a layer of perennial herbs and vegetables. Interspersed among these was a layer of horizontally spreading groundcover, a layer of fruit bushes and a layer of small nut and fruit trees. Towering above everything were mature fruit trees with vertical climbers wrapping around them. Planted just so, no one layer competed against another for nutrients, light or water, and with each layer, biodiversity increased, creating a unique habitat for a variety of organisms that would not have been possible with a single crop.

Through forest gardening, Hart demonstrated how viable a piece of land could be. While his concept cannot be easily applied to large-scale farming, it can be very beneficial in organic farming where the plots are smaller and easier to manage. By taking the soil and climate conditions into consideration

as well as the crop varieties and eliminating the competition for space, nutrients, water and sunlight, an organic farmer can create a garden that yields a lot with little to no tending.

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## USDA takes on organic farming

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced new figures on Thursday, March 20, that show the organic industry is continuing to grow domestically and globally, with over 25,000 certified organic operations in more than 120 different countries around the world.

Through the Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program, USDA has helped an additional 763 producers become certified organic in just 2013, an increase of 4.2 percent from the previous year. The industry today encompasses a record breaking 18,513 certified organic farms and businesses in the United States alone, representing a 245 percent increase since 2002. The 2013 list of certified USDA organic operations shows an increased rate of domestic growth within the industry, resuming previous trends.

"Consumer demand for organic products has grown exponentially over the past decade. With retail sales valued at \$35 billion last year, the organic industry represents a tremendous economic opportunity for farmers, ranchers and rural communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "New support in the 2014 Farm Bill will enhance USDA's efforts to help producers and small business tap into this market and support organic ag-

riculture as it continues to grow and thrive."

USDA has a number of new and expanded efforts to connect organic farmers and businesses with resources that will ensure the continued growth of the organic industry domestically and abroad. During this administration, USDA has signed three major trade agreements on organic products, first with Canada and then with the European Union and Japan. Trading partners are eager to establish organic equivalency arrangements with the U.S. because they recognize the strength of the National Organic Program and the value of the USDA organic label.

USDA is also helping organic stakeholders access programs that support conservation, provide access to loans and grants, fund organic research and education and mitigate pest emergencies. Funds are currently available for research projects under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities or problems. The program also funds research projects to enhance the ability of organic producers and processors to grow and market their products. Additional information is available online, and request for proposals are due by Thursday, May 8, 2014.

Additionally, the recently signed 2014 Farm Bill includes provisions that are a greater support to the organic community, including:

- \$20 million annually for dedicated organic research, agricultural extension programs, and education. The Cooperative Extension System is a nationwide, non-credit educational network. Every U.S. state and territory has a state office at its land-grant university and a network of local or regional offices staffed by experts that provide useful, practical and research-based information.
- \$5 million to fund data collection on organic agriculture that will give

polymakers, organic farmers and organic businesses data needed to make sound policy, business and marketing decisions.

- Expanded options for organic crop insurance to protect farmers.
- Expanded exemptions for organic producers who are paying into commodity "check off" programs, and authority for USDA to consider an application for the organic sector to establish its own check off.
- Improved enforcement authority for the National Organic Program to conduct investigations.

- \$5 million for a technology upgrade of the National Organic Program to provide up-to-date information about certified organic operations across the supply chain.
- \$11.5 million annually for certification cost-share assistance, which reimburses the costs of annual certification for organic farmers and livestock producers by covering 75 percent of certification costs, up to \$750 per year.

Additional information about USDA resources and support for the organic sector is available on the USDA Organics Resource page.



**Wally Riebesell, back** - Observes Eric Schneider, front, demonstrate the flipping motion used to launch the eBee Drone at MO Valley Ag in Rock Port, MO, on Monday, March 17.



**Eric Schneider, center** - Loads the drone's flight information into a program on his laptop.

## MO Valley Ag looks into drones for crop scouting

Eric Schneider, ag service technician with Labre Crop Consulting, visited MO Valley Ag in Rock Port, MO, on Monday, March 17, to demonstrate the eBee Drone.

With technology similar to military drones, the eBee Drone, as well as others, may be used to help farmers improve crop production. The process involves several steps. First, the eBee Drone is linked to a laptop with the GPS coordinates programmed into it, providing the drone with flight information. Next, the section of ground being covered is entered into the computer, and the program sets the flight path; wind and elevation are factored into the equation to provide the best coverage of the land possible. Finally, the drone is equipped with a camera that takes infrared still images of

the farm ground, and it takes off.

Once it has landed, the images are downloaded to the laptop, and the software stitches the images together to create one large picture of the field. From that image, any problem areas can be identified and located, which allows a field scout to go take samples to better assess the issue.

Overall, drones are able to cover 80 acres in roughly 25 minutes. They also help with plant count, identifying machine issues, sensing crop stress, checking crop elevations, looking for evidence of hail or wind damage, locating objects, assessing crop yields and collecting elevation and topography data. Farmers can also obtain a 3-D image of the inspected area.

To learn more about eBee senseFly drones, visit [www.sensefly.com/drones/ebee.html](http://www.sensefly.com/drones/ebee.html).

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### Drought tolerant corn hybrids

Growers have been excited to have access to this new corn hybrid technology. One of the questions often asked, should I adjust my seeding rate when using drought tolerant hybrids? Three site years of research has been conducted by K-State Research and Extension studying different seeding rates, hybrids and water use. They found the yield response of plants to population the same for drought tolerant and non-drought tolerant hybrids. Because of this, they are suggesting that corn planting populations remain the same for both drought tolerant and non-drought tolerant hybrids.

For more information, contact Wayne Flanary at 660-446-3724, Heather Benedict at 660-425-6434 or Wyatt Miller at 816-776-6961, Regional Agronomists, University of Missouri Extension.

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# USDA to reach out to small and mid-sized farmers, ranchers

In remarks at the National Farmers Union National Convention on Monday, March 10, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced new and expanded efforts to connect small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) resources to help them build stronger businesses, expand to reach new and larger markets and grow their operations.

"The recent Census of Agriculture shows that there is tremendous growth potential for small and mid-sized producers in the American agricultural landscape," said Vilsack. "USDA is taking a hard look at our existing resources to ensure that they work for producers of all sizes. We've adjusted policies, strengthened programs and intensified outreach to meet the needs of small and mid-sized producers. These producers are critical to our country's agricultural and economic future."

Efforts include improved ac-

cess to USDA resources, revised risk management tools that better fit the needs of smaller producers, additional support for hoop houses and expanded collections of valuable market news information. USDA is also introducing a series of education tools focusing on opportunities for farmers engaged in local and regional food systems. In addition, USDA field staff will be boosting their outreach efforts to small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers.

More information on the tools and resources available to small and mid-sized farmers, including information about access to capital, risk management, food safety and locating market opportunities on USDA's Small and Mid-Sized Farmer Resources webpage, will be rolled out in the coming months.

The new efforts announced by the Secretary include:

#### Access to capital

- Changes to the Farm Storage and Facility Loan (FSFL) Program to help small and mid-sized fruit and vegetable producers access the program for cold storage and related equipment like wash and pack stations. Diversified and smaller fruit and vegetable producers, including Community Supported Agriculture programs, are now eligible for a waiver from the requirement that they carry crop insurance or NAP coverage when they apply for an FSFL loan. FSFL can also be used to finance hay barns and grain bins.
- Funding for producers under the popular mi-

croloan program, which USDA launched to allow beginning, small and mid-sized farmers access of up to \$35,000 in loans using a simplified application process. Since the debut in 2013, USDA has issued more than 4,900 microloans totaling \$97 million.

- Funding for hoop houses to extend the growing season. Hoop houses provide revenue opportunities while also promoting conservation for small and mid-sized farmers. The hoop house cost share program began as a pilot in 2010, and since then more than 10,000 hoop houses have been contracted. USDA will soon announce an additional \$15 million for hoop house development in persistent poverty counties in 19 states as part of USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity Initiative.

#### Risk management

- Developing tools to help small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers make sound financial decisions as they plan for their future. USDA is developing a whole farm insurance policy that will better meet the needs of highly-diversified producers, particularly small and mid-sized fruit and vegetable growers. Using new tools provided by the Farm Bill, USDA is working to reduce crop insurance costs for beginning farmers and ranchers. Organic producers will benefit from the elimination of

a previously required five percent surcharge on crop insurance premiums.

#### Locating market opportunities

- USDA's Farm to School Program has put seven new Farm to School Coordinators on the ground in regional offices to help build direct relationships between small and mid-sized producers and school districts. One priority area for Farm to School is creating more opportunities for small and mid-sized livestock and poultry producers. Since 2013, USDA has invested nearly \$10 million in Farm to School grants that support schools as they purchase from local and regional sources. In the 2011-2012 school year alone, schools spent nearly \$355 million on local and regional food purchases.

- USDA expanded price, volume, supply and demand information through Market News, which is now collecting price data on grass-fed beef to arm producers with real pricing information from the sector. Market News will also soon begin collecting data about local food prices and volume, as it is valuable to small and mid-sized producers engaged in that marketplace. Market News provides real-time price, volume, supply and demand information for producers to use in making production and marketing decisions. Access to timely, unbiased market information levels the playing field for all producers participating in the marketplace.
- USDA broadened the National Farmers' Market Directory to include CSAs, on-farm stores and food hubs. This information will help small and mid-sized producers find new market opportunities. USDA will begin collecting data to update the directory for the 2014 season this spring. The USDA National Farmers' Market Directory receives over 2 million hits annually.

#### Food safety

- USDA launched pilot projects in five states to help small and mid-sized farmers achieve Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification. GAP certification indicates farmers have met food safety standards required by many retail buyers. Under these pilot programs, small and mid-sized producers will be able to share the costs and fees associated with the certification process as a group. Group GAP efforts are being developed in partnership with small and mid-sized producer groups in Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Montana and Pennsylvania.

#### Educational resources and outreach

- USDA created a Learning Guide Series for small and mid-sized producers to help them navigate available USDA resources on the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food website. The first in the series will

be for small and mid-sized livestock and poultry producers. Additional Learning Guides will be released later this year. USDA field staff and StrikeForce teams will also increase outreach to small and mid-sized producers using the Learning Guides.

- USDA launched Small Scale Solutions for Your Farm, a series of educational resources designed for both small livestock and fruit and vegetable producers. This series includes tips on simple management activities, from planting cover crops to complex structural practices, such as animal waste management systems or innovative irrigation devices.

#### 2014 Farm Bill

The recently-signed 2014 Farm Bill provides USDA with more direct resources to support small and mid-sized farmers, including:


- The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), which provides grants to organizations that train, educate and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies and other topics critical to running a successful operation. The 2014 Farm Bill provides \$100 million total to BFRDP over the next 5 years.
- The Value-Added Producer Grant Program, which was modified to allow USDA to better target small and mid-sized family farms, beginning and socially-disadvantaged farmers and veterans. The 2014 Farm Bill provides \$63 million over the next 5 years.
- The Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program, which was expanded to support both direct-to-consumer opportunities and other supply chain projects such as food hubs. The 2014 Farm Bill provides \$30 million annually.

#### USDA fiscal year 2015 budget proposal

USDA recently released its fiscal year 2015 budget, which includes additional resources to help small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers, including:

- \$2.5 million to provide food safety training to owners and operators of small farms, small food processors and small fruit and vegetable vendors affected by the Food Safety Modernization Act.
- \$3 million for Small, Socially Disadvantaged Producers Grants Program to ensure historically underprivileged rural Americans have opportunities for cooperative development.
- \$2.5 million for a new Food and Agriculture Resilience Program for Military Veterans (FARM-Vets) that promotes research, education and extension activity for veterans.
- \$11 million for the Value-Added Producer Grants Program. The 2014 Farm Bill provides an additional \$63 million in mandatory funding that is available until expended.
- \$2.5 million in funding for the National Agricultural Statistics Service to conduct a survey on land ownership and farm financial characteristics. This funding supports an administration priority that will provide additional demographic data related to small and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- \$1.2 million for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach to carry out these responsibilities and the provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill related to outreach to beginning, small and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, including veterans, and rural communities.
- \$25.7 million for Departmental Administration to maintain critical support activities and oversight for the Department, including management of small and disadvantaged business utilization programs.

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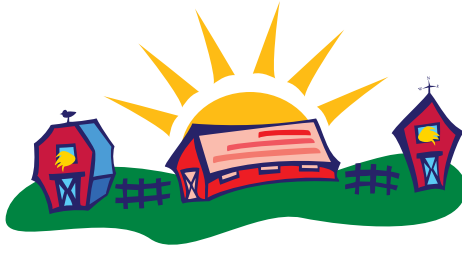
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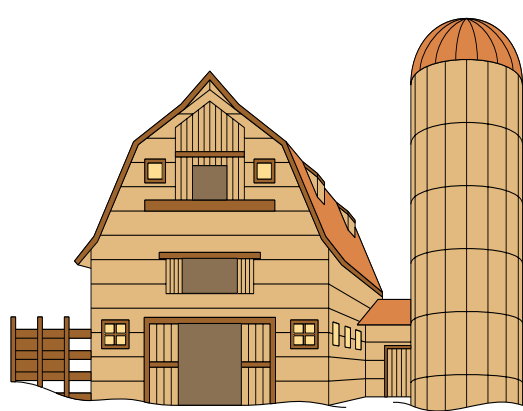


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DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR 2014-2015 FUNDING IS MARCH 28

## Director of agriculture announces grants for Missouri specialty crop producers

The Missouri Department of Agriculture is now accepting proposals for funding through the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Applications are available through late March for individuals, community organizations and research institutions working to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Missouri.

"Specialty crop grants are one of the many options available to producers growing their operations through innovation and value-added agriculture and the organizations working to assist them," said Director of Agriculture Richard Fordyce. "We continue to look for ways to support Missouri's agricultural producers, including through

increasing the production, processing and distribution of Missouri's specialty crops."

Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, maple syrup, honey, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. The Department's goal is to use the grant program to expand local, regional and international markets and distribution channels for specialty crops, as well as for education, marketing and infrastructure development. The Department anticipates receiving several hundred thousand dollars in grant funding for the upcoming fiscal year from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.

Concept paper applications for the up-

coming fiscal year must be submitted to the Department no later than March 28, 2014. The concept papers will be evaluated and selected applicants will be invited to submit detailed grant proposals in April. Those proposals will be due to the Department in May for inclusion in Missouri's state plan. A list of previously funded projects is available on the Department's website.

Applications are available online at <http://mda.mo.gov/abd/financial/specialtycrop.php>. For more information on the Missouri Department of Agriculture and its programs, visit the Department online at [mda.mo.gov](http://mda.mo.gov).

## Community improvement grants available to 4-H & FFA youth

Developing a thriving rural Missouri is important to FCS Financial. The Shaping Rural Missouri grant program offers Missouri 4-H and FFA organizations \$500 grants to implement projects that will benefit their rural communities and youth development.

"Providing opportunities for rural community development is important to FCS Financial because our employees and customers live in these same areas," said Scott Gardner, Vice President, Sales & Marketing. "These grants not only strengthen our rural communities but allow our youth to work as a team to accomplish a goal."

Funds are awarded to assist club or chapter members in bringing positive change by establishing projects that make their local communities better places to live. FCS Financial encourages

applicants to collaborate with other community organizations to develop and complete their improvement project.

Last year, FCS Financial funded 17 projects across Missouri. Projects improved local communities by building picnic tables, planting trees and landscaping school grounds.

Applications are due April 15, 2014. An application and more information on the Shaping Rural Missouri grant program can be found at [www.myfcsfinancial.com](http://www.myfcsfinancial.com) or by calling 1-800-369-3276, Ext. 1173.

Saluting  
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Presiding Commissioner  
**Mark Sitherwood**

## Gardening tips for beginners

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that many enthusiasts credit with helping them to peacefully escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Though gardening can be both relaxing and rewarding, it's not as easy as it may seem, and the more time and effort a person devotes to his or her garden the more likely it is to be successful.

Gardening can be a little daunting for beginners who have little or no experience planting flowers or vegetables. Gardening, however, need not be so intimidating, especially for those beginners who adhere to the following tips aimed at helping novice gardeners start their gardens off on the right foot.

\* Determine what you should plant. Where you live will go a long way toward determining what you should plant. While you can plant anything you can get your hands on, the United States Department of Agriculture as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada have

determined specific plant hardiness zones that indicate which plants are most likely to thrive in given locations. Maps of these zones can be found at [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) and [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca). By adhering to the maps, gardeners can significantly increase their chances of growing successful gardens. When in doubt about what to plant, consult a local gardening center or seek advice from a professional landscaper.

\* Think location when beginning your garden. Beginners with large yards have the luxury of choosing the right location on their properties to start planting. When choosing a spot, consider how much sunlight a lo-



cation gets on a daily basis and the spot's proximity to a water supply. If planting flowers, try to avoid planting in areas with heavy foot traffic so the flowers are less likely to be stomped. If you're planting flowers to accent walkways, then consider erecting a barrier around the flower bed to safeguard the flowers from foot traffic.

\* Get started before you plant. Preparing the soil a few weeks before you start planting can help the plants thrive down the road. Add some organic material, such as compost or fertilizer, to the soil roughly three weeks before planting. This helps the soil retain water and nutrients, which will help your garden thrive.

\* Time your planting. When you plant is sometimes as important as what you plant. Some climates allow for year-round planting, but many do not. When buying seeds, the packaging might suggest what time of year to plant the seeds. Adhere to these suggestions or your garden might not grow much at all. In addition, keep in mind that many seedlings need significant light throughout the day in order to grow, so choose a time of year with ample daylight.

\* Don't forget to mulch. Mulch can be as aesthetically appealing as it is effective. Mulch retains soil, helping roots to grow stronger, while deterring bugs and preventing weed growth; and many gardeners find mulch adds visual appeal to their garden, and does so in a very inexpensive way.

\* Clean your tools. Beginners rarely recognize the importance of cleaning gardening tools before putting them away. At the end of each gardening session, clean your tools thoroughly, as soil left on your garden tools can play host to potentially harmful microbes that might kill your plants.

Gardening can be a labor-intensive yet gratifying hobby. By sticking to a few simple rules, beginners can develop a thriving garden to reward all of that hard work.

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PAGE 10

# NATIONAL AGRICULTURE Week

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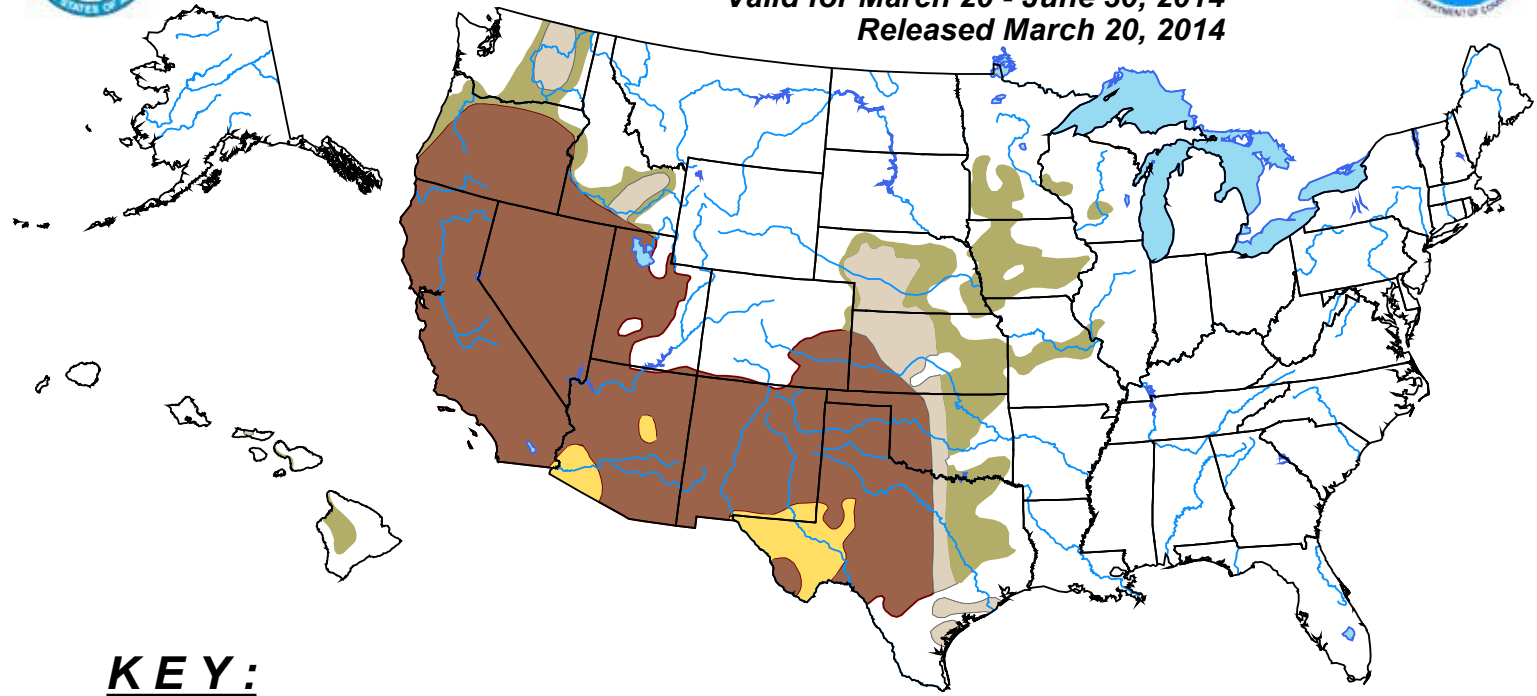
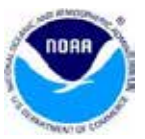


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## U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for March 20 - June 30, 2014  
Released March 20, 2014



### KEY:

- Drought persists or intensifies
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely

Author: Anthony Artusa, Climate Prediction Center, NOAA  
[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/season\\_drought.html](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/season_drought.html)

Depicts large-scale trends based on subjectively derived probabilities guided by short- and long-range statistical and dynamical forecasts. Short-term events -- such as individual storms -- cannot be accurately forecast more than a few days in advance. Use caution for applications -- such as crops -- that can be affected by such events. "Ongoing" drought areas are approximated from the Drought Monitor (D1 to D4 intensity).

For weekly drought updates, see the latest U.S. Drought Monitor.

NOTE: The tan area areas imply at least a 1-category improvement in the Drought Monitor intensity levels by the end of the period although drought will remain.

The Green areas imply drought removal by the end of the period (D0 or none)

Map from [http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/seasonal\\_drought.pdf](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/seasonal_drought.pdf)

### National Ag Day FAQ's

#### What Is Ag Day?

It's a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

#### When Is Ag Day?

Ag Day is celebrated on March 25, 2014. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 23-29, 2014.

#### What Is Ag Day All About?

Ag Day is about recognizing - and celebrating - the contribution of agriculture in our everyday lives. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

Saluting our farmers during

## National Ag Week March 23-29

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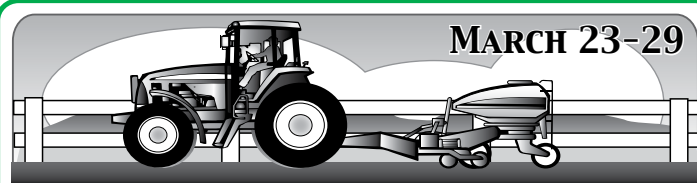


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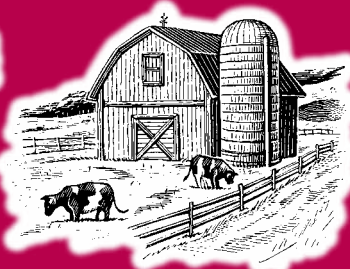
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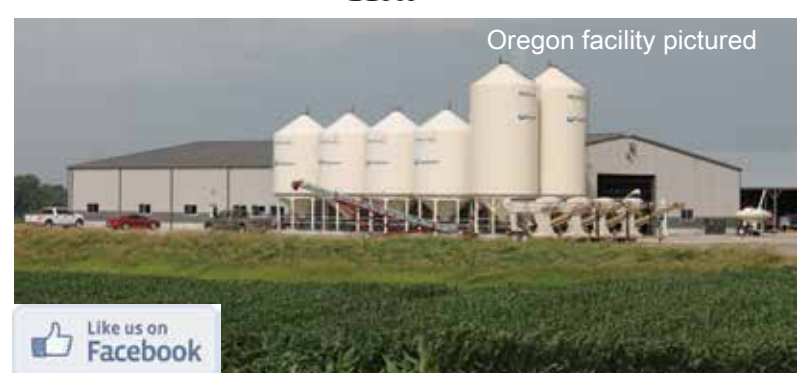
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