

Nebraska Department of Agriculture **Ag Update – November 15, 2016**

Nebraska officials sign 9 agreements to promote beef in Asia

(Associated Press) Nebraska officials have signed nine separate agreements with companies that will help promote the state's beef and pork products in Asia.

Gov. Pete Ricketts and the state agricultural director announced Tuesday that they have signed letters of intent in which companies agree to purchase Nebraska-made products. State officials and the Nebraska Beef Council will provide the companies with marketing materials, and participating restaurants may change their menu to highlight that their beef is produced in the state.

Although the letters of intent aren't legally binding, Nebraska Department of Agriculture Director Greg Ibach says they're an affirmation from companies that Nebraska offers superior meat products. He says they also help solidify Nebraska's relationships in China, Hong Kong and Macau.

For more on this story, please visit: http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/nebraska/nebraska-officials-sign-agreements-to-promote-beef-in-asia/article_0c84148e-e579-50b3-8c70-c1e11281234f.html

Ricketts hopes Trump administration will help Nebraska improve trade ties with China

(Omaha World Herald) Gov. Pete Ricketts said he is hopeful he can work with Vice President-elect Mike Pence, a fellow Republican governor, to make strides in overseas trade during the Trump administration.

Speaking Friday from Shanghai to Nebraska news media, Ricketts said his Chinese hosts on a trade mission have not shown concern about Donald Trump, who has vowed to rip up trade deals and demand new terms.

“The Chinese have been very interested in the election,” Ricketts said. “They’re really just asking questions. I’m sharing with them my desire to help grow trade, and how important it is to Nebraska.”

For more on this story, please visit: http://www.omaha.com/money/ricketts-hopes-trump-administration-will-help-nebraska-improve-trade-ties/article_6f4a70f7-8a3b-5284-8a0c-14a25971cc0c.html

Chinese demonstration farm will feature Nebraska equipment, expertise

(Lincoln Journal Star) Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts on Wednesday announced plans to create a working demonstration farm in China.

The farm, to be called the Nebraska (Yangling) Agricultural Sci-tech Park, is a collaboration between the state, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Yangling Agriculture Hi-tech Demonstration Zone located in China's Shaanxi Province.

For more on this story, please visit: http://journalstar.com/business/agriculture/chinese-demonstration-farm-will-feature-nebraska-equipment-expertise/article_43073c79-717c-526a-b07b-372e8a38402a.html

Headache for farmers as they get less cash for more crops

(Omaha World Herald) Midwestern and Nebraska farm economics are deteriorating, with crop prices and land values falling as loan defaults rise, conditions serious enough for authorities to invoke the disastrous 1980s.

The Kansas City branch of the Federal Reserve said in a recent report that land values for all types of farm and ranch land were down 6 percent from a year earlier in Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, western Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming and the northern half of New Mexico.

For more on this story, please visit: http://www.omaha.com/money/headache-for-farmers-as-they-get-less-cash-for-more/article_7ef8156d-a279-5a90-a261-26dbf558b4e7.html

Betting the farm and losing: banks seek collateral for debts

(Lincoln Journal Star) Betting the farm on record crop, livestock and dairy prices has turned into a losing investment for an expanding share of America's agricultural heartland. The level of debt to income is the highest in three decades, and growers are increasingly unable to make loan payments.

Four years after record U.S. crop and farmland values boosted purchases of land and equipment, a global surplus has sent prices tumbling and farm income into the longest slump since 1977. The Federal Reserve says growers are borrowing more to pay bills,

repayment rates are plunging, and the number of bankers requesting additional collateral is the highest in 25 years.

For more on this story, please visit: http://journalstar.com/business/agriculture/betting-the-farm-and-losing-banks-look-for-collateral-for-debts/article_2a63eb66-8c64-518f-b3c2-b5c9295c2f8e.html

Graying of rural Nebraska changing the landscape of agriculture

(NTV) The statistics are sobering. What passes as the average age on the farm, would be retirement age in many other professions.

“The average age of farmers and ranchers here in the United States is 58 years old and that's increasing,” said Michael Scuse, Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Scuse, the USDA deputy secretary said, “With commodity prices where they are today, where beef prices are, pork prices are, it is very difficult to get involved and see a bright future where you can raise a family out on the farm and make it profitable.”

For more on this story, please visit: <http://nebraska.tv/news/local/graying-of-rural-nebraska-changing-the-landscape-of-agriculture>

USDA Announces Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2017

(USDA-FSA) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Val Dolcini today announced that producers on farms with base acres under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Nov. 1, 2016, to sign contracts and enroll for the 2017 crop year. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2017.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, the producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs for the 2017 crop should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program. Producers who made their elections in 2015 must still enroll during the 2017 enrollment period.

For more on this story, please visit: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2016/nr_20161028_rel_173

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