

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

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Contact: USDA-TV (202) 720-6445 or (202) 720-3319

1. FEATURE – USDA ADVISORS HELP REBUILD IRAQI IRRIGATION

INTRO: Without water there is no farming. U-S Department of Agriculture advisors are in Iraq trying to help rebuild irrigation systems in that war-torn nation. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:31)

2. Soundbites and B-roll (1:31)

3. FEATURE - USDA ASSISTS FLOOD RECOVERY IN ILLINOIS

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4. Soundbites and B-roll (1:51)

5. FEATURE – TURNING ORANGE PEELS INTO ETHANOL

INTRO: USDA researchers have figured out how to turn orange peels into ethanol and now the private sector wants to take it to the next level. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more from Winter Haven, Florida. (1:45) (refeed from 3-08)

6. Soundbites and B-roll (1:45)

SCRIPTS for features are available at:

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.2E5?navid=BM_TV_CONT&parentnav=BM_RT&navtype=RT

The feed is available Thursday from 4:15pm to 4:30pm. ET at this satellite address:

Satellite: GALAXY 28 (C- Band) Transponder 12, downlink frequency 3940 MHZ, Vertical Polarity, 89 degrees west longitude, Audio 6.2/6.8

Trouble number: (202) 331-8882

FEATURE – USDA ADVISORS HELP REBUILD IRAQI IRRIGATION

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SUCCESSFUL NATIONS HAVE HISTORICALLY HAD SUCCESSFUL AGRICULTURE. TO THAT END, ONE OF THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S GOALS IN IRAQ IS HELPING FARMERS GET ENOUGH WATER.

Ryan Crocker, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq: The irrigation system has been very badly affected again by those thirty years of conflict and bad policy. What we find is that anywhere that the Iraqis with our assistance can get irrigation systems going again, agriculture starts to recover.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE CHALLENGES IN IRAQ'S DIYALA PROVINCE, WHICH BADLY NEEDS IRRIGATION.

Stephen Morin, USAID: Water is clearly a key issue for Diyala. There's an extensive irrigation system. Very sophisticated. And I think in its day was very successful and effective. It's not anymore. It needs a lot of work.

AND IRRIGATION EFFORTS IN DIYALA HAVE BEEN HAMSTRUNG BY AN EXTENSIVE DROUGHT.

Greg Brooke, USDA Agricultural Advisor: The canals have been cleaned and then repaired. Now, unfortunately, we're not able to use them because of the drought or the lack of water in the Diyala river drainage system.

Lt. Nicolas Fiore, U.S. Army: It's real hard on the people there because if you looked around all that brown stuff used to be perfectly green. These guys are hard working farmers and with no water what are they supposed to do?

WHILE THE DROUGHT HAS BEEN A SETBACK, THE AMERICANS SAY IRAQI FARMERS IN DIYALA REMAIN POSITIVE. HOWEVER, THE IRAQIS ARE FRUSTRATED BY THE SLOW PACE OF RECONSTRUCTION.

Brooke: They seem to be excited to have us willing to help them. We also hear their frustrations, too.

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.

FEATURE - USDA ASSISTS FLOOD RECOVERY IN ILLINOIS

INTRO: U.S. Department of Agriculture programs are helping to restore fields and levees damaged by this year's Midwest storms and floods. The U-S-D-A's Bob Ellison has more. (1:51)

LEVEES, TOWNS AND FARM FIELDS WERE DAMAGED AFTER THIS SPRING'S STORMS AND FLOODS IN THE MIDWEST. FARMERS NEAR THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN ILLINOIS SAW THEIR CROPS SUBMERGED BY THE FLOOD WATERS.

Steven Higgins, USDA NRCS: This particular field here was flooded for several weeks this Spring. As you can see the producer planted a crop, but because of the flooding it was completely destroyed and the water went down too late in time for him to replant.

THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE IS ASSESSING DAMAGE AND PLANNING REPAIRS. THROUGH THE EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM, OR E-W-P, THE N-R-C-S IS WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES TO ADDRESS FLOOD DAMAGE. THIS INCLUDES REPAIRING LEVEES.

Steven Hobson, USDA, NRCS: There was two breaks in the levees, and so what we did is did some engineering surveys of the site and then used that data to come up with the quantities of earth-fill that needed to be put back in here.

FLOODING ALSO AFFECTED THE TOWN OF KEITHSBURG, ILLINOIS. THROUGH E-W-P, N-R-C-S CAN PAY FOR SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF LEVEE REPAIR WITH LOCAL SPONSORS PAYING THE REMAINING COSTS.

Jason Hessman, USDA NRCS: E-W-P is going to help the residents of Keithsburg restore the levees that were damaged during the flood event in June back to their original condition to add some protection back to their village.

Mayor James Stewart, Keithsburg, Illinois: They come to us and offered us a seventy-five, twenty-five plan to help close the breaches in the levy that's quite necessary. As a small town we don't have the funding to handle that all by ourselves.

THE E-W-P HELPS PAY FOR EMERGENCY MEASURES INCLUDING FLOOD PLAIN EASEMENTS, AND RUNOFF AND SOIL EROSION PREVENTION. THE GOAL IS TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM FLOODS AND DROUGHT. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CONSERVATION PRACTICES CONTACT YOUR LOCAL USDA SERVICE CENTER. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.

FEATURE – TURNING ORANGE PEELS INTO ETHANOL

INTRO: USDA researchers have figured out how to turn orange peels into ethanol and now the private sector wants to take it to the next level. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more from Winter Haven, Florida. (1:45) (refeed from 3-08)

U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCHERS ARE PROCESSING THE SUGARS AND CARBOHYDRATES IN CITRUS PEEL INTO ETHANOL. THIS SYSTEM WAS DEVELOPED AT THE U-S-D-A AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE LAB IN WINTER HAVEN FLORIDA.

Wilbur Widmer, Research Chemist USDA ARS: The citrus industry in Florida produces between three and a half and five million tons of waste from the production of orange juice per year. Approximately half of an orange is waste. We pump the peel...into a jet cooker that we use to heat the peel up and pressurize it...and then we suddenly release the pressure...and the sudden release of pressure literally makes the peel explode...and the steam is driven off...and cooked peel that drops down to the bottom...is pumped into a tank where it's cooled...we add enzymes...to allow... the fermentation process to take place which converts those sugars into ethanol.

RIGHT NOW MOST CITRUS PEEL IS FED TO CATTLE. BUT OWNERS OF A FLORIDA ETHANOL COMPANY BELIEVE IT WILL BE GOING INTO GAS TANKS SOON.

Thomas Endres, Xethanol Corporation: We're testing their many years of research, their noble efforts in taking citrus waste and turning it into fuel and we're going to scale it up and see if it's commercially viable.

COMPANY OFFICIALS SAY A-R-S RESEARCH IS CRUCIAL TO THEIR EFFORT.

David Ames, Xethanol Corporation: What's good is that these kinds of labs have long years of experience in this market place and they're really maximizing the benefit of a waste material.

Bob Ellison, USDA: Florida could some day produce close to sixty million gallons of ethanol a year. In Winter Haven Florida I'm Bob Ellison for the U-S Department of Agriculture.

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