



Volume 76, No. 25 | June 28, 2024

ngfa.org/newsletter | ngfa@ngfa.org | Editor: Sarah Gonzalez, NGFA

Inside This Issue

NEWS

- 1 [USDA seeks public input on climate-smart practices for biofuel feedstocks](#)
- 2 [NTSB identifies failed wheel bearing as cause for NS derailment in East Palestine, Ohio](#)
- 2 [USDA issues emergency HPAI funding for dairy herds](#)
- 3 [FDA updates food traceability resources](#)

EVENTS

- 3 [CONVEY'24 to feature Columbia Grain CEO on future of automation](#)

SUPPLEMENTS

- 4 [Agri-Pulse offers free webinar on animal disease](#)
- 5 [Extra Supplements](#)



NEWS

USDA seeks public input on climate-smart practices for biofuel feedstocks

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has initiated a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) to gather insights from the public regarding the quantification, reporting, and verification of the impact of climate-smart farming practices on the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with U.S.-grown biofuel feedstock crops.

The input is being collected to establish “voluntary standards for biofuel feedstocks grown with practices that mitigate GHG emissions and/or sequester soil carbon,” USDA said. These standards, authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, would be available for consideration in clean transportation fuel policies to incentivize climate-smart biofuel feedstock crops.

While the RFI is not specific to the 45Z clean fuel production tax credit under development at the Treasury Department, findings could be incorporated into the credit and other clean aviation fuel programs, said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

USDA is seeking feedback on topics including:

1. Biofuel feedstock crops and practices for consideration in USDA’s analysis.
2. Scientific data, information, and analysis for consideration in quantifying the greenhouse gas emissions outcomes of climate-smart agricultural practices and conventional farming practices.

3. Records, documentation, and data necessary to provide sufficient evidence to verify practice adoption and maintenance.
4. Systems used to trace feedstocks throughout the biofuel supply chain.
5. Third-party verification of practice adoption and maintenance.

“Currently, clean fuel transportation policies do not distinguish between how crops are grown - whether with all conventional practices or one or more climate-smart practices,” USDA stated. “Accurate quantification and verification are important to ensure that net GHG emissions reductions are real. Improving the ability to accurately quantify and verify the GHG outcomes of climate-smart farming practices can also provide additional benefits, including improved credibility and confidence in a variety of climate-smart markets.”

The 30-day public comment period will end on July 26.

NTSB identifies failed wheel bearing as cause for NS derailment in East Palestine, Ohio

After reviewing the Norfolk Southern derailment that occurred in East Palestine, Ohio, last year, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) announced this week that a rail car’s defective wheel bearing caused the derailment and subsequent hazardous material release.

On June 25, NTSB released [this abstract](#) of the final report with findings, probable cause, and safety recommendations. The full final report will be published in the next few weeks.

The Board found that a visual rail car inspection failed to catch the failing wheel bearing and thus NTSB’s recommendation is not for more visual inspections but instead for research to create regulations on bearing defect detection systems. NTSB is also calling for the accelerated phaseout of DOT-111 cars in hazmat service because they are more likely to become compromised during derailments.

Notably, NTSB did not identify train length as a problem in its findings.

NTSB identified the following problems that led to the East Palestine incident:

- Failure of wayside monitoring systems to diagnose a hot wheel bearing in time for mitigation to prevent a derailment
- Inadequate emergency response training for volunteer first responders
- Hazardous materials placards that burned away, preventing emergency responders from immediately identifying hazards
- A lack of accurate, timely and comprehensive information passed to local incident commanders and state officials.
- The continued use of DOT-111 tank cars in hazmat service

USDA issues emergency HPAI funding for dairy herds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting applications on July 1 to provide financial assistance to dairy producers who incurred milk losses due to highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI or H5N1).

USDA will compensate dairy farmers for 90 percent of the value of milk production lost due to the H5N1 virus through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP). Payments will be “based on an expected 21-day period of no milk production when a cow is removed from the milking herd, followed by seven days when the cow has returned to milking but produces 50 percent of the normal amount of production,” USDA noted.

Positive test results must be confirmed through the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL).

H5N1 infections have been detected in 12 states including Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming. USDA reminded dairy producers in all states to stay vigilant and follow established [APHIS biosecurity, detection and testing guidelines](#).

To be eligible for ELAP funding, adult dairy cattle must be:

- Part of a herd that has a confirmed positive H5N1 test from NVSL;
- Initially removed from commercial milk production at some point during the 14-day time period before the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test date through 120 days after the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test;
- Milk-producing, currently lactating; and
- Maintained for commercial milk production, in which the producer has a financial risk, on the beginning date of the eligible loss condition.

To apply, producers should contact the Farm Service Agency at their local [USDA Service Center](#). Details on updated ELAP policy to provide financial assistance for milk loss due H5N1 will publish in the [Federal Register](#) on July 1.

FDA updates food traceability resources

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has published additional resources on its website to help the industry comply with the [Food Traceability Rule](#). These include:

- A [downloadable, electronic sortable spreadsheet template](#);
- Minor revisions to the [Food Traceability List](#) clarifying the status of previously frozen foods on the list, as well as a [new FAQ](#) summarizing the changes;
- A [chart](#) summarizing exemptions relevant to produce farms for both the Produce Safety Rule and the Food Traceability Rule;
- A supply chain [example](#) for sprouts; and
- New translated material about the [Traceability Lot Code](#) and the Traceability Plan.

In addition, the FDA said it has partnered with the [Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance \(FSPCA\)](#) to develop training for the food industry on the Food Traceability Rule to be available by mid-2025.

The Food Traceability Final Rule is a key component of the [FDA’s New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint](#) and implements Section 204(d) of the [FDA Food Safety Modernization Act \(FSMA\)](#).

EVENTS

CONVEY'24 to feature Columbia Grain CEO on future of automation

[CONVEY'24](#) will feature Jeff Van Pevenage, president and CEO of Columbia Grain International, on the outlook for automation in grain handling. He will share Columbia Grain's journey of automating a facility and provide insights on evaluating infrastructure, customers, labor, location, equipment, and operational efficiency.

CONVEY'24, an annual conference jointly hosted by NGFA, Grain Journal, and the Grain and Elevator Processing Society (GEAPS), is July 23-25 in Omaha, Neb.

Each year, NGFA, GEAPS and Grain Journal present this unique opportunity for grain handling employees and leaders to gain practical knowledge and training on real-world compliance issues, best practices and emerging industry trends. This year's focus will be on new technology and automation.

Register at conveyconference.com.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



What Will a Grain Handling Facility Look Like Over the Next 10 Years?

Jeff will share Columbia Grain's journey of automating a facility, and provide insights on evaluating infrastructure, customers, labor, location, equipment, and operational efficiency.

Jeff Van Pevenage
President and CEO
Columbia Grain Intl.

SUPPLEMENTS

Agri-Pulse offers free webinar on animal disease

Agri-Pulse will host a [free webinar](#) on July 11 at 1 p.m. ET on zoonotic diseases. The webinar will focus on “what can be done to protect against highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other zoonotic diseases that have the potential to disrupt not only our food supply but the entire agriculture economy.”

Since 2022, USDA has reported H5N1 virus detections in more than 200 mammals.

“This is an extremely important and timely topic for anyone involved with animal agriculture,” said Agri-Pulse Founder and Publisher Sara Wyant, who will moderate the event.

This virtual event is free, courtesy of webinar sponsor Boehringer Ingelheim. [Register here](#).

Speakers include:

- Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee
- Danelle Bickett-Weddle, DVM, Veterinary Consultant
- Doug Ensley, DVM, Director of Veterinary Public Health, Boehringer Ingelheim
- Jamie Jonker, Ph.D., Chief Science Officer, National Milk Producers Federation
- Jonathan Zack, DVM, Director, Preparedness and Incident Coordination, USDA APHIS

Extra Supplements

DTN: [Levees on Missouri River Hold as Tributaries Crest, But Some Farms Still See Flooding](#)

Agri-Pulse: [House Ag members press meat processing industry on child labor](#) (*log in*)

Red River Farm Network: [Vilsack: Farm Bill Needs a Practical POV](#)

Michigan Advance: [Stabenow says GOP farm bill is 'not balanced' and won't pass through the US Senate](#)

Successful Farming: [Few dairy farmers seek bird flu funds from USDA](#)

NGFA | 1400 Crystal Drive | Suite 260 | Arlington | VA | 22202