Happy New Year!

We hope this edition of the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) College of Agriculture and Food Sciences Cooperative Extension’s SDA Newsletter finds you at your best. We have a lot in store for this year and we look forward to sharing with you, all the events and important information you can use to assist with your agricultural needs.

The newsletter was created in 2012, as a result of the USDA/APHIS funded Socially Disadvantaged (SDA) Outreach Project. The objectives of this project were to improve USDA/APHIS outreach service to socially disadvantaged / minority farmers and ranchers and to encourage and/or improve their farming /ranching operations and activities.

As a 1890 land-grant institution, FAMU Cooperative Extension has a major responsibility to make sure we continually assist the underserved community. The newsletters are a great way for vital information to be disbursed to the clientele we serve, as well as our supporters.

On behalf of Mrs. Vonda Richardson, Associate Director of FAMU Cooperative Extension Program and the entire staff, we welcome you and hope you enjoy this and future editions.

Regards,
Amelia Davis
SDA Project Coordinator
Editor, FAMU Cooperative Extension’s SDA Newsletter
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WASHINGTON, Dec. 30, 2015 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodity Credit Corporation announced today that it does not expect to purchase sugar under the Feedstock Flexibility Program in the first quarter of 2016. The Commodity Credit Corporation is required to announce quarterly estimates of sugar to be purchased for the Feedstock Flexibility Program based on crop and consumption forecasts.

Federal law allows sugar processors to obtain loans from USDA with maturities of up to nine months from when the sugarcane or sugar beet harvest begins. Upon loan maturity, the sugar processor may repay the loan in full or forfeit the collateral (sugar) to USDA to satisfy the loan.

The Feedstock Flexibility Program was reauthorized by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill as an option to avoid sugar forfeitures. USDA’s Dec. 9, 2015, World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report (www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde) projects that domestic fiscal year 2016 ending sugar stocks are unlikely to lead to forfeitures.

USDA closely monitors domestic sugar stocks, consumption, imports and other sugar market variables on an ongoing basis, and will continue to administer the sugar program as transparently as possible using the latest available data. The next quarterly estimate regarding the Feedstock Flexibility Program will occur prior to April 1, 2016.

Release No. 0198.15
Contact:
Isabel Benemelis (202) 720-7809

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7, 2016 -- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement:

On Jan. 7, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in collaboration with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), reached agreement with South African officials to allow most U.S. exports of poultry, pork and beef and their products to re-gain access to the South African market, pursuant to an out-of-cycle review of South Africa conducted under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The agreement was reached following intense U.S. government engagement with South African officials over the last year. Only a limited number of U.S. poultry and meat products have been exported to South Africa in recent years, due to unwarranted sanitary requirements by the South African authorities, with most poultry exports blocked for the last 15 years. With this renewed access for U.S. red meat and poultry products, U.S. exports to South Africa could generate $75 million of shipments annually.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today made the following statement regarding this announcement:

"This is good news for American farmers, ranchers and poultry, pork and beef companies. We welcome this move by South Africa and will continue our efforts to break down barriers and expand access for high-quality, safe and wholesome U.S. food and agricultural products around the world. With this agreement, South Africa reaffirms the scientific soundness and integrity of the U.S. system for ensuring animal health and food safety, and this will result in high-quality U.S. meat and poultry being available for South African consumers.

The regained access for American meat and poultry exports we're announcing today is the culmination of many months of hard work by USDA and USTR staff. The past seven years have been the strongest in history for agricultural trade, with U.S. agricultural product exports totaling $911.4 billion since 2009. Strong agricultural exports contribute to a positive U.S. trade balance, create jobs and boost economic growth. Those exports supported approximately 1 million U.S. jobs last year. The economy is strengthened in rural communities and throughout the entire country from the additional economic activity that flows from the expanded farm and processing business."

Release No. 0007.16

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Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*), also called leonurus, lion’s tail, and heartwort, has been used to treat heart disease and depression for thousands of years. The Greeks gave Motherwort to pregnant women suffering from anxiety; hence the name “mothers herb” or “mother wort”. Traditional Chinese medicine recommends motherwort to promote longevity and treat menstrual disorders. Today motherwort is still recommended by herbalists for treatment of heart palpitations and anxiety, and to encourage normal menstrual cycles.

Recent studies performed in China have shown that motherwort helps prevent blood clots relax the heart muscle, and lower blood pressure. Of course, anyone with a diagnosed or suspected heart condition should be under a doctor’s care.

Motherwort contains lionurine and stachydrine, alkaloids that not only help lower blood pressure but also have a sedating effect on the central nervous system, which supports motherwort’s traditional use as a treatment for depression anxiety. It can be particularly beneficial when heart rhythm increases due to nervousness. It reduces blood pressure and maintains the heartbeats. The tranquilizing effects of this herb may benefit those experiencing anxiety as well as those suffering from insomnia.

Laboratory studies have shown that the lionurine in motherwort also causes uterine contractions. Motherwort may indeed benefit women who are trying to induce menstruation, but those that are pregnant or trying to get pregnant should avoid motherwort altogether.

Motherwort is easy to grow but could become invasive. It may be cultivated as a garden plant and is harvested during the summer when the plant blossoms. You can cut this plant and use the stem, leaves, or flowers in homemade herbal tea too much motherwort can cause diarrhea and upset stomach.

Pregnant or nursing women should not take this herb. People taking blood thinners also should not consume motherwort since it may increase the effects of those drugs.

References:

Disclaimer: These information are not intended to act as a substitute for a professional healthcare practitioner advice. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, always consult your doctor.
DID YOU KNOW........

Food Science touches the life of every single person for food is essential to life. Food Scientists apply sciences such as biology, chemistry, physics, biotechnology, microbiology, engineering and mathematics to food in order to ensure that the foods eaten are safe and factors such as taste, nutritional value, and shelf life are improved.

“Explore the SCIENCE behind FOOD”

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDIES AND CAREERS IN FOOD SCIENCE!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Food Science Summer Enrichment Program (FSSEP)**

FSSEP is an intensive week long program developed to provide a better understanding of science through experiential activities in Food Science that are linked to the Sunshine Standards. For ages 12-14.

For more information, please contact:
Conchita Newman, Extension Agent
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conchita.newman@famu.edu
**Hot Pepper Monthly**

**CONTRIBUTOR: GILBERT QUEELEY**

**GETTING READY FOR THE SCOTCH BONNET GROWING SEASON**

If you plan to grow Scotch Bonnet hot peppers this spring, January is a great time to sow your seeds. This issue of the hot pepper monthly focuses on seed collection and preparation for your Scotch Bonnet hot pepper crop. Interested parties are encouraged to contact me to inquire about seed availability. The first 5 contacts will receive a free gift of 500-600 seeds along with advice on planting instructions to get them started.*

**Sources of Seeds**

1. **Your current crop:** If you are already growing Scotch Bonnet hot peppers, perhaps the cheapest and most reliable source of seeds is from your current crop. Always collect seeds from healthy, phenotypically perfect fruits. Usually, these are the first set of fruits from your plants. For Scotch Bonnet hot peppers, this means fruits with the characteristic orange-yellow or red color (depending on type) with the four characteristic lobes at the bottom. The fruits tend to get smaller and lose their characteristic shape as the growing season progresses.

2. **Online sources:** Today, there are many online sources for Scotch Bonnet seeds. However, be extremely cautious when purchasing Scotch Bonnet seeds online since in most cases, they turn out to be other varieties of hot pepper. The variety that I’ve found the most consistent confusion with is the orange habanero. Only buy seeds from vendors with a Scotch Bonnet production history. These vendors are more likely to sell you the right seeds.

**The Planting Environment:** Between January and early March, the soil temperature will not support outdoor propagation of Scotch Bonnet Seeds. ALL seeds should be planted in the appropriate media indoors or in a temperature controlled greenhouse. Bottom heat is highly recommended or the seeds could be forced into dormancy. When this happens, the seeds will not germinate in time for your spring planting. If you are growing the crop for profit, planting on time is imperative so bear this in mind.

**Planting Media:** This includes potting soil and trays with inserts. Any commercial potting mix will do although I have found pro-mix to do very well. Scotch Bonnet seeds grow best in inserts with cells ranging between 2-3 square inches. These are slightly larger than normal but Scotch Bonnet seedlings require plenty of root room for development.

**Planting:** Because of the light texture of most potting soils, it is wise to dampen the soil before planting the seeds. This is important because watering the seeds after planting can cause them to be ‘splashed’ out of the cells resulting in poor germination rates. Plant seeds approximately ½ inch deep. Deeper planting can delay germination and time to transplanting.

That’s it for this month. The upcoming issue will provide pictures of planting media and more detailed growing instructions for the crop. Please be on the lookout for the February issue.

*Contact Gilbert Queeley at (850) 599-3546 or gilbert.queeley@famu.edu*
CARE OF DOMESTIC PARROTS

Parrots are among some of the most intelligent and unique species of animals. They have the potential to be fun, loving, affectionate and interesting pets. However, as with any animal, if not trained or time invested in it, these birds can be destructive, ill-tempered and difficult to manage. The following information is meant to serve as a basic guide in parrot care but let the buyer beware, always research ANY animal you are considering.

◊ **Housing** - The first thing you need to consider in parrot care is if you can afford the initial purchase and upkeep. There are basically three sizes to parrots: small, medium and large. To house each species, the cage space should allow them to completely open their wings but not fly in the cage. The cost depends on the size of the cage, as they can range from $60-$2,000. You also want to make sure no rust or paint is coming off of the bars of the cage as these can be harmful to the parrots.

◊ **Food** - There are many theories about what the proper diet is for parrots. The two main options are seed or pellet diet. It is true that parrots can eat many of the basic foods people can eat; however it is advised to feed a parrot specific diet and human food as treats only. Pellet diets tend to be strong in the nutrients that parrot need, in contrast to seeds that can be fatty for parrots causing them to gain unwanted weight. Also the plumage (feathers) of parrots on seed only diets tends to be very dull.

◊ **Toys & Time** - This is where the “rubber meets the road”. A parrot is a very social animal and will literally become sick physically and emotionally if not enough time is spent with it. You must be prepared to interact with your parrot on a daily basis. Be careful not to allow your parrot to sit on your shoulder as this can arouse a dominant trait in your bird. Toys are a great way to keep your parrot occupied while you are away and it is advised to obtain as many as you can to put in your birds cage. Please stay away from toy mirrors. Parrots can bond with the reflection in the mirror rather than you. It is a difficult behavior trait to break, so **NO MIRRORS**! You want your parrot to bond with you.

◊ **Care** - Have your parrot examined by a qualified Veterinarian at least once a year. This Veterinarian should be familiar with all the aspects of owning a parrot and the diseases parrots can catch. Parrots can transmit diseases to humans, which is called **Zoonosis** (the ability to transfer disease from animal to human). Protect yourself by keeping your bird cage clean, wear gloves when cleaning, change water every day, clean toys, perches and cage items once a week or as needed. You can use soapy water with antibacterial soap.

If you keep these basic principles in mind when considering a parrot, you and your pet bird will be fine. Always keep in mind, research any animal domestic animal you are considering for a pet.
Money Tips$ for College Students$

Daniel Solís, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor and Leader Agribusiness Program

Tip #1: Make a Budget and Stick to It!

College life often puts young Rattlers in control of their money for the first time. A budget is a good tool to track your income and expenses, and keep you out of financial trouble. To make a budget, first outline how much money you receive monthly. Include what you are earning from your job (in and out of FAMU), your allowance, financial aid and scholarships. Then, track your expenses. It is helpful to separate your expenses into categories like housing, food, entertainment, education, SAVINGS (we will talk about the importance of savings in a later Tip), etc. It is a good idea to check out your bank’s website for FREE budgeting tools, as well as software programs like Quicken, to help keep your budget on track.

After determining your Income and Expenses, Do-The-Math. If you have money left over, consider using it to boost your savings to cover any unexpected expenses or plan a DEBT-FREE VACATION. But if you are spending more than what you make, you need to revisit your goals. Remember your main goal is you get your college degree in 4 years; owning an iPhone or designer clothing is secondary.

After creating your budget, you will want to make sure it remains a living document and you update it over time. Review your budget on a monthly basis and forgive yourself for small spending mistakes BUT ALWAYS try get back on track.

The US Department of Education also suggests asking yourself the following questions the next time you are tempted to make an impulse buy:

- What do I need this for?
- Can I afford this item?
- If I buy this item now, will I still be happy that I bought it a month from now?
- Do I need to save this money for a financial goal?
- Will this item go on sale? Should I wait to buy it?
- Does it matter if I buy brand-name or can I get by with generic?

Now that you have more control of your money, you can be intentional about how you use and save it. Getting in the habit of creating and maintaining a budget in college can make it easier to manage more complex finances successfully after graduation.

Learn more about the Agribusiness Program in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida A&M University by visiting our website: www.agribusinessfamu.weebly.com.
UPCOMING EVENTS

You are invited to join

& special guest USDA Deputy Secretary Kystra Harden

for a panel discussion on:

The Next Generation of Agriculture

Challenges and Opportunities Facing Women, Minority and Veteran Farmers

Tuesday, January 19, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

On the Campus of
Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University

Panelists will include women, minority and veteran farmers from North Florida

Coffee and pastries will be served

Please RSVP to Tristin Brown at tristin.brown@mail.house.gov

Please direct all media inquiries to Matt Harringer at matt.harringer@mail.house.gov

More information available upon receipt of RSVP

*This meeting was prepared, published, and distributed in paper sequence.*
Train the Trainer Workshop:  
For Extension Agents and/or Educators

January 20th-22nd, 2016
FAMU Teleconference Center
2010 Pinder Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32307

Registration: $100

For more information, contact FAMU Extension (850)599-3546

If you require a reasonable accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA), please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs at (850) 599-3076 at least 10 working days prior to the start of the event.
In Memoriam of Mr. James Hill

Our sincere and deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr. James Hill, whom passed away January 5, 2016. For many years, Mr. Hill served as Southern SARE’s Limited-Resource / Minority Outreach Specialist, providing resources and workshops to all 1890 land grant institutions and a strong supporter of the events and programs at FAMU Cooperative Extension.
Be one of the first to get info on FAMU Extension and local community events, as well as important agriculture information. Subscribe to the FAMU Cooperative Extension’s SDA Newsletter.

Send an email to amelia.davis@famu.edu, with “New Subscription” in the subject box.