

SECRETARY VILSACK SEES CONTINUED STRONG FARM ECONOMY AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Written by USDA Communications
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INTRO: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Forum that a good farm economy could be further bolstered with help from Congress. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (2:14)

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK SAID TWENTY-TWELVE SHOULD BE ANOTHER GOOD YEAR FOR THE NATION'S FARM ECONOMY. SPEAKING TO THE ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK FORUM HELD NEAR WASHINGTON D-C, VILSACK SAID THAT STRONG AG EXPORTS SHOULD BOOST THE FARM ECONOMY.

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary: Strong trade opportunities bolstered by the passage of three free trade agreements last year, combined with Russia's possible inclusion in the W-T-O, recent China purchase announcements and discussions of a trans-pacific trade partnership make us confident of having another strong year in trade. At the same time our domestic markets are expected to expand as well, with an improving economy, continued population of popular local and regional food systems and the development and the expansion of the bio-based products industry.

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AND VILSACK SAID CONGRESS COULD HELP THE BIO-BASED PRODUCTS INDUSTRY WITH ATTENTION IN THE NEXT FARM BILL.

Vilsack: With the emergence of new ways to use crops, grasses, woody biomass and livestock waste to produce chemicals, polymers and fibers in thousands of biobased companies across rural America you can understand why I'm excited about the future of American agriculture and of rural America. Now as Congress considers the next farm bill efforts should be placed on programs and strategies to help this bio-economy take hold.

AND ALSO ON THE NEXT FARM BILL, VILSACK CALLED ON CONGRESS TO CONSIDER U-S AGRICULTURE'S LONG-TERM VIABILITY.

Vilsack: To attract and retain the next generation of farmers, we need to be far more creative in the crafting of this farm bill than we've been in past farm bills. We must make a commitment to the next generation of farmers and we must make that commitment as important to the nation's future as any other commitment we make to the future generations of scientists, engineers or teachers because after all nobody can do their job very well without food.