

Your Agri-Pulse Daybreak for October 27, 2021

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Daybreak

OSHA kicks off process for heat workplace standard

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is [beginning the process of establishing the first regulations for protecting workers from heat.](#)

OSHA will be gathering comments on an advance notice of proposed rulemaking, or ANPR, through Dec. 27. The agency is seeking input on issues such as heat-stress thresholds, heat-acclimatization planning and exposure monitoring.

“Heat is the leading cause of death among all weather-related workplace hazards,” OSHA said in a news release.

Keep in mind: Data show that farmworkers are particularly vulnerable to heat. The average annual heat-related workplace fatality rate in all industries other than the category of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting was 0.09 deaths per 1 million workers from 2000-2010. In the ag category, the rate was 35 times that, at 3.06 deaths per 1 million workers.



Jake Sullivan

Dems try to close the deal

Congressional Democrats insist they are closing in on an agreement on President Biden's Build Back Better package of climate provisions and social spending. "I'm more confident than ever that we'll be able to resolve our remaining differences and push this critical piece of legislation across the finish line," Rep. Angie Craig, D-Minn., said after a White House meeting.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, told reporters that U.S. allies have been impressed by the president's commitment to addressing climate change through the Build Back Better bill. "They're excited about it. They raise it when we see them," Sullivan said.

But Sullivan also suggested that Biden could live without a deal with Congress in hand before he heads to Europe for this weekend's G20 summit and then the international climate conference in Glasgow.

"I think you've got a sophisticated set of world leaders who understand politics in their own country, and understand American

democracy, and recognize that working through a complex, far-reaching negotiation on some of the largest investments in modern memory in the United States ... takes time," he said.

By the way: There were multiple reports Tuesday that the bill's climate-related provisions will total \$500 billion, meaning that they could account for at least one-fourth of the total package.

The National Biodiesel Board and other biofuel groups sent [a letter to Democratic leaders](#) in support of a long-term extension of the \$1-per-gallon biodiesel tax credit and other climate-related biofuel provisions.

For more on the upcoming climate conference and the Build Back Better bill's climate provisions, be sure and read this week's Agri-Pulse newsletter.

WTO members faced with lengthy fix for dispute resolution

Mexico's representative to the World Trade Organization took to the floor on Tuesday to propose that members begin selecting appellate court judges. But the U.S. once again blocked the process. It was the 47th time this scenario has played out, and frustrated countries are beginning to discuss a lengthy timeline to repair the WTO dispute resolution system.

Australia's representative implored members to come up with a framework for breaking the impasse at the next WTO ministerial meeting, which will be held from Nov. 30 through Dec. 3.

Vietnam's representative expressed optimism that if negotiations begin this year, a resolution may be possible at the following ministerial – two years from now.

An official in Geneva says the U.S. continues to insist that “WTO members must undertake fundamental reform if the dispute settlement system is to remain viable and credible.”



Lesser prairie-chicken

Wildlife agencies seek to rescind Trump-era species rules

[The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are proposing to scrap a definition of “habitat”](#) adopted by the Trump administration. Wildlife agencies say the definition would inappropriately limit their ability to designate critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act.

The previous rule was published last Dec. 20 and went into effect Jan. 15, five days before President Biden took office.

The FWS also is proposing to rescind a rule governing how it considers critical habitat exclusions under the ESA. The Trump rule “was unnecessary [and] increased confusion and decreased clarity,” FWS said in its proposal.

GOP senators push for biofuel meeting with Biden

Republican senators from key biofuel-producing states are asking Biden for a meeting after media reports said he met with oil and energy stakeholders recently. [In a letter to Biden](#), the senators say there are several steps to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with one being maintaining a strong Renewable Fuel Standard.

“Most pressing is the need for the administration to set robust renewable volume obligations, which will help restore the integrity of the RFS in accordance with congressional intent, and to not undercut the blending targets with subsequent small refinery exemptions,” says the letter led by Sen. John Thune, R-S.D.

EPA has yet to release RFS volume proposals that must be finalized by Nov. 30.

That global berry craze

Demand for blueberries around the globe is pushing countries to expand production at a dizzying rate, and the largest growth has taken place in the U.S. [A new analysis from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service](#) says global production more than doubled from 2010 through 2019, jumping from 439,000 metric tons to about 1 million tons.

The number of countries producing at least 10,000 tons annually went from four to 11.

Take note: U.S. blueberry production rose from over the decade from 225,000 tons to 340,000 tons.

But Peru is the most dramatic example of growth, says FAS. The country produced about 50 tons in 2010, but a decade later produced 125,000. That makes Peru the world's fourth-largest blueberry-producing country, behind the U.S., Canada and Chile.

She said it. “Food insecurity is a policy choice. We have become tolerant to the suffering of our neighbors while our neighbors feel invisible.” - Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., at a press conference hosted by Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J. urging the White House to convene a summit on hunger.

The United Fresh Produce Association applauded the proposal. “As we emerge from a pandemic that disproportionately impacted those with diet-related chronic disease – we simply cannot put off action any longer,” said President and CEO Tom Stenzel.

Steve Davies, Bill Tomson and Ben Nuelle contributed to this report.

Questions? Tips? Comments? Email Philip Brasher at philip@agri-pulse.com

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