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# The Hagstrom Report

Agriculture News As It Happens



## **The Hagstrom Report**

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### **IN TODAY'S REPORT**

- Hurricane heads for Florida Citrus Belt as Biden speaks to nation
  - GOP leaders criticize White House event as farm groups praise administration
  - USDA awards \$25 million to support specialty crop exports
  - USDA grants \$9 million for urban farmer access to FSA
  - Gallup: Economy most important issue in 2024 election
  - Walz, Harris campaign differ on Electoral College
  - Harris-Walz campaign holds event for Black Georgia farmers
  - Fetterman campaigns for Harris in rural Pennsylvania
  - CGIAR publishes 'breakthrough' agenda report
  - Postal Service continues to deliver in hurricane areas
  - Right wing makes gains in Brazilian local elections
  - Seafood demand grows but not investments in aquatic companies
  - USDA publishes interview with Chavez's granddaughter
  - Fortune: Napa the best retirement location
  - Former Sen. Tim Johnson dies
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*President Joe Biden receives a briefing from administration officials on recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene and preparations for Hurricane Milton on Wednesday in the South Court Auditorium of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building at the White House. Vice President Kamala Harris attends virtually. (Oliver Contreras/White House photo)*

## Hurricane heads for Florida Citrus Belt as Biden speaks to nation

Hurricane Milton is threatening to bring catastrophic damage across Florida's Citrus Belt and agricultural production regions as the massive storm charts a path toward Florida's fertilizer plants and orange groves, *Agriculture Dive* reported as the hurricane made landfall late Wednesday.

Just before the hurricane made landfall, President Biden spoke to the nation, urging people to stay safe and ignore "misinformation" that former President Trump has been promoting. Biden said Trump had engaged in "outright lies" that alarmed people.

Trump told a campaign crowd in Pennsylvania, "This administration has not done a proper job at all. Terrible, terrible. We just pray for everybody. We hope that God will keep them safe."

Vice President Harris told CNN, "There is a lot of disinformation being pushed out there by Donald Trump about what is available to the survivors of Helene. It's extraordinarily irresponsible. It's about him, it's not about you. The reality is that FEMA has so many resources available to folks who desperately need them. People are entitled to these resources, and it is critically important that people apply for the help that is there."

A Florida couple told *People* magazine they care for dozens of animals on their farm, and couldn't easily evacuate with all of them.

- [WhiteHouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov) – Press briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell

- **WCTV** – President Joe Biden delivers remarks ahead of Milton landfall (video of full speech)
  - **NBC News** – ‘It’s so stupid’: Biden shoots down Marjorie Taylor Greene’s conspiracy theory about controlling the weather
  - **Agriculture Dive** – Hurricane Milton takes aim at Florida’s Citrus Belt
  - **USDA** – Agricultural Weather Highlights: Wednesday, October 9, 2024
  - **AgWeb** – Florida citrus growers brace for Hurricane Milton as forecasters warn of ‘complete destruction’
  - **People** – Farm owner shares why she's staying in central Florida during Hurricane Milton: 'These animals are our children'
  - **Greenhouse Grower** – How Florida growers are preparing for Hurricane Milton recovery
  - **The New York Times** – Milton slices across central Florida as powerful hurricane
  - – Biden accuses Trump of ‘outright lies’ about hurricane response
  - **CNN** – The great political battle over Hurricane Milton didn’t wait for the storm to land
  - **Associated Press** – Trump lashes out at Harris and ‘The View’ co-hosts, as Hurricane Milton makes landfall
  - **Harris’ X post**
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### **GOP leaders criticize White House event as farm groups praise administration**

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson, R-Pa., and Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., ranking member on the House Agriculture Committee, criticized the farm event the Biden administration held Tuesday at the White House, while three farm groups praised the administration.

Thompson said in an email, “American producers are facing the most daunting economic conditions in generations. In the Southeast, farmers and ranchers in Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida are being hit hard by devastating hurricanes and flooding, while states in the West battle catastrophic wildfires. These extreme weather events compound the ongoing crises in farm country, where rural communities continue to face record farm production costs, high food prices, limited credit access, a record agricultural trade deficit, and the sharpest decline in farm income ever recorded. White House pep rallies and daily announcements of partisan executive actions do nothing to preserve a domestic, reliable, and affordable food supply. Rather than being an impediment to a five-year farm bill and doubling down on discriminatory actions, the Biden-Harris administration and Department of Agriculture officials should focus on restoring rural America’s trust in USDA.”



*Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson, R-Pa.*

Boozman said in an email, “The event demonstrated how out of touch the Biden administration continues to be with the needs of farmers. Instead of promoting policies to help agriculture operations, the administration is doubling down on regulations that make it more difficult for our farmers and ranchers to succeed.”

The Democratic-leaning National Farmers Union praised the announcements on competition policy that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made at the event.



*Sen. John  
Boozman, R-Ark.*

NFU President Rob Larew said, “We commend USDA for continuing to promote competition across our agricultural markets. The Biden-Harris administration has done more than any other administration since Theodore Roosevelt to ensure that the agricultural and rural economy is fair and competitive for family farmers and ranchers. Today’s announcement demonstrates USDA’s thoughtful and proactive approach to addressing some of the most pressing issues farmers and ranchers face — namely, the need for transparency, fairness and innovation in both seed systems and livestock markets.



*Rob Larew*

“The new framework for improving research access to seed germplasm is a significant step forward. Farmers rely on diverse, resilient seed traits to thrive in an increasingly unpredictable climate. This initiative helps to guarantee that seed choices are not limited by monopolistic practices but are driven by innovation and the demands of sustainability.

“The findings of USDA’s interim report on competition in the meat retail industry further illustrate the barriers to a fair market and a resilient food system. Family farmers and ranchers deserve a level playing field, and today’s report highlights the concerning consolidation that makes it increasingly difficult for them to compete. We look forward to even more initiatives from USDA and other enforcement agencies to ensure everyone is playing fairly.

“Lastly, efforts to enhance price discovery in cattle markets and enforce the Packers & Stockyards Act reflect a deep understanding of the challenges facing cattle producers,” Larew added. “For too long, unfair pricing practices have undermined the livelihoods of family farmers. Today’s advanced notice of proposed rulemaking is a welcome opportunity for farmers to shape new regulations that will promote fairness, increase



transparency and ensure competitive markets for livestock producers.”

Angela Huffman, president and co-founder of Farm Action, a group that fights corporate monopolies in agriculture and food production, said, “Farm Action thanks the Biden-Harris administration for a job well done on agricultural competition issues, including closing the Product of U.S.A. meat labeling loophole and issuing new merger guidelines to stem consolidation. We urge them to finish their work to strengthen the Packers & Stockyards Act and continue shifting government procurement from global monopolies to local and regional producers.”



*Angela Huffman*

Huffman also urged the administration to champion the Price Gouging Prevention Act introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and to “clean up the corruption in USDA’s checkoff programs.”

The U.S. Cattlemen’s Association (USCA) said in a news release, “USDA announced several steps to improve competition and ensure fairness in the marketplace.” Among those was the interim report of the investigation into competition in the meat retail industry and a rulemaking effort under the Packers & Stockyards Act of 1921 to enhance price discovery in fed cattle markets.



*Justin Tupper*

USCA President Justin Tupper said, “We commend USDA for their investigation into competition and fairness in the meat industry and hope identifying the trend of continued consolidation will help inform future decisions. We look forward to their continued investigation efforts, particularly through the use of subpoenas, to further research the concerns raised, largely by small and mid-sized, independent farmers and ranchers and processors like those that make up USCA.

“USCA is also carefully reviewing the preview of the price discovery options to be presented in the Price Discovery and Competition in Markets for Fed Cattle Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR).

“USDA has worked diligently to gather input from our industry on both the investigation and for the proposed price discovery options. Their willingness to connect with producers and organizations like USCA is appreciated and helps yield rulemaking procedures that make a difference for those of us in the countryside.”