



April/May 2020

***Welcome back to The U.S. Sustainability Alliance newsletter.***

How the world has changed since our last issue. We appreciate that this newsletter is coming to you at such a difficult time for everyone. During this extraordinary period, farmers and food industries across the world are front and center of the Covid-19 crisis, working to ensure the continued supply of safe, nutritious food. Today, we bring you news and reflections – please read Julie Borlaug’s inspiring comments in our Insight link – on how our farmers and businesses are adapting to the challenges before all of us.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Leather is the best way of dealing with the high volume of hides and skins that have to be sustainably and affordably managed.

**USDA Rolls Out Thirty-Year Conservation Program Plans**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) will introduce a new 30-year conservation program, [CLEAR30](#), which is designed to help farmers and landowners “maintain conservation practices and underscore their commitment to sound long-term stewardship on agricultural land.”



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## USDA Seeks Input into the Agriculture Innovation Agenda



USDA is calling for public and private sector input into its 'ag-innovation' strategy. Despite the coronavirus crisis, USDA remains focused on stimulating innovation to [increase U.S. agriculture production by 40% while halving its environmental impact](#). USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky said, "We know now, more than ever, it is important to double down on innovation in order to support farmers, ranchers, and producers as they work to increase productivity while conserving our natural resource base."

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## Whole Orchard Recycling is a Climate Smart Sustainable Strategy for California Almonds

Whole orchard recycling is a sustainable alternative to the burn treatments previously used to remove unproductive almond trees before planting new ones, says a [research report](#) from the University of California, Davis. The research shows that this practice sequesters 5 tonnes of carbon per hectare, increases water-use efficiency by 20% and boosts crop yields by 19%.



## USSA Farmer Spotlight: Tim Keegan on No-Till Practices and Precision Ag

Iowa maize, soybean and cow/ calf farmer Tim Keegan is a strong advocate of no-till practices and precision farming tools, which he uses to increase efficiencies while protecting the land. We are virtually [transported to his farm](#) where he plants no-till soybeans and shares what precision ag technology means for him and the land.

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## Guest Insight: Hope Through Agriculture - Now More Than Ever

Julie Borlaug, the granddaughter of Dr. Norman Borlaug, The Father of the Green Revolution and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, calls on the global agriculture community to come together and share its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. She urges the industry to share personal stories of how it is building a safe, sustainable and resilient global agricultural system, and providing [hope in these uncertain times](#).





## U.S. Dairy Has Taken 'A Gut Punch' But Will Bounce Back, Says USDEC's President and CEO, Tom Vilsack

U.S. Dairy Export Council President and CEO Tom Vilsack has spoken of the negative impact the coronavirus is having on U.S. dairy. However, he is confident that [exports will bounce back](#) and is keen to stress that America's dairy industry is open for business with products that are sustainable, nutritious, safe and in ample supply.

## Coronavirus Crisis Leads to Mountains of Food Waste

The shutdown of the foodservice industry due to coronavirus is creating mountains of waste from supplies once destined for restaurants, schools and other outlets. With their usual business drying up, vegetable farmers are plowing surplus produce back into the soil while dairy farmers are pouring milk on their fields. This hurts farmers' profits, uses up natural resources and generates greenhouse gas emissions.

[What is the answer?](#)



## Introducing the Leather and Hide Council of America

**LEATHER & HIDE**  
COUNCIL OF AMERICA

The U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association has joined forces with the Leather Industries of America to become the Leather and Hide Council of America (LHCA). Combining the membership, expertise and resources of both organizations, LHCA provides a new, stronger industry association for the U.S.

leather sector that will serve as "the premier voice of the entire leather supply chain, both in the U.S. and abroad." [Learn more about the LHCA](#) and read the [Leather-Hide Sustainability Fact Sheet](#).

## U.S Cotton Trust Added to Textile Exchange's Preferred List for Sustainable Fibers

The [U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol](#) has been added to Textile Exchange's list of preferred fibers and materials that over 170 participating brands and retailers can select from as part of Textile Exchange's Material Change Index program. Textile Exchange, a global non-profit group, defines a preferred fiber or material as one which results in improved environmental and/or social sustainability outcomes and impacts in comparison to conventional production.





## Healthy Eating Takes a Back Seat During Coronavirus but Sustainable Lifestyles Flourish

Consumers are turning to comfort foods to help them through the coronavirus crisis. Sales of alcohol, snack foods and tobacco have all increased, but analytics consultancy GlobalData urges manufacturers to prepare for a return to [healthy eating post-COVID-19](#). Meanwhile in the [UK, research shows](#) that consumers are wasting less food, using less plastic packaging and noticing cleaner

air and more wildlife since the crisis began.

## Deere to Produce Protective Face Shields for Frontline Workers

Farm machinery manufacturer John Deere is partnering with the United Auto Workers, the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and the Illinois Manufacturers' Association to make [protective face shields](#) for healthcare workers. Deere expects to produce 25,000 face shields initially, and an additional 200,000 once new materials arrive.



**The U.S. Sustainability Alliance strives to provide current and important stories about America's farmers, fishermen and foresters. Please let us know how we're doing by taking our 1-minute survey.**

**SURVEY**

## USSA Member Organizations:

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute; Almond Board of California; American Hardwood Export Council; American Peanut Council; Cotton Council International; Food Export Association of the Midwest; Food Export USA Northeast; Leather and Hide Council of America; North American Export Grain Association; North American Renderers Association; Organic Trade Association; Softwood Export Council; USA Poultry & Egg Export Council; USA Rice Federation; U.S. Dairy Export Council; U.S. Dry Bean Council; U.S. Grains Council; U.S. Meat Export Federation; U.S. Soybean Export Council; and U.S. Wheat Associates

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The U.S. Sustainability Alliance (USSA) is a group of American farmers, fishermen and foresters who have come together to explore and share our values regarding sustainable practices and conservation programs.

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