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October 2024 Newsletter

In this issue, we share the findings of the 2024 Global Agricultural Productivity Report (The GAP Report) by Virginia Tech. The report warns of sluggish productivity growth, highlighting the urgent need to bridge the gap between technology development and farmer adoption.

Other highlights include a USSA initiative that brought European officials to the United States for insights into sustainable agriculture and a USLGE visit to the UK to share the benefits of U.S. Hereford genetics.

Also, ASTA President and CEO Andy LaVigne discusses unlocking plant breeding innovation for the good of the planet, and we feature an Iowa farm converting agricultural waste into renewable fuel and fertilizer. Keep reading for more on these stories and the latest climate-smart agriculture news.

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GAP Report: Global Agricultural Productivity Growth Falls Short of Demand

A new report from Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences warns that a dramatic slowdown in agricultural productivity growth threatens the world's ability to feed a rising population and address environmental concerns. One of the main issues identified is the so-called Valley of Death between the development of proven and emerging tools and their adoption by farmers. [Read the report's recommendations for reversing the slowdown.](#)



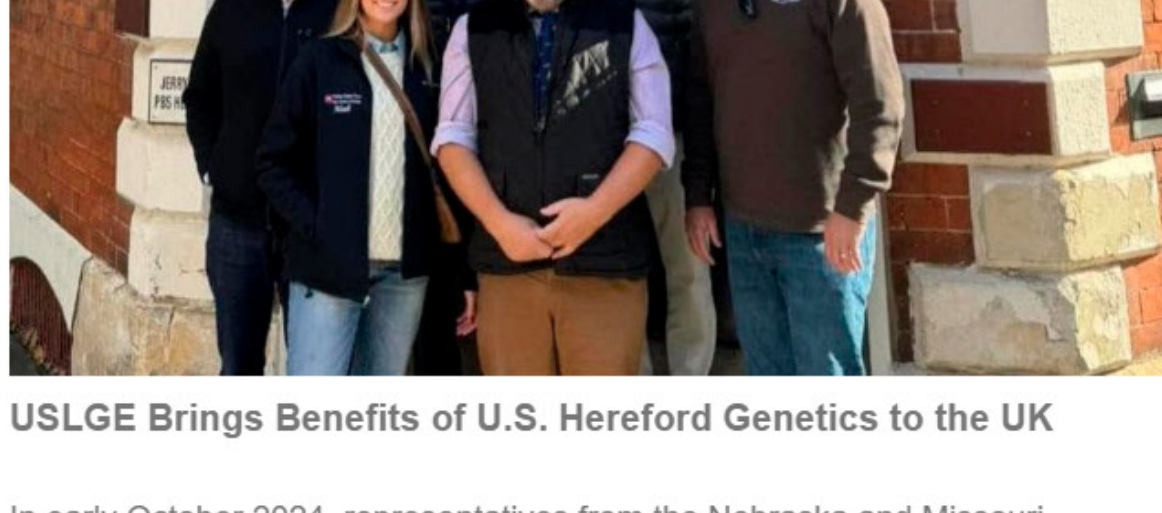
EU Officials Inspired by Climate Smart Agriculture in the United States

In mid-October, the U.S. Sustainability Alliance (USSA) hosted three European Union officials for a Climate Smart Agriculture mission to the United States. The mission aimed to enhance understanding of U.S. conservation programs and highlight U.S. leadership in agricultural sustainability. The officials were also encouraged to share their countries' sustainability approaches to explore potential harmonization in the measurement, monitoring, reporting, verification (MMRV), and recognition of best practices across different landscapes and sectors. [Read more about the mission.](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Compared to other rice producers worldwide, U.S. rice producers use less energy and fresh water, fewer chemicals and fertilizers, and produce less waste.

Sources: Cornell University Research, FAOSTAT & USA Rice Sustainability Report, 2016 Field to Market Indicators Report (via USA Rice)



USLGE Brings Benefits of U.S. Hereford Genetics to the UK

In early October 2024, representatives from the Nebraska and Missouri Departments of Agriculture and Hereford breeders from both states visited the UK with U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. (USLGE), a USSA member. Their objective was to build relationships with UK Hereford breeders, discuss the environmental and productivity benefits of U.S. Hereford genetics for their herds, and promote next year's Hereford World Conference. [Find out more about the USLGE UK visit.](#)



Plant Breeding Innovation Can Feed the World and Save the Planet

Farmers are under increasing pressure due to climate change, global conflicts, and trade disruptions. However, advances in plant breeding offer hope, writes Andy LaVigne, the President and CEO of the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA). He emphasizes that with the right policy environment, innovations such as genome editing can help farmers overcome challenges to sustainably feed a growing world population. [Read Andy's article on unlocking the full potential of plant breeding innovation.](#)



Sievers Family Farms Turns Farm Waste into Fuel and Fertilizer

Sievers Family Farms in Iowa is one of a growing number of farms using manure-based anaerobic digesters. These digesters convert farm waste into valuable renewable products, such as renewable natural gas, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Recently, USSA visited this fifth-generation farm with a delegation of EU officials to explore the environmental benefits of anaerobic digestion. [Learn more about Sievers Family Farms.](#)



Record \$7.7 Billion Allocated for Climate-Smart Agriculture

In response to shifting weather patterns and more severe extreme weather events, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is stepping up its efforts to help American producers fight climate change. For fiscal year 2025, USDA has earmarked up to \$7.7 billion to help farmers, ranchers, and foresters adopt conservation practices - more than double the amount available for 2024. [Read more on this story.](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

Here are some of the other stories that made the headlines this month:

- In news just in, USDA is investing a record \$1.5 billion in 92 partner-driven conservation projects through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. [Read more here](#)
- The success of USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities initiative is the subject of a new report. Since the program launched in September 2022, USDA has invested \$3.03 billion in 135 projects, connecting more than 14,000 farms to climate-smart markets, premiums, and incentives, as outlined [here](#)
- From agriculture to apiculture and news of a new research center at North Carolina State University. The state-of-the-art facility is dedicated to bee health and future-proofing the state's food supply, as reported [here](#)

For more on the above, check out our social media accounts!

The USSA is the voice of U.S. sustainable food and agricultural production. It represents the fertile lands and expansive waters of a great country and gives a voice to all that work and rely on them for food, clothing and materials.

Today, we represent more than twenty-five farming, fishery, forestry associations, and related production & processing sectors who are together responsible for approximately \$10.6 billion of annual U.S. food and agricultural exports to the UK and EU (2023).

USSA Member Organizations:

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute; Almond Board of California; American Feed Industry Association; American Hardwood Export Council; American Peanut Council; American Seed Trade Association; California Prune Board; Cotton Council International; Florida Department of Citrus; Food Export Association of the Midwest; Food Export USA Northeast; Intertribal Agriculture Council; Leather and Hide Council of America; North American Export Grain Association; North American Renderers Association; North Carolina SweetPotato Commission; Organic Trade Association; Softwood Export Council; U.S. Dairy Export Council; U.S. Dry Bean Council; U.S. Grains Council; U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.; U.S. Meat Export Federation; U.S. Soybean Export Council; U.S. Wheat Associates; USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council; USA Poultry & Egg Export Council; and USA Rice Federation.

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