Feds looking at regulating food for animals

By Michelle Fay Cortez, Bloomberg

Pet and animal foods would for the first time have to meet uniform manufacturing, processing and packaging standards under rules proposed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

While the FDA typically gets involved in investigating contaminated pet food that is already on the market, the new regulations are designed to prevent disease-causing bacteria and dangerous chemicals before the poisoning occurs. The rules are part of implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011, the biggest change to food oversight since 1938.

The safety of pet food has been in the spotlight in part because of imported jerky treats imported from China that have sickened 3,600 dogs and 10 cats, and killed 580, in the U.S. since 2007. The FDA has been unable to pinpoint the cause of the illness. The new rule, added to two others related to humans proposed this year, would ensure that foods brought into the U.S. from abroad meet FDA safety standards.

Read the whole story

Firewood available for seniors, disabled

More than 45 California Conservation Corps members bucked and split wood on California Tahoe Conservancy property this month that will be distributed by Kiwanis to seniors and disabled in

the basin.

Corps members participated in service projects around the state on this Volunteer Day.

The wood was generated by the U.S. Forest Service Upper Truckee River restoration project. This four-year project includes Conservancy property. The Conservancy took the lead on salvaging the extra wood.

The Kiwanis Club is organizing distribution. Seniors or disabled individuals who are interested in the wood may contact Richard Dart at (530) 543.0805.

Shoppers saying no to canned food

By Vanessa Wong, Bloomberg

Maybe canned foods remind us of school lunches. Or power outages. Or Y2K paranoia. Or cuisine from the ’50s. Perhaps it’s concern about BPA. Maybe the home canning trend keeps consumers from the supermarket. Because sales of preserved foods in the U.S. are fading.

Except during the recession, when consumers sought less expensive groceries, retail sales of canned, jarred, and otherwise preserved foods have been in decline. Ready meals such as canned stew, fruit, and seafood saw the steepest drops since 2003, according to researcher Euromonitor International.

Last year, volume sales of canned and preserved foods dropped by 1 percent, and Euromonitor estimates that by 2017, retail sales will be down 5 percent from 2012 levels, to 5 millions

tonnes.

Sure, they're affordable and can reduce food waste. But, as the firm explains in a report, because these products can be kept on shelves for years and can contain high levels of sodium, they are perceived to be less fresh and less healthy than even frozen and chilled foods. As the economy recovers, consumers are gradually trading back up. "Given the current health and wellness mind set of Americans, they are trying to avoid canned/preserved food if they can afford to do so," Euromonitor writes. (This obsession with freshness doesn't seem to be stopping people from hoarding Twinkies.)

Read the whole story

Slow jobs recovery likely to impact holiday spending

By Renee Dudley and Lindsey Rupp, Bloomberg

Katie Smith plans to spend $200 less on holiday gifts this year because of concerns that weak U.S. job growth will hurt her husband's home-remodeling business.

"We've scaled back," said the 51-year-old project manager for Wake Forest University's medical school as she perused cowboy boots for her 12-year-old daughter at a Salvation Army thrift store in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her family plans to spend about $1,000 on gifts, down from $1,200 last year.

With U.S. economic growth trailing the Federal Reserve's projections, shoppers have plenty of reasons to hoard their

dollars this holiday season. This week the government said employers added 45,000 fewer jobs in September than August. The news came with consumers already absorbing the implications of stagnant wages, a cooling housing market and the government shutdown and debt ceiling debate.

Retailers from Macy’s Inc. and Nordstrom Inc. to Wal-Mart Stores Inc. missed second-quarter sales estimates and cut their forecasts. To lure shoppers who have been shifting their dollars away from apparel and other general merchandise to cars and home-related products, chains are planning to introduce discounts early in the season.

In the past three months, job growth has averaged 143,000 per month, compared with 195,000 in the first half of the year. While consumer spending in November and December may rise 3.9 percent this year to $602.1 billion, according to the National Retail Federation, that’s only 0.4 percent more than last year and lower than 2011, when spending rose 5.1 percent.

Read the whole story

TRPA looking for spirit award nominations

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is taking nominations for the Lake Spirit Awards.

The public is encouraged to nominate members of community who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to protect the beauty and clarity of the Lake.

A North Shore and South Shore winner will be selected in each

category.

Nominations for the Lake Spirit Awards can be made online, and will be accepted through Dec. 2. Winners will be announced at TRPA's Governing Board meeting on Dec. 18.

Feds to protect sage grouse in Calif., Nev.

By Jason Dearen, AP

SAN FRANCISCO – Federal wildlife officials on Friday proposed to list as threatened populations of greater sage grouse in Nevada and California in an effort to save the struggling species, a decision that promises to pose new challenges for ranching and energy development in the West.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that invasive species and energy development in the desert have had a devastating effect on the large, ground-dwelling bird's populations, said Ted Koch, Nevada state supervisor for the service.

"It's not the eleventh-hour for sage grouse here, but it is maybe the 10th hour," Koch said. "And that's good news. It means we have some time and space to turn things around."

The service found multiple threats facing this specific sub-population of the sage grouse, a chicken-size bird whose males have a large white tuft of feathers around their necks.

The service estimates there are only about 5,000 of the birds left.

Non-native pinyon pine and juniper trees introduced to the

habitat and power lines have given low-to-the-ground perches for raptors, which eat the grouse, Koch said.

The service also found that an invasive grass from Asia that burns easily has helped decimate sagebrush, which is key to the grouse's survival.

Industry, federal and local officials say a local effort already underway to save the bird is a promising start. Passed in 2012, the plan is being used by federal officials to help clear red tape for industry in the area.

Some state legislators greeted the proposed listing with suspicion, saying it could have wide-ranging economic impact on the rural economies in the region. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada said the decision will have "major ramifications" on the way of life in parts of Nevada and California.

"This listing is further proof that we need to work together to protect sensitive species before they get to such a dismal point and negatively affect our rural economies," Reid said in a statement.

The final decision on the service's proposal will occur next year, and the public will have 60 days to comment.

Ranchers, miners and energy developers who use the mostly public lands that serve as the sage grouse's habitat have opposed the listing, saying it would have a deep economic impact in the rural West.

Friday's proposed listing comes as the service is also determining whether the entire western sage grouse population should be federally protected. Sage grouse also live in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and parts of Canada.

Ranchers worry that protections will scuttle or block outright

vast grazing areas. They say it adds a lot of uncertainty to any plans to expand or even launch habitat restoration plans on their lands.

“For guys talking about expansion and going to the bank for loan, I’m not sure what the bank is going to tell me,” said JJ Goicoechea, a rancher and veterinarian who is president of the Nevada Cattlemens Association.

“And the rural economy is heavily dependent on those ranching families, who generate revenues that help keep towns and schools running. What’s going to happen to those rural communities?” he asked.

The Center for Biological Diversity, which sued the service to protect the sage grouse, said the decision was long overdue.

“The sage grouse we have here in Nevada and California is a true symbol of all that is wild – what a relief that it’s finally getting the protection it needs to survive,” Rob Mrowka, a Nevada-based center ecologist, said in a statement.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Do you want to be as fit as Olympian Julia Mancuso? *Shape* magazine has the Squaw Valley skier’s secrets.

• There will be a job and resource fair Nov. 7 from 10am-3pm for veterans, National Guard and reservists returning from active duty. The location will be the McClellan Conference

Center, 5411 Luce Ave., McClellan. For veterans, a free bus will leave from the Raley's in Placerville at 7:30am and will depart at 8am from the El Dorado County center in front of Building A/B.

• Sand Harbor's boat ramp will close Nov. 18 due to low water. The parking lot will remain open for carry-in, non-motorized boating access only. Cave Rock is open during the winter season from 6am-4pm.

• Animal lovers who purchase a $5 raffle ticket to support the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe could win a $1,000 Visa gift card Nov. 15. Call (530) 587.5948 to purchase tickets.

• South Tahoe High grad Ian Ruhter will have a photo in the *National Geographic 125th Anniversary Photo Collection Edition*.

Ski racing season begins for professionals

By USSA

SOELDEN, Austria – In the first race of the season, two U.S. women skied the final run.

Slalom world champion Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail, Colo.) skied into sixth place in the Soelden giant slalom to kick off the 2014 Audi FIS Alpine World Cup Season on Oct. 26. Shiffrin led the U.S. women in the season opener and snagged her career-best World Cup giant slalom result.

Switzerland's Lara Gut sealed her first World Cup GS victory despite a huge mistake on the steeps.

Olympic giant slalom Champion Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) finished 27.

On Sunday, Ted Ligety (Park City) will be gunning for his third-straight win in Soelden while Bode Miller (Franconia, N.H.) returns to the snow for the first time since February 2012.

A night of South Shore history

Do you remember Oliver’s casino or the tree in the middle of Highway 50 or the first high school at South Shore?

Several long-time residents will be looking back on local history Nov. 12 at 7pm in the lodge of Camp Richardson.

The Lake Tahoe Historical Society is putting on the event. Cost is $3 for non-members, no charge for members.

Garden of Joy brightens Mt. Tallac High campus



Garden of Joy at Mount Tallac High School. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

“Who was that?”

“That’s one of my kids,” Joy Rothschild would say.

Biologically she didn’t have any children. But Rothschild had a bond with so many Lake Tahoe Unified students through being an aide in the schools, working to get those who in some manner were homeless to have a more stable life, and through volunteering with Court Appointed Special Advocates that she had many kids in a different way.

There was a special place in her heart for youngsters who didn’t fit into society’s definition of “normal teen”.

She regularly gave money for a scholarship to Mount Tallac High so students could continue their education.

Rothschild died in August 2012 at the age of 63. But her memory lives on and the work she did continues.

Today there is spot in the back of the Tallac campus in South Lake Tahoe called Garden of Joy. A bench was donated last year through the classified union and friends, with the mural being painted at the start of this school year. Pavers donated by Tahoe Paving Stones and laid by students under the direction of teacher Jackie Tan give it a more complete look.

In the stones is an 11-foot-by-11-foot chessboard. Tan plans to write a grant so by spring there would be large game pieces students could use to play chess.

Oct. 22 was Mount Tallac's annual open house, with students giving tours of the campus. The garden is one of the stops along the way.

"Joy just loved the Tallac school. She was very loved by students who liked the alternative programs. She loved them," Karen Tinlin, principal of Mount Tallac, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Teri Rothschild believes her sister would be thrilled with the tribute. She and their father, Rocky, donated to the cause.

"I like having something up there that is permanent," Rothschild said.

Rothschild and artist Matt Kauffmann met only once – and it was rather random. He works with the Sphere of Influence program that has kids paint electric boxes in the area. They are the type of youth Rothschild connected with and always helped. Kauffmann was on Ski Run Boulevard with some youths when a vehicle pulls up and out pops Rothschild saying, "I love what you are doing" – gives him a hug and gets back in the car.

Kauffmann spent a day creating the mural. A large sunflower represents Rothschild's favorite flower. Aspens frame the artwork.

"I wanted to make it bright, alive and fun," Kauffmann told

Lake Tahoe News.