



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

1550 Earl Core Road, Suite 101 • Morgantown, WV 26505

Phone: 304.284.4860 OR 1.800.295.8228 • Fax: 304.284.4893 • TDD: 304.284.4836 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wv>

Gail Bennett, Public Affairs Specialist – (304) 284-4875

Release No. 0466.10

Contact:
Weldon Freeman
(202) 690-1384

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND SMALL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

Support Will Promote Economic Development, Training for Entrepreneurship and Business Growth

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15, 2010 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced support for economic development initiatives and for educational institutions to help owners of small farms and rural businesses in 22 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The secretary announced the funding at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference.

"USDA and the Obama administration are committed to supporting small business and our nation's historically black educational institutions to ensure that all citizens have equal access to economic opportunities," Vilsack said. "This funding will help create the next generation of entrepreneurs and help small businesses better compete in today's global economy."

These awards are being provided through USDA Rural Development's Small and Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant Program and through a Rural Entrepreneurship Outreach and Development Initiative. Both programs support job creation efforts, business development and nurture cooperatives. Recipients of the outreach initiative funding are among the 18 institutions supported under the Second Morrill Act of 1890, a law providing for the establishment of land-grant institutions focusing on agriculture, home economics and the mechanic arts.

For example, West Virginia State University has been selected to receive a \$100,000 grant. "USDA Rural Development West Virginia is pleased to have the opportunity to continue working with West Virginia State University to provide technical assistance and outreach to entrepreneurs in Fayette, Greenbrier, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming Counties. In addition to continued emphasis on specialty foods, agritourism and artisan development, the project will add technical assistance and outreach for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). We anticipate continued progress toward developing additional successful entrepreneurs in southeastern West Virginia," stated State Director Bobby Lewis.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Alabama A&M University has been selected to receive a \$95,000 grant to provide outreach and technical assistance to help entrepreneurs, businesses and cooperatives. The university will develop educational materials concerning renewable energy sources, continue a rural entrepreneurial outreach and development program for youth, develop financial management training, and provide technical assistance to rural business cooperatives.

In Georgia, Fort Valley State University has been selected for a \$105,000 grant to help rural businesses develop business and marketing plans that will help them more fully utilize sources of funding such as USDA Rural Development's Intermediary Relending Program. The grant also will help Fort Valley continue to operate the area's only small business incubator.

The Rio Culebra Agricultural Cooperative in Colorado is using a \$175,000 Small and Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant that it was awarded in 2009 to help develop a business and marketing plan that will enable members to provide beef products in metropolitan areas. The cooperative also is helping producers sell specialty crops for Chicos and Bolita Beans. Additionally, it is working on a feasibility study for small-scale camelina production for a specialty cooking oil and use in a local biodiesel plant.

Funding of recipients announced today is contingent upon their meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. The following is a complete list of organizations receiving USDA Rural Development awards:

1890 Land-Grant Institutions Rural Entrepreneurship Outreach and Development Initiative Grants

Alabama:

Alabama A&M University – \$95,000

Tuskegee University – \$100,000

Arkansas:

University of Arkansas Pine Bluff – \$105,000

Delaware:

Delaware State University – \$115,000

Florida:

Florida A&M University – \$105,000

Georgia:

Fort Valley State University – \$105,000

Louisiana:

Southern University and A&M College – \$115,000

Maryland:

University of Maryland Eastern Shore – \$100,000

Mississippi:

Alcorn State University – \$100,000

North Carolina:

North Carolina A&T State University – \$100,000

Oklahoma:

Langston University – \$104,000

South Carolina:

South Carolina State University – \$100,000

Texas:

Prairie View A&M University – \$70,035

West Virginia:

West Virginia State University – \$100,000

Virginia:

Virginia State University – \$80,965

Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grants

Colorado

Arkansas Valley Organic Growers – \$93,000

Rio Culebra Agricultural Cooperative – \$186,000

Hawaii

Hawaii Bio-Energy Producers Cooperative – \$114,715

Louisiana

Louisiana Association of Cooperatives – \$200,000

Michigan

Farmers on the Move Cooperative Inc. – \$200,000

Mississippi

Mileston Cooperative Association – \$105,824

Mississippi Association of Cooperatives – \$200,000

Winston County Self-Help Cooperative – \$200,000

North Delta Produce Growers Association – \$177,417

Minnesota

Hillside Farmers Cooperative, Inc. – \$113,865

New Mexico

Red Willow Community Growers Cooperative – \$182,500

New York

North Country Grown Cooperative, Inc. – \$62,175

Puerto Rico

Cooperativa Agro-Comercial De Puerto Rico – \$154,360

South Carolina

People's Farmers Cooperative, Inc. – \$100,000

Farmers Low Country Marketing Cooperative – \$64,500

Federation of Southern Cooperatives – \$146,595

Pee Dee Small Farmer Association Inc. – \$34,500

SCF Organic Farms LTD – \$100,000

South Dakota

Intertribal Buffalo Council – \$175,000

Washington

Manzaneros Mexicanos De Washington Corporation – \$150,000

Through its Rural Development mission area, USDA administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a network of 6,100 employees located in the nation's capital and 500 state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers, and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$142 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through its housing, business, community and infrastructure programs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Further information on USDA Rural Development may be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>. In West Virginia, call 1-800-295-8228 to be put in touch with the appropriate personnel serving your county. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202.720.2600 (voice and TDD).

##