



NEWS RELEASE

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Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Streamlines Access to Energy Investment Information at USDA

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18, 2012 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the launch of a USDA energy website that will provide stakeholders fast and efficient access to USDA energy efficiency and renewable energy data. Today’s announcement builds on the Secretary’s commitment to develop a modern and efficient service organization as outlined in USDA’s *Blueprint for Stronger Service* announced last week.

“Improving and modernizing access to USDA energy data and resources is essential in today’s highly competitive rural business environment,” said Vilsack. “Farmers, ranchers and small businesses across the country will benefit from easier navigation and retrieval of energy and renewable energy investments data and funding opportunities.”

USDA’s energy website provides access to all USDA energy resources, including: agricultural, forestry, economic, and social data. This is done in part through a set of new complementary web-based tools: the *USDA Renewable Energy Investment Map*, the *Renewable Energy Tool* and *Energy Matrix*. These tools focus on USDA’s energy, energy efficiency and renewable energy investments and projects; provide information and data to a broad spectrum of stakeholders; and empower the user with the ability to easily navigate USDA’s energy web resources. In addition, the site provides a link to all USDA state and local offices and energy resource coordinators.

Vilsack said this newly designed tool is a great step in a more coordinated and efficient effort to increase public awareness of USDA’s energy research, commercialization of new technologies, program delivery, outreach, and education activities. It also provides a form or technical assistance to people thinking about adopting an energy project. The new site replaces a previous site which was established several years ago. To access the site, go to:

www.usda.gov/energy.

Secretary Vilsack said last week, “As we continue to invest in rural communities across the country, USDA has heard from producers about the need for reducing red tape and the need to modernize its services. We are answering this challenge by making the best use of taxpayer resources, and providing the best possible service to the American people.”

Since taking office, President Obama's Administration has taken historic steps to improve the lives of rural Americans, put people back to work and build thriving economies in rural communities. From proposing the American Jobs Act to establishing the first-ever White House Rural Council – chaired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack – the President wants the federal government to be the best possible partner for rural businesses, entrepreneurs and people who want to live, work and raise their families in rural communities.

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

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