



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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USDA Seeks Applications from Producers to Conduct Renewable Energy Feasibility Studies

WASHINGTON, Sept. 7, 2010 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the availability of funding under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy systems for agriculture producers and rural small businesses.

“Renewable energy production represents a promising revenue source for America’s producers while meeting the nation’s need for new sources of renewable energy,” Vilsack said. “These grants will help encourage the development of viable renewable energy projects across the nation and help small business owners, farmers, ranchers and agriculture producers conduct feasibility studies that identify renewable energy opportunities.”

Eligible feasibility studies for renewable energy systems include projects that will produce energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro power and hydrogen-based sources. The energy to be produced includes heat, electricity or fuel. For all projects, the system must be located in a rural area, must be technically feasible and must be owned by the applicant. More information is available by visiting http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapGrants.html.

Under this notice, USDA is making \$3 million available to conduct feasibility studies. Grants are limited to \$50,000 per study and the application deadline is October 5, 2010. The funding announced today is authorized under the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. More information on how to apply for funding is available in the August 6, 2010 Federal Register, page 47525.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national 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.

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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).

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