



NEWS RELEASE

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Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces Funding for More Than 500 Projects to Boost Renewable Energy Production, Reduce Energy Costs for Producers and Rural Small Businesses

*Rural Small Businesses and Producers Receive Support
To Assist In Job Creation*

WASHINGTON, Sept. 16, 2011 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced loans and grants for more than 500 agricultural producers and rural small businesses across the country to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in their operations.

“This funding is an important part of the Obama Administration’s plan to help the nation’s farmers, agricultural producers and rural small businesses conserve natural resources, create more green jobs and lead us on the path to becoming an energy independent nation,” Vilsack said. “These projects are in addition to the more than 900 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects recently announced during the President’s Rural Economic Forum.”

The grants and loan guarantees are being provided through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), a 2008 Farm Bill initiative. REAP offers funds for farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy-efficiency improvements. These federal funds leverage other funding sources for small businesses. In all, USDA announced today more than \$27 million in energy grants and guaranteed loans for projects.

The REAP program is helping many agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce energy consumption. For example, in Kirkwood, Pa., Jay Clifford Sensenig was selected to receive a \$309,733 grant to install a co-op digester system that will process annually more than 16,800 tons of dairy, hog and chicken manure from four farms into methane gas, creating more than 879,000 kilowatts per year of electricity. In addition, the digester system is designed to accept and process food waste. The host farm uses 232,000 kilowatts annually; the excess energy produced from the digester will be sold to the local utility.

In Beaver Dam, Wis., United Cooperative was selected to receive a \$448,500 grant to help with the installation cost of 33 ethanol flex-fuel dispensers and 17 biodiesel dispensers. United Cooperative is a full-service cooperative that offers feed, grain, agronomy and energy products to south-central Wisconsin farmers and consumers.

The Obama Administration has set a goal of making 10,000 new flex-fuel pumps available to America’s drivers within the next five years – a five-fold increase from today’s

Committed to the future of rural communities.

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level. By building infrastructure to put biofuels produced in America in our fuel tanks, USDA is supporting the clean energy economy we need to ensure our long-term prosperity and help us out-compete the rest of the world. USDA is working to support the research, investment and infrastructure necessary to build a nationwide biofuels industry that creates jobs in every corner of the country.

The REAP program is also funding several other types of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. For example, in Windham, N.H., the Pugliese Contracting Corporation was selected to receive a \$99,500 loan guarantee and a \$49,875 grant to purchase and install a 30 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system and a geothermal heating and cooling system in its 8,000-square-foot operations center. Once installed, the system will reduce energy purchased from the grid by 63 percent. The geothermal system will provide 100 percent of the business's heating and cooling needs.

Mock's Greenhouse and Landscaping, Morgan County, West Virginia, was selected to receive a \$28,070 grant to assist farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses in developing renewable energy systems, and in making energy-efficiency improvements to their operations. This project will serve to install energy efficiency improvements to reduce energy consumption of the rural small business.

Also in West Virginia, Appalachian Offroad MC, LLC, located in Kanawha County, was selected to receive a \$70,850 grant to assist farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses in developing renewable energy systems, and in making energy-efficiency improvements to their operations. This project will serve to install a 30.55kW solar PV system to reduce consumption for the rural small business.

Funding of each award is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant or loan agreement. Grants can finance up to 25 percent of a project's cost, not to exceed \$500,000 for renewables, \$250,000 for efficiency. For a complete listing of Rural Energy for America Program recipients announced today, go to <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/RD-REAP20000-aboveSept2011.pdf>.

Today's announcement further demonstrates the investments the Obama Administration is making to help create jobs and grow our rural economy.

On September 8, President Obama presented the [American Jobs Act](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/08/fact-sheet-american-jobs-act) (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/08/fact-sheet-american-jobs-act>) in an address to Congress. The purpose of the American Jobs Act is simple: put more people back to work and put more money in the pockets of working Americans. The American Jobs Act is specific, it will put people back to work right now and it won't add to the deficit. Through a combination of direct spending, such as infrastructure investments, and tax relief, such as an extension of the payroll tax cuts, it will lead to new American jobs.

Since taking office, President Obama's Administration has taken significant steps to improve the lives of rural Americans and has provided broad support for rural communities. The Obama Administration has set goals of modernizing infrastructure by providing broadband access to 10 million Americans, expanding educational opportunities for students in rural areas, and

providing affordable health care. In the long term, these unparalleled rural investments will help ensure that America's rural communities are repopulating, self-sustaining and thriving economically.

USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, administers and manages housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs through a national network of state and local offices. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of more than \$155 billion in loans and loan guarantees. 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.

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