



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development

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Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Sign MOU To Support Continued Development Of Biofuels And Related Products

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25, 2011 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that he will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to encourage the continued development of bio-based products for energy consumption, animal feed, chemicals and other uses.

“This agreement will help provide a roadmap to guide and strengthen public, private and academic partnerships that are essential to bio-based industries,” Vilsack said. “It is important that we work together to encourage the development of more bio-based products. Not only will this reduce our nation’s dependence on imported oil, it also will lead to a cleaner, healthier environment.”

Vilsack will sign the MOU with the Governors’ Biofuels Coalition, which was originally formed to provide leadership on ethanol policy development but has since expanded to address issues related to biodiesel, advanced biofuels and other products derived from renewable sources. Thirty-six states are Coalition members. Copies of the final version of the MOU will be made available on Monday.

The MOU calls for the parties to work together to support President Obama’s May 5, 2009, Biofuels Directive that calls for a reduction in energy consumption derived from fossil fuels. Specifically, it encourages the parties to address the following issues:

Eliminate obstacles to the development of higher-blend biofuels; Develop techniques and systems that make feedstock production sustainable throughout the United States; and Increase public understanding of the benefits of agriculture.

USDA is among the forefront of federal efforts to support the development of bio-based fuels. In early February, the Department announced a series of policy changes to increase the production and use of renewable energy. The changes increase the amount of financial assistance available for biorefinery loan guarantees, expand the types of facilities at which bioenergy products can be produced, and, in some cases, provide payments during the construction of biofuels facilities.

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 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 nearly \$146 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

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