

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Requests Public Input on New Climate-Smart Agriculture Initiative

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced today that it is seeking public comments on a new initiative designed to create revenue streams for agricultural producers through market opportunities for commodities produced using climate-smart practices.

“Through extreme weather, drought and fire, our agriculture producers are on the frontlines of climate change,” Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said. “The new Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative will support pilots that create new market opportunities for commodities produced using climate-smart practices and position U.S. farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners as leaders in addressing climate change. The pilots will invest in the science, monitoring and verification to measure the benefits of these climate smart practices. Today, we ask for public input to inform our decision making and enhance the design of this initiative.”

USDA is committed to partnering with agriculture, forestry and rural communities to develop climate solutions that strengthen rural America. Guided by science, USDA will support a set of pilot projects that provide incentives to implement climate-smart conservation practices on working lands and to quantify and monitor the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with those practices. The pilots could rely on the Commodity Credit Corporation’s specific power to help expand or develop new and additional markets.

USDA has published a request for information seeking public comment and input on how to design the new initiative. Comments may be provided via the [Federal Register](#).

The deadline to submit comments is 11:59 p.m. EST on Nov. 1, 2021.

Feedback will be used to inform design of the new Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative. USDA is seeking input on:

- The current state of climate-smart commodity markets.
- Systems for quantification.
- Options and criteria for evaluation.
- Use of information collected.
- Potential protocols.
- Options for review and verification.
- Inclusion of historically underserved communities.

USDA encourages comments from farmers and farmer organizations, commodity groups, livestock producer groups, environmental organizations, agriculture businesses and technology companies, environmental market organizations, renewable energy organizations, tribal organizations and governments, organizations representing historically underrepresented producers, organizations representing historically underrepresented communities and private corporations.

USDA is committed to equity in program delivery and explicitly seeks input on how to best serve historically underrepresented producers and communities. This aligns with the Justice40 initiative, an effort to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to deliver at least 40% of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities.

Insights gained through this process will be used to develop a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) soliciting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative project proposals that encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices and promote markets for climate-smart commodities. USDA plans to announce the NOFA this fall, with project proposals accepted early next year.

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