

Secretary Vilsack Announces Projects in 22 States to Improve Farm, Ranch and Rural Business Energy E

Written by USDA Office of Communications
Wednesday, 25 September 2013 13:12

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 25, 2013 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced funding for projects in 22 states that will help agricultural producers and rural small businesses reduce their energy consumption and costs. Funding will also allow producers to use renewable energy technologies in their operations and conduct feasibility studies for renewable energy projects. Grant and loan funding is made available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which is authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. Acting Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien made the announcement on behalf of the Secretary.

"REAP continues to help farmers and rural businesses reduce their energy consumption and by doing so, improve the bottom line of their operations," O'Brien said. "This important Farm Bill program and others like it would not be available without a comprehensive Food, Farm and Jobs Bill."

REAP helps producers reduce energy costs and increase efficiency. For example:

- Weber Land LLC in Halstead, Kan., will use a \$26,000 REAP grant to help purchase three energy-efficient electric irrigation systems that will replace an out-of-date and inefficient diesel system. The new systems will better irrigate 490 acres and is projected to reduce current energy usage by 74 percent annually.
- Casa de San Pedro B&B, LLC in Hereford, Ariz., will use a \$41,000 grant to assist with the installation of ground-mounted solar panels. Once operational, the bed and breakfast is expected to eliminate 83 percent of its current electricity costs.
- In New York, 18 maple syrup producers will use more than \$132,000 in REAP funds to purchase reverse osmosis systems, evaporators and preheaters to improve the energy efficiency of their operations. By utilizing these new technologies and practices, producers will

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reduce the amount of energy consumed by approximately 75 percent during the production process.

Under the terms of REAP, up to 25 percent of eligible project costs can be funded through a grant, and additional support can be provided in the form of a loan guarantee. Since the start of the Obama Administration, REAP has helped fund nearly 8,000 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects nationwide.

REAP offers financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. These federal funds leverage other private funding sources. REAP also helps the conservation of natural resources and the development of new forms of energy that reduce America's dependence on fossil fuels and creates a stronger rural economy. Follow this link to view the [complete list of recipients](#) announced today under the REAP program.

Today's REAP announcement helps support the June 2013 announcement of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, which outlines a comprehensive approach to reduce carbon pollution and better prepare the United States for the impacts of climate change. USDA continues helping rural America innovate to lead the world against modern climate challenges, and a summary of the USDA's efforts are available at www.usda.gov/climatesolutions.

More information about USDA's role and accomplishments in renewable energy can be found here: www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=ENERGY featuring access to agricultural, forestry, economic, and socio data on energy through several web-based tools: the USDA Renewable Energy Investment Map, the Renewable Energy Tool and Energy Matrix. These tools focus on USDA's investments and projects for energy, energy efficiency, and conservation programs; provides information and data to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including: farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, managers, lenders, community developers, related companies, small businesses, researchers, developers, and federal, state and local government agencies.

President Obama's plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities. Under the President's leadership, these investments in housing, community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way - strengthening America's economy, small towns and rural communities.

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USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, has a portfolio of programs designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. USDA has made a concerted effort to deliver results for the American people, even as the Department implements sequestration - the across-the-board budget reductions mandated under terms of the Budget Control Act.

USDA has already undertaken historic efforts since 2009 to save more than \$828 million in taxpayer funds through targeted, common-sense budget reductions. These reductions have put USDA in a better position to carry out its mission, while implementing sequester budget reductions in a fair manner that causes as little disruption as possible.

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