



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA ANNOUNCES \$17 MILLION IN GRANTS TO TRAIN BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS

ELGIN, Minn, Nov. 3, 2009 – The USDA today announced the award of more than \$17 million in grants to 29 institutions to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. agriculture.

"Beginning farmers and ranchers face unique challenges and need educational and training programs to enhance their profitability and long term sustainability," Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan said. "The training and education provided through these grants will help ensure the success of the next generation of farmers and ranchers as they work to feed people in their local communities and throughout the world."

Merrigan announced the funding in Elgin, Minn., at the Hidden Stream Farm and was joined by representatives from the Land Stewardship Project, the local grant recipient that provides local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives that address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers. Eric and Lisa Klein, the proprietors of Hidden Stream Farm, were some of the first graduates of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings course. Since graduating from Farm Beginnings, the Klein's have developed a thriving pasture-based livestock operation that markets pork, chickens and beef in southeast Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

This funding announcement is part of USDA's new 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' initiative which was launched in September 2009 to emphasize the need for a fundamental and critical reconnection between producers and consumers. 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' includes such major agricultural topics as supporting local farmers and community food groups; strengthening rural communities; enhancing direct marketing and farmers' promotion programs; promoting healthy eating; protecting natural resources; and helping schools connect with locally grown foods.

The grants were awarded through USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA, formerly the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service) Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). BFRDP is an education, training, technical assistance and outreach program designed to help U.S. farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or fewer. Congress authorized the FY 2009 funding for this program in the 2008 Farm Bill, with another \$19 million in mandatory funding for FY 2010. Under the program, USDA will make grants to organizations that will implement programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers.

Beginning farmers and ranchers interested in participating in any of the education, outreach, mentoring and/or internship activities are asked to contact the grantee institutions listed below.

Fiscal year 2009 recipients include:

Developing Innovations in Navajo Education, Inc., Flagstaff, Ariz., \$674,507

Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation, Brinkley, Ark., \$313,278

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, Salinas, Calif., \$515,862

California FarmLink, Sebastopol, Calif., \$525,000

Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Fla., \$225,079

University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla., \$596,219

University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, \$508,618

Angelic Organics Learning Center, Inc., Caledonia, Ill., \$750,000

University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky., \$749,883

Cultivating Community, Portland, Maine, \$600,000

USDA National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Md., \$1,498,137

Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis, Minn., \$413,820

Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc., St. Paul, Minn., \$506,170

Thomas Jefferson Agricultural Institute, Columbia, Mo., \$730,722

University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., \$692,198

University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., \$541,239

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb., \$644,408

Holistic Management International, Albuquerque, N.M., \$639,301

Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., \$750,000

Fort Berthold Community College, New Town, N.D., \$614,356

Langston University, Langston, Okla., \$525,000

Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa., 572,178

Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa., 733,821

South Dakota State University, Brookings, S.D., \$701,608

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn., \$74,000

University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, \$665,038

Washington State University, Pullman, Wash., \$748,651

Washington State University, Pullman, Wash., \$524,896

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, Spring Valley, Wis., \$151,515

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, NIFA focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. For more information, visit www.nifa.usda.gov.

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