

NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Invests in Crop Insurance Education Awarding \$651,954 throughout the Pacific Northwest

SPOKANE, Wash., October 28, 2011 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) will support crop insurance education and outreach in 47 states to ensure that small and underserved producers get the information they need to effectively manage their risk and remain productive. Awards totaling approximately \$13.6 million from two RMA programs—Targeted States and the Education and Outreach programs—will support thousands of American farmers, ranchers and producers.

Of that total, \$651,954 in partnership agreement awards will support crop insurance education and outreach in the Pacific Northwest Region serviced by RMA's Spokane Regional Office. "The partnerships will provide farmers and ranchers access to a complete set of conferences, targeted instruction, strategies, and networking opportunities at a local level." Dave Paul, Director of RMA's Spokane Regional Office stated, "We are very excited about the diversity of these partnership agreements and believe, through these programs, many farmers and ranchers will be better equipped to address the many risk management related challenges faced on their farms and ranches."

RMA accepted proposals from public and private entities, including colleges and universities; Federal, State, and local agencies; non-profit and for-profit organizations; and others. All partnership agreements were competitive and awarded based on merit.

The following awardees represent approved projects in the RMA Spokane Regional Office area only (representing Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington).

Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides – ***“AGR-Lite and Farm Products Branding Training for Organic Specialty Crop Producers in Idaho”*** to ensure an effective program of agricultural risk management education and information through small sessions will be established in the State of Idaho that will meet the needs of its producers.

Oregon Cattlemen's Association – ***“Oregon Risk Management Outreach on Livestock Risk Protection Ins. and Ranch, Pasture, Range, Financial and Legal Management for Traditionally Underserved Livestock Producers”*** to provide risk management outreach and education for livestock producers in Oregon who are traditionally underserved

Washington State University – ***“Breaking New Ground -- Using Agri-tourism as a Risk Management Strategy in the Spokane Region”*** to assist priority producers in the region to develop new agri-tourism enterprises that can capture additional income for producers, and help stimulate local economies. A major part of this project will be working with producers so they understand, and can mitigate both traditional risks of farming, as well as some unique new risks associated with agri-tourism.

Oregon State University – ***“Expanding Niche Livestock Ranching in Oregon”*** to strengthen risk management programming for underserved livestock producers throughout Oregon

RightRisk, LLC – ***“Risk Management Education for RMA’s Spokane Region: RME on Insurance, Succession Planning, Marketing, and Financial Planning to Women/New/ Hispanic/Senior/Specialty Crop/Other Producers in Idaho and Oregon”*** to promote sustained profitability for agricultural producers in Idaho and Oregon through effective risk management decision making.

Washington State University – ***“Enhancing Farming Practices and Marketing Skills as Risk Management Tools for Hispanic, Asian American, and Beginning Farmers in Washington State”*** to expand the successful implementation of “Cultivating Success” farm production and business management curricula with Hmong and Latino farmers in Washington.

Washington State University – ***“Education and Outreach Project for Producers, Ranchers, Limited Resource Producers, Ranchers, New and Beginning Farmers in Northeastern Washington, RMA Spokane District”*** to provide multiple learning and networking opportunities in aspects of small agriculture risk management.

Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System – ***“Delivery of Educational Materials to Increase LGM-Dairy Utilization by Dairy Farm Operators in General and Limited Resource Operators in Particular in Washington State”*** to develop and subsequently deliver an integrated education program composed of computer-based LGM-Dairy training workshops

Rural Community Development Resources – ***“Risk Planning Education for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Sustainability in Washington State”*** to provide outreach and create awareness of risk management issues for SDA producers, provide individual risk planning and provide outreach to RMA regional offices in regard to the new and beginning farmers and the Center’s role within Washington State.

Institute for Washington’s Future – ***“Production, Financial, and Human Risk Management Outreach and Education to Hispanic Farmers in Washington State”*** to develop and conduct a promotional program crop insurance and other risk management tools in Spanish.

The Risk Management Education and Outreach programs are designed to help ensure that farmers and ranchers effectively manage their risk through difficult periods, helping to maintain America's robust food supply and the survival of small, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved farmers. RMA administers these partnership projects as well as the Federal crop insurance program, with funding and authority from the Federal Crop Insurance Act.

RMA helps producers manage their business risks through effective, market-based risk solutions. RMA's mission is to promote, support, and regulate sound risk management solutions to preserve and strengthen the economic stability of America's agricultural producers. Federal crop insurance provides support to American producers as part of the "farm safety net." A strong farm safety net is important to the vitality of American agriculture. Complete listings of the agreements can be found on the RMA Web site at: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/agreements/>.

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