



News Release

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USDA Invests to Help Small and Underserved Producers Manage Risk and Remain Productive

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24, 2013 —Agriculture Secretary Vilsack today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) will support crop insurance education and outreach in 45 states to ensure that small and underserved producers get the information they need to effectively manage risk and ensure their businesses are productive and competitive. Cooperative agreements totaling nearly \$10 million from two RMA programs— The Targeted States Program and The Risk Management Education Partnership Program—will support thousands of American farmers, ranchers, and producers during a successful yet challenging period for American agriculture.

Undergoing a period of historic performance, U.S. agriculture continues to be an area of growing strength in the American economy thanks to producers' ability to manage risk, reduce their debt and capitalize on expanding market opportunities. Currently, agriculture supports 1 in 12 jobs here in the United States, from transportation to processing in businesses large and small.

"Despite the challenges and setbacks due to extreme weather felt in many parts of the country this year, American agriculture is experiencing its strongest period in history thanks to the dedication and resilience of our farmers and ranchers," said Agriculture Secretary Vilsack. "Our responsibility at USDA is to sustain and nurture these hard-won gains for all producers. For small and beginning farmers, in particular, risk management often means understanding direct marketing, or food safety standards, or designing tools to meet the scale of their operation and the markets that they serve. Overall, these agreements will provide tools and knowledge for underserved, small, and limited-resource producers to succeed."

Many of the agreements that RMA is offering can help farmers diversify production and marketing practices, or to provide planning tools to help farmers get the insurance and credit that are often critical to their ability to stay in business or to diversify their existing business. RMA administers these projects as well as the federal crop insurance program, with funding and authority from the Federal Crop Insurance Act.

The new partnership agreements announced today include:

Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States: \$5 million has been awarded to deliver crop insurance education and information to agricultural producers in 16 states designated as historically underserved in crop insurance coverage. These targeted states are Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Education Partnership Agreements: \$5 million has been awarded to fund 60 Education Partnership Agreements across the country, delivering training to U.S. farmers and ranchers in managing production, marketing, and financial risk, such as a \$98,754 award for Risk Management Education and Counseling for Military Veteran New and Beginning Farmers. This project will provide comprehensive training on risk management for beginning farmers who are also military veterans in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Together, the agreements announced today 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 sustainability of small, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved farmers.

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.

The Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's leadership, has worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its most productive periods in American history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers. A strong farm safety net is important to sustain the success of American agriculture. USDA's crop insurance program currently insures 294 million acres, 1.2 million policies, and \$122 billion worth of liability.

For more information about RMA or its programs, go to our web site, www.rma.usda.gov.

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