

USDA Invests \$6.7 Million in 544 Renewable and Energy Efficiency Projects

Written by USDA

Saturday, 13 June 2015 11:47

http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/wisconsin_farm_windmill_s5.jpg



Grants for renewable energy and conservation will cut energy costs, create jobs, promote energy independence.

STEVENS POINT, WI - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that USDA is investing more than \$6.7 million in 544 renewable energy and energy efficiency projects nationwide.

“These grants will help farmers, ranchers and small business owners use more renewable energy, which cuts carbon pollution, reduces our dependence on foreign oil, saves businesses money on their energy bills and creates American jobs,” Vilsack said. “All of these are crucial components to developing healthier, more economically vibrant rural communities.”

In Wisconsin, more than \$200,000 in grants has been awarded to 14 recipients throughout the State. Grant funds will be used for the acquisition and/or installation of renewable energy systems and in making energy-efficiency improvements to their operations.

REAP was created by the 2002 Farm Bill and was reauthorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. REAP funding has helped farmers expand renewable energy use in recent years. The new Census of Agriculture shows the number of farms utilizing renewable energy production has doubled in the last five years.

Since 2009, USDA has awarded \$545 million to support more than 8,800 REAP projects nationwide. This includes \$361 million in grants and loans for almost 2,900 renewable energy systems. For the remaining 5,900 projects, USDA provided \$184 million to help rural small businesses and agricultural producers make energy efficiency improvements such as lighting; heating, ventilation and cooling; irrigation; insulation and motor replacements. When fully operational, these projects are estimated to generate and save 7.3 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually – enough to power more than 660,000 homes for a year.

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Eligible agricultural producers and rural small businesses may use REAP funds to make energy efficiency improvements or install renewable energy systems, including solar, wind, renewable biomass (including anaerobic digesters), small hydroelectric, ocean energy, hydrogen and geothermal.

The [awards list](#) announced today is contingent upon the recipients meeting the terms of the grant agreement. A full list of the grants awarded is available at www.rd.usda.gov/files/RDREAPGrantAwards_06_10_15.pdf

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As the lead federal agency for rural development needs, USDA Rural Development invests in jobs, infrastructure, community development, health, education, homeownership and affordable rental housing to improve the lives of people in rural areas and the economic health of rural communities. During the last year, the agency has assisted nearly 9,000 families and businesses in more than 100 communities, investing more than \$571 million into rural Wisconsin through affordable loans, loan guarantees and grants. Further information on USDA Rural Development programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting the web site at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/wi>.

Wisconsin Recipients:

BENTON STATE BANK

\$18,185

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

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BLENKER BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC.

\$20,000

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

BULA, RONALD L. DBA PLEASANT VALLEY FARM

\$9,830

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

COLD SPRINGS EGG FARMS, INC.

\$18,635

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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LED LIGHTING SYSTEM UPGRADE

EICK, ERVIN H.

\$12,580

ENERGY EFFICIENT

GRAIN DRYER

FLAIG, CARL

\$9,506

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

KALTENBERG, ALAN

\$17,055

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY

GRAIN DRYER - 357 BPH

KICKAPOO COFFEE, INC.

\$18,248

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

NIEDFELDT, GERALD DBA OLD OAK FAMILY FARM

\$15,812

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

PINE RIVER MINI MART, INC

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\$7,910

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

LED LIGHTING

SIEVERT DAIRY FARMS

\$15,975

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

GRAIN DRYER 1500 BPH

TWARDOKUS, CARL

\$14,414

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

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VIEBROCK, GERALD

\$9,375

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ZETTLER, BRAD

\$16,475

RENEWABLE ENERGY

SOLAR

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