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Tuskegee University receives major USDA funding for Pilot Projects through Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

December 14, 2022



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack meeting with the 1890s Scholars & USDA APHIS Foreign Service Fellows.

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TUSKEGEE, Ala. – Earlier this week, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Biden-Harris Administration, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) investing an additional \$325 million for 71 projects under the second funding pool of the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities (<https://www.usda.gov/climate-solutions/climate-smart-commodities/projects>) effort, bringing the total investment from both funding pools to over \$3.1 billion for 141 tentatively selected projects.

Tuskegee University, an 1890 Land-grant University, will be the lead partner on two Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodity projects: one focused on developing climate-smart markets for agroforestry products and providing underserved producers assistance in transforming traditional production systems into agroforestry-based climate-smart production systems, and the other working with underserved producers to implement silvopasture and climate-resilient forage systems and market climate-smart sheep and goat products.

“Expanding opportunities for small and underserved producers is a key goal of Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities. Small and underserved producers are facing the impacts of climate change head on, with limited resources, and have the most to gain from leveraging the growing market demand for agricultural goods produced in a sustainable, climate-smart way. Our goal is to expand markets for climate-smart commodities and ensure that small and underserved producers reap the benefits of the market opportunities,” said Vilsack.

“Through the work of George Washington Carver, for over 100 years, Tuskegee University has been at the forefront of sustainable agricultural productivity and efficient use and conservation of natural resources,” said Dr. Olga Bolden-Tiller, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences. “The current awards support Tuskegee University’s continued commitment to this work while leveraging our 1890 Center of Excellence for Farming Systems, Rural Prosperity, and Economic Sustainability to increase profitability, natural resource conservation, and market demand for small farmers, including socially disadvantaged/underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners.”

The Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity had high demand from across agriculture and forestry. Between two funding pools, USDA received over 1,000 proposals requesting more than \$20 billion in funds from more than 700 entities, including nonprofit organizations; for-profits and government entities; farmer cooperatives; conservation, energy and environmental groups; state, tribal and local governments; universities; small businesses; and large corporations. Applications were received from all 50 states, tribal lands, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

USDA is currently in negotiations regarding the first 70 projects and will work with the applicants for all 141 identified projects to finalize the scope and funding levels in the coming months.

Funding will be provided by USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation.

A complete list of projects is available at usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities (<https://usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities>).

More Information

Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities is part of USDA’s broader strategy to position agriculture and forestry as leaders in climate change mitigation through voluntary incentive-based, market-driven approaches. Visit usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities (<https://usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities>) to learn more about this effort, at usda.gov/climate-solutions (<https://usda.gov/climate-solutions>) for climate-related updates, resources and tools across the Department.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our Nation’s lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air and water. Through climate-smart agriculture and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including State, local and Tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov (<http://www.usda.gov>).



Dr. Charlotte P. Morris, Secretary Tom Vilsack and Dr. Olga Bolden-Tiller, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences



Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack speaking to audience.



Secretary Vilsack speaking with Dr. Byeng Min, Associate Professor and Dr. Uma Karki, Professor/State Ext. Livestock Specialist

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