

USDA Unveils New Climate Partnership Initiative, Requests Public Input

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Public Comments Due by November 1, 2021

RICHMOND, VA, Oct. 14, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to partnering with agriculture, forestry and rural communities to develop climate solutions that strengthen rural America. The Department has outlined and requested public comments on a new climate partnership initiative designed to create new revenue streams for producers via market opportunities for commodities produced using climate-smart practices.

Guided by science, USDA will support a set of pilot projects that provide incentives to implement climate-smart conservation practices on working lands and to quantify and monitor the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with those practices. The pilots could rely on the Commodity Credit Corporation's specific power to aid in expansion or development of new and additional markets. The Department published a Request for Information (RFI) seeking public comment and input on design of the new initiative.

"Through extreme weather, drought and fire, our agriculture producers are on the frontlines of climate change," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The new Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative will support pilots that create new market opportunities for commodities produced using climate-smart practices and position U.S. farmers, ranchers and forest landowners as leaders in addressing climate change. The pilots will invest in the science, monitoring and verification to measure the benefits of these climate-smart practices. Today, we ask for public input to inform our decision making and enhance the design of this initiative."

Comments may be provided on or before 11:59 p.m. EST on November 1, 2021 via the [Federal Register, Docket ID: USDA-2021-0010](#). Feedback will be used to inform design of the new Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative. USDA is seeking input specifically on:

- The current state of climate-smart commodity markets,

- Systems for quantification,
- Options and criteria for evaluation,
- Use of information collected,
- Potential protocols,
- Options for review and verification,
- Inclusion of historically underserved communities.

Comments are encouraged from farmers and farmer organizations, commodity groups, livestock producer groups, environmental organizations, agriculture businesses and technology companies, environmental market organizations, renewable energy organizations, Tribal organizations and governments, organizations representing historically underrepresented producers, organizations representing historically underrepresented communities and private corporations.

USDA is committed to equity in program delivery and explicitly seeks input on how to best serve historically underrepresented producers and communities. This aligns with the Justice40 initiative, an effort to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to deliver at least 40% of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged communities.

Insights gained through this process will inform development of a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) soliciting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative project proposals that encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices and promote markets for climate-smart commodities. USDA plans to announce the NOFA this fall, with project proposals accepted early next year.

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