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Farm Service Agency  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## **Biden-Harris Administration Announces Historic Investment in Partnerships for 70 Climate-Smart Commodities and Rural Projects**

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*USDA to Triple Commitment with Initial \$2.8 Billion Investment Piloting New Revenue Streams for America's Climate-Smart Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Landowners, with Additional Projects to Come*

**STILLWATER, Okla., Sept. 19, 2022** – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced last week that the Biden-Harris Administration through the U.S. Department of Agriculture is investing up to \$2.8 billion in 70 selected projects under the first pool of the [Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities](#) funding opportunity, including 17 projects that applicants indicate will impact the state of Oklahoma, with projects from the second funding pool to be announced later this year. Ultimately, USDA's anticipated national investment will triple to more than \$3 billion in pilots that will create market opportunities for American commodities produced using climate-smart production practices. These initial projects will expand markets for climate-smart commodities, leverage the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production and provide direct, meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers. Applicants submitted more than 450 project proposals in this first funding pool, and the strength of the projects identified led USDA to increase its investment in this opportunity from the initial \$1 billion Vilsack announced earlier this year.

“There is strong and growing interest in the private sector and among consumers for food that is grown in a climate-friendly way,” said Vilsack. “Through this announcement of initial selections for the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, USDA is delivering on our promise to build and expand these market opportunities for American agriculture and be global leaders in climate-smart agricultural production. This effort will increase the competitive advantage of U.S. agriculture both domestically and internationally, build wealth that stays in rural communities and support a diverse range of producers and operation types.”

Earlier this year, Vilsack announced that USDA had allocated \$1 billion for the program, divided into two funding pools. Because of the unprecedented demand and interest in the program, and potential for meaningful opportunities to benefit producers through the proposals, the Biden-Harris administration increased the total funding allocation to more than \$3 billion, with projects from the second funding pool to be announced later this year. Vilsack made the announcement from the campus of Penn State University, which is the lead partner on one of the selected pilot projects to implement climate-smart practices, quantify and track the greenhouse gas benefits and develop markets for the resulting climate-smart commodities.

Funding for Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities will be delivered through USDA's [Commodity Credit Corporation](#) in two pools. Projects announced on September 14 are from the first funding pool, which included proposals seeking funds ranging from \$5 million to \$100 million. USDA received over 450 proposals from more than 350 entities for this funding pool, including nonprofit organizations; for-profits and government entities; farmer cooperatives; conservation, energy and environmental groups; state, tribal and local governments; universities (including minority serving institutions); small businesses; and large corporations. Applications covered every state in the nation as well as tribal lands, D.C. and Puerto Rico. The tentative selections reflect this broad set of applicants and geographic scope, and the proposals include plans to match on average over 50% of the federal investment with nonfederal funds.

USDA will work with the applicants for the 70 identified projects to finalize the scope and funding levels in the coming months. A complete list of projects identified for this first round of funding, including the 17 projects that may impact Oklahoma, is available at [usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities](https://usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities). These projects include:

- **Demonstration, Expansion, and Quantification of the Benefits of a Climate Smart Commodity: Verified Regenerative Bison Products** – The project will develop a demonstration program on tribal lands, implementing and expanding multiple climate-smart practices in production of American bison, and will showcase the benefits of regenerative bison production to rangeland, ranchers, and climate. It will also create a new entity to maintain standards of regenerative bison production, track climate benefits and payment for those benefits through the supply chain, and establish consumer trust. **Lead Partner:** Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
- **Producer Led Collaborative Effort to Fundamentally Transition the U.S. Beef Supply Chain to Carbon Neutral** – This eight-state project will amplify production of climate-smart beef by expanding market drivers, grassroots support networks, and early adopter mentors and providing technical assistance for the adoption of climate-smart grazing practices to substantially reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration. **Lead**

**Partner:** American Farmland Trust

- **U.S. Climate-Smart Cotton Program** – This project will build markets for climate-smart cotton and provide technical and financial assistance to over 1,000 U.S. cotton farmers, including underserved cotton producers, to advance adoption of climate-smart practices on more than 1 million acres, producing millions of bales of Climate-Smart Cotton over five years, and demonstrating major carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) reductions and millions of dollars of economic benefits to farmers. **Lead Partner:** US Cotton Trust Protocol

Spanning up to five years, these 70 projects will:

- Provide technical and financial assistance to producers to implement climate-smart production practices on a voluntary basis on working lands;
- Pilot innovative and cost-effective methods for quantification, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas benefits; and
- Develop markets and promote the resulting climate-smart commodities.

The projects will deliver significant impacts for producers and communities nationwide. USDA anticipates that these projects will result in:

- **Hundreds of expanded markets and revenue streams** for producers and commodities across agriculture ranging from traditional corn to specialty crops.
- **More than 50,000 farms reached, encompassing more than 20-25 million acres of working land** engaged in climate-smart production practices such as cover crops, no-till and nutrient management.
- **More than 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent sequestered over the lives of the projects.** This is equivalent to removing more than 10 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles from the road for one year.
- **More than 50 universities, including multiple minority-serving institutions,** engaged and helping advance projects, especially with outreach and monitoring, measurement, reporting and verification.
- Proposals for the 70 selected projects include plans to **match on average over 50% of the federal investment with nonfederal funds.**

Projects were selected based on a range of criteria, with emphasis placed on greenhouse gas and/or carbon sequestration benefits and equity. The [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) included a complete set of project proposal requirements and evaluation criteria.

USDA is currently evaluating project proposals from the second Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding pool, which includes funding requests from \$250,000 to \$4,999,999. Projects from this second funding pool will emphasize the enrollment of small and/or underserved producers, and/or monitoring, reporting and verification activities developed at minority-serving institutions. USDA expects to announce these selections later this Fall.

## **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, and [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 conservation practices 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](https://www.usda.gov).

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