

## National Agricultural Day

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### **National Agriculture Day:**

#### **Fifty Years Later, Farmers Are Growing a Climate for Tomorrow**

March 21, 2023 -- National Agriculture Day was created fifty years ago to recognize America's farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners. In Michigan, our producers are the best stewards of our land; they not only provide food, forage, and fiber for today, they are growing a climate for tomorrow, for our state, our nation, and our world. From crop insurance to farm loans, and from conservation to disaster assistance, USDA programs are helping producers conserve natural resources and keep families farming for future generations.

On this day, we look to what the future holds for Michigan agriculture. We are moving into a new era, finding our agricultural land stewards increasingly on the front lines of climate change. With that, USDA is creating an equitable and climate-smart food and agriculture economy built to support both rural and urban communities and empower Michigan producers. Our producers are investing in climate solutions to ensure a prosperous agricultural future for generations to come. Michigan agriculture is uniquely positioned to deliver solutions by implementing climate-smart production practices that conserve natural resources, build healthier soils, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and sequester carbon.

At the national level, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history. This is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for this country, and for the rural, suburban, and urban agricultural communities that USDA serves. USDA is committed to implementing the Inflation Reduction Act quickly and effectively, to give producers on climate change's front lines the tools and resources they need to keep their operations productive. The IRA promotes climate-smart agriculture by increasing access to conservation assistance and directing approximately \$20 billion to support USDA's conservation programs that yield climate-related benefits, while building resilience in agricultural operations.

The IRA also helps producers stay on the farm and prevents them from becoming ineligible for future assistance. The IRA provided \$3.1 billion for USDA to provide relief for distressed borrowers with at-risk agricultural operations, and \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers who have previously experienced discrimination or lack of equity in USDA's farm lending programs.

Equity is a priority in all we do at the USDA and is central to our Department mission. While the USDA is committed to ensuring American agriculture thrives, we must also ensure that the producers who need USDA's services the most, receive them. The programs we support and the investments we make are available to everyone, whether it is our long-standing conservation programs, or ad-hoc disaster assistance programs. And we take additional steps to ensure that underserved, smaller-scale, and urban ag producers can participate in, and prosper from participation in our programs.

As part of our equitable mission, the USDA is working across its agencies to support urban producers. We support efforts to grow fresh, healthy produce, while helping to create jobs, beautify neighborhoods, and increase access to locally produced, healthy food in areas where grocery stores are scarce. Our urban producers are an integral part of our producer family, and the USDA is actively working to ensure that program access is reaching our urban communities.

And finally, a reminder that 2022 was an ag census year, and your participation is crucial. A large part of what we do, how we grow, and who we service, is informed by your participation in the ag census. USDA will continue to collect completed 2022 ag census forms through the spring. Census data inform decisions about policy, farm and conservation programs, infrastructure and rural development, research, education, and more and it's not too late to respond.

On National Agriculture Day and every day, USDA is committed to ensuring our programs and investments reach all producers. We are committed to providing producers tools and resources they need to be part of the climate solution, to keep farming operations in production, and to grow our diversity in agriculture. Please join us in thanking our nation's producers and wishing them a happy National Agriculture Day!

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