



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA Accomplishments 2009-2011

Secretary Tom Vilsack

Energy

Energy Accomplishments

To create jobs in rural communities, drive economic growth, and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil, USDA is aggressively pursuing investments in renewable energy, investing in or making payments to over 5,700 renewable energy and energy efficiency improvement projects.

Support for Growers, Landowners and Producers of Renewable Energy Feedstocks

- To encourage feedstock production for renewable energy, USDA established a program to incentivize hundreds of growers and landowners farming nearly 50,000 acres to provide biomass to energy conversion facilities.
- To reduce the risk for farmers looking to produce biomass for renewable energy, USDA offers insurance coverage for farmers growing biofuel crops like switch grass and camelina and we are helping identify American farmland most suitable for growing energy crops.
- In USDA's National Forests, we contracted with private businesses to remove 3.7 million tons of biomass to produce energy.

Research and Planning for Renewable Energy

- Completed a Biofuels Roadmap proposing a plan of action to meet congressionally mandated RFS2 goals for national biofuels production.
- Coordinated five regional research centers to work on the science necessary to ensure profitable biofuels can be produced from a diverse range of feedstocks across the nation, not just in the Midwest where the industry is already thriving.
- Over three years, USDA invested about \$320 million to accelerate research on renewable energy ranging from genomic research on bioenergy feedstock crops, to development of biofuel conversion processes and costs/benefit estimates of renewable energy production.

Investments in Renewable Energy Production

- More than 130 biodiesel and ethanol projects funded by USDA are currently producing almost 3.7 billion gallons of biodiesel and ethanol annually, enough fuel – in equivalence to gasoline – to keep five million vehicles on the road every year.
- We are supporting efforts to build five biorefineries to produce advanced biofuels in states from Florida and Michigan to New Mexico, with investments worth about \$310 million. We are supporting facility upgrades and feasibility studies for advanced biofuels projects in every region of the country.

- To encourage the production of advanced biofuels from non-food sources, USDA made payments worth approximately \$154 million to 235 companies already producing biofuels from non-corn feedstocks in 42 states.
- In three years, Forest Service Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Program funded 56 projects to save or create more than a hundred jobs and using hundreds of thousands of renewable and sustainable green tons for renewable energy generation and other uses.
- USDA funded 436MW of renewable electricity generation projects between 2009 and 2011, enough to power about 115,000 homes – including more than 320 wind energy projects.

Support for Infrastructure for the Distribution of Biofuels to the End Consumer

- Provided financial assistance for blender fuel pumps so drivers can pump fuels with higher ethanol mix into their gas tanks. This year, these programs provided financial assistance to help support nearly 250 blender fuel pumps.

Support for Aviation Biofuels

- We have forged partnerships with the FAA and the aviation industry to promote aviation biofuels to help meet our nation's energy needs, combating global climate change, and fueling economic growth. This year, two commercial airlines flew their first domestic flights powered by biofuels.

- USDA invested more than \$80 million in research focused on developing aviation biofuels.
- We entered into a partnership with the Department of Energy and U.S. Navy to invest up to \$510 million during the next three years to produce advanced, drop-in aviation and marine biofuels to power military and commercial transportation.
- We have invested in a New Mexico facility to produce “green crude” oil from algae which can be refined into transportation fuel.

Support for Energy Efficiency and On-Farm Energy Generation

- Helped approximately 13,000 rural small businesses, farmers, and ranchers, save energy and improve their bottom line by installing renewable energy systems and energy efficiency solutions that will save a projected 6.5 billion in kWh– enough energy to power 590,000 American homes for a year.
- Helped support the construction of 70 anaerobic biodigesters so farm operations can produce electricity from waste products. And supported feasibility studies for another 26. Thanks to a partnership with the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy to cut greenhouse emissions from U.S. dairy operations, most of these projects are at dairy operations.

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