



I. Outreach



USDA works closely with state land-grant university partners and county Extension agents who deliver outreach programs to farmers.

Commission Recommendations: The Commission remarked on a lack of focused attention on small farms and an attitude of indifference toward the needs of small farmers and ranchers.

The Commission determined that the establishment and continued support of farmer support networks, mentoring programs, and apprenticeship programs are critical for small farm and ranch operators to exchange information with one another. Recommendations included the establishment of an administrator for small farms to provide a dedicated focus for small farm issues within USDA and intensified and targeted outreach, particularly to minority farmers and ranchers.

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

Agencies have made considerable strides since fiscal year (FY) 1999 to reach out collaboratively to small, limited-resource, and minority farmers, as well as to local communities, to ensure a better understanding of the programs and services that USDA offers. Such outreach efforts have enabled agencies to obtain a better understanding of the needs of our diverse customers, and will help them target programs and services to meet specific customer needs.

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

- In a joint venture with Southern University A&M College, AMS organized and participated in the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Outreach Workshop on April 11, 2000 in Memphis, Tennessee. The Workshop's target audience was small and limited-resource farmers in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee.
- AMS worked with California Polytechnic State University, University of California-Small Farms and Cooperative Extension Programs, and Modesto Junior College to host the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Outreach Workshop on October 31-November 2, 2000 in Modesto, California. Over 500 small farmers and agriculture professionals participated in workshops and



breakout sessions to discuss topics such as cooperative development, preparing marketing plans, and institutional marketing opportunities.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

As part of the USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs budget crosscut, APHIS has completed an initial program-by-program examination of the actual dollars and the percentage of individual line programs that impact small farms. This crosscut analysis allows the Agency to accurately identify funds devoted to activities that directly benefit small farms (e.g., compensation payments, or farm service delivery). The amount of APHIS's budget that directly impacted small farmers and ranchers was in excess of \$358 million in FY 1999 and over \$394 million in FY 2000. This represents approximately 52 percent of the FY 1999 budget and approximately 46 percent of the FY 2000 budget.

- On August 23, 2000, APHIS presented a "Model for Budget Analysis on Small Farm Issues—USDA/APHIS," to the Small Farms Advisory Council (SFAC) at their third meeting in Sacramento, California. It is the intention of APHIS to produce a similar analysis for FY 2001. Included in the information supplied to the individual members of the SFAC was a new MRP small farms brochure "We're here! For Small Farms." The APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs staff facilitated the development of this brochure.



- APHIS staff participated in three major small farms/outreach conferences in 2000-2001: the Urban-Rural Interface Conference sponsored by the Urban Affairs and New Nontraditional Programs of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, held on April 13, 2000 at Alabama A&M University; the National Black Farmers Association, which met in Richmond, Virginia on August 24-25, 2000; and the Natural Resources and Agricultural Workshop in Education, Outreach, and Technology, held on July 11-12, 2001, at the Georgia State Fair grounds in Perry, Georgia.

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)

CSREES has a full-time national program leader (NPL) for small farms who provides leadership to improve small farm operations throughout the United States and its territories via partnerships and collaborations with the land-grant university system; other public and private sectors, including farmers, community-based organizations, foundations; and others.

CSREES works closely with a national network of small farm program leaders through the land-grant university system and with USDA agency small farm program specialists to ensure that the USDA/CSREES small farm program and policies respond to current small farm issues and the recommendations of the National Small Farms Commission cited in the *A Time to Act* report. CSREES continues to increase outreach activities aimed at helping small farmers and ranchers improve the economic viability of their small farms and ranches. Activities in 2000 and 2001 include:

- **Planning the 3rd National Small Farm Conference:** During 2000-2001, CSREES took the lead in planning the 3rd National Small Farm Conference, held September 17-21, 2002 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The focus of the conference is strengthening partnerships and linkages among Federal, State, and local entities that serve small farmers and ranchers. New Mexico State University will be the land-grant university helping CSREES coordinate conference logistics and programming. USDA agencies with small farm programs or with information beneficial to small farmers will be conference sponsors.



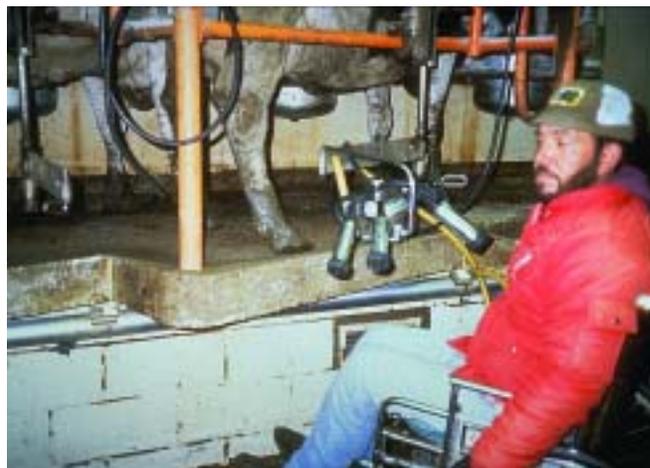
■ **AgrAbility Program Offers Farm Safety Information:**

Nationwide since 1991, the AgrAbility Program, given national leadership by CSREES, has provided assistance to over 12,000 farmers/workers with disabilities, trained 10,000 farm professionals, and provided disability educational awareness at over 1,000 events. Efforts to increase 1890 institution involvement in the program during 2000 included travel funds for faculty to attend the largest national AgrAbility conference ever held on November 10, 2001.

The conference built partnerships between CSREES and other USDA agencies to better provide services to disabled farmers and farm workers. CSREES also provided funding to four institutions to implement AgrAbility programs.

- **The CSREES Small Farm Program Hotline:** The CSREES Small Farm Program's toll-free hotline (1-800-583-3071) handles an average of 15 calls per day. Half of the requests are for farm loan program information and are referred to the appropriate USDA office, such as the Farm Service Agency or Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program. Other calls for technical assistance are referred to an appropriate State Cooperative Extension Service specialist within the statewide network with whom the CSREES works closely in disseminating information to help farmers nationwide. The CSREES Small Farm Program is housed within the Economic and Community Systems Unit.

- **National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Certification Program:** Pennsylvania State University and The Ohio State University received a CSREES grant in 2001 to develop a National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Certification Program for Youth. A lack of current teaching aids, uniform testing standards, and knowledge of the Hazardous Occupations Order for Agriculture training requirements justified the need for this grant. The 4-year project will develop and evaluate instructional materials as well as testing, evaluation, and certification procedures, and it will offer instructor training to establish and maintain the National Program.



Over the last several years, CSREES has provided training to approximately 10,000 farm professionals, and conducted disability educational awareness sessions at over 100 events.

- **Kentucky State University Programs Help Small Farmers with Marketing:** Kentucky State University Extension staff targeted the state's 59,000 limited-resource small farmers with a personalized production, marketing, and sustainable management information program in 1999-2001. Many cooperating farmers doubled their annual net farm income by an average of \$10,000 by implementing recordkeeping and sustainable practices.

Through the University's Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Project, Mennonite and Amish farmers were helped to establish the Fairview Produce Auction, Inc. The auction generated higher produce prices in local markets, realizing \$100,000 in sales during 1997 and \$250,000 in 1998 for 33 grower members. CSREES works in close partnership with State Small Farm Program Coordinators in the land-grant system to help small farmers remain economically viable.

- **University of California Small Farm Program Helps Small Producers with New Crops:** Members of the Small Farm Workshop at the University of California Small Farm Program have been focusing on new crops for California during 2000-2001.



Successful research trials on adapting blueberries to the various ecosystems in California have been underway from Sonoma to San Diego, spawning an explosive growth of several hundred acres in new blueberry plantings. Substantial portions of these acres are on small farms. It is expected that more acreage in California will be planted with blueberries as research results are adopted.

■ **CSREES Helps Sponsor Marketing Conference for Limited Resource Farmers in California:** CSREES

helped sponsor and participated in “The Markets, Tools, and Opportunities for Limited-Resource Farmers” Conference in Modesto, California during October 31-November 2, 2000. Staff at the CSREES Small Farm Program exhibit booth exchanged information with many of the 200 growers and other participants, including Hmong and Hispanic growers from California.

■ **National Black Farmers Association Conference 2000:**

The CSREES NPL for Small Farms moderated a session on “Farming for Our Next Generation” at the National Black Farmers’ Association Conference 2000: “Exploring the Future of Today’s Farmer—What Works” held August 24-25, 2000 in Richmond, Virginia. Information was shared with many limited-resource farmers, staff and officials who work with small farmers, landowners, farm workers, State conservation district representatives, Cooperative Extension specialists, vocational agricultural instructors, farm cooperative managers, rural church leaders, community-based organization leaders, and other farm advocates who visited the CSREES Small Farm Program exhibit.

- **Agricultural Marketing Outreach Workshop:** The CSREES Small Farm Program staff participated at the Agricultural Marketing Outreach Workshop—“Marketing: The Last Link In The Chain” held April 11-13, 2000 in Memphis, Tennessee. CSREES information was shared with a diverse group of limited-resource farmers and other attendees. A CSREES Small Farm Program exhibit booth offered an opportunity for program staff to talk one-on-one with farmers and Extension small farm specialists.



CSREES supports small farmers with limited resources. In March 2000, the CSREES staff participated in a “Successful Small Farming” teleconference session in North Carolina at a “Women in Agriculture” seminar.

- **14th Annual Small Farms Week at North Carolina A&T University:** During the 14th Annual Small Farms Week at North Carolina A&T State on March 20-24, 2000, CSREES Small Farm Program staff participated in a “Successful Small Farming” teleconference session and gave concluding remarks at a “Women In Agriculture” seminar. The critical role women play in agriculture and society, and the expanding opportunities for women in agriculture were a special focus of the event. Staff shared CSREES Small Farm Program information with farm families and Extension staff who work closely with small farmers in North Carolina.

- **108th Annual Farmers Conference:** The CSREES NPL for Small Farms moderated a session, manned a CSREES Small Farm Program exhibit, and shared ideas with many limited-resource farmers from the Southern region, Extension specialists, and others at the 108th Annual Farmers Conference at Tuskegee University during February 10-11, 2000. The Conference theme was “The Small Farmer: Survival Strategies for the New Century.”



Farm Service Agency (FSA)

ALASKA

- Reindeer Herders:** Alaska FSA extended the Livestock Assistance Program to about 20 small and remote Native reindeer herders on the Seward Peninsula, beginning in FY 1999. This was the first time any of the herders had participated in any FSA programs. The effort involved the State Office working with Sen. Stevens' office to add reindeer to the statutory definition of livestock. Once this was done, the program specialist and a County Executive Director went to Nome for two weeks and contacted each herder individually. Boats and aircraft were used to do this, along with cars and phones, as many herders do not live on roads.



USDA photo by Jimmy LaVoie

An Alaskan FSA County Executive Director works with small and remote Native reindeer herders as part of its outreach efforts to extend the Livestock Assistance Program.

- Berry Project:** Most of the agriculture in off-road Alaska would not be recognized as such by a Midwesterner. It is very small, subsistence or barter oriented, and relies on native plants. The State Office suggested a plan to use Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) education funds as a demonstration for techniques to conserve and enhance traditional berry-growing areas along the Yukon River. The State Technical Committee approved the idea, and it is going forward. Those who

will be able to best make use of this practice are currently at the mercy of nature and destructive snow machine traffic for the food on which they depend. FSA is helping resource-dependent people expand into agriculture from subsistence and barter.

- Oyster Farmers:** FSA personnel journeyed by floatplane and/or boat to help small, remote oyster farmers with loan applications, when they did not have the resources to come to FSA offices or the time available to leave their oysters unattended.



The Farm Service Agency's local field offices provide assistance to small farmers who do not have funds to move their animals away from out-of-control forest or range fires.

- Fire-Threatened Farmer:** In 1998, a major forest fire threatened to jump the Tanana River and the Richardson Highway and race up a canyon where one of FSA's customers has a small dairy farm. He did not have the funds to move the animals. The local County Executive Director (CED) organized a group of horse trailers and a destination farm for him. The move was not actually made because the forest fire was contained between the river and the highway, but the effort to move the dairy farm would have been made if it had been necessary.



- **Cooperative Formation:** The State Executive Director (SED) is familiar with cooperative formation and has put together bylaws and articles of incorporation for small farmers who are at risk of losing their livestock. Almost all the customers are small farmers. Many live off a good road system or any road at all. Others have no electricity. FSA uses whatever means of transport necessary to get to them and finds whatever resource is needed to help them.

ARIZONA

- **Farmers Market:** FSA has supported an effort in Arizona to improve the quality and number of farmers' markets. The latest effort involved helping to pay the cost of a forum to bring in key people from around the state to train in the use of WIC/Food Stamp vouchers at farmers markets. This increased the market outlets for small (less than five acre) farmers and helped the poor.
- **EQIP Program:** FSA has worked with NRCS to help them reach small farms with the EQIP program. Previously there was a 10-acre minimum size requirement to qualify farmers or ranchers for ACP assistance. That requirement has been relaxed and FSA helped conserve resources on small farms.

CALIFORNIA

- California's FSA offices continue to expand their outreach efforts to the State's small and limited-resource farmers. Measurable increases in FSA program participation by women, Hispanic, African-American, and Asian farmers have been recorded throughout the state. In addition, all of California's 32 County Offices and the State Offices have participated in the creation of a statewide strategic plan that will be the blueprint for future outreach activities. FSA has greatly increased contacts with numerous agricultural and rural based organizations in California through personal connections, expanded use of county and state newsletters, updated and bilingual web page announcements, attendance at local employment and career development fairs, targeted use of local minority media outlets, sponsorship of small farm conference participants, and other means.

- The California FSA views outreach to the Golden State's small and limited resources farmers as a continual process. Offering FSA programs and services to these farmers and ranchers will be one of the agency's primary goals in the first years of the 21st century.

Some highlights:

- California FSA annually publishes an Outreach Directory. The 2000 update reflected a 30 percent increase in the number of listings.
- Bilingual employee capability has increased in key areas of California.
- As of May 2000, 31 percent of the total loans made in California have gone to socially disadvantaged applicants.
- Monterey area FSA offices have developed special programs designed for Hispanic farmers, including bookkeeping courses, mentoring Latino growers, and publication of Spanish language newsletters and agency announcements.
- Loans to Hmong growers in Fresno County have gone from zero in FY 1998 to 43 loans currently. In addition, participation in FSA farm programs has also increased.

COLORADO

- A Forum for Local Assistance was held in La Jara and San Luis, Colorado. These two cities are the most economically deprived areas in Colorado.
- The San Luis Valley area is working to become an organic-based farming center. It also has the potential to benefit substantially from Rural Development (RD) and Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) in efforts to develop value-added agriculture opportunities.
- FSA is continuing to work with the Southern Ute Reservation and the Ute Mountain Tribes to provide the opportunity to offer cost share assistance to producers who do not have enough feed to maintain their livestock program on the reservations. The Montezuma County FSA office provides operating loans to tribal producers. There are approximately 120 tribal members that are



agricultural producers, including 30 agricultural producers from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and 90 agricultural producers from the Southern Ute Tribe.

GEORGIA

- Team Agriculture Georgia (TAG) has conducted four very successful workshops for small, beginning, and limited-resource farmers. More than 200 people have attended three of the Workshops. Topics presented by technical experts included marketing specialty crops, financing small farm operations, greenhouses, organic production and certification, irrigation/water management, ABC's of poultry, and alternative crop enterprises. Evaluations completed by participants indicate a high success rate and an expressed need to continue these workshops.

TAG is an organization comprised of Federal and State agencies, agricultural groups, state agricultural educational institutions and non-governmental agricultural organizations. The Georgia Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) created TAG in 1996 to provide collaborative outreach efforts for farmers with an emphasis on limited-resource, small, and beginning farmers. A 60-page TAG Directory of all members has been widely distributed and offers landowners a quick reference to agriculture-related services in their home county. A TAG homepage was developed and is housed on the Fort Valley State University server. The web site address is: www.ag.fvsu.edu.



IDAHO

- Idaho State FSA is increasing interest, activity, and membership in the State Outreach Council through diverse guest speakers and “on-the-road” meeting locations to reach underserved farmers and ranchers.
- A full-time State Outreach Council participates in functions sponsored by the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs and promotes agency programs at the Northwest Intertribal Agriculture Council Conference. News releases on new programs, program updates, and filing time frames are provided to over 80 Idaho Agriculture Associations and over 30 newspapers.
- County Offices throughout Idaho are participating in local county fairs with outreach displays. FSA will participate in the “Ag Pavilion” with a display at both the Eastern and Western Idaho State Fairs.
- In FY 2000, the state made a total of 98 beginning farmer operating and farm ownership loans and a total of 33 limited-resource farmer loans. The State Executive Director meets periodically with tribal council members on Idaho's five reservations to provide information on all FSA programs.

IOWA

- A letter was sent to over 350 fruit and vegetable growers and to the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association highlighting the provisions of the non-insured crop disaster assistance program and efforts to fight hunger.
- The State Outreach Council has been developing a partnership with the Ecumenical Ministries and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Through this alliance, twenty “Seeds of Connection” meetings were scheduled throughout the State. These meetings were held to reach farm families being affected by the ongoing farm crisis. The meetings allowed all USDA agencies to explain available assistance programs. In addition, churches, health professionals, and other partners were able to network with these families.



- The Iowa State Office sent a letter to numerous farmer organizations, media outlets, Congressional, State, and local government offices. The letter highlighted the work accomplished by our county office employees and thanked the addressees for their support and understanding. It also outlined the current programs and payments that have greatly benefited farm families and rural communities in Iowa.
- The Buena Vista County Office in northwest Iowa has helped establish a USDA Diversity Focus Group that is assisting Hispanic and Laotian families by providing garden plots, plants, seeds, information, and education. This community has had some local problems with diversity issues and this USDA project has helped create a common ground for communications. Many local citizens, businesses, and government agencies have joined together to make this project a success.

LOUISIANA

- On January 28, 2000, the Farm Service Agency directed all county offices to establish and conduct meetings (a minimum of once each quarter) with outreach working groups. The primary function of these groups will be to do the following:
 - Provide information to small and minority farmers
 - Identify barriers that keep minority farmers participating in Farm Service Agency programs, and
 - Develop steps designed to remove the barriers identified. By conducting these meetings in every county office, it is possible for as many as 8,000 minority farmers to benefit directly or indirectly from this group's efforts.
- On April 18, 2000, FSA personnel participated in the first official meeting of the newly formed community based organization, *Northeast Louisiana Small Farmer and Landowner Association*. This organization represents the predominantly minority, small farmers in nine northeast Louisiana parishes. Approximately 75 farmers attended, but it is expected that this association's membership will increase to approximately 300.

- On June 6, 2000, a Farm Loan Specialist manned an information booth at the annual FSA convention in Alexandria, Louisiana, where pamphlets and brochures outlining FSA programs and services were handed out. Approximately 1,000 people attended this convention.
- On June 24, 2000, FSA personnel manned an informational booth at the annual Southern Foundation Field Day in Plaisance, Louisiana. This is an annual event where programs designed specifically for small farmers and ranchers are discussed. In addition, field plots were inspected. An average of 150 people, mostly minority operators, attend each year.

MARYLAND

- **Economic Assistance to Small Farmers:** In 1999, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) offered \$3 million in disaster assistance to local producers by expanding the State's existing Cover Crop Cost Share Program and by allocating emergency funds to livestock producers whose livelihoods were threatened by the prolonged drought.
- **Emergency Feed Assistance Program:** Through cooperation between MDA and FSA the Emergency Feed Assistance Program allowed farmers to replenish hay and other feed for their livestock that had been reduced due to poor summer production. Producers who lacked financial means to meet their livestock feed needs applied for grants to offset these costs. The grants, which were based on a case-by-case assessment of need, were designed to meet the short term feed requirements for that producer.
- **Pasture Recovery Program:** The Pasture Recovery Program paid farmers up to \$25 an acre to plant cover crops as a source of feed for their livestock and as a mechanism to absorb unused crop nutrients remaining in the soil as a result of the drought. Crops such as rye, wheat, barley, and spring oats were planted in September and October 1999. The existing program assists farmers on 73,884 acres with over \$1.8 million in payments in 1999.



- **Technical Assistance and Outreach:** FSA collaborated with 2501-C Program Outreach, Technical Assistance Staff at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a historically black land-grant university. This outreach effort is targeted to small, limited resource, and minority farmers. The FSA is working with the Maryland Cooperative Extension, NRCS, extension agents, and specialists to deliver USDA program information to State producers. In every county, the Maryland Cooperative Extension offers a “Pro-Farm” seminar series to help farmers become better business managers.

MASSACHUSETTS

- The Dracut area has increased cropland acreage as well as the number of Southeast Asian growers. Two growers want to expand their operation and have inquired about FSA Farm Ownership Loans. The Lowell Farmers Market has changed location and the demand for locally grown Southeast Asian crops is very high. To date, FSA has processed 14 loans for Southeast Asian growers with a value of \$150,000 for this project. Farmed acres are expanding in Worcester County.

In Lancaster, acreage increased from 15 to 20 acres with five commercial growers and several dozen families. Ashburnham has eight acres, one commercial grower, and ten acres for home use. Bolton has three acres with one commercial grower. Additional land will be available in



2001 with greenhouse space. The town of Amherst has several Southeast Asian growers on five acres of land. In order to address the Southeast Asian growers’ needs for additional land, an intern will work in the county office to identify additional farmland for rent or purchase.

MINNESOTA

- **Minnesota Food Association:** FSA has been able to assist new immigrants and small farmers through a Cooperative Agreement with the Minnesota Food Association in partnership with RMA and other State agencies. The program implemented a comprehensive training/mentoring program to provide support to new immigrants in converting their agricultural experience, skills, and abilities to a sustainable and organic production farming enterprise.
- **Fond du Lac Community College:** FSA is partnering with the Fond du Lac Community College in a 5-year project to provide outreach for FSA youth, beginning farmer, and other farm loans to American Indians within a 200-mile radius of the college located in the State of Minnesota. This college is a 1994 Native American Land-Grant Institution. Under this project, the college hired a full time American Indian outreach worker to facilitate and coordinate outreach.

MISSOURI

- FSA will partner with the State of Missouri to disseminate information regarding the “MC+ for Kids” program. MC+ for Kids is part of the Federal Children’s Health Insurance Program, and is Missouri’s health insurance program for uninsured children of families who do not have access to affordable health insurance. Having access to adequate health insurance coverage for children is crucial to the well-being and success of Missouri’s farm families. A farmer or rancher could lose his or her income or livelihood due to a child’s accident or injury. Brochures containing enrollment and services information will soon be available in all Missouri County FSA offices.



MONTANA

- **Statewide Farm Loan Outreach Meetings:** Montana had 15 farm-loan outreach meetings statewide, including one on each of the seven Native American reservations in Montana. The meetings focused on servicing options when producers have a hard time making their payments. FSA has the Stone Child College Credit Outreach project with three staff members working with new borrowers and youth loans on the reservations. The State Federal Agriculture Council (FAC) Outreach Council has held outreach sessions on each of the reservations, and in May 2000 it held a 3-day statewide Tribal Services Conference in Bozeman. FSA sponsored three scholarships for limited-resource producers to attend this conference.
- **National Tribal Development:** FSA is partnering with the National Tribal Development Association (NTDA) in a 5-year project to provide outreach to the seven Federally recognized Tribes in the State of Montana for FSA's youth, beginning farmers and other farm loans to American Indians. NTDA has partnered with the SCC (Rocky Boy Reservation), Little BigHorn Community College (Crow Reservation) and S&K Holding (Flathead Reservation). All three colleges are 1994 Native American Land-Grant Institutions. Under this project the colleges hired three full-time American Indian outreach workers to facilitate and coordinate these outreach efforts.

NEW MEXICO

- FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths, 10 to 20 years old, to establish and operate income-producing projects. Two direct loans were made—one was a \$5,000 livestock loan to Keith, age 20, and the other was a \$5,000 farm crop production loan to Victor, age 16. Significantly, these FSA loans are the first youth loans made to New Mexico Pueblo Indians and are the first disability youth loans in the nation.

PUERTO RICO

- **Outreach Training and Technical Assistance to Small and Limited-Resource Farmers:** FSA continues to work with the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez and the Puerto Rico Agricultural Extension Service to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to small and limited-resource farmers to ensure that all farmers in Puerto Rico are aware of FSA programs and services. The goal of the program is to improve the farm income through better management and financial analysis and to provide assistance for small farmers to assure they have access to all services available through various FSA programs.

The program also provides recipients with both the technical means and the necessary knowledge to develop financial documentation for their individual farm businesses. This will enable them to improve the quality of their farming operations, their financial status, and eventually creditworthiness to commercial loan institutions.



Rural youths plant vegetables in garden as part of an FSA program, which provides operating loans to individual rural youths.



FSA has been working with the Hmong United Association of Rhode Island on developing their farm operation at J.L. Curran Park in Cranston, Rhode Island.

RHODE ISLAND

- FSA has been working with the Hmong United Association of Rhode Island on developing their farm operation at J.L. Curran Park in Cranston, Rhode Island. Members of the Association farm approximately 6 acres of their 12-acre lease from the State of Rhode Island. Last year, approximately 50 families participated in the ongoing production. They have found the tillers helpful, but are still restricted on maximizing their production due to the lack of a dependable water supply. They also hope to increase production by constructing a greenhouse type structure in the future to produce vegetable transplants and extend the limited growing season. They also sought assistance with insect and weed control.

Currently, the Association does not consistently produce sufficient quantities of Southeast Asian vegetables to dependably supply local farmers markets, stores, and restaurants. They do sell their limited production at local markets and donate vegetables to the Rhode Island Food Bank when their supply is adequate. The Association applied for another 1-year lease for the land from the State of Rhode Island. Under current regulations, they must apply for this lease yearly. The Association obtained the 1-year lease from the State of Rhode Island. The farmland

was planted and approximately 41 families are farming the parcel. Crops look good and growing conditions are adequate so far this season. Also, they are in negotiations with two local farmers to prepare the land for spring planting. FSA will be scheduling a workshop in the spring that will cover insect and weed control methods. FSA is in the process of obtaining educational videos from the Rhode Island Extension service on small farm cultivation, pest and weed control, and accepted best management practices.

FSA's main contact with the Hmong United Association of Rhode Island, Mr. James Kue, has left the organization and FSA is working with his interim replacement, Mr. Pao Yang.

- FSA contacted Joseph Victor Cooper from the Hope of Liberia, a nonprofit organization that aids the homeless and hungry. The organization is situated in Central Falls, which is an underserved area of Rhode Island. It requested assistance with obtaining farmland for vegetable production. Hope of Liberia represents approximately 500 families interested in farming and food gleaning. At this time, FSA is still assessing the situation and future meetings will be scheduled.

SOUTH CAROLINA

- The Small Farmer and Landowner State Outreach Committee is comprised of seven small farmers who attended the Southeastern Landowners Outreach Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, in January 1999. They formed a committee for the purpose of outreach to small farmers and landowners in South Carolina. A very successful outreach workshop was conducted in Saluda and then in five additional counties. This outstanding committee of farmers planned additional workshops in 2000. On March 30, 2000, the Florence County Executive Director (CED) met with the Small Farmers Outreach Community leaders at Lynches River County Park. The USDA and other state and local officials who attended addressed the concerns of community leaders. This type of meeting will be an ongoing endeavor in Florence County.



VIRGINIA

- FSA's Virginia County Office employees upgraded their customer service in several areas to ensure that tobacco farm owners and operators have completed the necessary forms correctly for the Tobacco Trust Fund Payments. Many of these owners and operators are limited-resource or minority individuals.
- FSA has launched a massive outreach campaign to ensure that limited-resource and minority producers are aware of the many new programs available through FSA. Through outreach meetings, farm tours, and personal contacts, over 2,620 minority producers statewide were contacted. These personal contacts included telephone calls, meetings in producers' homes, and informal meetings, which are sometimes held in grocery store parking lots.

WASHINGTON

- During 2000, FSA has made a concerted effort to reach out to small farmers and ranchers. Through increased communication efforts, the State and county offices provided program information to landowners who have not traditionally worked with the agency.
- The Beginning Farmer Loan Program specifically targets small and limited resource operations. During FY 2000, FSA in Washington provided 83 direct operating loans for more than \$5 million and 16 direct farm ownership loans for almost \$2.5 million. FSA provided 38 guaranteed operating loans for more than \$6 million and 6 guaranteed farm ownership loans for almost \$2 million. The Farm Loan staff has developed a curriculum for informational meetings for new loan applicants.



Red delicious apple orchard in Yakima Valley, WA.

- FSA is teaming up with the Risk Management Agency, Cooperative Extension, Washington State University, and others to develop a workshop curriculum and materials for orchard growers to assess risk (financial analysis, goal-setting, marketing, communication skills, etc.) related to their farming businesses. Family orchards and limited-resource farmers are the targeted audience. FSA anticipates this will benefit many FSA borrowers who operate orchards. Small operation producers, particularly fruit and vegetable farmers, benefited from the 1999 Crop Disaster Program, which was implemented in 2000.

The Small Hog Operator Program targeted small operations. Small and larger dairies enrolled in the Dairy Market Loss Assistance Program. These programs have helped keep some of the smaller operations in business.

- The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is also appealing to participants not enrolled in FSA's traditional programs. The Lummi Nation has land enrolled in CREP and the Yakama Nation is working on a CREP agreement with FSA.



- FSA took the lead in coordinating eight USDA Farm Bill Listening Sessions throughout the State. Producers not traditionally served by FSA were encouraged to participate. One meeting was specifically for American Indian tribes. The State Committee, program specialists, and former Under Secretary toured small fruit and vegetable farms on the west side of the State to determine how to better fit FSA programs to the needs of small, diversified operations.

The State Committee, program specialists, and representatives from USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service and Washington State Department of Agriculture visited Hispanic growers and small farm operators in the south-central part of the State.

- Working with the Spokane Agriculture Bureau, the Farm Service Agency helped plan a farm show and seminar series targeting landowners with 5-80 acres. The show had nearly 3,000 participants in its first year.

WEST VIRGINIA

- FSA has been able to assist small farmers in developing a pasture treatment under the Pasture Recovery Program. Many producers in this and other States who rely on cash auction sales of small numbers of ruminant livestock were looking at a drastic loss of income due to the 1999 drought.
- This program has helped their vegetation recover to the point that small foundation herds did not have to be sold due to lack of grass or feed after the immediate effects of the drought had passed. The terrain in the State limits agricultural enterprises to available resources, many of which are small grassland operations for beef, sheep, dairy, and goats. Few producers had the resources to maintain herds longer than their normal winter-feeding periods.

- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture was willing to accept FSA determinations on the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), for drought and provide an average of 26 percent additional cost-share for ECP practices. This brought the cost-share of Federal and State sources to a minimum level of 76 percent and a maximum level of 90 percent, depending on the practice completed. With the unprecedented effects on water systems that were in use prior to the onset of the drought, if producers had adequate feed, many did not have water.

The additional State funds made a difference in determining not to disperse herds. Since FSA already conducted its own program, it only made sense that the effort not be duplicated by the State for the distribution of its funds.

FSA National Outreach Projects

- **National Tribal Development Association:** This is an annual media blitz to reach out to American Indians about FSA's county office committee elections. The purpose of this project is to inform, encourage, and assist American Indians across the United States to participate in and be elected to FSA county committees.
- **Intertribal Agricultural Council (IAC):** FSA is partnering with the IAC in a 5-year multi-Agency project to provide information on all USDA programs to Native Americans and Tribal leaders throughout Indian country. Under this agreement the IAC hired four full time outreach workers, located throughout Indian Country, to coordinate and facilitate the outreach efforts. Other USDA agencies working on this project are RMA, APHIS, and NRCS.



Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- The steady growth and success of the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) has prompted several successful outreach activities. FNS continues to hold regional training conferences to encourage more states and Indian Tribal Organizations to participate in nutrition programs. In addition, FNS continues to be an active participant in the annual national conference of the National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP).
- With FNS assistance, the NAFMNP produces an annual impact report on program operations for the FMNP. The FMNP Impact Report is the primary document used by FNS and the NAFMNP to describe the administration and outcome of the FMNP and continues to be a valuable outreach, training, and marketing tool. In support of promoting the consumption of fruits and vegetables among WIC families and in support of the FMNP, FNS issued copies of recipe cards and a *Get Fresh* video to WIC State agencies in English and Spanish.
- FNS conducted site visits of all grantees that participated in the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Pilot Program (SFMNPP) in FY 2001. In addition, FNS created a web site for the SFMNPP. You may visit the site at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorsFMNP/SFMNmenu.htm.



Fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs, honey, maple syrup, baked and canned goods, and other wonderful things are found at USDA Farmers Markets.



Extension professionals link families and communities with recent information on food safety and nutrition.

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

- The Animal and Egg Production Food Safety Staff gave Production Level Food Safety presentations and staffed FSIS exhibits at two national conferences for underserved farmers and ranchers in FY 2001. FSIS made over \$137,000 available in non-assistance cooperative agreements through the Animal and Egg Production Food Safety Staff in FY 2002.

With the intent to implement HACCP-compatible food safety production level programs for underserved populations of farmers and ranchers, FSIS is working with the following 1890, 1994, and Hispanic Association Colleges and Universities (HACU):

- Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma (1890, with sub-grants to 1994 and HACU)
 - Florida A&M, Tallahassee, Florida (1890)
 - New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico (HACU)
 - Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (1890)
- FSIS budgeted approximately \$130,000 for an Animal and Egg Production Food Safety Conference held in July 2002 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The intent is to provide liaison from the U.S. mainland and education on HACCP-compatible food safety production level programs for



farmers, ranchers, agricultural educators, researchers, and industrial organizations in:

- Puerto Rico
- Spanish speaking Caribbean
- Spanish speaking Latin America.

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)

- FAS works with foreign countries to improve foreign market access for U.S. products. FAS operates programs designed to build new markets and improve the competitive position of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace. FAS bears the primary responsibility for USDA's overseas activities—market development, international trade agreements and negotiations, and the collection and analysis of statistics and market information. It also administers USDA's export credit guarantee and food aid programs, and helps increase income and food availability in developing nations by mobilizing expertise for agriculturally led economic growth. FAS also enhances U.S. agriculture's competitiveness by providing links to world resources and international organizations.
- FAS Outreach programs identify potential FAS customers/stakeholders, especially the traditionally underserved, limited-resource customers/stakeholders and provides effective access to FAS information, the expertise of its employees, and the benefits of participating in its programs and services by increasing the customers' understanding of the agency and the ways to access its resources.
- The FAS small farms coordinator tracked the implementation of FAS small farm policies and programs and acted as an advocate for small and disadvantaged farmers on various small farm issues. FAS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with "The Rural Coalition" to assist small-scale producers, underserved farmers, and cooperatives in making export sales. FAS and USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service began a partnership and entered into an MOU to develop outreach programs to improve the

competitiveness of small farms, recognizing that they represent an avenue to economic independence for a diverse group of Americans.

- FAS helped tailor a pilot program to help small and minority producers in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi master the fundamentals of international marketing. During 2001, the Secretary of Agriculture announced that USDA would provide \$500,000 to help small farmers develop new ways to market their products domestically and internationally.

As part of this project, FAS would offer export readiness training to small farmers and ranchers that will form cooperatives as a marketing tool to export their crops.

- In an effort to help expand Federal-State partnerships, FAS Outreach worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to educate State legislators on the implications and benefits of agricultural exports, imports, and international trade law. FAS outreach made numerous presentations on agricultural trade before the State legislatures and testified before the NCSL International Trade Committee on numerous occasions on the benefits of agricultural trade.

FAS Outreach worked with NCSL to plan an agenda and speakers for the first "Farming for the Future" State legislative conference. The conference, held for 2 days in March 2000, in Colorado, focused on agricultural trade, rural development, and biotechnology. Before the "Farming for the Future" conference, FAS Outreach drafted and sent more than 1,100 letters from USDA's Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services to State legislators discussing the conference and the importance of China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR). FAS presented information on export programs and markets to state legislators in Hawaii and conducted a video teleconference for Hawaii farmers explaining various FAS services and programs. FAS also met with Hawaiian state senators to learn how FAS can assist farmers transitioning from plantation agriculture.



- Through media outreach in major newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal* and cooperation with other Federal agencies such as the Farm Service Agency, FAS Outreach helped to develop new partnerships to promote exports at a grass-roots level to respond to the needs of small-scale and underserved farmers. USDA's FAS and the Department of Commerce's Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) have been working to identify areas of further cooperation and coordination to engage more companies in exporting, and in turn more fully utilize USDA export assistance programs and services. In order to better leverage the resources of local, State, and Federal export service providers within a particular State, the concept of State specific Agribusiness Teams has been developed.

The team would be composed of in-State export service providers such as Small Business Development Centers and related export assistance centers, all under the direction of the State Agriculture Commissioner. In short, the mission of an Agribusiness Team would be to provide a seamless delivery of export services at the State level to U.S. agricultural and food companies and other trade interests. The objective of the team is to utilize the strengths of the export entities to maximize value to U.S. businesses, while avoiding duplication of effort in the expansion of food and agricultural exports. The overall goal is to increase States' exports of U.S. food, fish, forestry, fiber, and agricultural products.

- The FAS and the Business Women's Network (BWN) are discussing ways to formalize cooperation in the development, enhancement, and expansion of outreach efforts to women in agriculture, involved in both on- and off-farm activities, by disseminating information about FAS programs and services throughout BWN affiliates and members. The goal is to increase the number of U.S. agri-women involved in exporting through a targeted, grass-roots information, education, and technical training campaign. Approximately 96 percent of the world's consumers live outside of the United States, and yet only 10 percent of U.S. food companies export. Additionally, women solely own 40 percent of all private agriculture land in the United States. Agricultural exports add to



FAS works with foreign countries to improve market access for U.S. products.

farmers' income and create employment both on and off the farm. There is great potential within the growing base of all small businesses now owned by women in the United States.

- Four Cochran Fellowship Program participants from the Republic of Georgia participated in an Agricultural Policy program designed by Fort Valley State University in Georgia. The four participants were interested in how the United States provides rural communities' agricultural education programs, and helps small farmers develop markets for agricultural products. At Fort Valley State University, the participants were hosted by the Extension Service, participated in seminars, and visited a major U.S. farm equipment trade show. The group consisted of three Georgian Ministry of Agriculture staff and one educator.
- Lincoln University organized a comprehensive training program for farm managers and extension specialists from Croatia (1), the Czech Republic (1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2). The Cochran fellows learned how the university extension system assists farmers. The fellows met with farmers, 4-H clubs, farm businesses and associations, credit institutions, and government agencies where they gained an understanding of how each entity assists in providing information to farmers and improving farm management. Participants visited the Missouri Farm



Progress Show 2000. The program exposed international agriculturalists to the U.S. system of agricultural extension and education, while exposing U.S. farmers and businesses to international contacts. The long-term outcome of such a project should enhance the food sufficiency for these countries—thus enhancing their economy. Lincoln University and the Cochran Fellowship Program also collaborated in the development and implementation of an agricultural finance program for participants from Azerbaijan (2), Kyrgyzstan (6) and Uzbekistan (1). Training focused on evaluating credit applications, collateral requirements, non-bank sources of credit, and lending to low-income borrowers.

- North Carolina State University, in conjunction with North Carolina A&T University, worked with Moldovan farm managers on organic agriculture. Europe is currently undergoing a major revolution in its desire for organic products. It is essential for the economic survival of Moldova to be able to supply a small portion of this market. It is expected that the knowledge gained by the individuals will help them in addressing the changes needed in their agriculture and in making the transition to a free market status. The training expanded U.S. farmers' outlook on the international marketing of organic products.

Forest Service (FS)

- **Identifying Underserved Customers:** The FS started requiring the collection of data on the ethnicity and gender of forest landowners in America that receive services from Cooperative Forestry (CF) programs. This data is collected at the field service level providers, both State and Federal. Collecting such data has enabled CF to determine if the programs are reaching underserved populations. CF manages most of the programs delivered directly to landowners by the FS.
- **Involving and Assisting Underserved Groups:** The FS provided significant financial support for technical tree nursery training for Native Americans; follow-up assistance; and translating technical journals, worksheets, and other publications into Spanish for education of Hispanic youth and the Hispanic work force and general populations. Funding has been provided to allow for training in every county in Mississippi for all forest landowners, targeting the small farmers and African-American landowners.
- **Small Farms and Landowners Conference:** The FS provided technical and financial support to the Small Farms Conference, July 23-25, 2001, held in Memphis, Tennessee. This conference provided technical information to community-based organizations, bankers, universities, and others that provide on-going assistance to small and limited-resource farmers, woodland owners, and other USDA customers. Financial and technical assistance was also provided to support the Southeast Small Farms and Landowners Conference in Perry, Georgia for underserved and minority landowners. Significant funding and technical support was provided for the 2nd Annual 1890 University Faculty Training Workshop at Alabama A&M University in June 2001 on the subject of riparian forest buffers.
- **Forest Taxation Network:** The FS has provided leading-edge technical expertise in the area of forest taxation. It will initiate a Board of Directors to set a strategic direction for forest taxation technical assistance and information development. In 2001, the network revised many documents on taxation and updated a National Timber Tax Web site, which is available through the FS web site. Revised documents include "Forest Landowners' Guide to Federal Income Tax" and "Most Frequently Asked Questions." Being on the FS web site makes these documents more accessible to everyone. The web site received over 600,000 hits from March to October 2001.
- **Farm Bill Activity:** The FS, working with numerous Federal and State Agencies and partners, has helped to develop options for the 2002 Farm Bill that will make technical, educational, and financial assistance available to forest landowners with consideration of no minimum acreage limitation. A web site, *Forestry in the Farm Bill*, has been established with a link to the *National Farm*



Bill web page. These actions have put nonfederal forestland management issues in the middle of discussions and actions on forest policy and farm bill developments.

- **Dissemination of Information to Non-industrial Private Forest (NIPF) Landowners:** In cooperation with State Foresters, the FS has developed the National Network of Private Forest Landowners (NNPFL). These groups will continue their organization, holding meetings, and networking with other landowner associations to benefit America's 10,000,000 private forestland owners.
- **Increased Awareness of Natural Resource Careers:** In conjunction with the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry and the National Hispanic Environmental Council, FS conducted a series of weeklong workshops in the Carson National Forest in New Mexico for Hispanic and other minority youth throughout the United States to promote awareness of natural resource careers in the FS and USDA.
- **Assistance to Underserved Communities:** Through Rural Community Assistance programs and other programs, the FS provided direct financial, technical, and organizational assistance to over 215 tribes and minority communities to improve their economic stability.
- **Community Outreach:** The FS coordinated a Memorandum of Understanding with the Asian Pacific American Employees Association, the FS Civil Rights Director, the FS Regional Forester in Region 5 and 6, and the Director of the Pacific Northwest and the Pacific Southwest Research Stations to establish a partnership and provide collaborative leadership in implementing the Asian Pacific American Community Outreach and Program Delivery Plan. There has been a coordinated effort to translate "Measuring Community Success and Sustainability: An Interactive Workbook" into Spanish in partnership with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD). The Workbook, which helps communities learn how to measure local and regional impacts of economic and community
- development, natural resource conservation, and civic development processes, will be available from NCRCRD in hardcopy or on the Internet at www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu/ along with the English-language version.
- **Program for Native American Students:** Working with a variety of partners, the FS provided funding to develop a training model for the exchange of Native American High School students between Alaska and Hawaii. The financial assistance was aided with technical assistance in both States to help locate and develop training sites for the exchange. The success of this model will determine future support for expanding this project.
- **Public Outreach Toolkit:** A public outreach toolkit has been developed by the FS to assist FS and State program managers in reaching all segments of society, including underserved populations and communities, so that programs and activities are accessible to all who qualify. It is also designed as a guide to increase awareness of agency expectations and to help make community outreach efforts more effective.
- **Urban Area Outreach:** FS, through the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program, has specifically reached out to, and included, 9 Hispanic radio stations, 84 Hispanic businesses and individuals, 5 Native American radio programs, 1 Native American newspaper, and 71 tribal/pueblo groups and individuals.

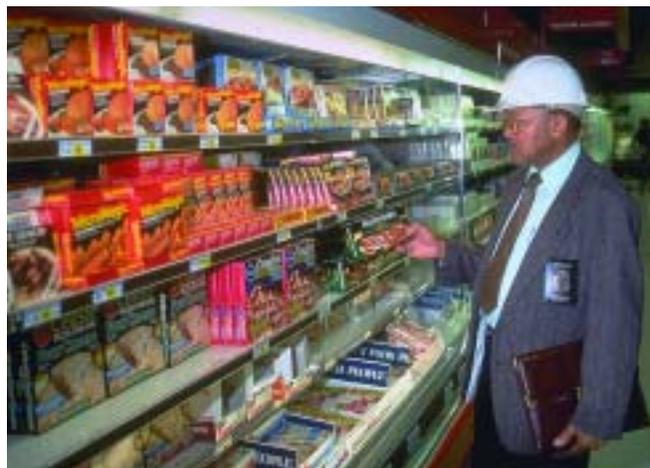




An MOU was signed with HUD to provide technical and financial assistance on urban forestry to their Hope 6 Public Housing program and projects. Focused funding was allocated in FY 2001 to stabilize and improve the stewardship of natural resources in inner cities. New cities have been added this year beyond those reached through the Urban Resources Partnership Initiative.

We also participated in the planning for the Urban Forestry Forests Forum in Atlanta May 7-11, 2001, to help define and focus an urban strategy for urban national forests. The FS Washington Office and Southern Region combined to provide technical leadership assistance and support to the National Conference of Black Mayors held April 7-11, 2001, in Savannah, Georgia.

- **Support for the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA):** The FS has continued the multi-year partnership with the NEA to provide grants to underserved rural communities in targeted States/regions that have the potential to combine natural resources, the arts, and rural development. This grant program has been very effective in attracting proposals from tribes and minority communities that do not typically respond to programs associated with natural resource management agencies.
- **Grants and Cooperative Agreement Opportunities:** The FS has significant grant and cooperative agreement opportunities that it uses to focus funding. Utilizing the National Cooperative Forestry Investment Process, over \$1,000,000 in funding is set aside annually to solicit and finance projects using a well-defined system of outreach, feedback, recommendations, decisions, and reports. An additional \$1,000,000 is set aside for the Secretary's National Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Committee to use in making competitive grants, many of which are focused on minority communities.



An inspector for the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration examines beef in a supermarket to ensure the use of better food safety practices within the food industry's chain.

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)

GIPSA continues its outreach activities to help ensure that farmers and marketers are aware of Grain Inspection and Packers and Stockyards activities and programs. Annually, GIPSA sponsors or participates in over 40 outreach activities, meetings, and industry presentations.

- **Regional Workshops for Small and Disadvantaged Farmers.** GIPSA participated in two major regional workshops for small and disadvantaged farmers: the Agricultural/Natural Resources Workshop For Farmers July 11-13, 2001, in Perry, Georgia, and the Risk Management Strategies Workshop for Small and Limited Resource Farmers July 23-25, 2001, in Memphis, Tennessee. The workshops provided an opportunity for GIPSA and other USDA agencies to focus on the challenges facing small and limited-resource farmers.
- **Minority Science Conferences.** GIPSA provided support and funding to the National Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences Conference.



- **Student Recruiting Initiatives.** GIPSA provided support and funding for student recruiting initiatives with Kentucky State and Southern University.
- **Intern Programs.** GIPSA hired over 20 interns from a variety of universities through such programs as the Washington Intern Program for Native American Students, DC Federal Jobs Initiative, DC Summerworks Program, Washington Intern Program for Disabled Students, HACU, and the Tribal College Initiative. GIPSA provided funding and support for the Annual Black Farmers Conference.
- **1890 Scholarship Program.** GIPSA provided assistance to minority students through the 1890 Scholarship Program, and the FGIS Scholarship program.
- **Minority and Small Agri-Businesses.** GIPSA supports and participates with Tennessee Outreach Council providing support to minority and women-owned small agricultural businesses.
- **University Funding Support.** GIPSA provided ongoing support and funding for the Regulatory Science Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Funding is provided to curriculum development, faculty support, and student recruitment.
- **Excess Property Donations to Schools.** GIPSA provides excess property (computers, laboratory equipment, etc.) to local high schools, HACU, and HBCU's.
- **Role of Biotech Grain:** GIPSA has taken the lead in meeting with farm organizations and commodity groups to determine the role of the USDA in regulating biotech grain.
- **Poultry Outreach Meetings:** GIPSA held a series of poultry outreach meetings during fall 2000. Poultry growers, most of whom are small farmers, were targeted for attendance; however, all segments of the industry were invited. The industry's issues and concerns were addressed. A new feed weight regulation was explained along with a discussion concerning additional rules that might be considered for the industry. A handbook on poultry production contracts was distributed.
- **Cattle and Sheep Outreach Meetings:** A number of Cattle and Sheep Town Hall meetings were held during the winter of 2000 and spring of 2001. As with the Poultry town halls, these meetings targeted small, minority, and disadvantaged producers.
- **Hog Producer Meetings:** GIPSA met with hog producers throughout 1999 and 2000 in sixteen meetings with nearly 1,400 producers attending to hear the results of the 1996 Midwest hog investigation and other investigations. GIPSA has also met with an additional 2,000 hog producers (mostly small farmers) to explain GIPSA's restructuring, recent investigations, and USDA assistance for hog producers.
- **Native Americans:** GIPSA and other USDA agencies met with the United Keetoowah Band (part of the Cherokee Indian Tribe) to explain USDA programs designed to meet needs of Native Americans and rural communities. GIPSA coordinates the USDA American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) activity and serves as Co-Chair of the USDA/AIHEC Leadership Group. This provides better opportunities for USDA to collaborate with AIHEC Institutions and provide technical assistance to Native Americans.
- **Meetings with State Officials:** GIPSA held meetings, focusing on grain and livestock issues, attended by State Attorneys General, Heads of State, Agricultural Departments, and representatives from the USDA during 2000. These meetings provided an opportunity for various governmental bodies to focus on the challenges associated with the changing face of agriculture. Major issues of concern to small producers and others that were discussed included concentration and mergers in agribusiness, production and marketing contracts, packer ownership of livestock, and mandatory price reporting legislation.



- **Millennium Conference:** Some 450 people registered and participated in GIPSA's "Vision for the Millennium Conference" on structural changes facing livestock and grain markets in the 21st century. The conference was held May 9-10, 2000, in Kansas City, Missouri. Farmers, ranchers, industry representatives, academics, and Federal and State representatives attended the conference.

The conference celebrated the accomplishments of American agriculture over the past 100 years, discussed current forces for change, and debated the merits of innovation and structural changes. Various speakers addressed the major challenges and opportunities they have faced and that will face farmers and ranchers as a result of changes in technology, international markets, consumer demand, concentration, consolidation and mergers, vertical coordination, changing marketing institutions, and other forces.

- **Hotline:** A GIPSA toll-free telephone hotline (1-800-998-3447) was established that enables producers to easily express concerns and record complaints or provide information about possible violations of the United States Grain Standards Act, the Agricultural Marketing Act, or the Packers and Stockyards (P&S) Act.

- **Cattle and Hog Assessment Report:** In June 2001, GIPSA published an annual assessment of the cattle and hog industries as required by the Grain Standards and Warehouse Improvement Act of 2000 (Pub. L. No. 106-472). The report does as follows:
 - (1) assesses the general economic state of the cattle and hog industries,
 - (2) describes changing business practices in those industries, and
 - (3) identifies market operations or activities in those industries that appear to raise concerns under the P&S Act.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

DELAWARE

- The Kent Field office has made a special outreach effort to provide assistance to the Amish community. There are 70-100 Amish farmers in the area. Most of the farms are self-sufficient and the crops grown are used on the farm. A farm program brochure highlighting available USDA programs was distributed to area Amish businesses.



NRCS field offices provide assistance to the Amish farming community.



As a result, three Amish farmers enrolled some of their land into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Two of the farmers constructed shallow wetland areas on their farms and a third is in the planning and design stage.

Additionally, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Education Assistance funds were used to develop and conduct an educational program that was targeted to Amish dairy farmers. During the program, NRCS discussed agricultural waste and how pending nutrient regulations may affect their operations. As a result of this meeting, two Amish dairy operations requested technical assistance for manure management systems.

GEORGIA

- Several outreach projects have been funded in Georgia. One pilot project, funded at \$129,000, was managed by The Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area. It covers nine counties in southwest Georgia. The project provided financial and technical assistance to help limited resource farmers install and use a hard hose irrigation system to allow for a profitable crop yield. Field days were conducted to publicize the benefits of irrigation and improve irrigation management skills for small and minority farmers within the nine-county area. Results achieved were:

- (1) More widespread knowledge of the added value that irrigation and nutrient management can bring to the operations of small and underserved farmers,
- (2) More farmers trained in the use of portable irrigation equipment, and
- (3) Increased numbers of small farmers using portable irrigation systems.

IOWA

- NRCS organized and sponsored a statewide conference attended by 125 small and specialty crop producers and minority farmers, to discuss local niche marketing opportunities. Financial assistance was provided through

Michael Field Agricultural Institute's Organic Vegetable Grower's Workshop to provide organic production and marketing information to 15 small farmers, 9 of whom were women producers.

LOUISIANA

- The USDA agencies in Louisiana worked with local leaders, Southern University, and others to host a Community Development Workshop for parishes (counties) in northeast Louisiana as part of a special outreach initiative to inform and educate traditionally underserved agricultural producers. Approximately 30 landowners and interested parties participated in the daylong community development workshop, learning about such topics as grant writing, home loans, USDA programs, and community services. Southern University personnel completed a NRCS assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the Agency's outreach to minority farmers in Louisiana. The assessment was favorable toward NRCS's outreach effectiveness. The study revealed that 60 percent of the minority farmers interviewed were familiar with services offered by the NRCS, 41 percent had applied for assistance, and 30 percent had been approved to receive the assistance for which they applied. Eighty-eight percent of the farmers who had or were receiving assistance from NRCS were satisfied with the services they received from NRCS.





SOUTH CAROLINA

- NRCS has been actively involved with the State Outreach Council initiatives regarding small farms in South Carolina. Some council members began planning an outreach workshop for small and limited resource landowners and farmers in the Pee Dee area of South Carolina. Members of the State Outreach Council and the local planning team met in June to plan the details of the outreach workshop. Workshop topics include agency overviews, wills, financial planning and heirs, timber theft, alternative cropping opportunities, financial management issues, how to generate profits, marketing agricultural and forestry products, success stories, and tobacco barn conversions.

NRCS also has worked with the South Carolina Small Farmer and Landowner's State Outreach Committee. The Committee sponsored an outreach workshop for small farmers and landowners in Saluda, South Carolina. Approximately 60 farmers, landowners, and others attended the workshop. Topics included alternative enterprises, senior citizen issues, farms and farm loan programs, forestry-timber theft, poultry issues, and crop insurance.

TEXAS

- An Outreach Advisory Committee, comprised of university scholars and local farmers and ranchers, was created to help the State Outreach Cadre and Outreach Coordinator assess the State's outreach efforts. The Outreach Advisory Committee uses the Civil Rights Action Team (CRAT) report, the report of the USDA National Commission on Small Farms, *A Time to Act*, and the Secretary's Hispanic Advisory Council (HAC) report, *Fact Findings and Proposed Action*, as the guiding documents to assess NRCS outreach.

There are two positions in the State dedicated to providing technical assistance to small farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged producers. A third position is currently advertised. These "Limited-Resource Specialist" positions, working with Soil and Water



Conservation Districts, RC&D Councils, Community Based Organizations, and other Federal and State agencies, significantly impact rural communities in the State. This is evidenced by the increase in applications received for USDA Programs, the increase of applications approved for USDA Programs, improved standards of living, and improvements of the natural resources base.

A special effort was undertaken to educate Indian Tribes in Texas. With the assistance of a representative from the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC), the American Indian Liaison visited all but one of the Indian Tribes in Texas. The Tribes became aware of the assistance and programs that NRCS provides and offers. Several identified needs are being addressed through the RC&D Program. These include wastewater treatment, recreation areas, and enterprise development, such as bison production.



UTAH

- NRCS has established a part time (one day a week equivalent) NRCS office at the Confederated Tribes of the Goshutes headquarters in Ibapah, Utah. This office continues to report success stories. In addition to range improvements and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) projects, several initiatives by the Bonneville RC&D program are being established to work with tribal youth and develop business enterprises for the tribe. At the Utah-Ouray Indian Reservation, the full time NRCS office has added an additional soil conservationist. Now two employees work with the tribe and train several tribal employees on NRCS conservation systems, standards, and specifications. The NRCS office also added a full time American Indian Liaison.

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

RMA's Office of Civil Rights and Outreach ensures equal access and accessibility to small and limited-resource farmers and ranchers. RMA has two Outreach Program Specialists. One is located in the Raleigh, North Carolina Regional Office (Eastern Outreach Region). The other is located in the Davis, California Regional Office (Western Outreach Region). In addition, RMA has 10 Regional Office Coordinators (collateral duty) located throughout the United States in 10 Regional Offices.

The Office of Civil Rights and Outreach collaborates with 1890, 1994, and 1862 Land-Grant Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Community Based Organizations and State and Federal Agencies, to implement initiatives to better serve small and limited resource farmers and ranchers.

In FY 2001, the following projects were funded under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act (ARPA) of 2000:

- **Alabama A&M University**, \$25,000: To develop and implement risk management education program for small and limited-resource producers in North Alabama.



Accurate farm recordkeeping helps producers manage risk by pinpointing losses and gains in the farm business.

- **Federation of Southern Cooperatives**, \$279,950 for Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina: To improve delivery of insurance products to small and limited-resource farmers by recruiting and training agents for underserved areas and to expand risk management education to underserved, diverse communities.
- **Hmong American Community**, \$62,850: To help establish a small farm resource center in the California Central Valley to provide training for limited-resource farmers and ranchers on the effective use of risk management tools and practices.
- **University of California**, \$12,000: To provide risk management information and training for Southeast Asians in Fresno County and adjoining counties.
- **Tufts University**, \$155,875 for Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island: To educate immigrant farmers about risk management strategies and programs for new producers.



Outreach Activities in 10 Regional Offices during FY 2001:

- National Conference on Survival Strategies for Small And Limited Resource Farmers:** On July 23-25, 2001, RMA sponsored this conference held in Memphis, Tennessee, to provide a forum for networking and forming alliances between public and private stakeholders to maximize their effectiveness in assisting small and limited resource farmers and ranchers to survive in the current risk environment. Conference attendance was estimated at 235 participants with 40 States (including Alaska and Hawaii) represented nationwide and others from Nigeria, New Guinea, and Peru. RMA will be planning numerous small farm meetings across the U.S. in follow-up to this Conference with the objective to hold smaller meetings throughout the States.



- North and South Dakota Tribal Farm Bill Forum:** In Billings, Montana, the Regional Office participated in a North and South Dakota Tribal Farm Bill Forum co-sponsored by the Intertribal Ag Council in November 2000. The purpose of the forum was to bring representatives of all the Indian tribes in ND and SD to meet with USDA representatives from NRCS, APHIS, FSA, and RMA.

The participants worked to determine tribal agriculture-related needs that Congress and USDA could address in developing the 2002 Farm Bill. The tribes are very interested in the development of affordable insurance programs. Tribal members proposed that USDA establish service centers on each reservation throughout the States, which they believe should include a Federal employee with the responsibility of educating tribal members about available risk management programs.

- Breaking Down Barriers for Hispanic Farmers:** Several efforts were made to arrange an informational session in the underserved areas of New Mexico and Oklahoma, to increase the awareness of the program advantages RMA can provide producers. A representative from the Oklahoma City Regional Office participated in a meeting on July 10, 2001, in Lubbock, Texas, that was designed to help break down barriers that Hispanic farmers face.
- 9th National Small Farm Trade Show & Conference:** November 1-3, 2001, the Topeka Regional Office participated in the largest annual small farm show in the United States by displaying the RMA's Civil Rights/Community Outreach display booth. The 2001 theme was "Profitable Small Farm Alternatives for the New Millennium," and featured moneymaking farmers communicating their methods to fellow farmers. Ideas and information on income opportunities for the small family farm were presented in 19 one-hour seminars and 5 three-hour short courses. Both traditional and alternative farm enterprises were covered for full and part-time farmers, ranchers, gardeners, and landowners.



Some States work with insurance representatives from the National Independent Insurance Agents Association to increase the number of women and minority crop insurance sales agents.

- Federation of Southern Cooperatives:** On November 28 and 29, 2000, Federation of Southern Cooperatives and RMA met to discuss a survey of limited-resource farmers. The purpose of the 110-question survey was to assess how black farmers in Southern States are managing risk in their operations. Federation and RMA were able to identify training needs and determine future education program directions to meet the needs of limited-resource farmers. Federation representatives drafted a letter to be sent to Washington, DC, giving recommendations and outlining how Washington representatives can assist limited-resource farmers.

- Hmong American Community, Inc. (HAC) in Fresno, California:** is partnering with many agencies including RMA, American Farmland Trust, University of California Cooperative Extension, NRCS, FSA, and the Valley Small Business Bureau to develop a Small Farm Resource Center for the San Joaquin Valley small farmers. The Center will become a central location where these underserved farmers can meet and receive information on various programs available to them. It will also serve as a training center for health related issues such as pesticide health and safety, marketing, recordkeeping, and other farm related legal and labor issues.

- Hispanic Cultural Awareness Training:** On October 16 and 17, the Spokane Outreach Coordinator attended and participated in Hispanic Cultural Awareness Training in Wenatchee, Washington. The members of the Washington State Civil Rights and Outreach Committee, which was established as a result of USDA's Civil Rights Action Team Report and State Outreach Council initiatives, sponsored the training. Agencies participating were USDA's RMA, FSA, NRCS, FS, RD, and Washington State Agricultural Statistics Service.

- Small Farmers and Landowners Outreach Workshop in Florence, South Carolina:** On October 26, the Valdosta Regional Office (RO) exhibited a booth at the "Pee Dee Small Farmers and Landowners Outreach Workshop" in Florence, South Carolina.

- Civil Rights/Increasing the Diversity of Crop Insurance Sales Agents:** On April 3, 2001, the Spokane Outreach Coordinator began working with insurance representatives from the National Independent Insurance Agents Association (IIAA) to increase the number of women and minority crop insurance sales agents throughout the United States.

- Outreach to Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota:** On August 29, 2001, the Davis RO staff met with NRCS Western Region staff to discuss the beginning of a series of meetings focused on the development of an action plan for Outreach to Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The outreach efforts will provide information on soil erosion,





conservation, risk management education, and crop insurance program development. There are numerous small farmers producing a variety of specialty crops consumed both locally and for export. Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are threatened every year by typhoons. In 1997, Typhoon Paka destroyed crops and livestock throughout this U.S. Trust Territory. These meetings come at the request of Congressman William (Lee) Torres and Guam Delegate Robert Underwood.

Examples of RMA Outreach Activities in 10 Regional Offices During FY 2000:

- **Creating Partnerships:** For FY 2000, RMA's Office of Civil Rights and Outreach partnered and collaborated with community based organizations, 1890 and 1994 land-grant colleges and universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Federal and State Councils. Nine projects totaling \$300,000 were funded. RMA is also working on an initiative to attract women and multi-cultural agents and agencies to sell and service risk management products. RMA is continuing to educate small and limited-resource farmers and ranchers and the agricultural community on managing risk. RMA is also reviewing our existing insurance products to ensure that they meet the needs of small and limited-resource farmers and ranchers.
- **Intertribal Agriculture Council and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation Meeting:** The Billings RO outreach coordinator met with the Intertribal Agriculture Council and the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Lame Deer, Montana, in order to solicit input on the successes of past partnering efforts. They discussed future outreach proposals, such as a potential Individual Rangeland and Pasture insurance program to benefit Native American producers.

Additionally, the participants want to better serve the needs of historically underserved groups and rural communities.

- **Southwest Louisiana Agriculture Field Day:** The Jackson RO outreach coordinator took part in the Southwest Louisiana Agriculture Field Day in June 2000, sponsored by the Southern Development Foundation. Participants were small to large-scale agriculture producers, business representatives, students, and staff from agencies across the State. RMA programs in Louisiana and information on the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 were discussed.



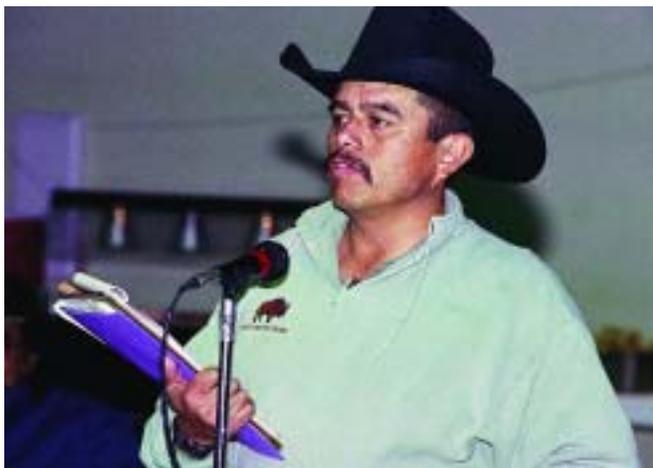
- **Choctaw Nation Meeting:** The Oklahoma RO held a meeting in April 2000 with members of the Choctaw Nation, in Oklahoma City. Participants discussed the feasibility of starting a tribal insurance agency or developing an RMA and Tribal Agreement, which would deliver and service crop insurance policies to tribal members. In addition, the RO is committed to helping select individuals within the Choctaw Nation become agents by providing one-on-one training and assisting them to obtain a limited agent license from the Oklahoma State Insurance Department to sell crop insurance to tribal members.
- **Virginia State Outreach Council:** The Raleigh RO attended the Virginia State Outreach Council Meeting at Virginia State University in March 2000. Several extension agents who work with small and limited-resource producers were invited to attend. The group discussed small farm activities and several mentioned their work in disseminating risk management education information.



- **Outreach to Western Groups:** The Davis RO gave a presentation to the leaders of several Arizona Indian tribes in January 2000 about the crop insurance and risk management tools available to Native Americans. The Indian Agriculture Council organized this event. In addition, the RO assisted Hmong growers in Fresno, California, in developing a cooperative to market their produce.
- **Michigan Limited-Resource and Minority Farms Second Annual Conference:** The Springfield RO was one of the sponsors of the Michigan Limited-Resource and Minority Farms Second Annual Conference held in March 2000 in Lawrence. A “How to Work with Lenders” workshop was held using “Assignment of Indemnity” as a risk management tool to secure operating loans.
- **Yakima County Hispanic Growers Small and Limited-Resource Farmer Grant and Outreach Project:** The Spokane RO met with the Yakima County Hispanic Growers in May 2000 regarding current activities. An educational delivery program for 500 active agricultural landowners and producers and 20,000 Hispanic farm laborers in Yakima, Washington was established, to familiarize them with USDA farm programs. Outreach efforts will also be provided to Heritage College in Toppenish, Washington.
- **Informational Exchange Meeting:** The Spokane RO is currently discussing plans for the Western Regional Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC)/State Food and Agricultural Council (FAC). An Informational Exchange Meeting was held in Pendleton, Oregon on September 11, 2000. Partners include the Outreach Coordinators for the FSA, NRCS, and the IAC. The RO is working with the Yakima County Hispanic Growers regarding an educational delivery program for approximately 500 active agricultural owners, producers, farmers, and 20,000 Hispanic farm laborers throughout Yakima, Washington.
- **Recordkeeping Training for Hmong Farmers:** The St. Paul RO participated in a working group from the State Outreach Committee, and the Minnesota Food Association has been working on educating Hmong farmers in recordkeeping. In the future, this training will be adapted to educate other ethnic groups.
- **USDA Outreach Serves All Kansans:** The Topeka RO worked with Kansas State Outreach Council, consisting of RMA, FSA, NRCS, RD, and Kansas State University. Each agency has contributed toward the creation and production of a brochure titled “USDA Outreach Serves All Kansans.” This joint effort is intended to increase underserved, limited-resource, and minority farmers’ awareness of USDA programs and services in Kansas. RMA’s offer to meet with Native American Farmers and discuss program information and services, in addition to conducting workshops and seminars, is receiving positive comment from American Indian Tribal Councils in Kansas.
- **Federation of Southern Cooperatives Outreach Meeting:** The Federation conducted its 17th Annual Marketing and Small Farmers Conference and Trade Show in February 2000, in Albany, Georgia. The Valdosta RO stated that Team Agriculture Georgia (TAG) is using \$2,000 in RMA funds for printing new directories, “*TAG Directory of Federal and State Agricultural Agencies, State Agricultural Educational Institutions,*” and “*Non-Governmental Agriculture Organizations in Georgia.*” The TAG Directory is a reference to help landowners and others contact participating agencies and organizations for services. For more information on the Risk Management Agency, visit our web site at www.rma.usda.gov.

USDA National Office of Outreach

The USDA National Office of Outreach has taken a proactive role to ensure that USDA programs and services are accessible to all eligible constituents, including the underserved. It also provides leadership, coordination, facilitation, and expertise to internal and external partners to ensure equal and timely access to USDA programs for all eligible constituents, with an emphasis on the underserved.



The USDA Office of Outreach awarded nearly \$6 million to 28 educational institutions or community-based organizations in 20 States and Puerto Rico. The awards were given to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to minority and rural area farmers and ranchers.

■ **Services Offered by the Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Program (2501).**

During the past five years, 2501 Program recipients were able to provide outreach and assistance to over 107,000 socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers who participate in 28 projects that serve 394 counties. Participants receive various types of assistance from the project recipient staffs, including:

- Assistance in completing Farm Service Agency Direct and Guaranteed Loan applications (farm ownership loans, farm operating loans, youth loans, and soil and water loans).
- Assistance with financial recordkeeping throughout the year and at the end of the year (year-end analysis).
- Assistance in helping farmers obtain loans to purchase equipment and machinery (operating loan assistance).
- Information on services and farm programs offered by FSA, NRCS, Cooperative Extension Service, RD, FS, RMA, and State and local government agencies.
- Assistance in helping farmers complete commercial bank farm loan applications.
- Assistance in developing financial plans (projected income and expense) and production plans (planting

dates, varieties, weed control, etc.) for alternative crops (vegetables and small fruits).

- Bi-weekly (or as needed) farm visits to assist with farm management (crop records, calibration, selecting pest treatments, insect and disease scouting, etc.).
- Group training meetings and individual training in farm management.
- Tours to educate and inform farmers and ranchers about profitable alternatives for small farms and ranches.
- On September 17, 2001—The USDA Office of Outreach awarded nearly \$6 million to 28 educational institutions or community based-organizations in 20 States and Puerto Rico to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to minority and rural area farmers and ranchers. In announcing the awards, Secretary Ann M. Veneman stated that USDA is committed to assisting farmers and ranchers in need. She said, “through these grants that we are announcing, we are striving to ensure access to USDA programs and services for our underserved constituents.”
- The amount of the awards is based on the population of need in the area served. Among the organizations receiving the awards are historically African-American land-grant colleges and universities, Native American community colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, Asian emphasis institutions, and community-based organizations.

Institutions receiving grants include the following:

1. Agricultural Land-Based Training Association
2. Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University
3. Alcorn State University
4. Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation
5. Delaware State University
6. Growing Power, Inc.
7. Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
8. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
9. Fort Berthold Community College
10. Fort Peck Community College
11. Intertribal Agriculture Council
12. Housing and Economic Rural Opportunity, Inc.



13. Hmong American Community
14. Kentucky State University
15. Langston University
16. North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
17. Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
18. Prairie View A&M University
19. Rural Community Development Resources
20. Southern University and A&M College
21. Tennessee State University
22. The Regents of New Mexico State University
23. The University of Texas-Pan American
24. Trustees of Tufts College
25. Tuskegee University
26. University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
27. University of Puerto Rico
28. Virginia State University

■ **Helping Small Farmers Increase Income with Alternative Crops:**

- Most 2501 project participants are typically small scale, traditional crop producers.
- During the last several years, rising production costs and relatively stable commodity prices have reduced the income generating potential of these farms.



About 80 percent of 2501 project participants use the Cooperative Extension Service, and 75 percent are familiar with NRCS services.

- Due to economies of scale, small farms often have a higher per unit cost and are less profitable than larger farm operations.
- Consequently, smaller farms tend to be lost at a faster rate than larger farms during adverse years.
- To help small farmers increase farm income and as a hedge against lost income from other crops, the 2501 project recipients assist small farmers in adding alternative crops to their traditional crop operations.
- The incorporation of alternative crops occurs without a large investment in machinery or equipment, and without the addition of new land.
- Farmers learn about the cultural practices needed to produce alternative crops.

■ **Marketing Assistance/Alternative Crops:**

- When a farmer diversifies by adding an alternative crop to his/her operation, the project recipients' staff provides assistance to the farmer in locating markets for the crop.
- Before an alternative crop is planted, a primary and secondary market is located.

■ **Working with Other USDA Agencies:**

- Most socially disadvantaged farmers are not familiar with the services offered by local USDA agencies.
- These farmers often fail to take advantage of the many services and beneficial programs that could help their farm operations. The 2501 recipient project staff works to inform participants of services offered by the different agencies. As a result, the number of participants now actively using the local agencies has steadily increased since the program's inception.
- Approximately 80 percent of 2501 project participants now use the Cooperative Extension Service; about 75 percent of participants are now familiar with services offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as compared to pre-project awareness that ranged from 5 to 10 percent.