

FEATURE – FARMS MAKING THEIR OWN ENERGY

INTRO: A newly released USDA survey shows that more farms are making their own energy. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:36)

ON FARM ENERGY PRODUCTION IS GROWING IN RURAL AMERICA ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE. THE SURVEY SHOWED MORE THAN EIGHT THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED OPERATIONS PRODUCING RENEWABLE ENERGY USING SOLAR PANELS, METHANE DIGESTERS AND WIND TURBINES. MANY SURVEYED FARMERS REPORTED DRAMATIC INCREASES IN RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK SAYS THE SURVEY RESULTS SHOULD ENCOURAGE MORE PRODUCERS TO MAKE THEIR OWN ENERGY.

Tom Vilsack, Agriculture Secretary: The reality is there is a significant energy savings and a money savings associated with these operations. And so as farmers and ranchers and growers learn about the fact that they can save twenty five hundred dollars or so on their energy bills they may be more interested in this.

VILSACK SAYS THERE ARE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES. PRODUCERS CAN SAVE MONEY, AND MAKE MONEY FROM PRODUCING AND SELLING THE ENERGY BACK TO THE GRID.

Vilsack: As excess power, excess electricity is produced, from a wind turbine or a solar panel, or a digester that can go back on the grid and maybe even reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

VILSACK SAYS PRODUCERS CAN GET HELP SETTING UP SYSTEMS THROUGH U-S-D-A'S RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM.

Vilsack: We want to be able to improve productivity and we want to be able to improve the bottom line for farmers and ranchers and growers. We also think that there are tremendous opportunities for innovation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ON-FARM RENEWABLE ENERGY SURVEY GO TO AG CENSUS DOT U-S-D-A DOT GOV. IN WASHINGTON D-C FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.