Alabama

The potential to grow and make innovative products in rural America is limitless. Since 2009, the Obama Administration has made targeted investments to help rural businesses grow. Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s projects in affordable housing, energy efficiency, roads and bridges, and internet access, coupled with loans and grants for rural businesses, the Administration has helped to attract and retain a talented rural labor force, improve connectivity and access to information, move products to market, and make rural communities competitive—ultimately supporting strong local economies and expanded opportunity for rural Alabamans.

SUPPORT FOR RURAL BUSINESSES
USDA has made investments to help 138 rural businesses in Alabama thrive and grow.

USDA investments in everything from advanced biofuels manufacturing facilities to food hubs help businesses, many of them small, capitalize on emerging markets for rural-made products. In rural America, small businesses support one in three jobs.

RENEWING RURAL MANUFACTURING
The rural economy includes more than products that come from farms. Rural manufacturing supports 90,527 jobs in Alabama. USDA has invested $28.8 million to help rural manufacturers in Alabama increase production and capacity.

GROWING EXPORTS
In 2013, exports of farm and ranch products alone contributed $1.5 billion to Alabama’s economy. The President’s Made In Rural America initiative helps rural businesses capitalize on demand for American-made products and identify ways they can participate in global markets.

HOUSING
Access to safe, affordable housing is critical to maintaining the rural labor force. USDA has helped 24,683 Alabama families purchase or repair homes.

CONNECTIVITY
USDA has invested $60.4 million in telecommunications projects serving rural Alabamans, which has helped to expand access to state-of-the-art health care, educational, and cultural resources and helps rural businesses compete in the global economy.

WATER
USDA has invested $183.5 million to support efficient water supply, treatment and storage facilities, and wastewater treatment systems. That investment has improved the health of thousands of rural Alabamans who now have access to clean water and reliable sanitation.

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL
In Alabama, the Small Farmers Agricultural Cooperative had trouble selling to large retailers because they could not meet their requirements for food safety documentation. With the help of the USDA’s Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Audit Program, the farmers were able to work with Tuskegee University to meet the audit’s requirements and are now able to supply the country’s largest retailer with local food.

Local food sales were valued at $11.7 billion in 2014. In Alabama, USDA has invested in 1,136 local food projects, helping to develop food hubs, small-scale processing, farmers markets and other market opportunities in local food.