



## USDA Grants to Help New Farmers

**29 institutions will receive \$17 million in grants to train beginning farmers.**

November 9, 2009

Twenty-nine grants distributed throughout the U.S. will be used to help train and educate beginning farmers. The USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture will award more than \$17 million in grants to 29 institutions in 2009 to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of U.S. agriculture.

"Beginning farmers and ranchers face unique challenges and need educational and training programs to enhance their profitability and long-term sustainability," said agriculture deputy secretary Kathleen Merrigan during the Nov. 3, 2009, announcement. "The training and education provided through these grants will help ensure the success of the next generation of farmers and ranchers as they work to feed people in their local communities and throughout the world."

Merrigan announced the funding in Elgin, Minn., at Hidden Stream Farm and was joined by representatives from the Land Stewardship Project, a local grant recipient that provides local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives that address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers. Eric and Lisa Klein, the proprietors of Hidden Stream Farm, were some of the first graduates of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings course. Since graduating from Farm Beginnings, the Kleins have developed a thriving pasture-based livestock operation that markets pork, chickens and beef in southeastern Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

The grants will be awarded through NIFA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. BFRDP is an education, training, technical assistance and outreach program designed to help U.S. farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or fewer.

Congress authorized the 2009 funding for the program in the 2008 Farm Bill, with an additional \$19 million in mandatory funding for 2010. Under the program, USDA will make grants to organizations that will implement programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers.

The grants are also part of USDA's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative, which was launched in September 2009 to emphasize the need for a fundamental and critical reconnection between producers and consumers. The initiative focuses on major agricultural topics such as supporting local farmers and community food groups, strengthening rural communities, enhancing direct marketing and farmers' promotion programs, promoting healthy eating, protecting natural resources, and helping schools connect with locally grown foods.

Beginning farmers and ranchers interested in participating in any of the education, outreach, mentoring or internship activities are asked to contact the following 2009 grantee institutions:

Developing Innovations in Navajo Education, Inc., Flagstaff, Ariz.  
Arkansas Land and Farm Development Corporation, Brinkley, Ark.  
Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association, Salinas, Calif.  
California FarmLink, Sebastopol, Calif.  
Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, Fla.  
University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla.  
University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii  
Angelic Organics Learning Center, Inc., Caledonia, Ill.  
University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.  
Cultivating Community, Portland, Maine  
USDA National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Md.  
Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis, Minn.  
Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc., St. Paul, Minn.  
Thomas Jefferson Agricultural Institute, Columbia, Mo.  
University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.  
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.  
Holistic Management International, Albuquerque, N.M.  
Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.  
Fort Berthold Community College, New Town, N.D.  
Langston University, Langston, Okla.



Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pa.  
South Dakota State University, Brookings, S.D.  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.  
University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas  
Washington State University, Pullman, Wash.  
Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, Spring Valley, Wis.