



THE FARM CREDIT COUNCIL

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**The Farm Credit Council Awarded USDA Grant
For Project to Evaluate and Improve Training Programs
For Next Generation of America's Farmers and Ranchers**

WASHINGTON – Seeking to enhance the success of the next generation of America's farmers and ranchers, The Farm Credit Council, in partnership with the Wallace Center of Winrock International, and through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is launching a project to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of training programs for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan recently announced that USDA has awarded \$18 million in grants to organizations that will provide training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers, including a grant of \$675,109 to The Farm Credit Council for a project to improve the effectiveness of educational material for those who provide training to beginning farmers.

The project involves reviewing beginning farmer training curricula and programs to assess the content, suitability, and delivery methods used. The primary focus of the assessment will be the components of a successful financial skills education.

"More effective financial skills training will enable beginning farmers to analyze their economic conditions, consider their personal goals and abilities, gauge the risk capacity of their farm businesses, improve their access to credit, and thereby increase the overall growth and economic sustainability of agriculture in America," said Gary Matteson, The Farm Credit Council's Vice President—Young, Beginning, Small Farmer Programs and Outreach.

"Beginning farmers and ranchers face unique challenges, and these grants will provide needed training to help these producers become profitable and sustainable," said Merrigan.

As part of its historic mission of service to U.S. agriculture and rural America, the farmer-owned lending institutions of Farm Credit System are leading providers of credit to young, beginning and small farmers and ranchers. Each of the Farm Credit System lenders nationwide has programs specifically focused on meeting the needs of these young, beginning and small producers.

Leveraging Farm Credit's unparalleled expertise in helping young, beginning and small producers succeed, the project will build upon Farm Credit's knowledge base as the leading lender to this segment. Beginning farmer training providers will then be able to adopt best practices into their own programs in order to improve access to credit for the beginning farmers that they train.

Over the course of the three-year grant, Farm Credit expects to develop a model for building relationships between independent beginning farmer training programs and their local Farm Credit cooperative across the country.

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded the grants through its Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). Under BFRDP, which was established through the 2008 Farm Bill, NIFA makes grants to organizations that implement education, training, technical assistance and outreach programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or fewer.

The Farm Credit BFRDP grant will be focused on the Southeast United States, with a special focus on including beginning farmer training programs that serve minority farmers.

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The Farm Credit System is the leading provider of credit and related services to U.S. agriculture. We are a nationwide network of cooperatives with a legacy of nearly 100 years of service to agriculture and rural America. We remain dedicated to our mission to improve the quality of life on the farm and in rural America by providing competitive lending, financial services, and sound business advice. The Farm Credit Council is the national trade association representing the interests of the institutions of the Farm Credit System. For more information visit www.fccouncil.com.