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# News Release

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## **USDA Has More Than \$400 Million Still Available for Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Loan Guarantees**

*Funding Helps Farmers, Rural Small Businesses and Ag Producers Cut Energy Costs*

**WASHINGTON, July 18, 2019** – Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today encouraged farmers, rural small businesses and agricultural producers to apply for financing in a key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that provides loan guarantees to help rural small businesses lower their energy costs.

“Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue, USDA is committed to increasing economic development in rural communities across the country through strong partnerships with rural businesses,” Baxley said. “USDA’s [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP) is an important tool to help strengthen and grow the rural economy.”

USDA accepts applications for REAP funding year-round. Potential applicants should contact their [state USDA Rural Development office](#) for additional information.

REAP funding can be used for renewable energy systems such as anaerobic digesters, biomass, geothermal, hydropower, wind and solar. It also can be used to make energy efficiency improvements to heating, ventilation and cooling systems; insulation; and lighting and refrigeration. Below are some examples of USDA’s REAP investments.

- Edgehill Farms, an ag tourism center in Oakland, Ky., received a \$34,596 loan guarantee to install a 34.8-kilowatt photovoltaic array system on the roof of its ham processing facility. The system will generate approximately 45,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually that will be sold directly to the local utility, earning about \$4,500 for the firm per year.
- In Magnolia, N.C., Optima KV received a \$6.5 million loan guarantee for an anaerobic digester that will help hog producers dispose of waste by converting it to energy. The project aggregates multiple biogas streams at a refinery. The resulting natural gas is then transported via pipeline to a power plant to generate electricity. The digester produces additional revenue for hog producers and a cleaner environment.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue

presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Supporting the rural workforce was a cornerstone recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

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