

## Remarks by Rural Development Under Secretary Dallas Tonsager; Announce 2012 Rural Energy for America Program Awards

June 6, 2012 • Maine

---

It's great to be here today to announce the recipients of our 2012 REAP awards. I want to thank Allen Smith of Forage Market for agreeing to host this event, and our Rural Development State Director Virginia Manuel for helping to organize. I also want to thank all our other awardees who were able to make the trip to be here; we had 10 from across the state this year and I just want to take a moment to acknowledge everyone who is here in person so that they can be recognized:

- Jeffrey Marstaller, from Cozy Acres Greenhouses
- Jonathan Roy from Inn of Acadia
- Phil Cavaretta and Allyson Cavaretta from Meadowmere Motel Corp.
- James Merryman from Potts Harbor Lobster
- Stacy Brenner from Broadturn Farm, Inc.
- Jay LaJoie from LaJoie Growers
- Denis Thoet (pronounced "Thought") from Long Meadow Farm

...thank you all very much for being here.

Now, energy is a part of our portfolio at Rural Development that I feel very strongly about, and I know the President and Secretary Vilsack share my feelings about how important it is to recognize efforts being made across the US. They are important to rural areas but also to the country as a whole.



What we know is that biofuels, biomass, wind and solar rely primarily on farm, ranch, and forest lands, and so the potential for renewable energy development resides predominantly in our Nation's rural regions. Renewable energy is an important source of jobs and economic growth in rural communities across the country, while biofuels and biomass offer exciting new opportunities for entrepreneurs and, in particular, for American agricultural producers. Our nation's future depends on out-innovating, out-investing, out-educating, and out-building our competitors in an increasingly integrated and competitive world economy, and renewable energy is clearly one of the sectors in which we must excel to secure our economic future. This is why the accelerated deployment of renewable energy has been a high priority for the Obama Administration. The United States imports about one-half of the petroleum we consume and the President is committed to reducing our imports of oil by one-third by 2025.

**The Rural Energy for America Program, or REAP, is USDA's renewable energy flagship.**

REAP provides grants and loan guarantees to agricultural producers and small businesses so that they can purchase, install, and construct renewable energy systems, make energy efficient improvements to non-residential buildings, and use renewable technologies that reduce energy consumption.

**With this announcement, REAP is investing almost \$161,000 in grants right here in Maine. Here at Forage Market, a grant for \$19,000 will enable them to purchase and install a new natural gas system with a solar heating coil that will provide a more energy efficient heating and cooling system.** This represents one of many small steps that this Administration is taking to ensure we take advantage of every opportunity at our disposal to reduce our reliance on foreign energy and to provide small businesses with opportunities to save on their own energy costs.

All of this is crucial to the future of our success as a nation.



**Our USDA programs are also encouraging the production of biofuels across the United States.** The Biomass Crop Assistance Program, or BCAP, is designed to help grow the volume of crops needed for the U.S. to meet the Renewable Fuels Standard, which requires **36 billion gallons of renewable biofuels to be used in our nation’s fuel supply by 2022.** BCAP has the potential to enhance prosperity in rural America by providing for new sources of crop revenues and job creation in the countryside while allowing family farms and forest owners to play even a bigger role in ensuring our domestic energy security.

Our Biorefinery Assistance Program is funding the construction of commercial-scale **biorefineries that will produce advanced biofuels in states like Florida, Mississippi, Oregon, and Michigan.** Similarly, our Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels is expanding the success of **corn-based ethanol production** by making payments for the production of biofuels that are derived from biomass other than corn kernel starch. In many respects, our biofuel production potential will only be realized through the work of all fifty states, and these two programs move us in that direction.

From feedstock production to the development of biofuels and other biobased products that can be delivered to customers, **research will drive** the United States to become a global leader in the renewable energy marketplace. USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, for example, is pursuing a **Biomass Research and Development Initiative, or “BIRDIE”**, to support research that will improve the entire cycle of production, development, and delivery for biofuels, bioenergy, and bio-based products.

In his State of the Union address, President Obama laid out **a blueprint for an economy built to last** - an economy built on American manufacturing, skills for American workers, and American energy. What you all are participating in through this program is a vital part of seeing that vision come to fruition.



And so, again, it really gives me great pride to be here with you today to announce this funding. I want to tell you that the President, Secretary Vilsack, and I are all looking forward to seeing what you are able to accomplish in the future.