Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry

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Climate Change Affects U.S. Agriculture and Rural Communities

• Producers and land managers across the country are experiencing climate impacts on their operations through shifting weather patterns and increasingly frequent and severe storms, floods, drought, and wildfire.

• These threats have significant implications not just for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners, but also for surrounding communities and all Americans.

• USDA is developing a comprehensive strategy to address the impacts of climate change centered on voluntary incentives, that is inclusive for all agricultural producers, landowners, and communities.
USDA also hosted a series of 10 stakeholder listening sessions to provide a forum for feedback and discussion around CSAF strategy development and implementation.

Participants included farmer organizations, commodity groups, livestock producer groups, environmental organizations, forestry representatives, agriculture businesses and technology companies, environmental market organizations, renewable energy organizations, Tribal organizations, and organizations representing socially disadvantaged communities.
Targeted Outcomes:

• Sustainably increase agricultural productivity and incomes

• Adapt and build resilience to climate change

• Carbon sequestration

• GHG emission reductions
The proposed strategy consists of the following elements:

1. Develop a CSAF strategy that works for all farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and communities
2. Develop methods to quantify, track, and report the benefits of CSAF activities
3. Leverage existing USDA programs to support CSAF strategies
4. Strengthen education, training, and technical assistance for CSAF practices
5. Support new and better markets for agriculture and forestry products generated through CSAF practices
6. Develop a forest and wildfire resilience strategy
7. Improve research
Develop a CSAF strategy that works for all farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and communities.

- Strengthen consultation and engagement with Tribes and socially disadvantaged communities and producers
- Identify opportunities for broader inclusivity within USDA programs
- Remove barriers to participation and adoption
- Recognize and include early adopters
USDA Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy

Develop methods to quantify, track, and report the benefits of CSAF activities.

- Identify promising CSAF practices
- Develop or enhance tools to assist farmers, ranchers, and foresters in quantifying benefits of CSAF practices
- Track implementation and quantify benefits of CSAF practices at the national scale
- Support research and data collection for quantification, monitoring and verification of carbon benefits
USDA’s Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

• Announced by Secretary Vilsack on February 7, 2022

• USDA will support the production and marketing of climate-smart commodities through a set of pilot projects that provide voluntary incentives through partners to producers and landowners to:
  • Implement climate-smart production practices, activities, and systems on working lands,
  • Measure/quantify, monitor and verify the carbon and greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits associated with those practices, and
  • Develop markets and promote the resulting climate-smart commodities.
USDA Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy

USDA’s Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities

• The opportunity is available to partners who serve producers of all sizes and all methods and all locations and all types of production. Primary applicant/recipient must be an entity, not an individual.

• Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on:
  
  • April 8, 2022 – First Funding pool – large scale pilot projects
  • May 27, 2022 – Second Funding Pool – smaller scale innovative projects

For more information visit: usda.gov/climate-smart-commodities
Leverage existing USDA programs to support CSAF strategies.

- Identify and prioritize climate risks, adaptation opportunities, and carbon benefits of USDA programs.
- Support and help finance renewable energy and energy efficiency activities.
- Keep forests as forests while building climate resilience through forest conservation programs.
- Help build community resilience to climate change.
EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts

• Conservation Incentive Contracts address priority resource concerns, including sequestering carbon and improving soil health in high-priority areas.

• Focus on management practices, such as irrigation water management, drainage water management, feed management, residue and tillage management, and cover crops that target resource concerns, including degraded soil and water quality, available water, and soil erosion.
NRCS Partnership with Farmers for Soil Health

• Farmers for Soil Health is an initiative of the United Soybean Board, National Corn Growers Association and National Pork Board.

• Farmers For Soil Health works to advance use of soil health practices – especially cover crops – on corn and soybean farms.

• The initiative has a goal of doubling the number of corn and soybean acres using cover crops to 30 million acres by 2030.

• Cover crops have great potential to improve soil health, improve water quality, sequester carbon, and make our farms more resilient to severe climate events.
Strengthen education, training, and technical assistance for CSAF practices.

- Strengthen and increase technical assistance
- Build on and expand existing education and outreach efforts
- Invest in and strengthen the role of the Climate Hubs
Support new and better markets for agriculture and forestry products generated through CSAF practices.

- Support producer participation in voluntary carbon markets
- Support the role of agriculture in decarbonizing the transportation sector
- Support renewable energy development in rural America
- Support deployment and development of methane digesters, biogas, and biobased products
- Support new markets for wood products
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USDA Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy

Develop a forest and wildfire resilience strategy.

- Increase the rate of fuels reduction to decrease the risk of severe wildfire
- Increase the rate of reforestation, especially after disturbances
- Support applied forest research to inform climate mitigation and adaptation
- Ensure equitable distribution of services regarding wildfire mitigation and response
USDA Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Strategy

**Improve research:**

- Support landscape-scale conservation and management
- Evaluate potential climate benefits of new technologies
- Increase our understanding of climate change and variability, its effects on agriculture and forests, and ways to build adaptation and resilience
- Support research into human dimensions and economic effects of climate change for agricultural and forest-dependent communities
- Target research on technologies with potential for mitigating U.S. agricultural GHG emissions
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