**FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Delivers on its Promises to Invest in Rural Communities, Nutrition Security, Climate-Smart Agriculture, More and Better Markets and Lower Costs for Families**

**Release & Contact Info**

**Fact Sheet**

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**WASHINGTON, Feb. 6, 2023** – President Biden is delivering on his promises to build a better America and rebuild the backbone of the country, the middle class. As the 2023 State of the Union approaches, it is clear that President Biden’s plan to lower costs for families and grow the economy from the bottom up and the middle out is working – we’ve seen the strongest two years of job growth in U.S. history, wages are up, inflation is moderating and the administration is making the biggest investment in America’s infrastructure since the 1950s. As part of this tremendous impact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues its efforts to build more and better markets for American agriculture, provide food and nutrition security, advance climate-smart agriculture, and ensure that USDA programs and services are accessible to all Americans.

“President Biden has passed a historic economic agenda to rebuild our infrastructure, supply chains, and manufacturing and reduce costs for families,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “As part of these historic achievements, USDA is working to build the economy from the bottom up and the middle out and, transform our food system so that it works for everyone and creates economic opportunity for all of our farmers, ranchers, and foresters, not just the few.”

Over the past two years, President Biden’s groundbreaking legislation has laid the foundation for a future that lifts up all Americans. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided USDA with more than $1 billion in funds to ensure underserved producers have the resources, tools, programs, and technical support they need to succeed; Passed in August 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build critical infrastructure, protect communities from wildfire and extreme heat, and drive climate-smart agriculture and renewable energy initiatives nationwide; Through the landmark Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), USDA fixes roads and bridges, improves water quality, brings affordable, high-speed internet access to rural areas, and makes climate-smart investments in partnership with agriculture, forestry, tribes, businesses, and communities. These historic pieces of legislation and funding opportunities offer a framework to build a profitable, sustainable, and resilient economy that benefits small, mid-sized, and large producers, alike.

Here is a look at USDA actions in 2022 to help more people benefit from economic growth, tackle climate change, create good-paying jobs for American workers, and invest in our families. We are supporting small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers to build and maintain successful, profitable businesses and stay on the land, speeding the transition to a circular economy, rather than one based on extracting resources from rural areas.

**Food System Transformation:** **USDA is transforming the food system and improving the resilience and security of the food supply chain through more than 60 programs** so that today’s markets work better for family farmers and the families they support. This multi-billion dollar effort is funded largely by ARP with some additional investments from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA), the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). It touches all parts of the food supply chain – from food production, food processing, food aggregation and distribution, to consumers. Select programs include:

* **More than $1 billion in investments**for food processing**,** distribution and aggregation infrastructure, including funding to expand and diversify independent meat and poultry processing capacity and addressing the credit access gap for meat and poultry processing projects.
* Since implementing ARP, **more than 2,800 small and very small businesses received $33 million in credits and refunds to help with holiday and overtime fees for FSIS inspection services**. About **266 small businesses saw opportunities for expanded markets** and **22 are building or expanding processing facilities in 2022**.
* **USDA is tackling pandemic-related shipping disruptions**. At the Port of Houston – the sixth busiest container gateway in the U.S. – USDA is increasing capacity for exporting chilled and frozen U.S. agricultural commodities. USDA also partnered with Northwest Seaport Alliance to create pop-up sites at the ports of Seattle and Tacoma (the fourth-largest container gateway in the U.S.) to store commodities so they’re ready for the next available ship.
* The **Farm and Food Workers Relief Grant Program** will make beneficiary payments to reach at least 1 million farmworkers, meatpacking workers, and front-line grocery workers who incurred pandemic-related health and safety costs.
* **Organic Transition Initiative: USDA launched a**$300 million Organic Transition Initiative including establishing the [Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)](https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp) in six regions across the U.S. as part of USDA’s Organic Transition Initiative to help transitioning and recently transitioned producers who face technical, cultural, and market shifts during the transition period and the first few years of organic certification.
* **Local Procurement**: Using $1.1 billion of American Rescue Plan and Commodity Credit Corporation funding for the [Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA)](https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfpacap) which uses non-competitive cooperative agreements with state and tribal governments to procure and distribute local and regional foods and beverages that are healthy, nutritious, and unique to their geographic area. The funding also was used for the [Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program](https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfs) (LFS), which strengthened the food system for schools by helping to build a fair, competitive, and resilient local food chain, and expand local and regional markets with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers and processors.

**Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry:** Climate change is happening, and America’s rural communities are on the frontlines. USDA is leading the way through climate-smart solutions that will improve the profitability andresilience of producers and foresters, open new market opportunities, and build wealth that stays in rural communities.

* **Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities:** USDA launched Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, which is revolutionizing agriculture’s ability to contribute to our national and international climate goals. USDA is investing more than **$3.1 billion for 141 projects** to support the production and marketing of climate-smart commodities through this effort. All of the projects will require meaningful involvement of small and underserved producers. The projects will:
  + **Create hundreds of expanded markets and revenue streams** for farmers and ranchers and commodities across agriculture and forestry ranging from traditional corn to specialty crops.
  + **Reach more than 60,000 farms, encompassing more than 25 million acres of working land**engaged in climate-smart production practices, like cover crops, no-till and nutrient management, as well as pasture and forestry management.
  + **Sequester more than 60 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent over the lives of the projects.** This is equivalent to removing more than 12 million gasoline-powered passenger vehicles from the road for one year.
* **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investments in Conservation and Forestry:** USDA enhanced its mission to protect communities from the risks of extreme wildfires, conserve forests with significant carbon sequestration benefits, and provide communities the resources and tools they need to prepare for and adapt to a changing climate.
  + **Wildland Firefighter Support:** With nearly $500 million in (BIL) funding, USDA increased wildland firefighter pay by as much as $20,000 a year, converted temporary positions to permanent positions, expanded mental health support, and announced efforts to establish a Wildland Firefighter Occupational Series.
  + **Community Wildfire Defense Program:** With support from the National Association of State Foresters and Intertribal Timber Council, USDA’s Forest Service will issue **$1 billion in grants over the next five years to reduce wildfire risk** for at-risk communities, including tribal communities, non-profit organizations, state forestry agencies and Alaska Native corporations.