

NEWS RELEASE

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Groundswell Center receives major USDA grant to train beginning farmers & boost regional green economy

Ithaca, NY.

The Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming, based in Ithaca, NY, has been awarded a three-year grant totaling \$707,727 to support training and business incubation programs for diverse beginning farmers in the central New York region.

"This is great news for beginning farmers and for our regional economy," says Joanna Green, Director of the Groundswell Center. "If you want to talk about green jobs for upstate New York, let's start with farming. Growing new farmers is essential to growing our world-class regional cuisine, and expanding agricultural tourism. Agriculture is the perfect clean and green economic engine for our region."

The new funding comes from USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. It will enable Groundswell to expand its offerings of technical and business training for aspiring farmers, and to secure a second, much larger site for its Farm Business Incubator Program.

Please refer to USDA's press release below for information about the latest rounds of grant awards from the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Groundswell's award is listed under its fiscal sponsor, "Center For Transformative Action."

For more information, contact info@groundswellcenter.org or visit www.groundswellcenter.org.

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Brian K. Mabry (20)

USDA Invests \$18 Million to Train Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Emphasis on military veterans and limited-resource farmers

New Orleans, LA - Feb. 2, 2015 - Today, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Deputy Secretary Kry (USDA) announced more than \$18 million in grants to educate, mentor, and enhance the sustainable next generation of farmers. The grants are available through the [Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#) (BFRDP) administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (

which was authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill).

"As new farmers and ranchers get started, they are really looking to their community for support. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program empowers these farmers and ranchers to bring innovative ideas to the table when it comes to addressing food security, creating economic enterprises, and building communities," said Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden. "As we celebrate the first anniversary of the 2014 Farm Bill, programs like these are evidence that an investment in beginning farmers and ranchers is an investment in our future".

The grant announcement was made at Recirculating Farms Coalition in New Orleans. Recirculating Farms received a BFRDP grant to develop training sessions focusing on soil-based production and aquaculture for new and beginning farmers in New Orleans.

The BFRDP program, first established by the 2008 Farm Bill, aims to support those who have farmed or ranched less than 10 years with workshops, educational teams, training, and technical assistance throughout the United States. NIFA awards grants to organizations that implement programs to train beginning farmers and ranchers. Today's announcement was funded by the 2014 Farm Bill, which continued authorization of this program.

The 2014 Farm Bill mandated at least five percent of BFRDP funding support veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers. Among today's announcement, more than 15 percent of the funded projects have a substantial component that supports veterans and farming, while about 50 percent of the projects focus mainly on socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. [A fact sheet with a complete list of awardees and project descriptions](#) is available on the USDA website.

- Since 2009, 184 awards have been made for more than \$90 million through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. These awards are part of USDA's deep commitment to beginning farmers and ranchers. Additional USDA investment in beginning farmers and ranchers include:
- Since 2009, FSA has issued more than 8895,000 direct and guaranteed farm operating and farm ownership loans to beginning farmers and ranchers.
- FSA's microloan program, an important access point to credit for some new farmers and ranchers, has issued more than 9,600 microloans totaling \$188 million. Seventy percent of these loans have gone to beginning farmers. Recently, USDA raised the ceiling for microloan from \$35,000 to \$50,000, giving new farmers access to more credit.
- The 2014 Farm Bill also strengthens the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for new producers by reducing the premiums on buy-up level coverage by 50 percent for new farmers and waiving their application fee. USDA announced this new tool for farmers and ranchers in 2015.
- USDA's Value-Added Producer Grants program gives priority to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them increase revenues through value-added agriculture, marketing, and new product development. Since 2009, more than 25 percent of 853 awarded Value Added Producer Grants went to beginning farmers and ranchers.

More information about USDA support for new farmers and ranchers is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program is currently accepting applications for the 2015 grant cycle. [Applications](#) are due March 13, 2015.

Funding for the BFRDP program is authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. The Farm Bill builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, NIFA focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. More information is at: www.nifa.usda.gov.

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