



Agricultural and Resource Policy Report

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HORTICULTURE, ORGANICS AND SMALL FARM PROVISIONS IN THE FARM BILL

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Despite the fact that organic agriculture is one of the fastest growing sectors of American agriculture, the U.S. is currently experiencing a domestic shortfall of organically-produced food as consumer demand continues to outpace supply. The surge in consumer demand for organically-produced food and agricultural products from local and regional markets have presented a unique set of opportunities and challenges. Rising demand for these kinds of foods is an important incentive for farmers and ranchers, but many still face the high cost of transitioning to organic production or live in an area that lacks appropriate processing and distribution infrastructure necessary to enable a local or regional food system to fully emerge.

Federal policies and programs have been slow to respond to this changing market environment, but the 2008 Farm Bill does take some important steps toward better addressing the gaps and technical support needs of producers and organizations who want to supply the growing demand for good food.

As an overview of the Farm Bill provisions that will impact specialty and alternative agricultural operations, including organics, horticulture, small and mid-sized farms, new farmers and socially disadvantaged producers, it is necessary to look across Titles of the Farm Bill for pockets of funding and programs that

may provide support and assist such operations. The provisions covered here will fall into four broad categories:

- I. Organic, Marketing and Production Cost Share and Technical Assistance,
- II. Research, Outreach and Data Initiatives to Support Specialty Agricultural Enterprises,
- III. Local Food Systems Initiatives
and
- IV. Working Lands programs applicable for alternative producers (conservation title programs with special provisions to some producers).

For each of these broad categories, significant changes in this Farm Bill's provision, compared to the 2002 Bill will be outlined, using the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service's overview, with some additional discussion of how some of the programs are tied with specialty agriculture and food sectors, and an overview of specific objectives of the funding programs highlighted here (and which were already available for producers).

I. Organic, Marketing and Production Cost-Share and Technical Assistance

Marketing and technical assistance were requested by several sustainable, organic and other farm

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organizations based on perceptions that too little of the available support from government, academic and NGO entities were effectively targeted at production and marketing systems that were organic, direct

marketing, low input or sustainable in their approach to farming systems.

Some examples of programs that changed significantly in the most recent Farm Bill include:

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Training, education, outreach, and technical assistance competitive grants program established for beginning farmers or ranchers (who have not operated a farm or have operated a farm for 10 years or less). Provided 3-year grants, with matching funds, for local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives.</p> <p>Collaborative State, tribal, local, or regionally based networks or partnerships of public or private entities became eligible. Funds were to be set aside specifically for limited-resource farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, or farmworkers wishing to farm. Authorized necessary funds for FY 2002-07.</p>	<p>Requires grant applications to be evaluated on relevancy, technical merit, achievability, expertise, track record, and applicability of results. Priority to be given to collaborations that include nongovernmental and community-based organizations and grants are to be regionally diverse. Maximum grant is \$250,000/year. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds shall be made available: \$18 million for FY 2009 and \$19 million annually for FY 2010-12. Additional appropriations of \$30 million/year are authorized for FY 2008-12.</p>

Specialty Crop Competitiveness

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 established block grants for each State for fiscal years (FY) 2005-09 to enhance specialty crop competitiveness, subject to appropriations.</p>	<p>Continues Specialty Crop Block Grant Program through FY 02012. Increases mandatory levels of CCC funding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10 million in FY 2008 • \$49 million in FY 2009 • \$55 million/year in FY 2010-12 <p>Each State is to receive \$100,000 or 1/3 of 1% of total funding for each fiscal year, whichever is higher. If State does not spend its full amount, money will be reallocated to other States.</p>
<p>Eligible "specialty crops" in Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act included fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops (including floriculture).</p>	<p>Adds horticulture to definition of "specialty crop." Adds Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands to list of eligible "States."</p>
<p>Market Access Program: Authorized additional \$2 million for promoting specialty-crop exports above amount already authorized under 2002 Farm Act's Trade Title.</p>	<p>Authorizes \$200 million annually for FY 2008-12. See Title III, Market Access Program.</p>

Cost-Share Assistance for Organic Certification

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 authorized cost-share assistance for organic certification to producers in not more than 15 States that have historically low participation rate in Federal Crop Insurance Program.</p> <p>Established National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program to assist producers and handlers of agricultural products in obtaining certification under National Organic Program, which was established under Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. Provided \$5 million in FY 2002, to remain available until expended. Maximum Federal cost share was 75% annually, with up to \$500 paid to individual producer or handler.</p>	<p>Increases mandatory funding for National <u>Organic Certification</u> Cost-Share Program to \$22 million in FY 2008, to remain available until expended. Maximum Federal cost share remains at 75%, but cap increases to \$750/operation.</p> <p>Adds State and Federal recordkeeping requirements, and requires Secretary to submit annual report to Congress describing State expenditures.</p>

National Organic Program Support

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>No similar provision.</p>	<p>Authorizes \$5 million in funding in FY 2008 (currently \$2.6 million) for USDA's program that regulates organic standards and certification. Increases authorized funding to \$11 million by FY 2012.</p>

Insurance of Organic Crops

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>No similar provision.</p>	<p>Requires FCIC to contract for studies of organic production coverage improvement. Unless studies document "significant, consistent, and systemic variations in loss history between organic and nonorganic crops," requires FCIC to eliminate or reduce premium surcharge for organic production. Studies to include development of procedure to offer additional <u>price election</u> that reflects actual prices received for organic crops.</p>

There are several important issues to note about the current policy environment and these changes, including the potential relationships between beginning farmers, specialty crops, organics and technical assistance needs among these audiences. This is the first time there is mandatory funding in the form of competitive grants to fund education, extension, and outreach to foster new farming opportunities. This assistance, together with new financing programs (down payment loans, development accounts, land purchase guaran-

tees), and some new programs to provide transition support (including organic certification cost-shares) appears to connect potential limited resource producers together with those considering sustainable approaches who do not currently have access to land resources. Given the relatively younger, less land intensive and less traditionally educated set of producers who are commonly found establishing horticulture, specialty crop, organic or direct marketing food enterprises, all these programs may be quite complementary.

In prior USDA National Research Initiative competitive grants programs, there were already Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) opportunities to transfer new research and technology to small businesses, and those programs will persist, but participation has been challenging for some producers.

In terms of programs specifically targeted at the Organic sector, a full portfolio of programs are emerging or increasing their scope. There was a significant increase in cost-share assistance, new programs to provide technical and financial assistance for organic conversion (within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program), newly targeted insurance products, better federal support to the sector and some new data/research (outlined below). Moreover, Appropriate Technology and Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA), a keystone technical assistance project for this sector, received more solid funding and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) will receive greater funding to do, among other things, professional

development and producer grants aimed to support innovation and networking.

II. Research, Outreach and Data Initiatives to Support Alternative Agricultural Enterprises

One of the key roles of the USDA for the agricultural sector is its provision of marketing data, applied research and outreach to transfer those data and knowledge to the field, partly through Land Grant institutions and other academic partners, as well as government agencies that develop data and research products. However, the organic, specialty crop and alternative communities have actively sought more of this data and research in areas where they face production, marketing or competitive challenges.

There are several new or expanded programs aimed at growing USDA's focus and impacts in these sectors including:

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Funding totaled \$3 million annually, out of "funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated." New features for organic agriculture research included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of advanced genomics, field trials, and other methods to identify desirable traits • classical and marker-assisted breeding to develop public varieties optimized for organic systems • identification of marketing and policy constraints on expansion of organic agriculture • advanced on-farm research into organic farms, including production and socioeconomic conditions • segregation of data on organic sector in ongoing data collection on agricultural production and marketing • facilitation of access to organic research conducted outside U.S. <p>Required Secretary to report within 1 year on research and promotion of organic products.</p>	<p>Adds new purposes to Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study conservation and environmental outcomes of organic practices • develop new and improved seed varieties for use in organic production systems <p>Increases mandatory CCC funding to total of \$78 million for FY 2009-12. <u>Authorizes</u> additional annual <u>appropriations</u> of \$25 million for FY</p>

Production and Market Data ;Economic Research and Analysis

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Required maintenance of segregated data on production and marketing of organic agricultural products in ongoing data collection on agricultural production and marketing.</p>	<p>Provides \$5 million in first-time mandatory CCC funding to be available until expended over 5 years for expanded organic data collection initiative. Authorizes additional \$5 million/year.</p> <p>Objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collect and distribute comprehensive reporting of prices relating to organically produced agricultural products • conduct surveys and analysis and publish reports relating to organic production, handling, distribution, retail, and trend studies (including consumer purchasing patterns) • develop surveys and report statistical analysis on organically produced agricultural products <p>Requires Secretary to submit a progress report on implementation of this initiative.</p>

Specialty Crops

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 added additional research area for purpose of improving efficiency, productivity, and profitability of specialty crop production.</p>	<p>Establishes Specialty Crop Research Initiative to provide research and extension grants to address specific crops and their regions. Grants awarded on <u>competitive</u> basis, and must be matched by non-Federal source. Gives priority to multistate, multidisciplinary, multi-institution efforts. Mandates CCC funding of \$30 million in FY 2008, and \$50 million annually in FY 2009-12. <u>Authorizes</u> additional annual <u>appropriations</u> of \$100 million. Includes research addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plant breeding, genetics, and genomics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ product taste, quality, and appearance ○ environmental response and tolerance ○ nutrient management, including uptake ○ pest and disease management ○ phytonutrient content • pollination, pest, and disease issues • productivity and profitability • “new innovations” such as ripening technologies • food safety, including that related to fresh produce <p>Amends Specialty Crop Committee Report to include economic analysis and applied information useful to specialty growers and policy research centers.</p>
<p>Required Secretary to establish program to identify alternatives to methyl bromide and to initiate research programs to develop alternatives for uses currently lacking registered, effective, economically feasible alternatives.</p>	<p>Directs transfer of \$200,000 to Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances to conduct meta-analysis related to methyl bromide.</p>

Within the newly created Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (that will take the place of the NRI programs that currently support integrated and basic research in many of these areas), small and medium-sized farm profitability, rural entrepreneurship, conventional/classical plant and animal breeding, agro-ecosystems, sustainable production systems, and renewable energy are all included as national priorities. Although these research programs will be very competitive and target basic (as well as applied) research, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension (SARE) program will continue to provide regional leadership in research and professional development among producers and their partners as well. SARE has been a flagship research program for sustainable agriculture given its cost-effective administration and strong farmer participation.

The new data products and market research will mirror some of the products available to the broader agricultural sector, but may be more impactful given the potential value of such marketing information to sectors that are more likely to directly market and develop their own pricing and marketing plans.

III. Local Food Systems Initiatives

There has been increasing consumer interest in procuring foods from their local food system, as well as evidence that some economic development goals may be well served by more innovation in regional food systems. These aims may also complement specialty crop and organic systems given the likelihood that fresh produce and organic offerings would be commonly found in local markets. The 2008 Farm Bill signaled new and greater investments in several program areas including:

Farmers' Market Promotion Program

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Farmers' Market Promotion Program provided grants to local governments, nonprofit corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, or other entities to improve and expand farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Authorized appropriations as may have been necessary.</p>	<p>Adds an agri-tourism promotion program to categories of farmer-to-consumer direct marketing activities eligible for funding.</p> <p>Provides mandatory CCC funding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3 million for FY 2008 • \$5 million/year for FY 2009-10 • \$10 million/year for FY 2011-12 <p>Requires at least 10% of funds to be used to support use of electronic benefit transfers from Federal nutrition programs at farmers' markets.</p>

Value-Added Agricultural Product Marketing Development Grants

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Authorized Value-Added Agricultural Product Marketing Development Grants, with expanded eligibility.</p> <p>Funded new Agriculture Innovation Center Demonstration Program to provide technical assistance, business and marketing planning, and other nonfinancial assistance to value-added businesses.</p>	<p>Mandatory funding of \$15 million available on Oct 1, 2008 from CCC for use until expended. Establishes priority for socially disadvantaged and new farmers. 10% of funding shall be reserved for projects benefiting beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, and 10% shall be reserved for projects developing mid-tier value chains.</p> <p>Authorizes appropriations for Agriculture Innovation Center Demonstration Program.</p>

Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Authorized \$5 million in FY 2002 and \$15 million/year through FY 2007 to implement and expand Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to provide fresh, locally grown produce to low-income seniors.</p> <p>Authorized \$15 million in additional funding for WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to help participants obtain fresh produce from farmers' markets.</p>	<p>Extends authorization of Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program through FY 2012, with mandatory funding of \$20.6 million annually.</p> <p>Disallows value of any benefit provided by program to be considered as income or resources and prohibits collection of State and local sales tax on purchases of food made with program benefits.</p>

Locally Produced Foods

2002-07 Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Directed Secretary to encourage schools participating in National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to purchase locally produced foods. Authorized annual funding of \$400,000 for FY 2003-07 to provide startup grants for up to 200 institutions.</p>	<p>Directs Secretary to encourage institutions, such as schools, that receive funds from child nutrition programs to purchase unprocessed agricultural products, both locally grown and locally raised, to maximum extent practicable and appropriate. Allows use of geographic preference in procurement in all programs funded under NSLA, Child Nutrition Act, and DoD Fresh Program.</p>

Grants to Improve Transporting Specialty Crops

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>No similar provision.</p>	<p>Authorizes grants to improve cost-effectiveness and address intermodal deficiencies of transporting specialty crops to local, regional, and international markets.</p> <p>Grants available to State and local governments; grower cooperatives; national, State, or regional producer, shipper, or carrier organizations; and other approved groups.</p>

In addition to these market development programs, there are other programs that will indirectly support more localized food industries. The Local and Regional Food Enterprise Guaranteed Loans program in the new farm bill will fund enterprises that process, distribute, aggregate, store, and market local and regional foods. This, together with the Value-Added Producer Grants Program's (VAPG) new focus on some smaller scale operations, may fuel new activity, while new provisions on interstate shipments of state-inspected meats and research on cost effective specialty crops transportation could improve competitiveness of alternative operations.

IV. Working Lands Programs Applicable for Alternative Producers

The Conservation title of the Farm Bill has become an increasingly important element of farm policy, as environmental stewardship services gain attention and value in some of the voting public's eyes. Many see a natural complementarity between these programs and alternative agricultural systems, and this is evident in several provisions including:

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) assists owners, through long-term rental agreements or easements, in restoring grassland and conserving virgin grassland while maintaining areas for livestock grazing and hay production.

2002 Farm Bill	2008 Farm Bill
Could have enrolled restored, improved, or natural grassland, rangeland, and pasture, including prairie.	Eligible land to also include grassland tracts containing historical or archaeological resources.
Could have enrolled up to 2 million acres during FY 2003-07, but CCC funding was limited to \$254 million. For FY 2003-06, \$217 million of CCC funding was provided.	Authorized additional 1.22 million acres for enrollment during FY 2009-12. CCC funding is authorized, but not explicitly limited.
Tracts had to be at least 40 contiguous acres.	Retains provision.
Could have enrolled eligible grassland under: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rental agreements of 10, 15, 20, or 30 years • 30-year or permanent easements, or • easements for maximum duration allowed under state law 	No longer authorizes 30-year rental agreements and 30-year easements.
Could have used up to 60% of funds for 30-year rental contracts or 30-year and permanent easements. Up to 40% was available for 10-, 15-, and 20-year contracts.	To extent feasibility, 60% of funds are to be used for easements.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides payments to producers for adopting or maintaining a wide range of conservation management and land-

based structural practices that address one or more resources of concern, such as soil, water, and wildlife habitat.

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
Predecessor program was Conservation Security Program.	Replaces Conservation Security Program with Conservation Stewardship Program, 2009-12. Existing Conservation Security Program contracts to continue as written, but no new contracts will be initiated after Sept 30, 2008. CCC funds, as necessary, to be available to fund these contracts.
Conservation Security Program funded through CCC as "capped" entitlement program, with program spending capped at \$794 million for FY 2002-07. Limited annual enrollment to selected watersheds; total of 331 watersheds for FY 2002-07. Applicants were ranked using category system based largely on producer stewardship.	Enrollment of acreage into program is authorized through FY 2017. Enrolls 12.77 million acres/year at average cost of \$18/acre/year, including financial assistance, technical assistance, and other expenses. Requires 5% of acres be made available for beginning farmers and another 5% of acres for socially disadvantaged producers.
All cropland and grazing land was eligible for Conservation Security Program enrollment, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land must have been cropped in 4 of 6 years prior to 2002 • land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or Grasslands Reserve Program was not eligible 	All privately owned cropland and grazing land (including land under jurisdiction of Indian tribe) is generally eligible for enrollment, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land must have been cropped in 4 of 6 years prior to 2008 (except land in long-term rotation) • land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or Grasslands Reserve Program is not eligible • Nonindustrial private forest land incidental to agricultural operation is also eligible but cannot account for more than 10% of acres enrolled in any given year.

Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) provides assistance to States found to be underserved by Federal crop insurance program.

Previous Legislation	2008 Farm Bill
<p>Provided \$29.2 million in CCC funding for FY 2002-07. Producers in 15 designated States were eligible for financial assistance for range of risk reduction purposes, including practices that also protected natural resources through soil erosion control, integrated pest management, and <u>organic farming</u>.</p>	<p>Makes available up to \$15 million annually in CCC funds for conservation programs. Level of producer interest in participating within the State is considered in determining specific funding allocations. Adds Hawaii to list of designated States where producers are eligible for financial assistance.</p> <p>Allocates funding as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% through NRCS for various conservation practices • 40% through Risk Management Agency for any risk-reduction activities • 10% for assistance in <u>organic certification</u> through USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service

It should be noted that the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) - formerly the Conservation Security Program - was established in the 2002 Farm Bill and represents the first serious attempt to move toward an outcome-based federal conservation program that rewards environmental performance rather than prescriptive practices. CSP participants can earn payments that are not based on the type or volume of production or on prices, but on fulfillment of clearly defined conservation conditions and compensation for provision of environmental services. The 2008 Farm Bill expands and improves the Conservation Stewardship Program, making it available nationwide with a continuous enrollment process and ranking system (not limited to particular watersheds as in previous years). There will also be special outreach for organic producers.

Within the Conservation Reserve Program Transition Incentives, funding will encourage owners of CRP land that is returning to production to rent or sell to beginning and minority farmers and ranchers who implement comprehensive conservation plans, including producers adopting rotational grazing or organic production. Finally, a new mandatory requirement reserves 6% of working lands conservation funding

(CSP, EQIP, WHIP) to be delivered through State and local partnerships, including NGOs, focusing on local and innovative solutions to agro-environmental problems: in short, 90% of funding total will be determined at the State level.

Implications for Specialty, Organic and Alternative Operations

There are a myriad of programs and funding opportunities for those who operate within, support or partner with agricultural operations that are positioned outside the more traditional commodity model. This fact sheet has given brief overviews of most policy changes, and what follows is a comprehensive list of some funding programs that are established.

For other programs, it is important to work with the agency partners that will receive feedback, administer, and evaluate how to best allocate these new resources. So, it is imperative to work with the USDA offices, NGO partners, Land Grant institutions or agricultural organizations who are equipped to facilitate and support your use of these programs.

Appendix: SOME MARKET RELATED USDA FUNDING PROGRAMS

This listing of funding to support marketing is based on a summary developed by Henry Bahn, Program leaders with the USDA CSREES in 2008. In essence, there are funding programs to support alternative agricultural operations (organic, local, small and mid-sized, socially disadvantaged) in three different ways, and several programs provide more than one type of support. The three broad types of support include:

- I. **Marketing Technical Assistance**
- II. **Development and Evaluation of Marketing Tools and Approaches**
- III. **Applied and Integrated Research**

I. Marketing Technical Assistance

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1130>

SARE works to increase knowledge about - and help farmers and ranchers adopt - practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good to communities. Several types of competitive grants are awarded by four regional administrative councils. Research and education grants, generally ranging from \$60,000 to \$150,000, fund projects that usually involve scientists, producers and others in an interdisciplinary approach. Professional development grants, generally ranging from \$20,000 to \$90,000, offer educational opportunities for extension, NRCS, and other agricultural professionals. Producer grants, typically between \$1,000 and \$15,000, go to farmers and ranchers who test innovative ideas and share the results with their neighbors. Projects address crop and livestock production and marketing, stewardship of soil and other natural resources, economics and quality of life. Application details, deadlines, and percent success vary by region and program [Jill Shore Auburn](#)

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1113>

The Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program (OASDFR) provides funds to organizations to conduct outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers

to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate in agricultural programs. The OASDFR will support a wide range of outreach and assistance activities in farm management, financial management, marketing, application and bidding procedures, and other areas. The primary purpose of the OASDFR is to deliver outreach and technical assistance, to assure opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and ranches; and assure equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs. [Dionne Toombs](#)

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1080>

The FY 2008 Community Food Projects RFA is reopening ONLY for those applicants who had a letter of intent accepted in February. PLEASE NOTE: The ONLY change to the RFA is to re-establish a close date for the proposals. Community Food Projects should be designed to (1): (A) meet the food needs of low-income people; (B) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (C) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and/or (2) meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (A) infrastructure improvement and development; (B) planning for long-term solutions; or (C) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers. [Elizabeth Tuckermanty](#)

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/bfrdp.html>

Section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub .L. No. 110-234) amended Section 7405 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and made available in fiscal year (FY) 2009 \$18 million to fund a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). To support the nation's beginning farmers and ranchers, the BFRDP will make competitive grants to new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives that address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers in several areas. [Janie Simms Hipp](#)

II. Development and Evaluation of Marketing Tools and Approaches

Farmers Market Promotion Program <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FMPP&description=Farmers%20Market%20Promotion%20Program&acct=fmpp>

The Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) was created through a recent amendment of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. The grants, authorized by the FMPP, are targeted to help improve and expand domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Approximately \$5 million is allocated for FMPP for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 and \$10 million for Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012. The maximum amount awarded for any one proposal cannot exceed \$75,000. Entities eligible to apply include agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public health corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities and Tribal governments. [Carmen Humphrey](#)

Federal State Marketing Improvement Program <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateC&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FSMIP&description=Federal%20State%20Marketing%20Improvement%20Program&acct=gpfsmip>

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture and other appropriate State agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system. [Janise Zygmunt](#)

Small Business Innovation Research: Small and Mid Sized Farms <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/smallandmidsizedfarmssbir.cfm>

This is one of 12 topic areas in the USDA SBIR program. Funded research concentrates on the development of new technologies and information that will help improve the viability and profitability of small and mid-size farms and ranches. Emphasis is placed on

developing new agricultural enterprises that are focused on specialty farm products, including both plants and animals, and how to market these products; developing new management tools to enhance the efficiency and profitability of small farms; developing farming methods appropriately scaled to small farms that are directed at more efficient use of natural resources; and developing new educational tools to ensure that small farmers have the information they need to operate their farms on a sustainable and profitable basis. Click the "More SBIR information" link for additional information including eligibility requirements. [Charles F. Cleland](#)

Small Business Innovation Research: Marketing and Trade <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1105>

Under the Marketing and Trade program, proposals identify an array of innovative marketing strategies to increase sales of agricultural, forestry and aquacultural products (either raw or processed commodities, value-added foods, feed and industrial products derived from these commodities). The marketing strategies identified include: assess and evaluate the type, size and location of domestic and international market opportunities; develop strategies to gain entry into new markets or expand sales in current markets; develop advanced information systems that provide complete, relevant and timely information on marketing opportunities for an industry or producers in a state, region or the USA; development of market-based approaches to reduce or mitigate adverse agri-environmental consequences or to promote positive agri-environmental outcomes while simultaneously preserving economic growth. [Siva Sureshwaran](#)

Small Business Innovation Research: Rural Development <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fnum=1126>

This is one of 12 topic areas in the USDA SBIR program. Funded research focuses on the development of new technologies, and on the innovative application of new or existing technologies, to address important problems and opportunities affecting people and institutions in rural America. Overall the rural development topic area is less centered on agriculture and more on areas of increasing importance to rural communities, such as environmental enhancement, disaster resilience, service delivery, and entrepreneurial and workforce skills. This topic area continues to require all applicants to explicitly discuss the specific rural

problem or opportunity that they will examine and how this project will successfully address it. Click the “More SBIR information” link for additional information including eligibility requirements. [Siva Sureshwaran](#)

III. Applied and Integrated Research

National Research Initiative - Agribusiness Markets and Trade

The National Research Initiative (NRI) was not reauthorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246; i.e., the 2008 Farm Bill). We encourage you to explore funding opportunities under the new Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program at www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/an_stakeholder_afri. Success of the U.S. economy in general, and agribusiness and rural communities in particular, is increasingly dependent on maintaining and expanding domestic and international markets. It is also dependent on the development of new products, production practices, and business and marketing tools and information that enhances efficiency, equity and the competitiveness of the producer. [Siva Sureshwaran](#)

National Research Initiative - Rural Development

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1127>

The National Research Initiative (NRI) was not reauthorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246; i.e., the 2008 Farm Bill). We encourage you to explore funding opportunities under the new Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program at www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/an_stakeholder_afri. The Rural Development Program will focus on developing sustainable rural communities through integrated projects focused on enhancing economic vitality of rural communities and reduce rural poverty; protecting and enhancing economic growth and the natural resource base of rural areas by developing strategies that reduce the competition between economic growth and the environment; and building a diversified workforce to meet the needs of the present and for the future. [Siva Sureshwaran](#)

National Research Initiative - Agricultural Prosperity for Small and Medium-Sized Farms

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1200>

The National Research Initiative (NRI) was not reau-

thorized in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246; i.e., the 2008 Farm Bill). We encourage you to explore funding opportunities under the new Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program at www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder/an_stakeholder_afri. The purpose of this program is to foster interdisciplinary studies to improve our understanding of the interactions between the economic and environmental components important to the long-term viability, competitiveness and efficiency of small and medium-sized farms (including social, biological and other components, if necessary). While small and medium-sized farms account for less than 25 percent of the value of all agricultural products sold in the U.S., the long-term viability of these farms is critical to the prosperity of rural people and places as these farms account for approximately 92 percent of all farms in the U.S. [Siva Sureshwaran](#)

Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1980>

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) was established to solve critical industry issues through research and extension activities. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops including floriculture. SCRI will give priority to projects that are multi-state, multi-institutional, or trans-disciplinary; and include explicit mechanisms to communicate results to producers and the public. Projects must address at least one of five focus areas: research in plant breeding, genetics, and genomics to improve crop characteristics; efforts to identify and address threats from pests and diseases, including threats to pollinators; efforts to improve production efficiency, productivity, and profitability over the long term; new innovations and technologies that delay or inhibit ripening; and methods to prevent, detect, monitor control, and respond to potential food safety hazards in the production and processing of specialty crops. [Thomas \(Tom\) Bewick](#)

Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Programs

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1102>

CSREES Integrated Programs provide support for integrated research, education, and extension activities. Integrated, multi-functional projects are particularly effective in addressing important agricultural issues

through the conduct of problem-focused research that is combined with education and extension of knowledge to those in need of solutions. These activities address critical national, regional, and multi-state agricultural issues, priorities, or problems. Integrated Programs hold the greatest potential to produce and disseminate knowledge and technology directly to end users while providing for educational opportunities to assure agricultural expertise in future generations. Individual program Requests for Applications for additional information about the topics. [Deborah Sheely](#)

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonum=1130>

SARE works to increase knowledge about - and help farmers and ranchers adopt - practices that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good to communities. Several types of competitive grants are awarded by four regional administrative councils. Research and education grants, generally ranging from \$60,000 to \$150,000, fund projects that usually involve scientists, producers and others in an interdisciplinary approach. Professional development grants, generally ranging from \$20,000 to \$90,000, offer educational opportunities for extension, NRCS, and other agricultural professionals. Producer grants, typically between \$1,000 and

\$15,000, go to farmers and ranchers who test innovative ideas and share the results with their neighbors. Projects address crop and livestock production and marketing, stewardship of soil and other natural resources, economics and quality of life. Application details, deadlines, and percent success vary by region and program [Jill Shore Auburn](#)

References

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