WASHINGTON, May 29, 2014 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding $6 million to universities and cooperative state extension services to develop online decision tools and other materials and train experts to educate producers about several key farm bill programs. The new Web tools will help farmers and ranchers determine what participation in programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will mean for their businesses.

The University of Illinois (lead for the National Coalition for Producer Education), along with the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri and the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M (co-leads for the National Association of Agricultural and Food Policy), will receive a total of $3 million to develop the new online tools and train state-based extension agents who can in turn help educate farmers.

“Helping farmers and ranchers understand new Farm Bill programs and what the programs mean for their families is one of USDA's top priorities,” said Vilsack. “With the resources we’re providing, university experts will help ensure farmers and ranchers are highly educated as they make critical decisions about new programs that impact their livelihoods. The new tools that will be developed will empower farmers and ranchers to select the plan that best fits their unique needs.”

The new resources will help farmers and ranchers make an educated choice between the new Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. Using the new online tools, producers will be able to use data unique to their specific farming operations combined with factors like the geographical diversity of crops, soils, weather and climates across the country to test a variety of financial scenarios before officially signing up for the new program options later this year. Once a producer enrolls in the ARC or PLC program, he or she must remain in the program through the 2018 crop year.

New tools will be provided for other programs as well. Sign-up for the newly established Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP) begins late this summer and enrollment for "buy-up" provisions under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) will begin early next year. An online MPP tool will be available when sign up begins and the NAP buy-up provision resource will become available to producers in the fall for the 2015 crop year.

The University of Illinois, as lead for NCPE, and FAPRI at the University of Missouri and AFPC, at Texas A&M, as co-leads for NAAFP will develop the ARC and PLC Web tool program. The University of Illinois will also develop the online resources for MPP and NAP.
USDA will also award $3 million to state cooperative extension services—a nationwide network of experts based at land-grant universities—for outreach and education on the new Farm Bill programs. Funds will be used to conduct public education outreach meetings where producers can speak with local extension agents and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff. Outreach meetings will begin late this summer to help farmers and ranchers understand the new programs and their options.

While universities work to create new online tools, producers now have access to a preliminary website that gives them a chance to begin familiarizing themselves with the new programs and the type of information they will need to consider when deciding which program options work better for them. At this site, farmers and ranchers can view ARC and PLC projected payments, ARC guarantees, and PLC payment rate projections. These tables are available on the FSA website.

Today's announcement was made possible through the 2014 Farm Bill, which 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.

**Partners to Develop Web-based Decision Tools:**
For the NCPE, University of Illinois as lead: Michigan State University, Montana State University, Watts & Associates, Delaware State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, North Carolina A&T University, University of Wisconsin, Cornell University, Pennsylvania State University, Ohio State University, and University of Minnesota.

For the NAAFP, FAPRI and AFPC as co-leads: Texas Tech University, University of Missouri, Iowa State University, University of Nebraska, Kansas State University, Mississippi State University, Oklahoma State University, Tennessee State University, University of Georgia, and Fresno State University.

View a list of funding for the state extension services.

**Implementation Time Line for Selected Farm Bill Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-Summer - 2014</th>
<th>Late Summer - 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Winter 2014</th>
<th>Early 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Producers receive letters notifying them of current bases and yields and 2009 to 2012 planting history.</td>
<td>MPP, ARC and PLC online tools become available.</td>
<td>NAP buy-up online tools become available.</td>
<td>ARC/PLC one-time selections occur.</td>
<td>ARC/PLC sign-up for 2014 and 2015 starts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MPP enrollment for 2014 and 2015 begins.</td>
<td>NAP buy-up sign-up starts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MPP owners have opportunity to update yields and reallocate bases for ARC/PLC purposes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visit [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) or the local FSA office for information about FSA and the 2014 Farm Bill programs.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).