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USDA hands out \$35M for cleantech projects

August 28, 2008

The cash will be used for renewable energy systems or to improve energy efficiency in farm and business operations.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture said today it awarded \$35 million in grants and loans guarantees for cleantech projects across the country. The awards will be spread among 639 individuals and businesses in 43 states and the Virgin Islands for renewable energy systems or to improve energy efficiency in farm and business operations.

The grants and loan guarantees were awarded through the USDA Rural Development's Section 9006 Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements program.

"America is a world leader in renewable energy and energy efficiency," said Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer. "These projects are good for business, good for the economy, good for jobs, and they help secure more self sufficient energy resources for our country."

The program provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses to support renewable energy projects across a wide range of technologies including biomass, geothermal, hydrogen, solar and wind energy.

The USDA said the program also provides support for energy efficiency improvements, helping recipients reduce energy consumption and improve operations. Of the \$35 million announced today, \$27.5 million is in grants and \$7.4 million is in guaranteed loans.

D.J. Keehner Farms in Iowa and A & L Lawson Partnership in Louisiana are two of the recipients. D.J. Keehner is getting a \$11,561 grant to replace a propane heating system with a more energy-efficient geothermal system, which is expected to reduce energy costs by 78 percent. A & L Lawson will receive a \$14,980 grant to purchase and install energy-efficient electric motors to replace and power a diesel irrigation well, expected to reduce energy consumption by 48 percent.

For a complete list of recipients, click [here](#).

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Regarding renewable energy as an investment category, would a large drop in oil prices:

Make renewables much less attractive

Have little effect, because there are other drivers

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