

Glickman Announces \$300 Million Bioenergy Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced details of a new \$300 million program to encourage expanded production of environmentally-friendly fuels made from corn, soybeans, and other crops.

The program, which was initially proposed in President Clinton's 2001 budget as part of the farm safety net, will help expand markets for agricultural commodities and promote use of bio-fuels like ethanol and soy-based biodiesel.

"This program will help us tap into a huge domestic energy re-

serve — our family farms," said Glickman. "Encouraging the use of bioenergy benefits America's farmers while improving our energy security and helping to protect the environment."

Biofuels offer renewable, clean, domestic sources of fuel that can create new markets for America's farmers. Ethanol, practically non-existent 20 years ago, now accounts for 1.2 percent of the nation's gasoline supply. Already, 567 million bushels of corn, over 5 percent of U.S. production, are grown annually for use in biofuels. President Clinton issued an executive order last

summer that set a goal of tripling the U.S. use of renewable energy.

Under the program, USDA will make cash payments to bioenergy companies that increase their purchases of corn, soybeans and other commodities to expand production of ethanol, biodiesel or other biofuels. The program will provide higher payments to small and new-to-market processors, including co-operatives, to encourage the expansion of domestic bioenergy production capacity. USDA will provide up to \$150 million for the program this fiscal year and another \$150 million in fiscal 2002.

The new regulation, under development during this past year, was finalized under a USDA rule-making process. A proposed rule was issued this summer, followed by a public comment period. Sign-up for the program will begin in December. Further information will be available on the Web at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daco/bioenergy/bioenergy.htm>.

Glickman also announced that USDA is soliciting proposals for pilot projects that use harvested vegetation to produce energy. Biomass, plant materials containing cellulose and lignin, can be burned, converted into com-

postible gas, or used to produce liquid fuels. The land must be enrolled in USDA's Conservation Reserve Program and the vegetative cover, such as grass, must be an approved cover for use in the conservation program. Pilot projects will be for a minimum period of 10 years and the total acreage per project may not exceed 50,000 acres.

The maximum acreage for all pilot projects will not exceed 250,000 acres. No more than one project will be approved in any state. Those interested in submitting proposals for biomass projects should contact their State Farm Service Agency.

Maryland Farm Bureau Nominates Hughes For National Award

RANDALLSTOWN, Md. — The Maryland Farm Bureau board of directors recently nominated H. John Hughes of Snow Hill, Md. for the national Excellence In Crop Advising Award.

Each state Farm Bureau nominates a certified crop adviser (CCA) to the American Farm Bureau Federation for consideration for the national award.

Hughes is an employee of

Keen Consulting, Inc. and performs scouting reports for cotton, small grains, soybeans, corn, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, and sweet corn. He also develops nutrient management plans as a certified nutrient management consultant in Maryland and Virginia, and holds a commercial pesticide license in Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware.

Hughes will be honored at the

Maryland Farm Bureau Annual Convention in December. The presentation will take place during the banquet Tuesday evening, Dec. 5, at the Sheraton Fontainebleau in Ocean City,

Md.

The Excellence in Crop Advising Award honors the CCA who strives to provide the best service in nutrient management, soil and water conservation, integrated

pest management, and crop production. The winner of the national award will be honored at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in Orlando, Fla. in January.

USDA Protects Six New Plant Varieties

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA has issued certificates of protection to developers of six

new varieties of seed-reproduced plants. They include lettuce, pea, pepper, potato, and watermelon.

The six certificates are being issued under the Plant Variety Protection Act. The certificates

require that the varieties be new, distinct, uniform, and stable. The owners will have the exclusive right to reproduce, sell, import, and export their products in the United States for the duration of protection.

The six certificates are the Snow Green and Snow Wind varieties of pea, developed by Novartis Seeds, Inc., Boise, Idaho; the 504 Green and Green Day varieties of lettuce, developed by Seminis Vegetable Seeds, Inc., Oxnard, Calif.; the Tift 8593 variety of millet, developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Tifton, Ga.; and the MSL 501 C variety of rapeseed, developed by Svalof Weibull AB and Norddeutsche Pflanzenzucht Hans-Georg Lemke KG, Svalov, Sweden.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administers the Plant Variety Protection Act, which provides time limited marketing protection to developers of new and distinct seed-reproduced and tuber-propagated plants ranging from farm crops to flowers. For additional information about the Plant Variety Protection Act, contact the Plant Variety Protection Office at (301) 504-5518 (tel.), (301) 504-5291 (fax), or www.ams.usda.gov/science/pvp.htm (Website).

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