



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA CREATES VOLUNTARY REGISTER TO REACH MINORITY PRODUCERS

WASHINGTON, August 20, 2004 – Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced today that minority farmers and ranchers may now join a new voluntary register to receive information from USDA.

“The new Minority Farm Register is an outreach tool to underserved farmers and ranchers who are not currently enrolled in USDA loan, farm or conservation programs,” said Veneman during video taped remarks to the 37th Annual Meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund being held in Epes, Ala. “The Register will create a shared outreach list that will help USDA, community-based organizations and minority-serving educational institutions to communicate with minority farmers and ranchers.”

By joining the Register, minority producers may receive outreach materials, newsletters and program announcements from USDA agencies. They may also receive information and assistance from other USDA-approved outreach partners, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and minority-serving educational institutions. USDA will carefully control access to the Register.

People wishing to join the register must sign and date an application that provides their name and address. Providing phone numbers, e-mail address, race, ethnicity, gender and farm or ranch location will be voluntary, although the additional information increases the producer’s opportunities for receiving appropriate assistance.

The Register application is available at USDA Service Centers or from approved USDA outreach partners. Completed applications may be mailed to: Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250. The sign-up information will also be available on the FSA’s Web site at www.forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/eforms/mainservlet, and on the Assistant Secretary for civil Rights’ (ASCR) Web site at www.usda.gov/cr. FSA and ASCR are jointly administering the register. Sign-up forms will be issued in Spanish and English. The register is planned to be ready Sept. 3, 2004.

People may remove their name from the Register by writing to the Minority Farm Register, USDA Stop Code 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250.

For more information, please contact the Office of Minority and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Assistance, Farm Service Agency, STOP 0503, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-0501 (Call 1-866-538-2610; Fax: 1-866-302-1760; TTY: 1-866-480-2824, E-mail: MSDA@USDA.gov) or USDA Office of Outreach, STOP 9473, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250 (Call 1-800-880-4183; Fax: (202) 720-7489; E-mail: usdaoutreach@usda.gov).

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