

## **Hispanic Farmers Criticize USDA Claims Process Rollout As “More Of The Same Discrimination”**

Washington, DC February 25, 2011...Hispanic farmers criticized today's announcement by the USDA of a process to settle their discrimination claims against the USDA as “more of the same discrimination we have suffered for years at the hands of our own government.”

Lupe Garcia, the named plaintiff in the *Garcia v. Vilsack* suit, said, “The process which the USDA announced today just continues the insult of discrimination. The government must think that Latinos can't count,” Garcia said, “as they continue to repackage the same old proposal with the same unfair numbers as if we will eventually accept them as equal to what other minority farmers have received in their settlement.”

The African American farmers have been awarded a total of \$2.25 Billion so far to settle their claims and the most recent farm population counts approximately 39,000 African American farmers. The Hispanic farmers and female farmers, who together number more than 370,000 farmers, have been offered 1.33 Billion to share.

In terms of the claims process, Garcia pointed to the fact that the burden of proof for Hispanic farmers to receive a maximum of \$50,000 was exactly the same as that for the African American farmers in *Pigford I* to receive as much as \$13 Million. “It is not equal treatment under the law- plain and simple,” said Garcia.

“Our Hispanic farmers, who represent the fastest growing segment of the rural population entering farming, are, even today, rejected and humiliated by the treatment they receive at the hands of the USDA loan officers. Loans are denied with no reason given and another planting season goes by,” Garcia said. “We need a fair and immediate settlement to our lawsuit and an end to the discriminatory way the USDA does business.”

\*The Garcia case is a class action lawsuit which seeks to remedy years of massive and admitted discrimination against Hispanic farmers and ranchers, all US citizens and taxpayers, who were denied access to United States USDA loan programs in violation of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and seeks to remedy discrimination against Hispanic farmers and ranchers in the administration of USDA farm benefit programs. Unlike most lawsuits, the salient facts in this case are not disputed. The suit was originally filed in 2000.

For additional information regarding the *Garcia* lawsuit please visit our website at [www.hispanicfarmersforjustice.org](http://www.hispanicfarmersforjustice.org).