



### **Hispanic Farmers Discrimination Case Against USDA Enters New Phase**

Washington, DC May 26, 2010...The Hispanic farmers' lawsuit against the USDA, *Garcia v Vilsack*, alleging discrimination in the administration of the department's farm credit and non-farm credit benefit programs, entered a new phase last night as the Government offered both Hispanic and women farmers an opportunity to settle their cases.

According to press reports, "the Obama administration on Tuesday offered \$1.33 billion to settle complaints from female and Latino farmers who say they faced discrimination from the Agriculture Department."

Stephen Hill, the attorney for the Hispanic farmers, commented on the developments. "This fight is far from over," Hill said. "While we applaud the government's beginning settlement discussions there is much more to be considered before this can be presented to those who have suffered this discrimination. The Justice Department's proposal serves to highlight the inequities being faced by Hispanic farmers as the Government insists on treating groups that suffered the same discrimination differently. Hispanic and women farmers represent a significantly larger group than black farmers, yet the offer from the DoJ allots only a fraction of the compensation that black farmers have received. Our farmers have to wonder why their Government feels that the value of their pain is so much less than that of other minorities.

"The Government also unilaterally suggests a process for identifying those farmers who have suffered such discrimination - one which cuts out untold numbers of eligible farmers. The Government, which after all perpetrated the discrimination, now seeks to be the sole administrator of the settlement process. That simply does not make sense.

"Instead of announcing this settlement as a "done deal" the DoJ must continue to work with us toward a settlement that is truly fair. The 'sordid chapter', as the Administration calls this era of rampant discrimination, cannot end until all Hispanic farmers are made whole through a fair and equitable process of administering claims and until the very administration of the USDA farm programs is opened equally to all eligible applicants."

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For further information or to arrange an interview, pls call

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