

Climate-Smart Farming and Ranching

Q&A

USDA created a climate-smart farming and ranching commodity partnership initiative in 2022, to create more opportunity to produce and market climate-smart commodities. USDA allocated \$3.1 billion toward 141 cooperative projects that represent all commodities and all sizes of farms and ranches across the country, including more than 20 projects that will assist producers in South Dakota. See infographic on back side.



Q1 What is climate-smart farming and ranching?

A: Some would call it regenerative agriculture, farming or ranching in ways that build soil health. Boiled down, climate-smart farming and ranching is using practices that improve the soil and build soil organic matter—and by doing that, take carbon out of the air and put it into the ground. See question 5 answer for examples of climate-smart practices involved.

Q2 Why is that helpful?

A: Producers who are using soil health practices are improving the air and climate by taking carbon out of the air, but that's not the reason most are using those practices. Producers have found soil health practices boost production long term. They build soil structure and resilience into the soil against drought, with better water infiltration and water storage capacity, improved nutrient cycling, and overall better production with fewer inputs.

Q3 Who are these projects going to help?

A: The details are still being worked out, but for instance we know having a small grain in a corn-soybean rotation helps build soil health. So there will likely be incentives to do that. The idea is to assist the producer with some financial assistance and technical assistance to not only get those small grains grown but to also get them marketed as climate-smart commodities.

Q4 Who all is involved in South Dakota projects?

A: South Dakota producer groups will be heavily involved in climate-smart projects. Commodity groups as well as USDA agencies will have updates on how the projects will work. Producers are encouraged to stay in touch with both as the projects roll out and details are announced.

Q5 What practices are called climate-smart practices?

A: Many of the conservation practices South Dakota producers are already using are defined as climate-smart. Conservation crop rotations, cover crops, no-till farming, residue and tillage management, nutrient management, field borders, filter strips, grassed waterways, pasture and hayland plantings, and range seedings are all part of the list. Prescribed grazing on grasslands is considered to be a climate smart practice, along with forest land improvement, tree and shrub establishment, and windbreaks. These examples are not the complete list of practices; producers are encouraged to visit their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office to learn more about the practices and how incentives will work once the programs are fully put into place.

This fact sheet was produced on December 27, 2022. Please visit the USDA-NRCS website or your NRCS field office to get updated information in 2023.



USDA U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE-SMART COMMODITIES

BY THE NUMBERS



The U.S. Department of Agriculture is investing over **\$3.1 billion** in **141 selected** projects under the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities.

PROJECTS BY COMMODITY



PROPOSAL INVESTMENTS

Proposals for the **141** tentatively selected projects include plans to match **50%** of the federal investment with non-federal funds.

PROJECTS BY AWARD SIZE*

71 Under \$5M

22	\$5-20M
25	\$25M-45M
09	\$50M-65M
14	\$70M-95M

~100 universities, including more than **30 minority-serving institutions**, engaged & helping advance projects. **20+** tribes and tribal groups engaged and leading on many projects across a wide geography.

60,000 farms reached, encompassing **25M acres of working land** engaged in climate-smart production practices.

Hundreds of expanded markets and revenue streams for producers and commodities across agriculture ranging from **traditional corn** to **specialty crops**.

More than **60 million metric tons** of carbon dioxide equivalent sequestered over the lives of the projects. This is equivalent to removing more than **12 million gasoline-powered** passenger vehicles from the road for one year.

*USDA will work with the applicants to finalize the scope and funding levels

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

