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# News Release

Release No. 0150.14

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## **Research Projects to Improve Plant Feedstocks for Bioenergy Production** *Departments of Agriculture and Energy Announce Projects in 10 States*

WASHINGTON, July 17, 2014 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced the selection of 10 projects that are being awarded funding aimed at accelerating genetic breeding programs to improve plant feedstocks for the production of biofuels, biopower, and biobased products. The investment is part of the Obama Administration's broader effort to diversify the nation's energy portfolio and accelerate development of new clean energy technologies designed to decrease dependence on foreign oil, providing a more secure future for America's energy needs and enhancing rural economies.

"Innovative research is a critical link to stimulating rural economies and creating jobs across America," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "These awards are part of the Obama Administration's 'all of the above' energy policy. These projects will not only support our efforts to provide a sustainable and domestic energy source for the nation, but also improve the lives of rural residents."

"Biofuels and bio-based products offer the potential of homegrown American resources that can reduce our dependence on imported oil and also cut carbon emissions," said Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz. "This advanced research is helping us to lay the groundwork for biomass as an important part of the low-carbon future."

The \$12.6 million in research grants are awarded under a joint DOE-USDA program that began in 2006 focused on fundamental investigations of biomass genomics, with the aim of harnessing nonfood plant biomass for the production of fuels such as ethanol or renewable chemical feedstocks. Dedicated feedstock crops tend to require less intensive production practices and can grow on poorer quality land than food crops, making this a critical element in a strategy of sustainable biofuels production that avoids competition with crops grown for food.

The projects are located in **California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Texas, and Virginia**. DOE's Office of Science will provide \$10.6 million in funding for eight projects, while USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will award \$2 million to fund two projects. Initial funding will support research projects for up to three years. The full list of awardees and project descriptions can be found online at: <http://genomicscience.energy.gov/research/DOEUSDA/index.shtml>.

New projects to be funded this year will build upon gains in genetic and genomic resources for bioenergy and biofuels. The projects will accelerate the breeding of optimized dedicated bioenergy feedstocks through a better understanding of complex interactions between bioenergy feedstock plants and their environment, allowing the development of new regionally-adapted bioenergy feedstock cultivars with maximal biomass or seed oil yield and traits leading to more sustainable production systems, such as minimal water usage and nutrient input requirements.

For more information on the joint DOE-USDA Plant Feedstocks Genomics for Bioenergy research program, visit: <http://genomicscience.energy.gov/research/DOEUSDA/index.shtml>

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