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*MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FUNDED TO MOBILIZE INVESTMENT
IN REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE*

USDA Conservation Innovation Grant will provide \$700,000 in funding to accelerate investment in agricultural practices that restore soil and water health

CHICAGO, IL -- In the dynamic agricultural sector, demand for crops that meet specific positive social, environmental, climate, and economic objectives is currently outstripping supply, and investments are needed to grow these value chains. Today, Acting Chief of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Leonard Jordan announced \$700,000 in funding through the USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) program to a multi-sector partnership, led by Chicago-based environmental nonprofit Delta Institute, aimed at mobilizing capital for these impact investments.

"The Conservation Innovation Grant program is an example of government at its best, providing seed money to help spur cutting-edge projects," said Acting NRCS Chief Jordan. "This year's competition resulted in an impressive array of proposals that will ultimately benefit the people who grow our food and fiber."

With CIG funding, and in-kind matching contributions from private sector and nonprofit partners, the project will enable investments in, and increase the scale of, regenerative agriculture, a system of practices that promote soil health and restore the natural function of ecosystems while maintaining crop yields. The wide-scale adoption of regenerative agriculture is poised to provide durable solutions to a range of challenges facing our rural and urban communities, yet investment is currently hampered by high transaction costs, limited data about economic and environmental returns, poorly understood risk profiles, and limited coordination between sources of capital.

"By bringing together partners representing different sectors and sources of capital, we can work together to reduce barriers, strengthen the business case, and develop tools to accelerate the flow of capital to regenerative agriculture," said Bill Schleizer, CEO of Delta Institute. "The agriculture industry faces ever-increasing risks, and a shift to a more climate-smart, regenerative system is necessary to ensure that our land and water resources can continue to nourish our population."

This three-year initiative will identify opportunities to improve efficiency in the investment pipeline and showcase pathways for sector growth by developing a toolkit to facilitate transactions. The project will demonstrate these approaches in, and draw insights from, the example of a Wisconsin-based grain farm, building the investment case for the expansion of regenerative diversified small grains production and processing.

CATALYZE

By creating a more open and collaborative investment landscape for regenerative agriculture and equipping investors with the knowledge and tools needed to participate, this project will provide rural economic development opportunities, promote regional food systems, and ensure the resilience of our land and water resources in a changing climate.

Project partners include Badgerland Financial, Bickford Organics, Croatan Institute, Dirt Capital Partners, Encourage Capital, Equilibrium Capital, Farmland LP, FoodCrunch, Green America Center for Sustainability Solutions, LIFT Economy, Meadowlark Organics LLC, Nourish^N, Pipeline Foods, Plovgh, Primrose Valley Farm, Rodale Institute, Sustainable Insight Capital Management, and Vilicus Capital.

Authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill, the USDA Conservation Innovation Grant program helps develop the tools, technologies, and strategies to support next-generation conservation efforts on working lands and develop market-based solutions to resource challenges. Read the USDA NRCS press release here: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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About Delta Institute: Delta Institute is a 501(c)(3) organization formed in 1998 that works to build both a resilient environment and economy through sustainable solutions. Working in partnership with business, government and communities in the Great Lakes region, Delta creates and implements innovative solutions that build environmental resilience, economic vitality, and healthy communities. Learn more at www.delta-institute.org.