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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2007

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FY 2007 USDA Farm Bill Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Loan and Grants Now Available

Annapolis, MD – U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has announced the availability of \$176.5 million in loan guarantees and \$11.4 million in grants to support investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements by agricultural producers and small businesses.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency loan and grant program was established under Section 9006 of the 2002 Farm Bill. It provides loan guarantees and grants to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems or for energy efficiency improvements. These funds can be used in conjunction with state renewable energy programs such as the State Anemometer Loan Program, Solar Energy Grant Program and the Clean Energy Production Tax Credit.

Loan guarantees cover up to 50 percent of a project's cost, not to exceed \$10 million. Grants are available for up to 25 percent of a project's cost, not to exceed \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements and \$500,000 for renewable energy systems. These loans and grants are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 0.97 million metric tons, replace 821 million barrels of foreign oil and generate almost 2 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually. USDA has funded more than 800 loans and grants since the renewable energy program began in FY 2003.

Applications for grants must be postmarked **no later than May 18, 2007** and mailed to 655 Parfet Street, Room E-100, ATTN: April Dahlager, Lakewood, CO, 80215. The deadline for submitting loan applications as well as for loan and grant combinations is July 2, 2007.

For more information refer to the announcement in the March 22 Federal Register or contact the Colorado State Rural Development office at (720) 544-2909.

To access the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for this energy program please go to,
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/index.html>

For more information about our renewable energy programs, visit www.energy.maryland.gov.