

USDA: Celebrates critical infrastructure to combat climate change in rural Wisconsin during Earth Week

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Funding Will Help Contribute to Rural Energy Independence

DEKORRA, Wisc., April 21, 2022 – This week, in honor of Earth Day 2022, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director in Wisconsin Julie Lassa, alongside other federal and local officials, today visited the Town of Dekorra to recognize critical infrastructure improvements to strengthen energy independence for a rural ag producer in south-central Wisconsin.

“Under the leadership of President Biden and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, USDA is making it a priority to improve the lives of rural residents by making funding opportunities more equitable, investing in climate-smart infrastructure, and building a better economy,” Lassa said. “Projects like the one we’re highlighting in Dekorra today are a great testament to these priorities and the positive impacts they have on our state’s rural communities. We couldn’t be more excited to recognize these efforts in celebration of Earth Day this Friday.”

Self-declared pioneer in the animal genetic improvement field, ABS Global takes their dedication to the world of ag production very seriously. Pushing the limits of bovine genetics innovation worldwide for more than 80 years, they are committed to ag producers looking to tailor solutions for higher quality milk and meat products through a combination of genetic improvement and reproduction management. And now, they are extending that dedication further to include climate smart infrastructure.

Thanks in-part to a \$250,000 grant through USDA's [Rural Energy for America Program](#) (REAP), ABS Global was able to purchase and install a 657 kilowatt (kW) solar array. Not only will this climate-smart infrastructure help the business save on their bottom line - nearly \$61,000 in annual electrical cost savings - but also reduce their carbon footprint by replacing nearly 867,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity. That's enough energy to power 80 homes by safely harnessing a natural resource without harming its integrity. [visit <https://abs.link/to/solarpower/> to view project video and photos]

The project highlighted in today's visit is a great example of how USDA Rural Development is taking several actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change in rural communities. Since fiscal year (FY) 2020, USDA has invested \$7.3 million on climate-smart infrastructure through the REAP program. To learn more about USDA's [Energy Programs](#), please contact our Wisconsin State Office at 715-345-7646.

Today's visit is also part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Rural Infrastructure Tour, during which Biden Administration officials are traveling to dozens of rural communities to talk about the impact of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments, as well as President Biden's broader commitment to ensure federal resources reach all communities in rural America. To learn more, read about the [Infrastructure Implementation Task Force](#) and how USDA and other federal agencies are working with rural communities to deliver on the promise of support for rural America.