



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Shows Tremendous Growth** *USDA Releases Results of On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Survey*

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23, 2011 – The number of solar panels, wind turbines and methane digesters on America's farms and ranches has increased significantly over the past decade and there are now 8,569 operations producing their own renewable energy, according to the results of the 2009 On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Survey released today. Conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service, this was the first-ever nationwide survey that looked at renewable energy practices on America's farms and ranches.

"These results indicate that farmers and ranchers are increasingly adopting renewable energy practices on their operations and reaping the important economic and environmental benefits," said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "At USDA we are committed to natural resource conservation, prosperity and energy independence in rural America. This survey gives us a benchmark against which we can measure our future successes."

According to the survey results, solar panels were the most prominent way to produce on-farm energy. In 2009, farmers on 7,968 operations nationwide reported using photovoltaic and thermal solar panels. The use of wind turbines was reported by farmers on 1,420 operations across 48 states. The use of methane digesters was reported by 121 operations in 29 states.

On the state level, California leads the nation with 1,956 operations producing renewable energy, accounting for nearly a quarter of all operations in the United States participating in this practice. Texas, Hawaii and Colorado were the other major states where farmers on at least 500 or more operations were producing their own renewable energy.

The survey results also show an economic upside to producing energy on the farm. Farmers in nearly every state reported savings on their utility bills. The savings were especially noticeable in New York, where utility bill savings reported by respondents topped \$5,000 for 2009.

Conducted as a follow-on to the most recent Census of Agriculture, the 2009 On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Survey focused on three principal renewable energy systems: solar panels, wind turbines and methane digesters. The survey expanded upon the energy questions asked in the census to provide a deeper analysis of American on-farm renewable

energy production practices.

Full results of the 2009 On-Farm Renewable Energy Production Survey are available online at [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

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