

AFBF, Ag Library to Create Information Clearinghouse for Beginning Farmers

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 5, 2009—The American Farm Bureau Federation is partnering with the Agriculture Department's National Agricultural Library to create the National Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. The new information-sharing program will help those who have decided to pursue a career in agriculture and will help support Farm Bureau's commitment to rural development.

The clearinghouse is a component of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, a competitive grant initiative that is part of the 2008 farm bill. The clearinghouse will be supported by a five-year, \$1.5 million grant from USDA.

"This is a great opportunity for Farm Bureau to provide information to beginning farmers on how to start and stay in farming and ranching," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "We are providing in-kind support to the National Ag Library with outreach, publicity, educational seminars and our annual conference where other project grants will be highlighted."

The clearinghouse will use the grant money to develop a Web site and databases to serve beginning farmers and ranchers, with particular focus on those categorized as underserved. The clearinghouse will provide education, training, outreach and mentoring materials to beginning farmers and ranchers across the United States. AFBF will serve as a conduit for distribution of the information.

"Our goal at Farm Bureau is to help farmers be successful and to move agriculture forward," said Dan Durham, coordinator of AFBF's Young Farmers & Ranchers program. "The projects included in the clearinghouse are fascinating and diverse: an agricultural entrepreneurial program in Missouri, legal and technical support for beginning and immigrant farmers in Minnesota, effective business practices to

Navajo farmers in Arizona, business planning and sustainable practices for women in the Northeast, and absentee forest landowner training in Tennessee.”

Farm Bureau will host a beginning farmer and rancher conference annually that will be held in conjunction with the AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher Conference, beginning in Orlando, Fl. in February 2011.