

*Milton, NY* - -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director Jill Harvey today visited Sunshine Orchards in Milton, New York to announce more than \$371,481 in federal loans and grants for ten local farms to install solar energy systems and make other renewable upgrades that will enable them to dramatically cut their energy consumption.

"This funding will enable local farms to dramatically cut down on their energy consumption while serving as a model for other farms and businesses that are looking for practical ways to cut down on energy costs and become more environmentally-friendly," Hinchey said. "New York is clearly establishing itself as a leader when it comes to solar energy research and development and this funding demonstrates how those solar products are being put to practical use."

The agricultural producers in the Hudson Valley receiving grants through the program are:

- \$191,170 -- Sunshine Orchards, Milton, NY: Combination grant and loan guarantee will be used to install a 42-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system that will generate 60 percent of the farm's electricity use.
- \$44,500 -- Hepworth Farms, Milton, NY: Grant will be used to help install a 22.8-kilowatt solar electricity generation system on the farm.
- \$29,313 -- Thunder View Farms, Grahamsville, NY: Funds will help purchase a solar electric generation system.
- \$28,500 -- Bridle Hill Farm, Jeffersonville, NY: Grant will help purchase a solar electric generation system for the farm.
- \$17,579 -- Catskill Mountain Sugar House, Grahamsville, NY: Funds will be used to purchase energy efficient maple syrup production equipment.

- \$16,306 -- Sky Acre Angus Farm, Pine Plains, NY: Grant will be used to install a wind turbine for on-farm use.
- \$16,306 -- Gallatin, Columbia County, NY: Funds will be used to install a wind turbine to generate on-farm electricity.
- \$15,201 -- Little Texas Ranch, Obernburg, NY: Funds will be used to install a wind turbine that will generate 55 percent of farm's power.
- \$7,588 -- Maple Syrup, Inc., Parksville, NY: Grant will help purchase energy efficient maple syrup production equipment.
- \$5,018 -- White Oak Farm, Yorktown Heights, NY: Grant will be used to help purchase a reverse-osmosis system, which will reduce energy usage during the production of maple syrup.

The funding was made available through USDA's Renewable Energy for America Program, which provides grants and loan guarantees to farms and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency improvements, feasibility studies and energy audits. The program requires matching funds on the part of the farmer or business owner and grants are limited to 25 percent of a project's total costs. Loan guarantees can cover up to 75 percent of project's costs, which is also the limit for those who receive both grants and loan guarantees.

The Hudson Valley awards represented almost a quarter of the 39 projects funded in New York this year. The total Renewable Energy for America Program investment in the state exceeded \$1.4 million.