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Arkansas One of Four Pilot States Receiving Funding Under RIPE Program

LITTLE ROCK, AR— The Rural Investment to Protect our Environment Program (RIPE) announced that the nonprofit and its partners have been awarded \$80 million for a pilot program by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Program. The pilot program will target four states, including Arkansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Virginia.

RIPE is a producer-led organization advancing RIPE100, a conservation program that will pay producers \$100 per acre or animal unit for stewardship practices, offering equitable payments above costs associated with practice implementation.

Under the three-year pilot program, RIPE and its partners will help producers prove the value of paying farmers and ranchers for stewardship practices that deliver public value through carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas reduction, improved soil health, water quality, water conservation, and other environmental services. Participants will receive technical support in implementing climate-friendly practices such as cover crops, no-till, nutrient management, and more.

“We are excited to be a partner in this program,” said Jim Whitaker, Arkansas farmer and member of RIPE’s Farmer Advisory Network. “The simplicity of the program should be appealing to local producers who want to implement stewardship practices on their farms.”

In Arkansas, the program will be administered by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Division in partnership with the Agricultural Council of Arkansas, Arkansas Rice Federation, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, and local conservation districts in eastern Arkansas. The pilot will be implemented in Arkansas, Jefferson, Lincoln, Drew, Craighead, and St. Francis counties over the next three years.

For more information on the RIPE program or to follow updates on the pilot program, visit riperoadmap.org.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.