



COLORADO
Energy Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

Contact: Susan Carollo, Colorado Energy Office
(303) 866-6585 susan.carollo@state.co.us

Colorado Energy Office receives \$1.1 million USDA agriculture award

Two-year award helps incentivize agriculture energy efficiency improvements

DENVER – Apr. 27, 2016 – The Colorado Energy Office (CEO) announces that it was selected for a \$1.1 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) award to help finance energy efficiency improvements for Colorado farmers. The award comes through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and is matched through a \$1.3 million cash and in-kind combined contribution from CEO, the Colorado Department of Agriculture and utility and industry partners. The funds will help finance energy and water saving projects identified through CEO's Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program. Over the two-year grant period, the efficiency improvements are expected to achieve over 5,250 MWh of electricity savings and 524,000 gallons of water savings annually, and will provide additional environmental benefits to Colorado's agricultural producers.

“Over the last two years the Colorado Energy Office laid the foundation and identified significant opportunities for cost-effective energy savings in Colorado's agriculture industry. Having USDA on-board as a funding partner helps overcome the upfront investment barrier so farmers can affordably build out projects that can provide long-term savings,” said Jeff Ackermann, director of the Colorado Energy Office.

In 2015, CEO launched the Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program to provide agricultural producers free energy audits and technical assistance designed to select and implement cost-effective improvements that will reduce energy, water and operating costs. Currently 63 producers have participated and 2,800 MWh of potential electricity savings have been identified through the audits. The program will expand to 200 producers during the next two years and is expected to generate over \$4.5 million in potential savings in only five years.

“This grant will enable the implementation of cost-effective projects identified through Colorado's statewide program, while meeting NRCS's goal to integrate energy conservation into agricultural practices,” said Clint Evans, state conservationist for the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Colorado's agriculture industry faces direct energy expenses of more than \$400 million annually that account for 7 percent of the industry's overall expenses, according to [CEO's 2013 Agricultural Energy Market Research Report](#). The report identifies 90,000 MWh of potential electricity savings annually and identifies dairies and irrigators as the most energy intense sectors with the greatest opportunity for savings.

For more information about the statewide [Colorado Dairy and Irrigation Efficiency Program](#), contact Michael Turner at michael.a.turner@state.co.us.

###

About the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrate the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation. Visit the website for more information:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>