



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Research,  
Education, and  
Economics

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

1400 Independence  
Avenue SW  
Washington, DC  
20250

# Memo

**To:** State Partners  
**From:** Sonny Ramaswamy, Director  
**Date:** August 19, 2013  
**Subject:** USDA Climate Hubs

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Ramaswamy".

On June 5, 2013, Secretary Tom Vilsack announced in a speech to the National Press Club that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will establish Regional Climate Hubs to work in partnership with producers and foresters. The Secretary called them "Service Centers for Science-Based Risk Management" to serve as a source of regional data and information for hazard and adaptation planning in the agriculture and forestry sectors. USDA's goals are for the Hubs to provide outreach and extension to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners on science-based risk management, and seek partnerships with Land-grant universities, Extension, and the private sector.

On June 25, 2013, President Obama presented his Climate Action Plan to the public, which included a focus on "Maintaining Agricultural Sustainability" by building on the existing network of federal climate-science research and action centers, and the creation of USDA's new Regional Climate Hubs to deliver tailored, science-based knowledge to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. The President envisioned these Hubs to work with universities and other partners, including the United States Department of the Interior and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to support climate resilience.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) fully supports the establishment of the Regional Climate Hubs and encourages our Land-grant partners to become actively engaged in the climate science research and outreach activities led by the USDA office in the region. These Hubs are needed to maintain and strengthen agricultural production, natural resource management, and rural economic development under increasing climate variability. The Hubs will build capacity within USDA and the network of partners to deliver information and guidance on technologies and risk management practices at regional and local scales.

I strongly encourage you to use the Hubs to advance the development and delivery of new systems for sustainable agricultural production and for increasing ecosystem

resilience to the risks of climate change, and to seek funding for these efforts from federal, state, and private sources. I also encourage you to look at NIFA's opportunities for competitive funds from all its programs, as well as make strategic use of Capacity Funds to build a streamlined and coordinated service delivery platform using the Hubs as a direct connection to other partner service providers. Our National Program Leaders are ready to assist you in the development of ideas and receive your input for potential NIFA programs and partnerships in this effort.

It is our long-term goal to develop an agriculture and forestry system that maintains high productivity in the face of climate change. The Regional Climate Hubs will help communities plan for and make decisions to adapt to changing environments, sustain economic vitality, and take advantage of emerging opportunities offered by climate change mitigation technologies. We continue to support a robust and growing portfolio of climate change programs at NIFA, several of which are in partnership with other federal agencies that share NIFA's goal for the sustainable production of food, feed, fiber, and fuel. We have built successful collaborations for funding applied agriculture science for climate variability and change with several agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. I encourage you to explore funding opportunities from these entities, as well.

I am confident that together we can accomplish the goals set by the President's Climate Action Plan and ensure that groundbreaking research discoveries go beyond the field and laboratory and make their way to the classroom and to people who can put the knowledge into practice and improve lives for the benefit of our communities and the world.

Please contact my colleague, Luis Tupas, if you need additional information in this regard.

pc: NIFA Staff  
Bill Hohenstein, Director, USDA Climate Office  
Ann Bartuska, Deputy Under Secretary

