

STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Partners with University of Kentucky to Evaluate Impacts of Recent Investments to Strengthen the U.S. Food Supply Chain

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27, 2023 – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development today announced that it is partnering with the University of Kentucky to evaluate impacts of the agency’s loan and grant programs that support regional food systems and strengthen the U.S food supply chain.

Since 2022, USDA has invested \$1.15 billion to transform the American food supply chain through the [Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program](#), the [Healthy Food Financing Initiative](#), the [Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program](#) and the [Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program](#).

USDA Rural Development is awarding \$750,000 through a cooperative agreement to University of Kentucky Research Foundation.

Through this agreement, the Community and Economic Development of Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) and the Food Connection within the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment will measure USDA Rural Development programs, including the four programs listed above. They will focus on how well the programs are creating market opportunities for small- and mid-sized farmers and independent agricultural businesses throughout the food supply chain.

Through this partnership, USDA will identify how the investments to support local and regional food supply chains have:

- Created a more resilient, diverse and secure food system.
- Resulted in more fair and accessible food systems with more and better market opportunities.
- Led to more economically viable farm and food businesses and healthy rural communities.

The findings will help guide USDA’s future investments in the food supply chain.

Today’s announcement answers [President Biden’s call to federal agencies](#) to use the best science and data available for decision-making and gather the best evidence to tackle complex policy challenges.

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