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Biobased Procurement Program Adopted by Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

The Southern Plains Area of the ARS has become an early adopter of the Biobased Procurement Program and is taking immediate steps to ensure awareness, participation, and integration.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA), Section 9002 of Public Law 107-17, mandates the development of a Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program (FB4P) that requires federal agencies to purchase biobased products. Products classified as biobased are those commercial and industrial non-food products composed, in whole or significant part, of biological and/or renewable domestic agricultural or forestry materials, such as plant, animal, and marine.

USDA's Secretary Ann M. Veneman says the FB4P, "builds upon President Bush's commitment to promoting energy independence while protecting the environment. This program will improve environmental health by using renewable resources from our farms and forests to produce products, [many which have previously been] derived from fossil energy sources. This program will enhance the development of high performing and environmentally friendly products."

Implementation of the FB4P by the Southern Plains Area of the ARS is multi-faceted and serves as a potential model. Area Director C.A. Onstad in College Station, Texas promoted the program in his four-state region by sending a detailed memorandum along with a video of the highly successful biobased efforts at the Beltsville Center. Location Coordinators and Laboratory/Center Directors in Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas received the memo from Onstad that:

- introduced the Biobased Program, and requested its integration into daily operations,
- encouraged purchases of biobased products on a regular basis,
- provided a list of potential categories for biobased purchases,
- included a link to the USDA biobased website,
- established a point of contact for the program, and
- requested success stories.

Mike Downing, Area Procurement and Realty Officer, as well as point of contact for the Southern Plains Area Biobased Program, has also taken an active role in integrating the Biobased program. Downing's efforts were 2-fold. One memorandum that he sent to the Area Architectural Contractor introduced the Biobased Program, provided biobased

resource material, and requested biobased products be incorporated into all future design projects whenever possible. Downing then sent out an area-wide email to all locations/centers requesting status on implementing the Biobased Program, successes or problems, and contacts for each location.

Recent activity indicates that the Southern Plains Area locations are steadily moving forward with the Biobased Program. The Grazinglands Research Laboratory in El Reno, Texas has already identified and purchased biobased products for farming operations, grounds-keeping, and facilities maintenance. Products purchased include:

- bio-trans hydraulic tractor fluid,
- bio-two-cycle engine oil,
- bio-bar and chain oil,
- bio-grease,
- bio-penetrating lubricant,
- bio-diesel fuel conditioners, and
- bio-fuels.

ARS' level of commitment is so high that the Southern Plains Area has created an annual award. The "Southern Plains Area Greening Award" recognizes locations that have demonstrated continued effort, progress, and achievement in making environmentally friendly choices. The Conservation and Production Research Laboratory in Bushland, Texas was this year's award winner.

For additional information on the Southern Plains Area Biobased Program contact Mike Downing at 979-260-9446 or email at mdowning@spa.ars.usda.gov .

For additional information on FB4P contact Mike Green at 202-720-7921, email at Mike.GREEN@usda.gov, or visit the Biobased Products Initiative Web site at <http://www.biobased.ocs.usda.gov/public/index.cfm> .