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NEWS RELEASE

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The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Receives \$231,000 Grant for Beginning and Young Farmers

SPRING VALLEY, WI – The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) announced today that it is the recipient of a \$231,000 USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant. MOSES will use the funds to support the needs of young organic farmers with dedicated training – both classroom and on-farm – and networking opportunities.

The MOSES grant was one of 36 Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grants totaling \$18 million awarded last week by the USDA. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan made the announcement on Friday.

The USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program earmarks funds to organizations that provide training, resources and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms.

Beginning and young farmers interested in organic and sustainable farming face unique challenges. Traditional agriculture education programs rarely feature training in organic and sustainable practices. In addition, youth can feel isolated and disconnected from others with similar thinking, and hunger for a feeling of support and connection. There is a real demand from young ag students for on-farm internships and classroom learning to improve skills and knowledge of organic and sustainable systems. The BFRDP grant will enable MOSES to provide comprehensive learning and communication resources for beginning and young farmers to help them understand and successfully use these practices.

Working in partnership with the Organic Field School at the Minnesota-based Gardens of Egan farm and Renewing the Countryside, over the next three years, MOSES will add two beginning farmer focused courses to the in-classroom Organic University; create two on-farm Organic University courses for beginning and young farmers to participate in hands-on training; develop an ongoing Young Organic Stewards track at the Organic Farming Conference; provide financial support for beginning and young farmers to participate in training; and create a social and learning online network.

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