



coalición
RURAL
coalition

1029 Vermont Ave NW Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
phone 202/628-7160, fax 202/393-1816
<http://ruralco.org>
www.facebook.com/RuralCoalition
Twitter: @RuralCo

Board of Directors

John Zippert, Chair*
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund, Epes, AL

Georgia Good, Vice Chair*
Rural Advancement Fund
Orangeburg, SC

Dorothy Barker, Treasurer*
Operation Spring Plant, Oxford, NC

Tirso Moreno, Secretary*
Farmworkers Association of Florida
Apopka, FL

**Chilo Villarreal, Assistant
Treasurer*** Mexico City, Mexico

**Mily Trevino-Sauceda,
Assistant Secretary***
Organización en California de Liderés
Campesinas, Inc., Pomona, CA

**Darnella Burkett Winston,
Youth Representative***
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
Petal, MS

Rudy Arredondo
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers
Trade Association, Washington, DC

Daisy Garrett
Rural Coalition Events Committee Chair
Jackson, MS

Savi Horne
Land Loss Prevention Project
Durham, NC

Starry Krueger
Rural Development Leadership Network,
New York, NY

**Anita Matt, Intertribal Agriculture
Council, Moiese, MT**

**Attaquin Mills, American Indian
Mothers, NC**

Maria Moreira
Flats Mentor Farm, Lancaster, MA

Rhonda Perry
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
Columbia, MO

Victor Quintana
At Large, Chihuahua, Mexico

Willard Tillman
Oklahoma Black Historical Research
Project Oklahoma City, OK

**Chukou Thao, National Hmong
American Farmer, Fresno, CA**

Carlos Marentes, Chair Emeritus
Border Agricultural Workers Project
El Paso, TX

Hubert Sapp, Chair Emeritus
Atlanta, GA

Patricia Bellanger, Emeritus
American Indian Movement
Minneapolis, MN

Marge Townsend, Emeritus
North American Farm Alliance
Windsor, OH

John Bloch, Emeritus
Markham Center, Montpelier, VT

Lorette Picciano, Ex-officio
Executive Director

*Executive Committee

The Rural Coalition, born of the civil rights and anti-poverty rural movements, has worked for 30 years to assure that diverse organizations from all regions, racial, and ethnic groups and genders have the opportunity to work in solidarity on the issues that affect them all. The foundation of this work is strong local, regional and national organizations that work to assure the representation and involvement of every sector of this diverse fabric of rural peoples.

December 21, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We remain appreciative of the actions of your administration to secure a just resolution to all of the outstanding discrimination lawsuits, including those involving Latino and Women producers against the United States Department of Agriculture.

At this moment, we write to reiterate our strong support for obtaining equality, justice and dignity for Latino and Women producers with an acceptable and fair resolution for the constituents we serve.

In the interest of securing simple justice and equality for all those who have been discriminated against by the USDA, we the undersigned encourage you to alter the Hispanic and Women's claim process to conform to the terms the settlements now in force in the Keepseagle and Pigford II processes. Our previous letter and earlier resolution on this matter, developed by the Latino and Women farmers and ranchers that we serve, are shared for reference as an example of some practical steps that could still be taken to address some of the concerns raised to us.

We will continue to work with all the farmers and ranchers we serve until all the outstanding claims are settled for every producer who has been subjected to unfair treatment. We urge you to consider these proposals or other avenues to achieve more equity in the settlement terms.

Sincerely,

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, Washington, DC

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, Washington, DC

and

American Federation of Government Employees Union Local 3354, St. Louis, MO

American Indian Mothers, Inc., Shannon, NC

Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, Tillery, NC

Farmworker Association of Florida, Apopka, FL

Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, Atlanta, GA

Food & Water Watch, Washington, DC

La Joya Acequia Association, La Joya, NM

Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis, MN

Organización en California de Lideres Campesinas, Oxnard, CA

Minnesota Food Association, Marine on St. Croix, MN

Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Jackson, MS

National Hispanic Environmental Council, Alexandria, VA

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Washington, DC

National Women in Agriculture Association, Oklahoma City, OK

North American Farm Alliance, Windsor, OH

North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project, Durham, NC

Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project, Oklahoma City, OK

Pesticide Action Network North America, San Francisco, CA

Rural Development Leadership Network, New York, NY

Rural Advancement Fund, Orangeburg, SC

United Farmers USA, Manning, SC

World Farmers, Inc., Lancaster, MA

cc: The Honorable Eric Holder, Jr., Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice
The Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture



coalición
RURAL
coalition

1029 Vermont Ave NW Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
phone 202/628-7160, fax 202/393-1816
<http://ruralco.org>
www.facebook.com/RuralCoalition
Twitter: @RuralCo

Board of Directors

John Zippert, Chair*
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund, Epes, AL

Georgia Good, Vice Chair*
Rural Advancement Fund
Orangeburg, SC

Dorothy Barker, Treasurer*
Operation Spring Plant, Oxford, NC

Tirso Moreno, Secretary*
Farmworkers Association of Florida
Apopka, FL

**Chilo Villarreal, Assistant
Treasurer*** Mexico City, Mexico

**Mily Trevino-Sauceda,
Assistant Secretary***
Organización en California de Liderés
Campesinas, Inc., Pomona, CA

**Darnella Burkett Winston,
Youth Representative***
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
Petal, MS

Rudy Arredondo
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers
Trade Association, Washington, DC

Daisy Garrett
Rural Coalition Events Committee Chair
Jackson, MS

Savi Home
Land Loss Prevention Project
Durham, NC

Starry Krueger
Rural Development Leadership Network,
New York, NY

Anita Matt, Intertribal Agriculture
Council, Moiese, MT

Maria Moreira
Flats Mentor Farm, Lancaster, MA

Rhonda Perry
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
Columbia, MO

Victor Quintana
At Large, Chihuahua, Mexico

Willard Tillman
Oklahoma Black Historical Research
Project Oklahoma City, OK

Chukou Thao, National Hmong
American Farmer, Fresno, CA

Carlos Marentes, Chair Emeritus
Border Agricultural Workers Project
El Paso, TX

Hubert Sapp, Chair Emeritus
Atlanta, GA

Patricia Bellanger, Emeritus
American Indian Movement
Minneapolis, MN

Marge Townsend, Emeritus
North American Farm Alliance
Windsor, OH

John Bloch, Emeritus
Markham Center, Montpelier, VT

Lorette Picciano, Ex-officio
Executive Director

**Executive Committee*

The Rural Coalition, born of the civil rights and anti-poverty rural movements, has worked for 30 years to assure that diverse organizations from all regions, racial, and ethnic groups and genders have the opportunity to work in solidarity on the issues that affect them all. The foundation of this work is strong local, regional and national organizations that work to assure the representation and involvement of every sector of this diverse fabric of rural peoples.

July 21, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President

We are appreciative of and encouraged by the efforts of your Administration to secure a just resolution to the outstanding discrimination lawsuits involving Latino and Women producers against the United States Department of Agriculture. In order for us to move forward as a nation, we must continue the hard work of eradicating the stain of institutional discrimination that has been exhaustively documented for decades through various United States Civil Rights Commission Reports, Congressional testimonies and the personal narratives of African American, American Indian, Latino and Women producers.

For months, the Rural Coalition and the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association have communicated directly with Latino producers as well as community based farming organizations comprised of Latino producers regarding the current posture of the *Garcia* case. Although there exists a deep sentiment of disappointment within our coalition that class certification was denied in both the *Garcia* and *Love* cases, we remain committed to obtaining equality, justice and dignity for Latino and Women producers. Consequently, our coalition has worked tirelessly to achieve an acceptable and fair resolution for the constituents we serve. The accompanying resolution is the fruit of this collective work.

We strongly urge you to direct the United States Department of Justice and the Department of Agriculture to strive toward a more equitable claims process that will demonstrate our government's renewed commitment to ensure that Latino and Women producers fully benefit from the range of federal agriculture programs and recognize that underserved and limited resource producers have a fundamental role in strengthening rural communities and economies.

The Rural Coalition and our members and allies support simple justice and equality for all those who have been discriminated against by the USDA and will continue to work with all the farmers and ranchers we serve until all the outstanding claims are settled for every producer who has been subjected to unfair treatment. We feel the

resolution we have presented outlines practical steps to address some of the concerns that have been raised to us. We urge you to consider these proposals.

Sincerely,

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural, Washington, DC

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, Washington, DC

Colorado Latino Farmers and Ranchers Organizing Committee, Antonito, CO

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Atlanta, GA

Land Loss Prevention Project, Durham, NC

Minority Agricultural Producers, San Juan, TX

cc: The Honorable Eric Holder, Jr., Attorney General of the United States Department of Justice

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture

**RURAL COALITION
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
June 25, 2011**

**RESOLUTION to Support Equitable Treatment for
Farmers in the Garcia, Love, Keepseagle and Pigford Cases**

Whereas, Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill in Section 14011 urged the Secretary of Agriculture to settle all outstanding discrimination cases including the Hispanic, Women's and Indian cases. This is the legal basis for the settlement of these cases.

Whereas, USDA has agreed to settlement of the Garcia, Love, Keepseagle and Pigford discrimination cases, they have not provided these farmers the benefits of fairness, equality, justice and dignity they deserve.

The Rural Coalition urges the USDA, Congress and the Courts to modify the current settlement agreements for the Hispanic and Women's lawsuits and make them more reflective of the unjust treatment, discrimination and suffering these claimants endured at the hands of the USDA:

a. Give consideration comparable to class treatment of the Hispanic and Women farmers in the settlement of these discrimination lawsuits, which would allow class counsel to represent the farmers at lesser-negotiated fees than requiring individual legal representation of each farmer;

b. Remove the \$50,000 limit on Track 2 settlements and allow the settlement amount to be decided as part of a one day arbitration hearing, as was the case in Pigford I; this would allow farmers whose damages from discrimination exceed the \$50,000 claim limit to secure compensation, if damages exceed that amount;

c. Allow USDA guaranteed loans, as well as direct loans, to be considered for debt forgiveness as part of the settlement. Most successful Hispanic and women farmers were urged by USDA to seek guaranteed loans from commercial banks - so these loans were subjected to discriminatory decision making actions and must be eligible for forgiveness under the settlements;

d. Provide an appeals process in the settlement that would allow redress of decisions based on an arbitrary and mistaken basis. This appeals process should be fair and definitive in the written settlement agreements.

e. That modifications c. and d. also be added to the Pigford II settlement agreement.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Rural Coalition supports simple justice and equality for all those who have been discriminated against by the USDA.

*Adopted June 25, 2011 by the Rural Coalition Annual Assembly,
Shawnee, Oklahoma*