PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Vilsack to open Farm Foundation® Forum on poverty in rural America

Oak Brook, IL. April 11, 2016: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack will join two other rural community experts to discuss the cost of poverty in rural America at the Farm Foundation® Forum on Monday, April 18, 2016.

The Forum will be 9 to 11 a.m. EDT in the Holeman Lounge of the National Press Club, 519 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. A free, live audiocast will also be available.

“Poverty is a seed that breeds many cancers in individuals, families and communities—both urban and rural,” says Neil Conklin, President of Farm Foundation, NFP. “It is a complex, multi-dimensional problem for which there are no simple answers. It is critical, however, that we bring these issues to the forefront to be better understood so that work can begin on finding solutions.”

A recent study at the Carsey Institute of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire found that poverty, specifically childhood poverty, is spreading in intensity across the country and disproportionally so in rural America. Additional work done at Purdue University highlights the effects of childhood poverty on long-term health. The costs of poverty are seen in academic performance, underused human capacity, health costs, addictions, criminal activities and community infrastructure.

“Secretary Vilsack is providing leadership to address these issues through his role as chair of the White House Rural Council. We are excited to have him join us for this discussion,” Conklin added.

Jason Henderson, Director of Extension at Purdue University, will moderate the discussion. Henderson also leads a university-wide initiative to connect Purdue experts and resources with Indiana residents and communities to improve financial conditions in the state. Also featured on the panel will be William Bynum, CEO of Hope Enterprise Corporation and Hope Credit Union, a regional community development financial institution and policy center based in Jackson, MS. HOPE provides financial services to underserved communities in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

After discussion by the panelists, the floor will be opened for questions.
There is no charge to participate in the April 18 Forum, but registration is requested. Register
HERE if you plan to attend the Forum in person at the National Press Club. Register HERE to
participate in the live audiocast. Audiocasting is made possible by a grant from Farm Credit.

After the event, an audio file is posted to the Farm Foundation website for those unable to be
part of the live event.

**Who should participate in the Forum:** People with an interest in agricultural, food and rural
policy, including members of Congress, congressional staff, executive branch officials, industry
representatives, NGO representatives, academics and members of the media.

**The Forum:** Farm Foundation, NFP organizes these public forums to engage all stakeholders in
informed dialogue on food, agricultural and rural policies. Participants examine current policies,
explore and analyze alternative policy options, and give voice to new proposals.

**Audio from the session** will be posted on the Farm Foundation website. Presentations and audio
files from past Forum sessions are also available at the website.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
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