

21 grants awarded for biomass research

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Two U.S. departments said they plan to invest \$18.4 million for biomass research, development and demonstration projects over three years.

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Energy said in a news release Tuesday the projects would address barriers to making production of biomass more cost-effectively and efficiently. Project funding is provided through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, a joint USDA-DOE effort to develop the next generation of clean, bio-based technologies.

The project helps advance the President George Bush's strategy of developing more clean, bio-based products and biofuels to help reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"These (funds) help fund the innovative research needed to develop technologies and systems that lead to the production of bio-based products and biofuels," Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer said. "Funding new technologies will help make biofuels competitive with fossil fuels in the commercial market, putting America on the path of reducing its dependence on foreign oil."

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said continued investment in biomass is critical to make available "clean, abundant and domestically produced biofuels for widespread use."

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