

For more information, contact:

Peter Nelson
Phone: 901.866.1800
pnelson@biobased.org

Maury Tower
Phone: 901.692.6066
maury@towermm.com

USDA Presents Rural Development Grant to BioDimensions *Grant to Support Sweet Growth Opportunities*

Whiteville, Tenn – In West Tennessee, one company is growing a new energy crop with sweet results.

BioDimensions Delta BioRenewables LLC (BDBR) is in its third year of operation of the Sweet Sorghum Development Program at its pilot-scale biorefinery in Whiteville, Tennessee on German Farms. BDBR has developed the first advanced rural biorefinery in the Mid-South to process sweet sorghum, which can be used to make a variety of biobased products such as carpet fibers, plastic bottles and ethanol.

USDA Rural Development State Director for Tennessee, Bobby Goode, and other local officials were at the biorefinery for a field day on October 19, 2011 to present BDBR with a \$20,000 USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant. The federal grant, combined with contributions from the company, will be used to purchase equipment needed to produce and pelletize the sweet sorghum. BDBR has found that once the sugar has been extracted from sweet sorghum, the leftover stalks (called bagasse) can be pelletized for use as feed in the cattle industry or for energy production.

"The Mid-South is poised to lead the growth of energy crops and bio-based products. This project has real potential to be adopted widely across West Tennessee and the region," said Goode. "We are proud of the partnership with BioDimensions to bring new technology and alternative crops to market."

"Helping rural businesses take advantage of money-saving, environmentally-responsible systems helps them compete," Goode added. "This kind of investment also helps create good jobs in the renewable-energy sector and promotes the use of renewable, American-made energy alternatives."

REAP grants and low interest energy loans are available to most farms and rural businesses. More information on the REAP program is at www.rurdev.usda.gov/TN-Business.html.

Sweet sorghum enhances the production of other current row crops through boosting yields, offering farmers increased options, requiring less water and inputs, and introducing much needed diversity in the face of emerging issues such as weed resistance in the region. "Sorghum crops seem to be very resilient to our hot, dry summers. Sweet sorghum seems to grow no matter how hot it gets," said farmer, Willie German of German Farms. "We're looking at growing sorghum as a good rotational crop from soybean and cotton."

BDBR plans to continue to scale-up production, optimize its systems, and develop a business model for commercialization and replication throughout the Region. The investment is projected to produce 960 acres of sweet sorghum by the time the process is in full swing in 2016.

And, as Randy Powell, BDBR Program Manager, points out, "A typical commercial biorefinery will employ about 25 people in rural areas. If hundreds or possibly thousands of biorefineries are launched, there is a huge opportunity for green jobs." And that's a sweet deal.

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About BioDimensions Delta BioRenewables LLC

BioDimensions Delta BioRenewables LLC is a joint venture between BioDimensions, Inc., German Farms, and Memphis Bioworks Foundation. The Company is focused on developing new industrial sugar crops for applications to replace petroleum in a range of chemical and biofuel applications. BDBR operates a pilot-biorefinery in Whiteville, Tennessee, and conducts agricultural research in AR, KY, MO, MS and TN with the goal of replicating the processing across the Mid-South.

To learn more about BioDimensions, Inc., visit www.biodimensions.net.

About USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development invests in jobs, businesses, community infrastructure, homeownership and affordable rental housing in rural communities. Last year, Rural Development assisted more than 1.5 million rural Tennessee families and businesses with more than \$1.06 billion in financial assistance through affordable loans, loan-guarantees and grants.

To learn more about the USDA Rural Development Programs in southwest Tennessee, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/tn or contact the Rural Development Area Office in Jackson at 1-800-342-3149, ext. 1495.

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