



**focus on energy**<sup>sm</sup>

*The power is within you.*

..... **for immediate release** .....

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**FOCUS ON ENERGY HELPS RURAL BUSINESSES BECOME MAJOR ENERGY SAVERS**

*- No-cost energy audits available for qualifying Wisconsin farmers and rural businesses -*

**MADISON, Wis. (June 1, 2009)** – Focus on Energy, Wisconsin’s energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative, recognizes that most of the more than 78,000 farms in Wisconsin are being hit hard by the current economic downturn. Focus has resources and incentives in place to help farmers and rural businesses meet these challenges.

“We know farms and rural businesses can use large amounts of energy in their daily practices. Focus on Energy can help reduce their energy consumption,” said Rich Hackner, sector manager for the Agriculture and Rural Business Program. “Focus recognizes the importance that energy savings can have on the overall bottom line and sustainability of many rural businesses.”

Focus is no stranger to assisting Wisconsin’s farmers and rural businesses. In 2008 alone, Focus on Energy helped implement 806 energy-saving projects at 687 farms and rural businesses statewide. Focus will continue to help Wisconsin farms and rural businesses reduce operating costs by providing grants and incentives for the installation of energy efficient equipment. Changes large and small – from updating barn lighting and fans to milking and pasteurizing equipment with energy efficient alternatives – can have a significant financial impact.

**How Focus on Energy Can Help**

Focus on Energy can help by assisting farms and agribusinesses to look at how they use energy. By installing energy efficient equipment and changing processes agribusinesses can see results in increased profits and improved productivity. By providing expert advice, technical training and financial incentives, Focus helps farmers and rural businesses take the steps necessary to achieve these results.

Focus offers no-cost energy assessments with trained energy advisors to provide information on potential energy savings and incentives at farms that will help offset the costs. By assessing each farm, energy advisors can identify areas where the implementation of energy efficient systems and equipment will have the greatest impact on the efficiency of the overall operation.

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### **Incentives Large and Small Available**

Incentives and grants are available to help farmers and rural businesses implement many energy efficient technologies. Two of the incentives or grants available are discussed below.

#### **Lighting**

Simple changes, such as utilizing lighting control systems, including daylighting controls or turning lights off when not needed, can have an immediate impact on financial savings. Likewise, some Wisconsin dairy operations are choosing to employ long-daylighting practices or photoperiod controls in their barns. Studies have shown that the process of exposing cows to supplemental light during the short days of fall and winter can increase milk production by between 5 percent and 16 percent (four pounds to five pounds per day per cow). Focus on Energy encourages the use of energy efficient lighting and is offering incentives when qualifying lighting equipment is installed.

#### **Request for Proposal**

Focus on Energy is now accepting proposals to fund large and comprehensive energy efficiency projects on farms and rural businesses. Funds are available up to \$100,000 per project, with a maximum of \$250,000 per applicant. Eligible agribusiness customers include dairy farms, on-site farm processors and other agricultural customers.

While the program is particularly interested in funding innovative projects, new technologies and large, integrated projects, any project that results in significant energy savings will be considered. Technologies may include heat-recovery systems, combined heat and power systems and more.

Examples of potential projects include:

- A large dairy operation that optimizes its milk-cooling and handling systems
- The addition of ice thermal storage systems to a milk-cooling system
- A farm with an anaerobic digester that installs a heat-recovery system off the engine gen-set to displace natural gas or electric heating

For more information, contact Focus on Energy at (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com)

#### **About Focus on Energy**

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not be completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information, call (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com).

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