Central State University, in partnership with Ohio State University, has been awarded a $5 million grant over five years from the USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities program. The purpose of this partnership award is to build markets for climate-smart commodities and invest in America’s climate smart producers to strengthen U.S. rural and agricultural communities.

This project led by Central State University (CSU) that utilizes manure as a natural fertilizer is seeking participation of farmers who will integrate climate-smart agriculture practices for the production of vegetables starting in fall, 2024 through 2028. Urban, as well as rural, farmers are encouraged to be part of the project. The objective is to measure, quantify, and verify the soil carbon gain and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction benefits associated with these practices and to determine the marketing and economic viability of the produce. Farmers who want to learn more about participating can complete an interest form at: https://forms.office.com/r/259cEAYdpA

I. Who can participate?

- A member of socially disadvantaged or veteran farming group: (see definition on next panel)
- A legal entity or joint operation can be a Veteran Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify.
- Socially disadvantaged groups consist of the following:
  - American Indians or Alaskan Natives
  - Asians
  - Blacks or African Americans
  - Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
  - Hispanics
- For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals.

II. Requirements for Participating Farmers:

- Provide at least 3,000 sq. ft. of plot space for four years, with one plot for manure and another for fertilizer
- Register farm, if not already done, with the USDA-Farm Service Agency to obtain a farm identification number
- Historical records for the plot areas for two growing years prior to the grant

  During the grant period, both plots will be: No tilled; Cover cropped; Drip irrigated.

III. Farmer Incentives-Participating Farmers will receive:
• Inputs for growing identified vegetable crops (estimated at $3,437.63 per acre. For example, 3,000 sq. ft. would equate to $236.75):
  o Seeds/seedlings for three crops during the growing season
  o Lime
  o Fertilizer
  o Manure
  o Organic pest and plant disease management products
  o Drip irrigation.
  o Mulch
  o Cover crop seeds.
• Produce grown in space to sell.
• Incentive annual based on size of plots is calculated from $1,322 per acre. For example, 3,000 sq. ft. would equate $91.05/year.
• The labor reimbursement for assisting with field activities and data collection is up to $4,848.
• Expertise from CSU Extension for crop production and management

Farmers who want to learn more about participating can complete an interest form at: https://forms.office.com/r/259cEAYdpA. For more information or questions about the project, please contact:

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