

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today announced \$25,000 for the Chenango County Agricultural Energy Steering Committee through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Value-Added Producer Grant program.

"I am pleased to announce this federal grant to help local farmers group together to expand local renewable energy production and economic opportunities," **said Arcuri**. "This grant will allow a group of local farmers to create a business plan for a community anaerobic digester to turn cattle waste into valuable energy and fertilizer. By coming together and utilizing this federal grant, local farmers will be able to invest in critical new technology to expand their businesses."

This rural development grant will be used to conduct a feasibility study and prepare a business plan for a group of four livestock producers considering construction of a community anaerobic digester to process cattle manure and produce renewable energy, high quality compost, and crop fertilizer.

Value-Added Producer Grants may be used for planning activities or to provide working capital to market value-added agricultural products and farm-based renewable energy projects. Rural Development has committed more than \$158 million to value-added agricultural investments since 2001.

Since taking office, Arcuri and his staff have met with over 70 agricultural groups from across Upstate New York – listening carefully to their unique needs. Earlier this year, Arcuri hosted Agricultural Roundtables in Herkimer and Cayuga counties where he brought together local dairy farmers, organic and vegetable farmers, with representatives from diverse governmental, business, and educational agriculture organizations to hear directly from the local agricultural community. The Farm Bill, passed in July, includes increased investments in specialty crop assistance for apple and grape growers and an extension of the MILC program for dairy farmers.

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