

Women Farmers Litigation

Love v. Vilsack

www.womenfarmers.com

Home	
Current Status of Love v. Vilsack	Welcome to the <i>Love v. Vilsack</i> Women Farmers litigation website. The purpose of this site is to provide information regarding the status of the litigation and to connect with those who have an interest in the litigation and pending legislation that aims at addressing the women farmers' claims.
Farm Bill 2008	
Court Filings	The lawsuit <i>Love v. Vilsack</i> , Case No. 1:00CV02502 (U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia) was initially filed on October 19, 2000 by a number of women farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for gender discrimination in the administration of the USDA's farm loan programs.
Press Releases	
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)	
Contact Us	The plaintiffs sought to have the case certified as a class action on behalf of women farmers and prospective women farmers nationwide who were discriminated against in attempting to obtain farm loans or loan servicing from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or its predecessor Farmer's Home Administration (FmHA) from 1981 to December 31, 1996 and from October 19, 1998 to the present.
Links	

Click on [Current Status of Love v. Vilsack](#) for more information on the status of the litigation.

UPDATE (January 27, 2012): The attorneys for plaintiffs in the *Love* case sent a [letter](#) to USDA Secretary Thomas Vilsack and Associate Attorney General Thomas Perrelli, endorsing the changes made to the administrative claims program, and urging them to make additional changes to ensure that the program is fair and provides appropriate relief for women farmers.

UPDATE (January 20, 2012): USDA filed an updated "[Framework](#)" document, which describes the administrative claims program USDA expects to offer women farmers. USDA also issued a [press release](#) on January 25, 2012. Those interested in the details of the program may review USDA's [Framework](#), which was filed as an exhibit to a status report in the *Love* case. The claims program will not begin until USDA has selected a claims administrator and announced a start date. After that, those who wish to file a claim will have 180 days to do so.

UPDATE (December 23, 2011): Several Senators and Members of Congress wrote a [letter](#) to President Obama, urging that he insist on changes to the administrative claims program to ensure that the program offered to women farmers is fair and equitable.

UPDATE (April 7, 2011): The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, along with 17 affiliated organizations, sent a [letter](#) to President Obama urging the White House to demand improvements to the administrative claims program that will be offered to women and Hispanic farmers by the government.

NOTICE: Individuals, including attorneys, who are or may be affiliated with the National Womens Farming Association (NWFA), have been traveling around the country to speak with women about discrimination by the USDA and about the *Love* case. The lead counsel in the *Love* case do not seek to discourage the NWFA's efforts to assist female farmers. They do wish to clarify, however, that this website, www.womenfarmers.com, is the official website run by lead counsel in the *Love v. Vilsack* case, and not the website run by the NWFA (www.womenfarmers.net).

IMPORTANT UPDATE (February 25, 2011): USDA has announced today that it is launching a program for resolving women farmers and Hispanic farmers' discrimination claims against the agency. We await additional information from USDA regarding the specifics of the program, but we anticipate that it will include USDA opening a "call center" for receiving names and contact information from potential claimants. ([Click here](#) for the USDA's press announcement.) USDA then plans to disseminate the claims packages to the names it has gathered and to make the claims package publically available for others. Contacting the call center is strictly voluntary, and failure to do so will not prevent a woman farmer from being able to file a claim with USDA through its claim resolution process, or to pursue a claim through other means. The government has stated that the program will provide at least \$1.33 billion in compensation and up to \$160 million in farm debt relief to eligible women and Hispanic farmers, and that it will provide up to \$50,000 for each woman farmer claimant who is successful in establishing that USDA discriminatorily denied her a loan or loan servicing during certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. In addition, the government's program provides for tax and debt relief. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions, or to contact your counsel for advice on involvement in USDA's call center and/or claims resolution process, or for them to communicate with USDA on your behalf. Click [here](#) for USDA's web site, www.farmerclaims.gov, to get more information on the government's claims process and/or to register to receive a claims packet. The web site includes a [summary description](#) of USDA's program, and a [notice](#) from USDA to farmers who may qualify for the program.

Please [click here](#) for a press release issued by Arent Fox, counsel for women farmers in *Love v. Vilsack*, in response to the USDA's announcement.

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and Congresswoman Anna Eshoo introduced the Equality for Women Farmers Act, H.R. 4264, on December 10, 2009. This landmark legislation is aimed at addressing the long-standing discrimination experienced by women farmers in USDA's farm loan programs. [Click here](#) for more information on the legislation.

[Contact us for more information](#)

Copyright © 2007-2011 [Arent Fox LLP](#).

The materials appearing on this website are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. You should not take action based upon this information without consulting legal counsel. This site is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely upon any single source of information, including advertising on this website. You may ask us to send you additional information about us, and we urge you to review other sources of information about the firm. By using this site you agree that you have read our [Legal Notice](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) and agree to our [Terms of Use](#).

Last updated: February 2, 2011

- Main Justice - <http://www.mainjustice.com> -

DOJ, USDA Offer Settlement to Hispanic, Female Farmers

Posted By [Leah Nylen](#) On May 26, 2010 @ 6:06 pm In [News](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

The Justice Department is seeking to resolve two lawsuits, offering a \$1.3 billion settlement to female and Hispanic farmers who have alleged the Agriculture Department discriminated against them, the Associated Press reported ^[1] late Tuesday.

In the 1990s, a group of African-American farmers successfully sued the Agriculture Department, alleging discrimination against them in the awarding of government loans and other assistance. The farmers received more than \$1 billion under a 1999 class action settlement ^[2] with the government and could get another \$1.15 billion under a deal Congress is expected ^[3] to vote on this week. Hispanic and female farmers have sought similar settlements ^[4] for their discrimination claims, but have been stymied in court where judges rejected class action status for the Hispanic farmers case — *Guadalupe L. Garcia Jr. v. the Secretary of Agriculture* — and the female farmers case, *Rosemary Love v. Thomas Vilsack*.

According to the AP, the Justice Department has offered to reach out to the affected groups and offer awards of up to \$50,000 per claimant.

"We have made significant progress on addressing USDA's civil rights record and look forward to providing substantial relief to Hispanic and women farmers in an expedited manner," Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said in a statement to the AP.

In a statement issued Wednesday, **Stephen Hill** of Howrey LLP ^[5], lead counsel in the Hispanic farmers suit, said the case is "far from over."

"While we applaud the government's beginning settlement discussions there is much more to be considered before this can be presented to those who have suffered this discrimination," Hill said. "The Justice Department's proposal serves to highlight the inequities being faced by Hispanic farmers as the government insists on treating groups that suffered the same discrimination differently."

Hill also criticized the proposed process for awarding claims, saying it would cut out many eligible farmers.

"The government, which after all perpetrated the discrimination, now seeks to be the sole administrator of the settlement process," Hill said. "That simply does not make sense."

RELATED POSTS:

- DOJ and Agriculture Spar Over Hispanic Farmers Settlement ^[4]
- Congress Does Not Fund Black Farmers' Settlement ^[6]
- US Settles With Black Farmers for \$1.25 Billion ^[7]

- Efforts Continue on Black Farmers Settlement ^[8]
- Cobell, Black Farmers Settlements to Get Vote This Week ^[3]

Article printed from Main Justice: **<http://www.mainjustice.com>**

URL to article: **<http://www.mainjustice.com/2010/05/26/doj-usda-offer-settlement-to-hispanic-female-farmers/>**

Copyright © 2009-2012 WDC Media LLC. All rights reserved.

Home » Briefing Room » Justice News

JUSTICE NEWS**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 25, 2011

Department of Justice and USDA Announce Process to Resolve Discrimination Claims of Hispanic and Women Farmers

Obama Administration's Efforts Will Bring Finality to Longstanding Claims of Discrimination in USDA Program Delivery

WASHINGTON – As part of continued efforts to close the chapter on allegations that discrimination occurred at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in past decades, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division Tony West today announced the establishment of a process to resolve the claims of women and Hispanic farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans.

"The Obama Administration has made it a priority to resolve all claims of past discrimination at USDA, and we are committed to closing this sad chapter in USDA's history," said Secretary Vilsack. "Women and Hispanic farmers and ranchers who allege past discrimination can now come forward to participate in a claims process in which they have the opportunity to receive compensation."

"Under the resolution announced today, USDA and Hispanic and women farmers will be able to move forward and focus on the future," said Assistant Attorney General West. "The administrative process being established will give Hispanic and women farmers who believe they suffered discrimination the chance to have their claims heard."

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible women and Hispanic farmers and ranchers. This announcement follows the Obama Administration's settlement of longstanding litigation brought by African-American farmers and Native American farmers.

The program announced today provides up to \$50,000 for each Hispanic or woman farmer who can show that USDA denied them a loan or loan servicing for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. Hispanic or female farmers who provide additional proof and meet other requirements can receive a \$50,000 reward. Successful claimants are also eligible for funds to pay the taxes on their awards and for forgiveness of certain existing USDA loans. There are no filing fees or other costs to claimants to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary, and individuals who opt not to participate are not precluded by the program from filing a complaint in court.

In conjunction with this announcement, USDA is launching an outreach effort to potential claimants that will include a call center for farmers and ranchers, a website, public service announcements and in-person meetings around the country. Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov. Beginning March 15, 2011, individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential claimants. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA is addressing civil rights complaints that go back decades, and today's announcement is another major step towards achieving that goal. USDA is committed to resolving allegations of past discrimination and ushering in "a new era of civil rights" for USDA. In February 2010, Secretary Vilsack and Associate Attorney General Tom Perrelli announced the *Pigford II* settlement with African-American farmers. In October 2010, Secretary Vilsack and Assistant Attorney General West announced the *Keepseagle* settlement with Native American farmers. Meanwhile, Secretary Vilsack continues to advocate for resolution of all remaining claims of past discrimination against USDA.

11-247

Office of Public Affairs



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: oc.news@usda.gov • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0085.11

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and Assistant Attorney General West Announce Process to Resolve Discrimination Claims of Hispanic and Women Farmers

Obama Administration's Efforts Will Bring Finality to Longstanding Claims of Discrimination in USDA Program Delivery

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25, 2011 – As part of continued efforts to close the chapter on allegations that discrimination occurred at USDA in past decades, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Assistant Attorney General Tony West today announced the establishment of a process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans.

"The Obama Administration has made it a priority to resolve all claims of past discrimination at USDA, and we are committed to closing this sad chapter in USDA's history," said Vilsack. "Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege past discrimination can now come forward to participate in a claims process in which they have the opportunity to receive compensation."

"Under the resolution announced today, USDA and Hispanic and women farmers will be able to move forward and focus on the future," said Tony West, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division of the Department of Justice. "The administrative process being established will give Hispanic and women farmers who believe they suffered discrimination the chance to have their claims heard."

The claims process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation and provides at least \$1.33 billion in compensation, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. This announcement follows the Obama Administration's settlement of longstanding litigation brought by African American farmers and Native American farmers.

The program announced today provides up to \$50,000 for each Hispanic or woman farmer who can show that USDA denied them a loan or loan servicing for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000. Hispanic or female farmers who provide additional proof and meet other requirements can receive a \$50,000 reward. Successful claimants are also eligible for funds to pay the taxes on their awards and for forgiveness of certain existing USDA loans. There are no filing fees or other costs to claimants to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary, and individuals who opt not to participate are not precluded by the program from filing a complaint in court.

In conjunction with this announcement, USDA is launching an outreach effort to potential claimants that will include a call center for farmers and ranchers, a website, public service announcements, and in-person meetings around the country. Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claims package, or may obtain more information, by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov. Beginning February 25, 2011, individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential claimants. Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA is addressing civil rights complaints that go back decades, and today's announcement is another major step towards achieving that goal. USDA is committed to resolving allegations of past discrimination and ushering in "a new era of civil rights" for the Department. In February 2010, the Secretary announced the *Pigford II* settlement with African American farmers, and in October 2010, he announced the *Keepseagle* settlement with Native American farmers. Meanwhile, Secretary Vilsack continues to advocate for resolution of all remaining claims of past discrimination against USDA.

Audio and video public service announcements in English and Spanish from Secretary Vilsack and downloadable print and web banner ads on the Hispanic and women farmer claims process are available at: http://www.usda.gov/PSAs_Print_and_WebBanner_Ads.xml.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272(voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

#

If you enjoy this page, do us a favor: [Share This](#)[subscribe](#) [advertise](#) [contact us](#)[Home](#) [News](#) [Livestock](#) [Crops](#) [Markets](#) [Hay, Range & Pasture](#) [Home & Family](#) [Classifieds](#) [Resources](#) [This Week's Journal](#)[This Week's Journal](#)[Home](#) >> [Archives](#) >>> [Stories](#)[Like](#) [0](#)

Hi, I'm FarmGuy

**USDA discrimination cases pending**

Settling the Pigford I and II lawsuits providing compensation to African-American farmers and ranchers who suffered discrimination will not mark the end of discrimination woes for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, says Henry English, Ph.D., director of the Small Farm Program at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Three additional discrimination cases are pending: Garcia vs. Vilsack (Hispanics), Love vs. Vilsack (women) and Keepseagle vs. Vilsack (Native Americans).

A claims process has been established to compensate farmers and ranchers who were improperly denied farm loan benefits between 1981 and 2000 because they were women, Hispanic or Latino.

"To participate, female farmers and ranchers, Hispanics and Latinos must submit a complete claims package to the claims administrator by the end of the claims period," says English. Claimants have only 180 days from the opening of the claims period to submit their package, he says. The claims package will specify the deadline.

Because the opening date has yet to be announced, English is advising those seeking compensation to obtain a claims package as soon as possible. "Claims packages will be sent out during the summer of 2011, but women, Hispanics and Latinos must apply for them," says English.

To receive a claims package, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 Monday through Friday, between 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time). Leave your name and address, and say you want a claims package. It provides forms and instructions for filing a claim and detailed information on eligibility and the claims process. Or, go the www.farmerclaims.gov website and request a package online.

In general, women, Hispanics and Latinos are eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- Sought a loan or farm-loan servicing from USDA during 1981-2000 and
- Loan was denied, provided late, approved for a lesser amount than requested, approved with restrictive conditions or USDA failed to provide appropriate loan service and
- Believe the actions occurred because you are Hispanic, Latino or female.

An independent claims adjudicator will determine eligibility based on the criteria contained in the claims package, says English. Claimants will be able to track their status online or they can call to confirm receipt of their claims package.

Claimants currently represented by a lawyer against USDA should contact their lawyer about the claims process.

Click for related articles

USDA introduces online tool for locating 'food deserts'
 Capitol Hill hears from sheep industry
 Leaders stand up for rural issues in D.C.
 Bill would ban filming of Minn. farming operations
 USDA discrimination cases pending
 Moran moves to preserve rural health care access

article 2011- 21 - 0426DiscriminationClaimsPac.cfm



Search HPJ

This Week

Search

Follow us!

ALL ABOARD
WHEAT HARVEST
syngenta JOURNAL



2012 WHEAT TOUR

Follow updates from
Holly Martin at the...
THE 2012 YOUNG
CATTLEMAN'S
CONFERENCE

Inside Futures

All | [Softs](#) | [Meats](#) | [Metals](#) | [Grains](#) |
[Financials](#) | [Indices](#) | [Energies](#) |
[Currencies](#) | [Forex](#) | [Stocks](#)

GRAIN TECHNICALS: THE
 IMPACT OF THE USD Inside
 Futures - Sat Jun 23,
 11:28AM CDT
 The Trend Trader For Futures
 Trading on Monday, June 25,
 2012 Inside Futures - Fri Jun
 22, 5:49PM CDT
 Moody's Blues [Dry Heat]
 Inside Futures - Fri Jun 22,
 2:12PM CDT
 Grains - A Traders Market
 Inside Futures - Fri Jun 22,
 10:48AM CDT
 Morning Grains 6/22/12 Inside
 Futures - Fri Jun 22,
 10:36AM CDT
 Morning Softs 6/22/12 Inside
 Futures - Fri Jun 22,
 10:27AM CDT
 The Soft Spot(71) Inside
 Futures - Fri Jun 22, 8:21AM
 CDT

[Older Stories](#)