

October 16, 2018

## **Udall, Heinrich Announce USDA Grants to Support Acequia Associations & Traditional Communities, Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers, and Tribal Communities**

**Nearly \$525,000 in grants come from USDA's Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers & Ranchers Program**

**WASHINGTON** – Today, U.S. Senators **Tom Udall** and **Martin Heinrich** announced three grants totaling nearly \$525,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to benefit New Mexico's traditional communities and acequia associations, Hispanic farmers and ranchers, and tribal agricultural communities in the state. The grants were made through the USDA's Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, which Udall and Heinrich have long supported to help socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and foresters in New Mexico and across the country who have historically experienced limited access to USDA loans, grants, training, and technical assistance.

“New Mexico's traditional communities have been stewards of our state's water and land for generations, and this new funding will support acequia farmers and ranchers as they continue to manage our resources for generations to come. These grants will empower farmers and ranchers from Hispanic and tribal communities across New Mexico to continue producing for our state and the nation,” **said Udall**. “As a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, I have worked hard to preserve the Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmers & Ranchers Program and to secure additional funding for these grants – because this program provides essential support to the farmers and ranchers who help make New Mexico strong, but who too often are overlooked or left behind when it comes to federal assistance. I look forward to working with our land grants, acequias, and other traditional New Mexico farming communities to build on this progress.”

“Our farmers help drive New Mexico's economy, especially in rural communities,” **said Heinrich**. “Acequia users, land grants, and tribal communities have cultivated land in New Mexico for centuries. I will continue fighting for New Mexico's farmers and ranchers so they can continue our state's long tradition in agriculture and promote long-term, sustainable use of our land and water.”

**The USDA grants announced by Udall and Heinrich include:**

**Support for New Mexico Acequias and Traditional Communities:** Udall and Heinrich announced a \$135,964 grant for the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA) for the New Mexico Acequia Farmer and Rancher Education Project, to strengthen the agricultural operations of the farmers and ranchers who use acequias or community ditches in New Mexico. According to USDA, “through a statewide membership network, NMAA will provide education and technical assistance to improve agricultural operations through irrigation efficiency, to train new

and beginning farmers and youth, and to increase participation in USDA programs. NMAA will work with organizational and agency partners to ensure farmers, ranchers, and acequias meet eligibility requirements for USDA programs and to assist with USDA applications which will benefit over 300 producers. NMAA will also provide education and training through workshops and demonstration sites for new and beginning farmers and youth benefiting over 150 participants.”

**Support for Native farmers and ranchers from New Mexico tribes and pueblos:** Udall and Heinrich announced two grants totaling \$388,492 to benefit farmers and ranchers from tribal and pueblo communities. One grant will help expand access for Northern New Mexico pueblos to key USDA programs to benefit the ownership, operation, and profitability of family farms and ranches for pueblo farmers and ranchers. The second grant will help fund agricultural workshops, training, resources, and free consultations for farmers and ranchers on the Navajo