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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Recirculating Farms Coalition Awarded Grant to Train and Mentor New and Beginning Farmers

USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden Makes Announcement in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 2, 2015— Today, the Recirculating Farms Coalition (RFC) hosted United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden and staff at the organization’s community garden in Central City, New Orleans. Harden visited the city to announce the awards of the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program grants to RFC and others nationwide. The USDA Deputy Secretary spoke to a diverse crowd of farmers, educators, community members and press on this initiative to train, mentor, and enhance the success of future farmers and ranchers.

"As new farmers and ranchers get started, they are really looking to their community for support. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program empowers these farmers and ranchers to bring innovative ideas to the table when it comes to addressing food security, creating economic enterprises, and building communities," said Harden.

The RFC is a national non-profit organization, headquartered in New Orleans, that supports and promotes soilless water-based farming - recirculating hydroponics, aquaculture and aquaponics - along with more traditional soil-based growing. RFC provides free training, support and resources to empower communities in growing their own local food and creating stable jobs in green businesses.

Marianne Cufone, Executive Director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition said, "We are excited to be part of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. This grant will allow us to continue offering free training classes, demonstrations, hands-on learning opportunities and food and farm events for people in New Orleans and beyond."

Deputy Secretary Harden, accompanied by Louisiana and Washington, DC staff, toured RFC’s community garden, spoke with food and farm project leaders and enjoyed assorted treats prepared with ingredients from local farms.

"We are thrilled that Deputy Secretary Harden and various USDA staff came to New Orleans, and to our garden, to announce these grants. There are so many innovative, amazing programs in food and farming in our community, and we look forward to working with all of them and the USDA to support our growers in being both ecologically and economically sustainable." Cufone said.

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About the RFC:

The Recirculating Farms Coalition is a collaborative group of farmers, educators, non-profit organizations and many others committed to creating local sources of healthy, accessible food through promoting and supporting eco-efficient farms. RFC is headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. <http://www.recirculatingarms.org>