

# Healthy Farmer

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<http://www.agriwellness.org>

## Sowing the Seeds of Hope Helplines

Iowa Concern Hotline:  
1-800-447-1985

Kansas Rural Family  
Helpline: 1-866-327-6578

Minnesota Crisis Connec-  
tion: 1-866-379-6363

Nebraska Rural Response  
Hotline: 1-800-464-0258

North Dakota 2-1-1:  
1-800-472-2911

South Dakota Rural  
Helpline: 1-800-664-1349

Wisconsin Farm Center:  
1-800-942-2474

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## *The People's Garden*

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has plans to build a six –acre People's Garden on the grounds of its headquarters in Washington, D.C. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, originally came up with the idea of a vegetable garden but the idea grew into something larger after the public response was very positive. Secretary Vilsack announced the plans for a sustainable garden on April 22, 2009. The USDA is also challenging other USDA facilities across the country and world to create similar gardens.

According to USDA press releases and documents, the garden will include a 1,300 square foot organic vegetable garden, ornamental flower gardens and bioswales (mini-wetlands).

The vegetable garden will include crop rotations such as organic field peas, plowed in and followed with buckwheat and then crimson clover. These rotations are required in order to be a Certified Organic garden. The USDA plans for the garden to be certified organic at the end of three years.



Another area of the planned garden will feature a traditional Native American sustainable planting system called the Three Sisters Garden. The name of the garden refers to the Native American tradition of growing corn, beans and squash together.

The Potager Pollinator Garden will include organic vegetables mixed with native plant and flowers.

Storm water from the USDA rooftops and walkways will be redirected to bioswales that filter and infiltrate runoff. The bioswale will be composted and planted with native vegetation to maximize water infiltration. This area will also include a rain garden, planted with native grasses, that will absorb excess runoff.

USDA employees can volunteer in the garden and the garden will be maintained by a landscape contractor as well. The agency will donate

the produce to a local food bank.

The People's Garden will eliminate 1,250 square feet of unused pavement at the headquarters and will add 612 square feet of planted space to an existing garden.

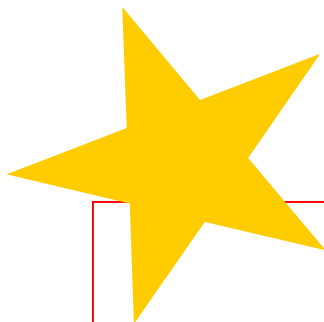
In announcing the plans for the People's Garden, Vilsack said, "The garden will help explain to the public how small things they can do at home, at their business or on their farm or ranch, can promote sustainability."

For more information and to view the plans for the Garden, please visit:

[www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden](http://www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden)



Deputy Secretary, Kathleen Merrigan, works with Cole (left) and Chase (right) to plant Native American seeds in the Three Sisters Garden at "The People's Garden" at USDA on Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, 2009. USDA photo 9di1348-92



## *Congratulations*

### **Nebraska Rural Response Hotline**

The Nebraska Rural Response Hotline is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The Hotline began in 1984, under the leadership of the Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska (IMN). The IMN formed a coalition of interfaith denominations and other organizations in response to the economic and financial stresses that Nebraska's rural families were facing. The coalition developed the hotline as a way to address what would be ongoing challenges for rural residents.

The Nebraska Rural Response Hotline is sponsored by the Farm Crisis Response Council of the IMN. The hotline has been particularly instrumental in serving rural Nebraskans during times of weather-related disasters including the 2007 ice storm, the multi-year drought that occurred earlier this decade and severe tornadoes.

Congratulations to the IMN for reaching this landmark of providing a very vital service to the rural and agricultural people of Nebraska.