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USDA FOREST SERVICE • FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY • (608) 231-9200  
One Gifford Pinchot Drive • Madison, WI 53726-2398 • Web site: [www.fpl.fs.fed.us](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us)

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Sue Paulson, (608) 231-9249

E-mail: [skpaulson@fs.fed.us](mailto:skpaulson@fs.fed.us)

### Scientist honored for greenhouse gas reduction research Team develops reporting guidelines for farms and forests

Madison, Wis.— Ken Skog, a project leader and research economist with the U.S. Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) here, was recently honored as part of a team that according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), “defined a new class of agricultural commodity – a greenhouse gas reduction credit.”

According to the USDA, this represents the first time that a consistent metric for an environmental good has been developed for the agricultural and forestry sectors. The FPL Director, Chris Risbrudt, believes the value of this achievement is only beginning to be realized.

“This will open the door to new markets that reward farmers, landowners, and forest products producers for environmental performance; enable industry to meet environmental obligations at lower costs; and strengthen rural economies while protecting the environment,” said Risbrudt.

In 2002, President Bush directed the USDA to develop accounting rules and guidelines for crediting carbon sequestration, in consultation with DOE and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Then, the DOE requested that the USDA assist them in developing new greenhouse gas reporting guidelines for agricultural and forest sources and sinks for their Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Registry.

A small team of researchers and technicians in the Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service built this system essentially from scratch.

“To get a sense of the magnitude of this challenge, virtually every major agricultural or forestry practice results in greenhouse gas emissions or carbon sequestration. Greenhouse gases result every time a farmer plows a field, applies fertilizer or lime, raises livestock, handles manure, heats or cools a barn,” Risbrudt said,

Farmers, land owners, and forest products producers and user, can sequester carbon by using conservation tillage, and installing buffers, by planting trees, managing woodlots, and by producing wood products for long term storage, added Risbrudt.

The USDA had a special and important role in working with the DOE on the guidelines. Historically, carbon sequestration and emissions from agricultural and forestry sources have been among the most difficult to quantify and poorly understood. However, cost-effective opportunities for reductions and increases in carbon storage on agriculture and forest lands are an attractive option for companies seeking reductions.

The challenge to the USDA team was to create methods to estimate greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration that are comprehensive, clear and consistent, while recognizing that the issues faced are varied and that some flexibility is required.

In April 2006 DOE formally announced the final revised guidelines for the Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program, known as 1605(b) – and recognized the important role performed by the USDA.

"These guidelines represent an important milestone in the effort to encourage new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without impairing economic growth," said Deputy Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner. "By participating in this program, our farmers and ranchers have a unique opportunity to be part of the solution to greenhouse gas emissions."

The new guidelines establish a national registry where businesses and institutions can submit reports on their greenhouse gas emissions, sequestration and reductions. Methods developed by Forest Service experts enable a landowner, anywhere in the country to calculate the volume of carbon on a particular forest through comprehensive lookup tables organized by tree species, region, and forest age. The USDA guidelines also enable forest products producers to use methods developed by Skog to calculate the greenhouse gas benefits provided by storage of carbon in wood products in end uses such as housing, and the benefits of using wood fuel to produce energy. the DOE's Energy Information Administration will administer this voluntary reporting program.

"We hope that by reducing uncertainties and increasing the confidence in the reporting of greenhouse gases and carbon sequestration from forests and agriculture, we can remove a barrier to taking actions," said Mark Rey, the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.

The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory was established in 1910 in Madison, Wis., with the mission to conserve and extend the country's wood resources. Today, FPL's research scientists work with academic and industrial researchers and other government agencies in exploring ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and improve papermaking and recycling processes. Information is available at FPL's Web site: [www.fpl.fs.fed.us](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us). Through FPL's Advanced Housing Research Center, ([www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/)), researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.