

USDA Helps To Get More Green Products To Market

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The USDA's Bio-Preferred program is about using ecologically friendly materials as a replacement for those materials made from petroleum and other non-renewable resources.

WASHINGTON (WUSA) -- As the Green movement grows, efforts to make products from more ecologically sensitive raw materials is also growing.

The government has been buying Bio-Preferred products in growing numbers, but, Kate Lewis of the USDA says, "On the consumer side, I don't think there is a high awareness of bio-based products".

The USDA is working with other government agencies and the military to make them more aware of these bio based products."So a bio-based product is one that is, composed in significant part of these renewable agricultural feed stocks."

This sector of the economy is one that is taking off, according to Lewis, "...we have about 3700 of these designated bio-preferred items...there's decking materials, building materials, there's janitorial products both for general cleaning of offices and large businesses right down to consumer cleaning appropriate for home use."

Using the massive buying power of the Federal Government, The USDA is optimistic that more and more green products will come to market and as companies rack up production, that should help prices come down.

Here's some food for thought. A regular plastic drinking cup might take thousands of years to decompose in a landfill, while a compostable one will take less than 2 years.

Like the Energy Star Label, the USDA is developing the Bio-preferred label to help consumers make purchasing bio-based products even easier.

Lewis adds, "The products themselves really do mean the future. we're growing an industry and we're helping U.S. farmers look at developing an industry and stay competitive in the 21st Century. That's a great way to spend your time. To have a job doing that...it's incredibly fulfilling."

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