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**GROWN CLIMATE SMART MARKS SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YEAR ONE:
\$6.3 MILLION OF INCENTIVES TO GROWERS**

Grown Climate Smart, an initiative spearheaded by The DeLong Co., Inc., announces the completion of its first year of the USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant. Dedicated to incentivizing and supporting the development of sustainable farming practices, Grown Climate Smart has made significant strides in promoting environmental stewardship while empowering growers across multiple states.

These sustainable farming practices, known for their significant greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction and carbon sequestration benefits, have garnered considerable interest among growers. In 2023, Grown Climate Smart enrolled over 170 growers from 7 different states, covering a total of 235,000+ acres dedicated to sustainable farming practices. Through direct incentive payments on a per acre basis, growers have been incentivized to continue or start implementing cover crops, reduced or no-till, nutrient management plans, and windbreak establishment or renovations.

"Our first year has seen a lot of success, with growers embracing the opportunity to continue or start implementing climate-smart practices on their farms," remarked Matt Woods, General Manager of Grown Climate Smart. "We're thrilled to have provided over \$6.3 million in incentive payments directly to growers, demonstrating our commitment to supporting sustainable agriculture while increasing the marketability of row crops."

Among the achievements of the program, 70% of enrolled growers are implementing two or more climate-smart practices, showcasing a widespread commitment to environmental responsibility within the agricultural community. Additionally, 62% of growers enrolled in Grown Climate Smart are small, underserved, or specialty growers. Furthermore, the enrollment of over 235,000 acres dedicated to sustainable farming practices, producing corn, soybeans, and wheat, underscores the program's impact on enhancing the sustainability of row crop production.

In addition to on farm agricultural milestones, Grown Climate Smart has been actively working to build brand recognition among consumers, encouraging them to align their purchase preferences with sustainably marked products. The Grown Climate Smart logo has been adopted by several companies utilizing climate-smart grain in their products. Now, consumers can find the Grown Climate Smart logo on certain products throughout Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, and

Wisconsin, signaling a strengthened commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

As Grown Climate Smart moves into its second year, the program remains dedicated to increasing the marketability of row crops grown using climate-smart practices. By continuing to scale the program and enroll more growers and acreage in 2024, Grown Climate Smart aims to further solidify its position as a leading force in promoting sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship.

Growers interested in joining the Grown Climate Smart initiative can reach out by emailing info@grownclimatesmart.com or calling (608) 676-3041. More information can also be found on the Grown Climate Smart website, grownclimatesmart.com.

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