

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Sara Stanton**

**(401) 465-1849**

[StantonSara@bfusa.com](mailto:StantonSara@bfusa.com)

## **Bridgestone Awarded \$35 Million USDA Climate-Smart Grant to Further Advance Guayule Natural Rubber Production**

- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded Bridgestone and several partners a \$35 million grant to continue its investment in desert shrub guayule to advance a climate-smart domestic rubber industry and offer a solution for growers amid the ongoing water crisis in the Southwestern U.S.**
- **The grant will be used to expand Bridgestone’s guayule production in the Southwestern U.S. with lowered greenhouse gas emissions and to create regional jobs for farmers and Native American tribes to build a rubber bioeconomy based on climate-smart and sustainable practices.**
- **In line with its commitment to utilize 100% sustainable materials by 2050, Bridgestone aims to commercialize use of guayule rubber in tires by the end of the decade.**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (November 17, 2022)** – Bridgestone Americas (Bridgestone) announced today it has been awarded a \$35 million climate-smart grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to invest in desert shrub guayule to expand natural rubber production in the U.S. and offer a solution for growers amid the ongoing water crisis in the Southwest with a more environmentally sustainable crop. As part of the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Initiative, the \$35 million investment in guayule will allow Bridgestone to expand natural rubber production in the Southwestern U.S. with lowered greenhouse gas emissions and create jobs in the region for local U.S. farmers and Native American tribes to build a rubber bioeconomy based on climate-smart and sustainable practices.

“At Bridgestone, we have been committed to guayule as a domestic source of natural rubber since our research initiative in this desert shrub began in 2012 to offer a more sustainable solution for both our environment and economy,” said William Niaura, Director of Sustainable Materials and Circular Economy, Bridgestone Americas. “By participating in this larger industry-wide initiative led by the USDA, we can continue our commitment to establishing a natural rubber industry domestically in a climate-smart way alongside other industry thought leaders who are similarly dedicated to

sustainable commodity production that will provide meaningful benefits for domestic growers.”

The USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities was established to expand markets for America’s climate-smart commodities, leverage the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production, and provide direct, meaningful benefits to production agriculture, including for small and underserved producers. Bridgestone was awarded the \$35 million grant as part of the first pool of partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities funding opportunity.

Bridgestone will leverage grant funds to attract additional guayule growers in the Southwestern U.S. among local farmers and Native American tribes. Bridgestone seeks to educate local growers on how to implement climate-smart practices of guayule to enable a domestic natural rubber industry in the U.S. with the climate-appropriate crop in a drought-stricken region of the U.S. The grant will also facilitate grower education defining optimal agricultural practices to help enable carbon sequestration in desert soils, water utilization, soil health, and nutrient delivery and ecological benefits of guayule.

The \$35 million in grant funds will be disbursed through a five-year period from 2023-2027 and is designed to reduce overall costs for guayule growers. Through the grant, Bridgestone also seeks to utilize guayule to reduce agriculture’s carbon impact to 0% by implementing key agricultural practices, optimize water utilization in guayule production to match growers’ water allotment, and incentivize growers to implement sustainable practices. Joining Bridgestone, additional partners in the \$35 guayule climate-smart grant include the University of Arizona, Colorado State University, OpenET, Environmental Defense Fund, Tohono O’odham Nation and Colorado River Indian Tribes, and eight regional growers.

Bridgestone launched its guayule research initiative in 2012 when it broke ground on a guayule processing and research center in Mesa, Arizona. Today, the company continues to operate the Mesa facility in addition to a 281-acre guayule farm in Eloy, Arizona. To date, Bridgestone has invested more than \$100 million in its efforts to commercialize guayule. Bridgestone is also the recipient of multiple U.S. government research grants for guayule research and development, including from the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(July 2017\)](#) and from the [U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\) Joint Genome Institute \(September 2021\)](#).

Most recently, Bridgestone announced it is expanding the number of local farmers it partners with in Central Arizona and is targeting 350 new acres of guayule to be planted in 2023. In August 2022, Bridgestone announced its plans to invest an additional \$42 million to establish commercial operations, with additional investment and expansion toward 2030. This investment will increase capacity of up to 25,000 additional acres of

farmland for planting and harvesting guayule at scale in collaboration and partnership with local U.S. farmers and Native American tribes.

Guayule is part of Bridgestone's plan to achieve carbon neutrality and make tires from 100% sustainable materials by 2050. The company is targeting commercial production of guayule-derived natural rubber by the end of the decade.

The guayule initiative aligns with the [Bridgestone E8 Commitment](#) that consists of 8 Bridgestone-like values starting with the letter "E" (Energy, Ecology, Efficiency, Extension, Economy, Emotion, Ease and Empowerment) to realize a sustainable society. This initiative aligns with the company's "Ecology" and "Energy" commitments.

**About Bridgestone Americas, Inc.:**

*Bridgestone Americas, Inc. is the U.S.-based subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, a global leader in tires and rubber, building on its expertise to provide solutions for safe and sustainable mobility. Headquartered in Nashville, Tenn., Bridgestone Americas employs more than 50,000 people across its worldwide operations. Bridgestone offers a diverse product portfolio of premium tires and advanced solutions backed by innovative technologies, improving the way people around the world move, live, work and play.*

###