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## Black Farmers Press For Settlement Payout

With Congress bailing out the auto industry and financial institutions, black farmers are pressing the federal government to pay money owed to thousands of black farmers as part of a discrimination settlement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "This is an issue that has been going on for years," said John Boyd Jr., president of the National Black Farmers Association. "(The government) ought to pay the black farmers what you owe us."

About 200 black farmers, mostly from Southern states, protested today in front of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, calling on lawmakers, President Barack Obama and federal agriculture officials to live up to a promise last year to pay black farmers \$100 million for years of discrimination by the agency.

"This is just a drop in the bucket for what we've suffered," said James Burrell, a 66-year-old farmer from Oak Grove, Louisiana. Mr. Burrell said that for years, the USDA denied him loans while granting white farmers loans for new equipment and cattle. Mr. Burrell was part of a successful class-action discrimination lawsuit against the agency and one of thousands of black farmers who each received a \$50,000 payment as part of a 1999 settlement. Mr. Burrell joined the protest today because he said many other black farmers have yet to be paid from the \$100 million Congress set aside in a farm bill last year.

After the class-action lawsuit was settled, lawmakers — including President Obama, then a U.S. Senator from Illinois — pushed legislation to allow black farmers who missed the deadline for the lawsuit to file claims. Funding for that provision was included in the 2008 farm bill. But black farmers say it has been more than a year since Congress passed the bill.

Posted by Shay at [4/28/2009](#)

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- [Right Democrat: A Mainstream Populist Voice](#)
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## Republicans

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