



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development

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Ben Higgins, State Director

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Contact: Sarah Pursley

Office: (530) 792-5801

Cell: (916) 798-9295

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS

DAVIS, Calif., February 5, 2008 – USDA Rural Development State Director Ben Higgins invited applications for Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) today. Applications must be received no later than March 31, 2008.

“In today’s global marketplace, California’s farmers and ranchers understand that they need to stay on the cutting edge of innovation to stay competitive,” said Higgins. “These funds will assist them in developing new markets and expanding uses for their agricultural products.”

Value-Added Producer Grants may be used for planning activities, such as feasibility studies, marketing and business plans needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product, or to provide working capital for operating a value-added business venture, marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy projects. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

Details on application procedures are published in the January 29, 2008 *Federal Register* as well as online at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm. The application is also available online at www.grants.gov. For more information or questions, contact Karen Firestein at karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov.

Since 2001, USDA Rural Development has invested over \$14.5 million in California’s farmers and ranchers through the Value-Added Producer Grant program.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development has invested over \$91 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. As a result, over 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at one of California’s 18 local USDA Rural Development offices or by visiting <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>.

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United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169
Telephone (530) 792-5801 Fax (530) 792-5837
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>