

The USDA logo features the letters "USDA" in a bold, blue, serif font. Below the text are three horizontal green lines of varying lengths, suggesting a landscape or fields.

Committed to the future of rural communities.

NEWS RELEASE

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES \$22.7 MILLION IN VALUE ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS

“Missouri receives \$1,239,500 to Fund Ten Projects”

Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr announced the selection of 194 recipients from 40 states to receive \$22.7 million in USDA Rural Development grant assistance through the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program.

"These grants support farm families in rural America by helping them to market their commodities and increase their financial returns," said Dorr. "I'm pleased to announce that some of these funds will help develop alternative fuels from renewable energy sources which are part of President Bush's comprehensive national energy policy."

"Missouri received funding for ten of the 194 nationwide VAPG grants," said Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development. "Recipients will utilize the Rural Development VAPG funds to finance feasibility studies or for working capital to increase the value of their products to the customer."

Examples of value-added grants that were funded in Missouri include a grant of \$300,000 to Missouri Soybean Association for working capital to segregate identity-preserved grains through superior electronic merchandizing system; \$215,000 to Grassland Beef, LLC for working capital for a grass-fed cattle to a fresh refrigerated market direct to door campaign, \$145,000 to Ozark Quality Hardwoods Cooperative to add value to locally grown sustainable-produced hardwoods; \$100,000 to Mississippi Valley BioEnergy, LLC to be used for planning activities for an ethanol project; \$100,000 to Producers' Choice Soy Energy, LLC to develop a mechanical extraction soybean processing plant and an attached biodiesel facility; \$100,000 to Puregrain Bioenergy to plan for cooperative oilseed processing to enhance producer profits; \$90,500 to Show Me Select Replacement Heifer, Inc. to create value added opportunities for quality bred heifers; \$72,000 to Pasture Fresh to develop a feasibility study and business plan to market pasture raised poultry into targeted retail and foodservice markets; \$68,000 to 1 Soy to assess value added soy protein opportunities in Vietnam; and \$49,000 to Southeast Missouri Value Added Cattle Producers to conduct a market feasibility of a natural value chain beef alliance.

Value-Added Producer Grants may be used for planning activities or to provide working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy projects. A value-added product is created when a producer takes an agricultural commodity, like milk or vegetables, and processes or prepares it in a way that increases its value to consumers. Rural Development has committed more than \$158 million to value-added agricultural investments since 2001.

A complete list of the nationwide grants and further information about rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

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 \$76.8 billion since the 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance

and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments.

Further information on Rural Development programs is available by by visiting USDA's web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/>.

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

“USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.”

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).