



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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STATELINE BEAN TO TAP NEW MARKETS FOR GREATER RETURNS

Bridgeport, Neb., January 7, 2004 -- Stateline Bean is expanding its dry edible bean sales through enhanced marketing to access both the domestic and international marketplaces. The increased marketing will help promote Stateline's growth and enhance member equity. At a symbolic funding check presentation today, USDA Rural Development showed its financial support towards this effort via a grant of \$500,000 provided to Stateline Bean Producers Cooperative, NonStock for working capital.

"Stateline's ultimate goal is to increase the value of the dry edible beans we produce and market," stated Glen Lussetto, financial manager for Stateline Bean Producers Cooperative, Nonstock. "The USDA Rural Development grant will allow us to increase our marketing efforts, affording us the opportunity to reach new markets resulting in a greater profit to our grower-owners."

Stateline Bean will provide matching funds to join the USDA Rural Development grant to enhance the marketing presence of their product. Monies will be used for a new computer network and related office equipment; introduction of a new Stateline web site that is readily accessible to both growers and customers; and for the development of an all-inclusive Stateline brand/logo that is marketable to mid-market customers of dry edible beans. Anticipated completion of the outlined tasks is July 31, 2004.

"Entering into new markets is vital to producers in order for them to compete for a greater return on their product. These profits are then brought back into the rural communities through increased jobs that build for a stronger rural economy and offer an improved quality of life. I applaud Stateline Bean for the pursuit of their value-added venture and congratulate them on their USDA Rural Development grant award," stated Jim Barr, Nebraska state director for USDA Rural Development. The grant was funded through the USDA Rural Development Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant program.

Stateline Bean Producers Cooperative, NonStock, (SLB), is a 100 percent producer-owned closed cooperative with 216 current members under the direction of a 7 member board of directors. Currently, Stateline operates 2 dry edible bean-processing facilities purchased in 2000 by contributions from over 200 area farmers. The facilities enhance the value of the farmer's product by segregating the production into different yield classes, then actively marketing the segregated beans to customers. The USDA Rural Development grant will allow Stateline to develop and begin to promote the Stateline label to the domestic and international community as a high-quality, mid-price food item. Returns from the project, due to Stateline's cooperative nature, will be returned directly to the producer-owners of the cooperative, enhancing their ability to earn a living.

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For information on the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant program, contact Mary Gambill at (402) 387-2242 or mary.gambill@ne.usda.gov, 731 E. 4th Ainsworth, Nebraska 69210.

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