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VENEMAN ANNOUNCES \$920,000 IN GRANTS FOR A BIODIESEL FUEL EDUCATION PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, July 18, 2003--Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced the availability of \$920,000 in grants to conduct a biodiesel fuel education program.

“The biodiesel education program supports President Bush’s energy plan to expand the economic prospects and environmental promise of renewable energy,” said Veneman. “This Administration is committed to encouraging the further development of a biodiesel industry in the United States.”

The purpose of the program is to award the grants for the development of an education program to target governmental and private entities that operate vehicle fleets. The program will address issues previously identified by fleet operators and other potential users of this alternative fuel, including the need to balance the positive environmental, social and human health effects of biodiesel consumption with the increased cost per gallon. In addition, the education programs are to be designed to inform other interested entities and the public about biodiesel fuel use. The program is authorized by Section 9004 of the 2002 Farm Bill through 2007.

Biodiesel can be made from almost any agricultural oil including soybean oil, animal fats and recycled greases. Biodiesel has many environmental and health benefits. It is biodegradable and reduces air toxics and cancer-causing compounds and can be considered to be an environmentally preferable fuel. Burning biodiesel or biodiesel blends reduces most forms of air pollution, including sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

Detailed information about program requirements and information on how to apply is available in the July 15, 2003 *Federal Register* and at <http://www.usda.gov/oce/oepnu/index.htm>. Eligibility of applicants is limited to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education (as defined in Sec. 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that have demonstrated both knowledge of biodiesel fuel production, use or distribution and the ability to conduct educational and technical support programs. Applications must be received by the close of business on August 14, 2003 to be considered. A maximum of two grant awards will be made.

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Carmela A. Bailey, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service at (202) 401-6443 or cbailey@csrees.usda.gov; or James Duffield, Office of Energy Policy and New Uses, U.S. Department of Agriculture, at (202) 401-0523 or jduffield@oce.usda.gov.

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Availability of the grant is contingent on finalizing a proposed rulemaking for the administration of grants under this program. The proposed rule appeared in the July 15, 2003 Federal Register and is posted at <http://www.usda.gov/oce/oepnu/index.htm>.

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