



# NEWS RELEASE

**United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development**  
**World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ca>**  
**Dr. Glenda Humiston, State Director**

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## **\$18 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR VALUE-ADDED PROJECTS**

*Funds available for planning and working capital grants*

DAVIS, Calif., September 16, 2009 – USDA Rural Development State Director Dr. Glenda Humiston today encouraged farmers, associations and cooperatives to apply for \$18 million in grants to help them add value to the commodities they produce.

"We want to ensure that California's agriculture producers are aware of the application process and that they take advantage of this important program," said Humiston. "Nationally, USDA plans to award \$18 million to assist them in developing new markets and expanding uses for their agricultural products."

Last year, Sunsweet Growers, Inc., of Yuba City received a \$300,000 Value-Added Producer Grant to market a new 60 calorie snack pack of dried pitted plums. Sunsweet has successfully introduced several new products with help from USDA Rural Development's Value-Added Producer Grant program including PlumSmart plum juice and PlumSweets chocolate covered dried plums.

The national application period for USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grants closes on November 30, 2009. For more information on how to apply, visit [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm) or see page 45165 of the Sept. 1 *Federal Register*. Paper applications must be submitted to the Rural Development California State Office at 430 G Street, Agency 4169, Davis, CA 95616. Electronic applications must be submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). For more information or questions, contact Karen Firestein at [karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov](mailto:karen.firestein@ca.usda.gov) or (530) 792-5829.

USDA plans to award planning grants of up to \$100,000 and working capital grants of up to \$300,000 to successful applicants. Applicants must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grant requested. Ten percent of the funding being made available is reserved for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10 percent is reserved for projects involving local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses, and cooperatives that market value-added products.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development, and supports creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. 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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