



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**UPCOMING SEMINAR TO DISCUSS VALUE ADDED
AGRICULTURE GRANTS & RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANTS**

Lincoln, Neb., April 23, 2003 -- Farmers and ranchers, groups of agricultural producers, and agribusinesses are invited to learn about the Value Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant (VADG) program and the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Grant program on May 5th in Lincoln, Neb. The morning session will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with focus on the VADG program. The afternoon session starting at 1:30 p.m. will be directed towards the Energy program. The meetings will be held at the East Campus Union on the University of Nebraska Campus, room (to be announced).

Deb Yocum, cooperative development specialist with USDA Rural Development will present the VADG program details including an overview of both the planning grants and working capital grants, eligibility requirements and how to apply for funds.

Associate Director Ed O'Neill with the University of Nebraska's Food Processing Center will explain how to write grants using a template that is available to workshop attendees. Vice Chancellor for Research, Dr. Prem Paul with the University will discuss how to write successful grant proposals, explaining areas to emphasize as well as common errors and oversights that can affect grant applications. In addition, the sessions will discuss raising matching funds and in-kind contributions needed for grant projects, as well as a discussion on the components of business plans and feasibility studies. Attendees will also have the opportunity to meet representatives of organizations that provide professional assistance to value-added ventures.

Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, commodity groups, and majority-controlled producer based business groups are eligible to apply for VADG funds. The funds can be used to add value to products or commodities that will expand the customer base and assist producers in realizing greater revenues from the value-added activity.

Cliff Kumm, program support manager with USDA Rural Development will brief afternoon attendees about the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Improvement Grant program eligibility requirements and how to apply for funds.

Independent agricultural producers and rural small businesses are eligible applicants. Funds can be used to purchase renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

For more information on the VADG program call Deb Yocum at 402-223-3125 ext. 4 or Joan Scheel at 402-472-8852. Contact Cliff Kumm at 402-223-3125 ext. 4 for questions regarding the Energy program.

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-2-

The workshops are sponsored by the Nebraska Value Added Advisory Partnership (NEVAAP), which includes the University of Nebraska, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Cooperative Development Center, Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation, Nebraska Cooperative Council, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Rural Development Commission, Co-Bank, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Ethanol Board, Nebraska Corn Board, USDA NRCS and USDA Rural Development.

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