



# NEWS RELEASE

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**VENEMAN ANNOUNCES \$75 MILLION IN GRANTS TO SPUR  
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INVESTMENT IN U.S. RURAL COMMUNITIES**  
*Grants to Fund Value-Added Products, Distance Learning & Telemedicine, and Rural  
Infrastructure*

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22, 2002—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced more than \$75 million for economic development, energy and infrastructure projects to help spur investment and create new jobs in rural communities throughout the United States.

“These grants will bring new economic opportunities and job creation for rural America,” said Veneman. “The Bush administration continues to increase investment in health care, education, value-added processing and rural infrastructure which is providing renewed growth to these important sectors of our economy.”

The **Rural Business-Cooperative Service Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development** grants announced today support two of President Bush’s pillar initiatives: economic growth and energy. These 231 grants in 43 states total over \$37 million and will fund a variety of agricultural ventures such as renewable energy, agri-marketing, high-value products from major crops and commodities. Thirty-five projects totaling more than \$7.2 million will foster development of alternative energy sources (see press release #0458.02). Recipients are required to obtain matching funds which will double the impact of the USDA grants. Funding of individual recipients is contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. For information on applying for 2003 value-added grants visit:  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>

Nebraska recipients of Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development grant funds totaling **\$1,635,160** include:

Imperial Young Farmers and Ranchers, Imperial, Neb. - \$40,000

Purpose: To conduct a feasibility study for developing a biomass ethanol and electric facility that utilizes waste crops such as corn stover and wheat straw.

Shuck Family Limited Partnership, Edgar, Neb. - \$9,105

Purpose: To assess the feasibility of a salsa production facility in South Central Nebraska and develop a business, market analysis and financial plan.

Small Farms Cooperative, West Point, Neb. - \$250,000

Purpose: To obtain technical assistance in creating a natural meat certification and definition program and establish the cooperative’s emerging European markets.

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St. James Market Place, Wynot, Neb. - \$34,500

Purpose: To develop a feasibility study, business and marketing plan and legal cost to help develop and enlarge their business of locally made products.

Kansas/Nebraska Meat Goat, Orleans, Neb. - \$12,855

Purpose: To complete a feasibility study and business development plan to determine opportunities for producers in the adjoining states to enter and compete in the meat goat market.

Nebraska Corn-Fed Beef, Inc., Lincoln, Neb. - \$150,000

Purpose: To develop new markets, implement new technologies to support the expansion of the value-added program and develop new supply by attracting more beef producers into the program.

Farmers Coop Oil Company, Newman Grove, Neb. - \$22,300

Purpose: To investigate the economic and market feasibility of locally grown and processed soybeans for oil and meal.

Panhandle Chicory Growers Association, Inc., Scottsbluff, Neb. - \$67,500

Purpose: To conduct a feasibility study and develop a business and marketing plan for Chicory to Inulin processing.

Western Nebraska Vineyard Association, Gering, Neb. - \$6,000

Purpose: To complete a feasibility study and marketing and business plan to assist in the determination of a successful grower-owned winery.

KAAPA, Kearney, Neb. - \$154,950

Purpose: To conduct a feasibility study and market study for niche market, quality differentiated and identity preserved grain sales to Mexico.

Ag Processing Inc., Omaha, Neb. - \$346,950

Purpose: To assist with the expansion of markets for its SoyGold (solvent) program.

Dorchester Farmers Cooperative, Dorchester, Neb. - \$500,000

Purpose: For working capital to develop the necessary systems to coordinate the handling, contracting and movement of large volumes of value-added identity preserved grains.

Natural Quality Direct Steering, Indianola, Neb. - \$41,000

Purpose: To assist with project initiation, feasibility study, legal and structural fees and business planning to help expand the cooperative's beef, dairy and poultry product markets.

The **Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine** grants will fund 71 recipients totaling more than \$27 million for education and medical service in 33 states. The award of these grants will bring to rural communities access to better, faster and more modern health care, and students in rural areas will receive better equipment and learning tools and access to courses that would otherwise be unavailable. These grants help invest in infrastructure projects that assist rural communities with communications and medical services. A complete list of 2002 recipients can be found at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telcom/dlt/awards.htm>. For information on applying for 2003 grants please visit <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/dlt/dlt.htm>.

Nebraska recipients of Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant funds totaling **\$648,640** include:

Rural Health Partners, Inc. d.b.a. Heartland Health Alliance, \$164,640 for distance learning.

North Platte Nebraska Hospital Corporation d.b.a Great Plains Regional Medical Center, \$484,000 for telemedicine.

The **Rural Housing Service Community Facilities Program's Rural Community Development Initiative** will fund 41 proposals in 22 states and the District of Columbia totaling nearly \$12 million. Grants will help private and nonprofit community-based development organizations and low-income communities improve their ability to develop rural housing and community facilities.

These projects will help create jobs and economic investment in rural areas through direct investment and housing availability. Recipients are required to obtain matching funds which will double the impact of the USDA grants. Funding of individual recipients will be contingent upon meeting the conditions of the grant agreement. For information on 2003 funding availability and applications please visit <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/index.htm>.

Nebraska recipients of Rural Community Development Initiative grant funds totaling **\$760,000** include:

Department of Economic Development, Lincoln, Neb. - \$700,000

Center for Rural Affairs, Walthill, Neb. - \$60,000

“These grant programs are important to helping America’s rural communities thrive and prosper,” said Under Secretary for Rural Development Tom Dorr. “Investing in our hospitals and schools, as well as providing housing development for low income communities, helps families, creates new jobs and provides real investments in these rural areas.”

A complete list of 2002 recipients can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>.

The following is a complete list of selected project dollars by state:

Alabama - \$733,262	Alaska - \$1,096,223	Arizona - \$1,010,822
Arkansas - \$827,779	California - \$4,911,267	Colorado - \$1,731,796
Connecticut - \$12,500	Delaware - \$425,000	Florida - \$629,070
Georgia - \$1,724,450	Hawaii - \$338,195	Idaho - \$1,338,835
Illinois - \$1,944,650	Indiana - \$68,500	Iowa - \$6,335,224
Kansas - \$2,315,655	Kentucky - \$966,072	Louisiana - \$140,322
Maine - \$2,420,649	Maryland - \$843,104	Massachusetts - \$1,110,000
Michigan - \$1,781,216	Minnesota - \$2,376,670	Mississippi - \$1,523,441
Missouri - \$3,384,307	Montana - \$1,893,023	<b>Nebraska - \$3,043,800</b>
New Jersey - \$390,200	New Mexico - \$552,526	New York - \$3,523,393
North Carolina - \$79,618	North Dakota - \$1,789,800	Ohio - \$2,416,048
Oklahoma - \$2,438,402	Oregon - \$1,449,857	Pennsylvania - \$2,770,788
Puerto Rico - \$320,000	South Carolina - \$760,000	South Dakota - \$1,185,000

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Tennessee - \$1,918,774	Texas - \$3,643,080	Utah - \$742,322
Vermont - \$780,469	Virginia - \$1,481,749	Washington-\$2,635,179
West Virginia - \$369,170	Wisconsin - \$1,249,912	Wyoming - \$90,000
District of Columbia - \$1,400,000		

In August, Veneman attended an economic forum in Texas, convened by President Bush, which brought federal agencies together with working Americans to examine ways to strengthen the U.S. economy and create jobs. USDA serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Utilities Service.

Further information on USDA Rural Development and these announcements can be obtained by contacting an USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.usda.gov>.

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