



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Rural Development's Value-Added Program Delivers *Three Recipients Harvest More Than \$98,000 from Program*

**Columbus, Ohio, October 11, 2005** – The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Office awarded \$98,750 in Value-Added Producer Grant funding to three recipients during the FY 2005 funding cycle. The funding is spread among a variety of Ohio enterprises and helps the state's program build upon its success.

"We've focused our efforts on ensuring Ohio's Value-Added program maintains its momentum and continues to increase opportunities for local agribusinesses," said State Director Randy Hunt. "There were 171 Value-Added applications approved nationally totaling more than \$14.6 million. We're encouraged that Ohio's Value-Added program has grown in strength since its introduction in 2001. Our attention is on ensuring that more agribusinesses become aware of and benefit from this program."

The competition for these funds continues to increase as more agribusinesses adapt the program to maximize its benefits. Ohio had eight applicants whose requests totaled \$431,883. Three grants totaling \$98,750 were awarded in Ohio. The grant recipients are: Dale Stokes Raspberry Farm LLC - \$34,500, Ohio Corn Growers Association - \$33,000 and Mercer Landmark, Inc. - \$31,250.

Value-Added Producer Grants may be used for planning activities, such as feasibility studies or business plans, or to provide working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based bio energy projects.

Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures. The Value-Added Producer Grant program was authorized by the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 and the 2002 Farm Bill.

USDA Rural Development 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 can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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