



NEWS RELEASE

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Rural Development Awards Value-Added Funding *Select Sires Secures \$300,000 to Help Improve Operations*

Columbus, Ohio, October 30, 2006 – The United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Office awarded \$630,471 in Value-Added Producer Grant funding to seven recipients during the FY 2006 funding cycle. The funding will help Ohio’s agriculturally related businesses increase their profitability.

“We continue to see a growing and emerging value-added agriculture sector in Ohio as producers seek new ways to become more entrepreneurial and profitable,” said State Director Randy Hunt. “The Value-Added Agriculture Producer Grant program continues to help Ohio farmers and agri-related enterprises reach their business development goals.”

There were 194 Value-Added applications approved nationally totaling \$22.6 million. Some of the funding was targeted to the development of alternative fuels from renewable energy sources – part of President Bush’s comprehensive national energy policy.

Ohio’s seven successful applicants included: Select Sires, Inc. receiving \$300,000, Egg Tech. Ltd. receiving \$94,500, Maize Valley Farm Market Ltd. receiving \$83,721, Jackson Farms Energy, LLC receiving \$53,500, Dale Stokes Raspberry Farm, LLC receiving \$34,500, Ohio Corn Grower Association receiving \$33,000 and Mercer Landmark, Inc. receiving \$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 Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs, and Rural Utilities Programs. 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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