



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
Federal Bldg. 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: (614) 255-2394 • Fax: (614) 255-2559 • TDD: 800-877-8339 • Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

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Dane Henshall (202) 260-0996

Keith Williams (202) 720-4623

JOHANNNS ANNOUNCES \$22.7 MILLION IN VALUE ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2007 - Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the selection of 162 recipients in 40 states and Puerto Rico to receive \$22.7 million through the Value-Added Producer Grant program.

“These grants support farm families in rural America by helping them market their commodities and increase their financial returns,” Johanns said. “I’m also pleased that some of these funds will help develop alternative fuels from renewable energy sources as part of President Bush’s comprehensive national energy policy.”

Approximately one-third of the grants, 56, will go to recipients who requested \$50,000 or less in federal assistance. For example, in Chilton, Wis., Quality Dairy Goat Producers Cooperative of Wisconsin was selected to receive an award of \$37,500 to market quality goat milk to high-end cheese companies. Krouse Ranch, Inc. in Grants Pass, Ore., was selected to receive an award of \$17,650 to develop a feasibility study to process and market cut and dressed beef through local farmer-chef connection programs.

Mercer Landmark, Inc. of Mercer, Ohio, was awarded \$300,000 to help bring a new soy crushing facility online, and Orlicek Farm, Stuttgart, Ark., was selected to receive \$98,500 to determine the feasibility of marketing biofuels from a facility in Arkansas.

Value-Added Producer Grants may be used for planning activities or to provide working capital to market value-added agricultural products and farm-based renewable energy projects. A value-added product is created when a producer takes an agricultural commodity, such as milk or vegetables, and processes or prepares it in a way that increases its value to consumers. Rural Development has committed more than \$158 million to value-added agricultural investments since 2001.

A complete list of grant recipients is available at USDA’s web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 voice or 202-720-6382 TDD.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. USDA Rural Development has invested more than \$76.8 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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