NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer Grant Meeting to be Held

Robstown, Texas, June 16, 2004 – USDA Rural Development State Director Bryan Daniel announced today that the Agency will hold a seminar to discuss the Value Added Producer Grant program. The meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on July 6, 2004, at the Nueces County Building, 710 East Main, Robstown, Texas.

"This grant program will foster the development of value-added projects to help create the opportunity for economic development and job creation in rural areas," said Daniel. "USDA Rural Development is committed to providing the necessary tools to help rural businesses create jobs and improve the quality of life for their communities."

Authorized as part of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grants program provides an opportunity to refine agricultural commodities and products to increase their value in the marketplace. Grants may be used for planning activities and working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy. Eligible applicants are independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

State Director Daniel encourages individuals interested in USDA Rural Development's Value Added Producer Grant Program to attend this seminar and to contact their local office. The USDA Rural Development local office that serves this area is located at 2287 North Texas Boulevard, Suite 1, Alice, Texas. The telephone number is (361) 668-0453, ext.4.

USDA Rural Development is the economic development agency for USDA, and the lead federal entity for rural development. For additional program information, you may also log onto the state's Rural Development website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx.

USDA Rural Development is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

USDA Rural Development was created in 1994 and includes Business Programs, Housing Programs, and Utilities Programs. Its mission is to use the resources of USDA to provide an improved quality of life for the nation's rural residents.

For more information on USDA Rural Development programs in Texas, check our web site at http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/