



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES GRANT FUNDING TO WHITE EGRET FARM

AUSTIN, TEXAS, January 19, 2005 – Bryan Daniel, USDA Rural Development State Director, announced today that White Egret Farm was selected to receive a \$72,000 Value Added Producer Grant. The funds will be used to develop a business and marketing plan for expanding into the natural foods retail market. The farm, which produces fluid goat milk, cheeses, yogurt and meat, has developed a yogurt culture that reduces the lactose content.

“This grant will allow White Egret Farm to test markets in Travis County to determine the demographics of potential customers who have expressed a interest to purchase their products locally from retail outlets in their neighborhoods,” said Daniel.

The VAPG program is designed to provide agricultural producers or rural businesses with grant funds to further refine agricultural commodities, increasing their value to consumers. The grants will also provide capital to allow producers to better market their products so that they can better compete in domestic and international markets. 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.

Authorized as part of the 2002 Farm Bill, the Value-Added Producer Grant 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.

USDA Rural Development was created in 1994 and with a mission to use the resources of USDA to help enhance the quality of life for the nation’s rural residents. For more information regarding USDA Rural Development programs, please contact the Georgetown Local Office at (512) 863-6502, Ext. 4.

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