

Value added grants offered to farmers

Written by gothenburgtimes
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Farmers and producers are urged to apply for \$18 million in grants to help them add value to the commodities they produce. The funding is made available through USDA Rural Development's Value Added Producer Grant program.

The national application period for the program closes on Nov. 30. For more information on how to apply, producers should [visit the Web](#) or see page 45165 of the Sept.1 Federal Register.

USDA plans to award planning grants of up to \$100,000 and working capital grants of up to \$300,000 to successful applicants. Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that use existing agricultural products in non-traditional ways or merge agricultural products with technology in creative ways. Businesses of all sizes may apply, but priority will be given to operators of small to medium-sized farms operating as a family farm - those with average annual gross sales of less than \$700,000.

Applicants must provide matching funds equal to the amount of the grant requested. Ten percent of the funding being made available is reserved for beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10 percent is reserved for projects involving local and regional supply networks that link independent producers with businesses, and cooperatives that market value-added products.

If a project is located in Nebraska, a paper application must be submitted to the Rural Development State Office, Attn. Joan Scheel, Rm. 152 Federal Building, 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb. 68508. [Electronic applications](#) must be submitted through the Web.

Contact Scheel at 402-437-5594 or joan.scheel@ne.usda.gov for more information.