

(Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 1508.22;
Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, section 21)

Dated: June 7, 2004.

Edward C. Cole,

Forest Supervisor, Sierra National Forest.

Dated: June 7, 2004.

Jeffrey E. Bailey,

Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Ravalli County Resource Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Ravalli County Resource Advisory Committee will be meeting to discuss 2004 projects and hold a short public forum (question and answer session). The meeting is being held pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393). The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The meeting will be held on June 22, 2004, 6:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Ravalli County Administration Building, 215 S. 4th Street, Hamilton, Montana. Send written comments to Jeanne Higgins, District Ranger, Stevensville Ranger District, 88 Main Street, Stevensville, MT 59870, by facsimile (406) 777-7423, or electronically to jmhiggins@fs.fed.us.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeanne Higgins, Stevensville District Ranger and Designated Federal Officer, Phone: (406) 777-5461.

Dated: June 7, 2004.

David T. Bull,

Forest Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business—Cooperative Service

Announcement of Value-Added Producer Grant Application Deadlines and Funding Levels

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) announces the availability of \$13.2 million in competitive grant funds for fiscal year (FY) 2004 to help independent agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. RBS hereby requests proposals from eligible independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer or rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures interested in a competitively-awarded grant to fund one of the following two activities: (1) Planning activities needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product (e.g. conduct a feasibility study, develop a business plan, develop a marketing plan); or (2) acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets. In order to provide program benefits to as many eligible applicants as possible, applications can only be for one or the other of these two activities, but not both. The maximum award per grant is \$500,000 and matching funds are required.

DATES: You may submit completed applications for grants on paper or electronically by 4 p.m. Eastern time on July 30, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain application guides and materials for a Value-Added Producer Grant via the Internet at the following web address: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm> or by contacting the Agency Contact for your state listed in Section VII of this notice.

Submit completed paper applications for a grant to DynAccSys, Attention: Bitsy Keko, 101 Donner Drive, Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

Submit electronic grant applications to the following e-mail address: VAPG@duncanltd.com.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Agency Contact for your state listed in Section VII of this notice.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency: Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS).

Funding Opportunity Title: Value-Added Producer Grants.

Announcement Type: Initial announcement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.352.

Dates:

- *Application Deadline:* Applications must be received on or before 4 p.m. Eastern time on July 30, 2004.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

This solicitation is issued pursuant to section 231 of the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-224) as amended by section 6401 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) authorizing the establishment of the Value-Added Agricultural Product Market Development grants, also known as Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG). The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated the program's administration to USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

The primary objective of this grant program is to help eligible independent producers of agricultural commodities, agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures develop strategies to create marketing opportunities and to help develop business plans for viable marketing opportunities. Eligible agricultural producer groups, farmer and rancher cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures must limit their proposals to emerging markets. These grants will facilitate greater participation in emerging markets and new markets for value-added products. Grants will only be awarded if projects or ventures are determined to be economically viable and sustainable. No more than 10 percent of program funds can go to applicants that are majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

Definitions

Agency—Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), or a successor agency.

Agricultural Producer—Persons or entities, including farmers, ranchers, loggers, agricultural harvesters and fishermen, that engage in the production or harvesting of an agricultural product. Producers may or may not own the land or other production resources, but must have majority ownership interest in the agricultural product to which Value-Added is to accrue as a result of the project. Examples of agricultural producers include: a logger who has a majority interest in the logs harvested that are then converted to boards, a fisherman that has a majority interest in the fish caught that are then smoked, a wild herb gatherer that has a majority interest in the gathered herbs that are then converted into essential oils, a cattle feeder that has a majority interest in the cattle that are fed, slaughtered and sold as boxed beef, and a corn grower that has a majority interest in the