

News

North Carolina Research Campus, Kannapolis

April 5, 2010

Media Contacts: Brittany Whitmire, NCVACS program coordinator, N.C. MarketReady, 919-830-9557 or brittany_whitmire@ncsu.edu. For assistance in arranging interviews, contact Leah Chester-Davis, coordinator of communications and community outreach, N.C. MarketReady, 704-250-5406 or leah_chester-davis@ncsu.edu

N.C. MarketReady Opens New Grant Cycle for N.C. Value-Added Cost Share Program; Announces Award Recipients from First Round of Funding

KANNAPOLIS, N.C. – The third cycle of funding offered by the N.C. Value-Added Cost Share (NCVACS) program is now open. The NCVACS program provides financial support, through matching funds, to producers who are applying for the USDA Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG), a nationally competitive program. NCVACS is funded by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and administered by N.C. MarketReady, a program of Cooperative Extension located at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis.

The current funding cycle is designed to offset the cost (by approximately 50 percent) of hiring a qualified grant writer and feasibility professional. Matching funds, contingent on receipt of the federal grant, are also available through this grant cycle. The guidelines, application and supporting documents are available online at www.ncmarketready.com under the navigation tab “Value-Added Cost Share”. The deadline for this current cycle is May 1, 2010.

Nine value-added producers in North Carolina received a financial boost as recipients of the first NCVACS cycle, awarded in late 2009, and currently in progress. “The nine recipients represent a diverse array of value-added enterprises and are geographically scattered throughout the state,” said Brittany Whitmire, NCVACS program coordinator. The award recipients fell into three categories of cost share funding for grant writing and feasibility assessment.

Lee Swinson, a peanut farmer who operates Golden Grove Candy Company in Warsaw, N.C., produces the Carolina Crisp Peanut Bar and other peanut candies. He received \$3,500 in cost share funds to assist with grant writing to help his VAPG proposal be more competitive.

Four other recipients will receive grant writing assistance (\$3,500) and, upon receipt of a VAPG, matching funds of \$10,000 to help fulfill a matching funds requirement from the USDA. The following are recipients of this cost share funding.

- Smoky Mountain Native Plants Association, located in western North Carolina, is a producer group that grows and harvests ramps, wild mountain leeks that grow at high elevations in the Appalachian Mountains. Ramps are processed for seasoning packets and rampmeal.
- Ossie and Mary Betty Kearney, along with their son, Andrew, own and operate Nooherooka Natural in Snow Hill, N.C. The Kearneys direct market all-natural, Black Angus beef products to wholesale and retail outlets in eastern and central North Carolina.

(more)

N.C. MarketReady Opens New Grant Cycle for N.C. Value-Added Cost Share Program; Announces Award Recipients from First Round of Funding, p. 2

- Jon Dorman and Della Williams, dairy goat farmers located in Pelham, N.C., produce a variety of artisan cheeses which they direct market as Sleepy Goat Cheese in north central North Carolina and south central Virginia.
- Jack and Grace Bishop, the owners of Vineyards on the Scuppernong, a vineyard and winery in Columbia, N.C., produce grapes for table wine and operate a retail shop near the vineyard.

Four other producers received NCVACS cost share funding for grant writing to help them be more competitive in seeking working capital from the USDA VAPG program. They also were awarded cost share funds for a feasibility assessment. The value of these awards ranged from \$18,000 to \$23,500.

- Mary Roberts, Windcrest Farm in Monroe, N.C., is a certified organic producer who grafts heirloom tomato scion to disease-resistant rootstock, selling heirloom tomato transplants.
- Richard Parker, located in Mt. Ulla, N.C., owns an organic dairy (cows) and plans to partner with Chuck Moore, who operates a dairy goat farm, to produce a line of artisan and specialty cheeses.
- Wilson and Debbie Daughtry of Alligator River Growers farm, one of four vegetable operations that produce and plan to market ready-to-cook, bagged snapbeans to wholesale and retail markets along the east coast.
- Henry and Tracy Moore own Bobcat Farms, in Clinton, N.C., a diversified beef and swine operation that direct markets beef to retail consumers in central North Carolina.

These producers are working with professional grant writers and feasibility consultants to prepare applications to the USDA VAPG program. North Carolina producers have been awarded 13 VAPGs since the program's inception in 2001. "One of the goals of NCVACS is to increase North Carolina's success in the federal VAPG program by increasing the amount of federal funding that our value-added producers receive," said Whitmire. "As one of the most diverse agricultural states in the country and with a population of highly entrepreneurial, hard working and creative farmers, North Carolina is in an excellent position to secure more federal VAPG dollars."

A value-added agricultural product is a raw, agricultural commodity that has been changed in some manner so that it no longer can be returned to its original state. This change results in increased market value, allowing the producer to receive a higher price for these value-added products compared to the original commodity. Chopped lettuce, fruit jams and stone-ground corn meal are a few examples. "The NCVACS guidelines also include non-standard production methods (such as organic), physical product segregation (gluten-free grains separate from gluten-based grains), generating farm-based renewable energy and some locally produced food products," said Whitmire.

The second cost share cycle, for Equipment, is now in the review process. Another Equipment cycle will occur in the spring of 2011. For more information about NCVACS, visit www.ncmarketready.org (choose Value-Added Cost Share on the left menu bar), or contact Brittany Whitmire at 919-830-9557 or brittany_whitmire@ncsu.edu.

N.C. MarketReady will be featuring an in-depth profile of each award recipient in the coming months. Read more about them at www.ncmarketready.org.

N.C. MarketReady, formerly known as the Program for Value-Added & Alternative Agriculture, is a program of N.C. Cooperative Extension, which is an educational outreach of N.C. State University and

(more)

N.C. MarketReady Opens New Grant Cycle for N.C. Value-Added Cost Share Program; Announces Award Recipients from First Round of Funding, p. 3

N.C. A&T State University. N.C. MarketReady's multidisciplinary team builds partnerships and educational resources to help North Carolina agriculture be more profitable. N.C. MarketReady is a partner of the Plants for Human Health Institute at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis. Learn more at www.ncmarketready.org or www.ces.ncsu.edu.

Writer: Megan Bame

###