

News

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Governor's Announcement Expands N.C. Value-Added Cost Share Program

KANNAPOLIS, N.C. – Gov. Beverly Perdue, on August 2, 2010, announced a package of programs, the Family Farm Innovation Fund, to help North Carolina farmers rebound from the recession. The N.C. Value-Added Cost Share program (NCVACS), administered by N.C. MarketReady, will receive \$150,000 from the Family Farm Innovation Fund, as well as an additional \$150,000 from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission to expand its equipment cost share program for value-added producers and processors of N.C. agricultural commodities. This \$300,000 will be used to expand the current \$350,000 equipment cost share program funded by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

Under the Family Farm Innovation Fund, five state and federal programs will help farmers lower energy costs, launch renewable energy projects, implement value-added production and develop other sources of farm income. Over the next year, they are expected to provide grants for up to 1,500 farm projects and energy efficiency training for an additional 2,400 farmers. In addition to N.C. MarketReady, other programs that will administer the funds are Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), USDA-Rural Development; Value-Added Producer Grants, USDA-Rural Development; Farm Energy Efficiency Project, N.C. Farm Bureau; and Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund, RAFI-USA.

“This initiative builds on the legacy of innovation in North Carolina’s family farms, and it is another step forward in our JobsNOW economic recovery efforts,” Perdue said in making the announcement at the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center.

The funding appropriated to NCVACS is being used to increase cost share availability to producers and develop a cost share option for value-added processors of N.C. agricultural commodities. NCVACS, established in 2009 with initial funding from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, announced award recipients of the 2010 Equipment Cost Share cycle in June. Recipients ranged from individual micro-enterprises of value-added pickles and jams to larger projects for groups of producers who process specialty meats and food products. “While the initial cycle was only available to value-added

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producers, the new funding opens the door for processors as well—those who don't necessarily produce the raw commodities to which they add value, but who buy those inputs from North Carolina farmers," says Brittany Whitmire, NCVACS program coordinator.

Through NCVACS, applicants can seek to purchase new or used equipment with cost share funding. Equipment cost share awards will vary from 25 to 50 percent of the total cost of the equipment, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

Guidelines and applications are available online at www.ncmarketready.org, under "N.C. Value-Added Cost Share" in the left column. "The first step is to review the guidelines for the cost share programs to determine whether or not a processor or producer is eligible for NCVACS assistance," advises Whitmire. Applications for the equipment cost share are due by December 31, 2010. For more information, contact Brittany Whitmire, NCVACS program coordinator, at brittany_whitmire@ncsu.edu or 919-830-9557.

N.C. MarketReady is a program of N.C. Cooperative Extension, which is an educational outreach of N.C. State University and 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.

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