Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Agriculture Development Fund

Administered by Farm Credit East

The primary objective of the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Grant is to help Western New York agricultural producers fund projects similar to those eligible under the USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. This grant allows funding for capital expenditures, including the acquisition, construction and/or renovation of agricultural structures, and the acquisition of machinery and equipment.

How are grants awarded?
Grants are based on eligibility and awarded competitively. As a rolling grant, there is no specific application deadline at this time.

Maximum grant amount
Up to $50,000 may be awarded per project, generally not to exceed 50 percent of the total project expenditure, which is expected to leverage matching loan funding through Farm Credit East or other financing sources. Multiple farms may apply on one application, with their aggregate application generally not to exceed $50,000 per farm.

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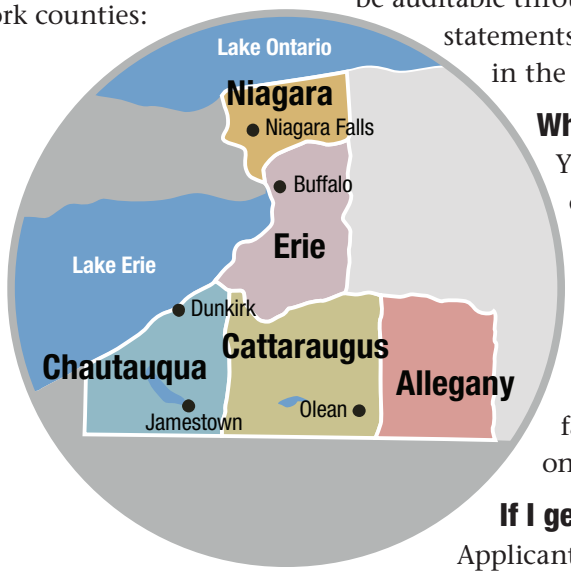
This grant allows funding at generally up to $50,000 for value-added or direct-to-market farm activities.

Am I eligible to apply?

Agricultural producers who meet the following criteria may apply:

1. Agricultural producers from a commercial farm in any of the following New York counties:
   - Allegany
   - Erie
   - Cattaraugus
   - Chautauqua
   - Niagara



2. Eligible producers are those who are engaged in a value-added activity based on the definitions in 7 CFR 4284.902.

The value-added agricultural product is any agricultural commodity that meets one of the following value-added methodologies:

- Has undergone a change in physical state
- Was produced in a manner that enhances the value of the agricultural commodity
- Is physically segregated in a manner that results in the enhancement of the value of the agricultural commodity
- Is aggregated and marketed as a locally-produced agricultural food product.

In addition and as a result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity was produced, marketed or segregated:

- The customer base for the agricultural commodity is expanded and,
- A greater portion of the revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation of the agricultural commodity is available to the producer of the commodity.

3. Eligible applicants are expected to retain and expand agricultural activity; increase access to locally grown products; retain and create jobs; and create stronger rural communities from agricultural economic development.

Applicants or investors are required to contribute a minimum of 10 percent of the total project cost to the project. This contribution cannot be borrowed funds or borrowed funds secured by the assets of the project. Applicants are required to inject cash into the project and the contribution should be auditable through the applicant's financial statements or accounts and documented in the application.

What can I do with the grant?

You may use grant funds for capital costs associated with value-added or direct-to-market activities on farms. Examples of eligible projects include a small cheese production activity on a dairy farm or a new vegetable cooler on a vegetable farm.

If I get the grant, what's next?

Applicants are required to report quarterly on the project's successes, such as the creation of new jobs, the retention of jobs or an increase in farm profitability. Successful applicants will be required to comply with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) as applicable.

Other resources

For more information on VAPG, visit the USDA Rural Development site at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG.html.

What if I have a question?

Nathan Rudgers, Farm Credit East's director of business development, looks forward to answering your questions and helping you complete the application. Nathan administers this grant.

How do I apply?

Contact Nathan Rudgers for an application.

- Office: 800.929.1350
- Cell: 585.993.0395
- Email: Nathan.Rudgers@FarmCreditEast.com

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