

## STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

### **USDA Seeks Comment on Ways to Help Rural Agricultural Producers Increase Income and Expand Markets**

**WASHINGTON, Aug. 24, 2021** – U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Justin Maxson today announced that the Department is seeking input on ways to better help rural businesses and agricultural producers develop and market new products.

The Department is specifically interested in recommendations to improve the application process and eligibility requirements for the [Value-Added Producer Grant Program](#). The program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities to help process and market new products. This program helps to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities and increase producer income.

USDA is seeking comments on:

- Ways to measure the economic and market impact of post-harvest activities.
- Whether USDA should allow applicants to write their business plans without assistance from qualified business consultants.
- When USDA should set the application deadline.
- Ways the department can help rural businesses meet food safety requirements and purchase food safety equipment.

USDA will hold a virtual listening session on these topics on Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021 at 2 p.m. Eastern Time. Interested parties may register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/574045542162812683>.

Written comments on proposed changes to the program must be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Oct. 25, 2021. For additional information, see page 47284 of the Aug. 24, 2021, [Federal Register](#).

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