



MARBIDCO
growing rural ventures™

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Maryland Value Added Producer Grants Now Available From MARBIDCO

ANNAPOLIS (September 9, 2009) – The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) has announced a grant funding opportunity to encourage Maryland's independent agricultural producers to enter into value-added activities and pursue financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Value Added Producer Grants Program (USDA-VAPG). The USDA-VAPG is a highly competitive nationwide funding program with approximately \$18 million available for distribution in 2009. These grant funds can be used for planning or working capital purposes in accordance with USDA regulations. Eligible purposes include determining appropriate marketing techniques and creating business plans, or paying operating costs before a business has sufficient cash flow from operations.

MARBIDCO will make available through its Maryland Value Added Producer Grants Program (MVAPG) matching grants of up to 15% of the amount of an USDA-VAPG award to help an eligible applicant meet the non-federal financial matching requirement. A MVAPG monetary award from MARBIDCO will only be provided to an applicant that is selected to receive USDA-VAPG funding, and the amount of an individual grant is capped at a maximum of \$25,000.

New for 2009, 10% of available USDA-VAPG funds are reserved to fund applicants who are Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, and an additional 10% of available funds are reserved to fund Mid-Tier Value Chain Producers. All applications for USDA-VAPG must be postmarked and mailed, shipped or sent overnight no later than November 30, 2009. Questions about the USDA-VAPG can be addressed to the Maryland/Delaware Office of USDA-Rural Development at 302/857-3628, or visit USDA's website for more information: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm>.

The submission deadline for applicants seeking to receive USDA-VAPG matching funds from MARBIDCO is November 16, 2009. Alternatively, applications may be received in the mail postmarked no later than November 13, 2009. Please visit the MARBIDCO website for more information and to download the MVAPG application form: <http://www.MARBIDCO.org>. Questions about the MVAPG may also be addressed by contacting Kristen Robinson, MARBIDCO Financial Programs Officer, at (410) 267-6807.

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MARBIDCO is an agricultural economic development authority established in 2004 with a statewide mission to help Maryland's farm, forestry, seafood businesses achieve sustainability and profitability, and thereby help preserve rural working lands in the process. MARBIDCO offers assistance to qualifying rural businesses in securing affordable capital and credit for farmland purchases and other business projects (often by partnering with commercial lenders). MARBIDCO also offers specialized help and referral with rural business planning and technical assistance needs, and assists with rural working land preservation facilitation (by serving as a financial intermediary for Maryland land conservation organizations). MARBIDCO is particularly focused at the present time on promoting rural entrepreneurship and farm energy efficiency, as well as, helping young and beginning farmers to start or expand their business enterprises. MARBIDCO is headquartered in Annapolis.