

The Oklahoma Agricultural Enhancement and Diversification Program

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The Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement & Diversification Program is designed to develop or improve uses for agricultural products, expand the state's production of value-added products and to encourage diversified farming. Interest-free loans and grants are available. Applications are evaluated quarterly.

Cooperative Marketing Loan

- This loan may be used by a group to organize to market a product. The loan may also be used to formulate or implement a marketing plan if the cooperative is already in place.
- Applicants should provide an outlet for products that normally have not been marketed through an existing marketing cooperative. A sound marketing plan for the product should be included.
- Principals should be individuals rather than a previously existing corporation. Those individuals must have some type of cooperative agreement between themselves that will ensure proper accountability for the proposed plan.
- The agreement may be formal or informal, but proof of an agreement must exist.
- Individuals are encouraged to seek marketing partners within the state of Oklahoma.

Marketing and Utilization Loan

- Loan must be used for product development and/or implementation of a sound marketing plan for Oklahoma agricultural products and by-products.
- Applicants are encouraged to use the funds to seek new markets and new marketing ideas to promote their products.
- The products should be new to the particular area targeted for the marketing promotion or should expand the use of existing products.

- Proposals should encourage the creation of jobs and industry within the Oklahoma agricultural economy. The proposal should expand jobs in the agricultural economy where the project will take place.
- Applicants are encouraged to research potential markets for their products, estimate the financial possibilities of markets, and present an action plan.
- A realistic timeline for success must be presented.

Basic and Applied Research Loan/Grant

- Applicants should focus research efforts on use and processing of agricultural products and by-products.
- Applicants should develop the expanded use of technology for processing agricultural products and by-products in Oklahoma.
- Application must be aimed at business expansion or creation without regard to an agricultural product's use; it must not include research that cannot reasonably be expected to result in a marketable product or that has already been duplicated by other research.
- Applications should exhibit thoughtful planning, expansion of jobs in rural areas, and a reasonable opportunity for commercialization.

Farm Diversification Grant

- Projects should deal with the diversification of a family farm to non-traditional crops or on-farm value-added processing of agricultural commodities.
- The project will be judged on traditional/non-traditional guidelines, but doesn't necessarily have to be a new crop, livestock or value-added processing venture. The proposed project must have the potential to create additional income for the farm unit.
- Proposals must demonstrate a well-prepared action plan, and markets must have been researched and possible income must be projected.

About Gary Bledsoe

Bledsoe contracts with ODAFF to work with the Ag Enhancement and Diversification Program and in rural economic development. He is currently working on the American Native Beef Cooperative project, poultry litter processing, ethanol feasibility, dairy initiatives, and the Value Added Products Cooperative.

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- New and innovative plans for marketing and products must be evident.
- A sound business plan must show potential profits from diversifying.
- Grants will not exceed \$5,000 per application

Application Procedure

Five- to eight-page applications are available from the

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry. Loan and grant applications may be submitted at any time, but are evaluated quarterly by the appointed board of directors. Each application will be considered on an individual basis and on its own merits and objectives to reach the goals of the particular grant or loan. A fifteen-minute oral presentation to the board of directors may be required.