

RD AN No. 3958 (1940-L)
March 19, 2004

SUBJECT: Reporting the Progress of Value-Added Producer Grant Activities

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

PURPOSE/INTENDED OUTCOME:

This Administrative Notice (AN) provides guidance and clarification to the State Rural Development Offices on the requirements for reporting on the progress of Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) activities. Each State Office (SO) administering VAPG grants must report the progress of all grants from fiscal years (FY) 2001, 2002, and 2003. This includes activities that have been completed and grants terminated for any reason.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:

No previous AN has been issued on this subject.

BACKGROUND:

The VAPG Program has the potential to provide farmers and ranchers a means to help them add value to the commodities and products they produce. This will result in producers receiving a greater percentage of the consumer's food dollar than producers who merely sell commodities or products in their raw form.

The National Office cannot evaluate the effectiveness of this Program without good progress reports from grant recipients. We are also getting considerable congressional inquiries about specific projects and the Program as a whole. The VAPG Program will also undergo an Office of Management and Budget Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) analysis this year. The information contained in these progress reports will be needed for that analysis.

Our ultimate goal is to develop a Web-based reporting system where the recipients of grants submit their reports on-line. Each SO that receives a report can study that report on-line and make two determinations. The completeness of the report is the first determination.

EXPIRATION DATE:
March 31, 2005

FILING INSTRUCTIONS
Preceding RD Instruction 1940-L

Determining if the recipient is making sufficient progress on achieving the goals originally agreed to by the Agency and the grant recipient is the second consideration. The National Office will also have access to these reports in order to respond to the issues mentioned above.

The Web-based system has not yet been developed. However, we still need to assess the effectiveness of the VAPG Program. To this end, we are requiring that each SO submit a synopsis of all semiannual progress reports from VAPG recipients in FY 2001, 2002, and 2003, starting with those due April 30, 2004. Each SO will aggregate the reports submitted to their States.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

Who Reports

Each State Rural Development Office has designated a staff person(s) whose assigned responsibilities include serving as liaison to the VAPG Program. This person will ensure that each grant recipient submits their semiannual reports and is responsible for any followup required to get recipients to submit their progress reports. Those recipients who refuse to submit adequate reports will have to face remedies that may include the termination of their grants.

What to Report

Each report will include a project ID (year-state-number), fiscal year funding, a project name, an amount of funds obligated, unliquidated obligations, and a short narrative discussing what has been accomplished and any problems the project is facing. This narrative should be as short as four or five descriptive sentences.

Format

The format for these reports will be Excel™ spreadsheets similar to the one attached to this AN. The reports are to be e-mailed as attachments to cpgrants@usda.gov. The National Office will aggregate these reports.

If you need additional assistance, please call Gail Thuner at (202) 690-2426 or Marc Warman at (202) 690-1431.

(Signed by John Rosso)

JOHN ROSSO
Administrator
Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Attachment

State VAPG Progress Report, Fiscal Years 2001 Through 2003					
Grant Number	FY	Recipient's Name	Grant Amount	Unliquidated Balance	Progress Report
2003-VA-0001	2003	Archibald's Goat Ranch and Land Company	500,000	425,000	It is here you summarize the main points of the recipient's progress reports. In most cases, this should take only four or five sentences. Include any economic impacts or benefits and how much farm income increased because of the grant.