VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE GRANT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

Funding to support programs that add value to traditional commodity crops, expand fruit and vegetable production along with other alternative crops, increase processing capacity and open new market opportunities for livestock products.

BACKGROUND

While Iowa's major commodities and livestock industries will remain the core economic drivers for Iowa's ag economy, recent trade disruptions, market price and profitability challenges and evolving consumer food preferences are driving the need for alternative production and marketing strategies. This proposal would create an ongoing grant program to identify, evaluate and financially support programs and services that add value to agricultural products, enable new technologies and support alternative marketing strategies. Specific areas of focus would include ideas to enable additional livestock processing capacity, new grain processing technology, food safety, sustainability and ways to meet changing consumer market preferences.

Strong emphasis will be placed on incentivizing ideas that provide increased economic activity and jobs in rural communities. A recognition program will be developed to showcase grant-funded projects. Existing efforts like "farm-to-fork," food hubs, farm-to-school and local breweries and distilleries using small grains are all turn-key mechanisms to boost value-added opportunities for Iowa agriculture through this grant program.

REQUEST

$500,000 annual appropriation

IMPLEMENTATION

Grants may vary in size. Grants would require a 50% match in funds or in-kind contributions by the applicant. Individuals, farmers, businesses, agricultural cooperatives or local government entities would be eligible to apply.