

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number for these programs is 10.450.

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Part I—Information for the Commodity Partnership Program

A. General Information

1. Legislative Authority

The Commodity Partnership program is authorized under section 552(d)(3)(F) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (Act).

2. Background

RMA promotes and regulates sound risk management solutions to improve the economic stability of American agriculture. On behalf of FCIC, RMA does this by offering Federal crop insurance products through a network of private-sector partners, overseeing the creation of new risk management products, seeking enhancement in existing products, ensuring the integrity of crop insurance programs, offering outreach programs aimed at equal access and participation of underserved communities, and providing risk management education and information.

One of RMA's four strategic goals is to ensure that its customers are well informed as to the risk management solutions available. This educational goal is supported by section 522(d)(3)(F) of the Act, which authorizes FCIC funding for risk management training and informational efforts for agricultural producers through the formation of partnerships with public and private organizations. With respect to such partnerships, a priority is to be given to producers of Priority Commodities (as specified in subsection 5 of this section).

3. Project Goal

The goal of this program is to ensure that “* * * producers will be better able to use financial management, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools.”

4. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide U.S. farmers and ranchers (with an emphasis on producers of Priority Commodities) with training and informational opportunities to be able to understand:

- The kinds of risks addressed by existing and emerging risk management tools;
- The features and appropriate use of existing and emerging risk management tools; and
- How to make sound risk management decisions.

Each partnership agreement awarded through this program will provide the applicant with funds, guidance, and the substantial involvement of RMA to carry out a risk management education and

information program for producers in a specific geographical area. RMA envisions that most of the training and informational activities under these partnership agreements will be conducted during the November 2003 through March 2004 period, which will be the best time to reach producers with educational programs in most areas. However, activities are not restricted to this time period because certain groups of producers might benefit from a different schedule of educational activities. RMA anticipates that project leaders will have sufficient time to organize and schedule events, commit funds to reserve event facilities, gather materials, raise awareness, and otherwise make the preparations needed to ensure good producer participation in all planned educational activities. Most of all, RMA anticipates that project leaders will prepare by fostering the cooperation and active support of organizations with close ties to local producers. Support from such organizations is essential in influencing local producers to participate in the type of activities envisioned in this educational program. A maximum of thirty-nine partnership agreements will be awarded: One each in thirty-five specific States and one in Puerto Rico (collectively referred to as the “States”), and one each in three multi-state areas (referred to as the “area”). A maximum amount of funding will be available for each of the States and area. The specific States and areas are identified in part I.B.4.

Projects funded through this program are envisioned to include the participation of multiple and diverse partners within the specific States and areas. Partners should include public and private agricultural organizations in the State or area with a state in ensuring that agricultural producers have increased knowledge and skill in dealing with production, price, and financial risk. RMA specifically encourages applicants to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers as an important element of the project. Over the past year, livestock and forage producers and livestock producers who use rangeland in certain regions of the U.S. have suffered unusually large financial losses from the effects of prolonged drought. These producers are in special need of education and information on the programs, tools, and risk management strategies that will assist them in dealing with drought. Therefore, RMA is specifically seeking projects for these producers in the States of Montana, South Dakota, Arizona, Multi-state Area 1 (Utah, Nevada, and