

Wyoming), New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Louisiana, and Nebraska. The selection of these States and areas was based on those States and area experiencing severe, extreme, or exceptional drought over a significant area, as identified by the U.S. Drought Monitor of June 3, 2003. Consequently, projects directed to producers of livestock and forage and livestock producers who use rangeland with respect to drought risk mitigation in the above States and areas will be awarded bonus points in the evaluation process. Details are provided in part IV.B.5.

#### 5. Definition of Priority Commodities

For purposes of this program, Priority Commodities are defined as:

*Agricultural commodities covered by (7 U.S.C. 7333).* Commodities in this group are commercial crops that are not covered by catastrophic risk protection crop insurance, are used for food or fiber (except livestock), and specifically include, but are not limited to, floricultural, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, turf grass sod, aquaculture (including ornamental fish), and industrial crops.

*Specialty crops.* Commodities in this group may or may not be covered under a Federal crop insurance plan and include, but are not limited to, fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, syrups, honey, roots, herbs, and highly specialized varieties of traditional crops.

*Underserved commodities.* This group includes: (a) Commodities including livestock and forage, that are covered by a Federal crop insurance plan but for which participation in an area is below the national average; and (b) commodities, including livestock, with inadequate crop insurance coverage.

A project is considered as giving priority to Priority Commodities if the majority of the educational activities of the project are directed to producers of any of the three classes of commodities listed above or any combination of the three classes.

#### B. Eligibility/Funding

##### 1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include State departments of agriculture, universities, non-profit agricultural organizations, and other public or private organizations with the capacity to lead a local program of risk management education for farmers and ranchers in a specific State or area. Individuals are not eligible applicants. Applicants may apply to deliver education in more than one State or area, but a separate application must be submitted for each State or area.

Although an applicant may be eligible to compete for an award based on its status as an eligible entity, other factors may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal assistance under this program (e.g., debarment and suspension; a determination of non-performance on a prior contract, cooperative agreement, grant or partnership; a determination of a violation of applicable ethical standards).

##### 2. Non-Financial Benefits

To be eligible, applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they will receive a non-financial benefit as a result of a partnership agreement. Non-financial benefits must accrue to the applicant and must include more than the ability to provide employment income to the applicant or for the applicant's employees or the community. The applicant must demonstrate that performance under the partnership agreement will further the specific mission of the applicant (such as providing research or activities necessary for graduate or other students to complete their educational program).

##### 3. Project Period

Each project will be funded for a period of up to one year from the project starting date for the activities described in this announcement.

##### 4. Availability of Funds and Amounts

Up to \$3,500,000 is available in fiscal year 2003 to fund up to 39 partnership agreements. A maximum of one agreement will be funded for each of 35 specific States, Puerto Rico, and three multi-state areas. It is expected that the awards will be made approximately 60 days after the application deadline. All awards will be made and agreements approved and signed no later than September 30, 2003.

Partnership or cooperative agreement funds may not be used to:

- Plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility including a processing facility;
- To purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment;
- Repair or maintain privately owned vehicles;
- Pay for the preparation of the partnership or cooperative agreement application;
- Fund political activities;
- Pay costs incurred prior to receiving a partnership or cooperative agreement;
- Fund any activities prohibited in 7 CFR Parts 3015 and 3019, as applicable.

The approximate funding amount available for each State, Puerto Rico, and multi-state area, along with the

RMA Regional Office assigned to those States or areas for purposes of providing substantial involvement, is as follows:

<b>Billings, MT Regional Office:</b>	
Montana .....	\$45,000
North Dakota .....	50,000
South Dakota .....	57,000
<b>Davis, CA Regional Office:</b>	
Arizona .....	57,000
California .....	356,000
Hawaii .....	37,000
Multi-state Area 1* (UT, NV, WY) .....	118,000
<b>Jackson, MS Regional Office:</b>	
Arkansas .....	83,000
Kentucky .....	61,000
Louisiana .....	47,000
Mississippi .....	63,000
Tennessee .....	49,000
<b>Oklahoma City, OK Regional Office:</b>	
New Mexico .....	55,000
Oklahoma .....	77,000
Texas .....	177,000
<b>Raleigh, NC Regional Office:</b>	
North Carolina .....	103,000
Virginia .....	56,000
Multi-state Area 2 (ME, NH, VT, CT, RI, MA, NY) .....	279,000
Multi-state Area 3 (PA, NJ, DE, MD, WV) .....	245,000
<b>Spokane, WA Regional Office:</b>	
Alaska .....	31,000
Idaho .....	67,000
Oregon .....	70,000
Washington .....	92,000
<b>Springfield, IL Regional Office:</b>	
Illinois .....	53,000
Indiana .....	56,000
Michigan .....	64,000
Ohio .....	68,000
<b>St. Paul, MN Regional Office:</b>	
Iowa .....	92,000
Minnesota .....	79,000
Wisconsin .....	93,000
<b>Topeka, KS Regional Office:</b>	
Colorado .....	81,000
Kansas .....	101,000
Missouri .....	69,000
Nebraska .....	106,000
<b>Valdosta, GA Regional Office:</b>	
Alabama .....	73,000
Florida .....	126,000
Georgia .....	89,000
Puerto Rico .....	30,000
South Carolina .....	45,000
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>

\*The partnership agreement for Multi-state area 1 will also be supported with substantial involvement from RMA's Billings, MT Regional Office.

The funding amount for each State and area was determined by first allocating \$30,000 to each State and Puerto Rico, for a total of \$1,530,000. The amount remaining from the \$3,500,000 available for this program (\$1,970,000) was then allocated pro rata to each State's share of cash receipts for Priority Commodities. Receipts for Priority Commodities were estimated by