

## How Can I Get One of Those Grants?

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It seems like that time again when I receive many calls from farmers inquiring about grants for their farm and farm business. I have shared these helpful hints before, but I think it is worth sharing again.

“How can I get one of those grants?” they ask. The answer is you can, but there are some things to think about before you venture into trying to secure a grant for your farm business. The first thing a farmer should determine is what do you want to do on the farm or what is the need for the farm business. Many want to build a building for start up or expansion. Some are looking for marketing help or develop a new technology. The key is finding a grant that will fit the farm’s needs, and of course, help fund the proposed project. Grant funders want to fund projects that will have a positive impact on the farm but also on the agricultural industry as well.

It is important to identify a grant early in the process. Many grants are announced and due for submission with in a months time. Sometimes, by the time one finds out there is a grant available, there is not much time to write it. So knowing when they are available means getting in the loop. Saratoga and Washington County producers are invited to “get in the loop” by joining the Agricultural Economic Development (AED) listserv. I manage the AED listserv and when a grant announcement comes to my attention, I immediately send an email message to the group. Another way is to visit [Grants](#) on the AED website to find the most popular agricultural grants and links to the information. I also recommend visiting and contacting funding agencies on a regular basis, either by going to their website or by calling them.

When contemplating on writing a grant, there are some downsides one should consider. First, grants are not free money. Anyone who has written a grant can share it takes a lot of time and effort to write a grant. Paperwork, reports and vouchers need to be completed in order to receive the grant funding. Some people are intimidated by this or may feel the time and effort are not worth pursuing a grant. Second, check the date that anticipated grant funding notifications will be mailed out. Usually (if not always) you cannot be reimbursed for work done before you are awarded the grant. A farm business will need to have money up front to do the work and then the grant reimburses the farm. So, if you are on a tight time line to get a project done, don’t count on a grant. You probably should be looking at getting a loan instead.

There are positives to receiving a grant for a farm business. Grants can enhance the farm, expand the farm business, accomplish research that will help your farm and others, and help with expenses of a project.

When writing a grant, it should include: a cover letter addressed to the agency; explanation of your project and completely answer their questions; a budget – grant dollars you are asking for and what amount of cash and in-kind match you will be contributing; and letters of support – from those participating in the project such as other farmers, agencies, veterinarians, etc.

When writing a grant, look at other successful grants proposals to see how they were written. Have someone help you write the grant and always have a second or third pair of eyes proof read your proposal. Be sure to thoroughly explain the project and meet the deadlines and application requirements. Your grant proposal will be competing against many others and you don’t want to

be rejected because of not following directions. Keep these things in mind to help be successful in your grant pursuits.