

print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Paul Kiecker,
Administrator.

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BILLING CODE 3410-DM-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Secretary

Fiscal Year 2021 Raw Cane Sugar Tariff-Rate Quota Increase and Extension of the Entry Period

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (the Secretary) is providing notice of an increase in the fiscal year (FY) 2021 raw cane sugar tariff-rate quota (TRQ) of 90,100 metric tons raw value (MTRV) and an extension of the TRQ entry period.

DATES: Applicable: August 24, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Souleymane Diaby, Multilateral Affairs Division, Trade Policy and Geographic Affairs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 1070, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-1070; by telephone (202) 720-2916; or by email Souleymane.Diaby@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 9, 2020, the Secretary established the FY 2021 TRQ for raw cane sugar at 1,117,195 MTRV, the minimum to which the United States is committed

under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Uruguay Round Agreements. Pursuant to Additional U.S. Note 5 to Chapter 17 of the U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) and Section 359k of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, the Secretary has authority to modify the raw and refined sugar WTO TRQs. The Secretary gives notice today of an increase in the quantity of raw cane sugar eligible to enter at the lower rate of duty during FY 2021 by 90,100 MTRV. The conversion factor is 1 metric ton raw value equals 1.10231125 short tons raw value. With this increase, the overall FY 2021 raw sugar TRQ is now 1,207,295 MTRV. Raw cane sugar under this quota must be accompanied by a certificate for quota eligibility. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) will allocate this increase among supplying countries and customs areas.

The Secretary also today announces that all sugar entering the United States under the FY 2021 raw sugar TRQ will be permitted to enter U.S. Customs territory through October 31, 2021, a month later than the usual last entry date. Additional U.S. Note 5(a)(iv) of Chapter 17 of the HTS provides: "(iv) Sugar entering the United States during a quota period established under this note may be charged to the previous or subsequent quota period with the written approval of the Secretary."

These actions are being taken after a determination that additional supplies of raw cane sugar are required in the U.S. market. USDA will closely monitor stocks, consumption, imports and all sugar market and program variables on an ongoing basis and may make further program adjustments during FY 2021 if needed.

Jason Hafemeister,
Acting Deputy Under Secretary, Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2021-18194 Filed 8-23-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

[Docket No. RBS-21-BUSINESS-019]

Stakeholder Listening Session and Request for Information on the Value- Added Producer Grant Program

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) is hosting a listening session and opening a request

for information for public input about the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. RBCS is currently considering how it can streamline the application process, clarify eligibility requirements concerning food safety, reduce the burden for meeting requirements, and implement such requirements.

DATES: The listening session will be held on:

October 6, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.
ET

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/574045542162812683>

Comments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on <https://www.regulations.gov>.

ADDRESSES: Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and, in the "Search" box, type in the Docket No. RBS-21-BUSINESS-0019. A link to the Notice will appear. You may submit a comment here by selecting the "Comment" button or you can access the "Docket" tab, select the "Notice," and go to the "Browse & Comment on Documents" Tab. Here you may view comments that have been submitted as well as submit a comment. To submit a comment, select the "comment" button, complete the required information, and select the "Submit Comment" button at the bottom. Information on using [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "FAQ" link at the bottom. Comments on this information collection must be received by October 25, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Greg York, Program Management Division, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, MS 3226, Room 5801—South, Washington, DC 20250-3250, or call 202-720-1400, or email cpgrants@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview of VAPG

The VAPG program is authorized under section 231 of the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-224), as amended by section 10102 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) (see 7 U.S.C.

1627c). Applicants must adhere to the requirements contained in the program regulation, 7 CFR 4284, subpart J. Terms you need to understand are defined in 7 CFR 4284.902.

The objective of this grant program is to assist viable Independent Producers, Agricultural Producer Groups, Farmer and Rancher Cooperatives, and Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Businesses in starting or expanding value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of Value-Added Agricultural Products. Grants will be awarded competitively for either planning or working capital projects directly related to the processing and/or marketing of value-added products. Generating new products, creating and expanding marketing opportunities, and increasing producer income are the end goals of the program. All proposals must demonstrate economic viability and sustainability to compete for funding.

Instructions

Response to this notice is voluntary. Each individual or institution is requested to submit only one response as directed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice. Submission must not exceed 10 pages and fonts must be 12 point or larger, with a page number on each page. Responses should include the name of the person(s) or organization(s) filing the comment. Comments containing references, studies, research, and other empirical data that are not widely published should include copies or electronic links of the referenced materials. Comments containing profanity, vulgarity, threats, or other inappropriate language or content will not be considered. Comments submitted in response to this notice are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552). Responses to this notice may also be posted, without change, on a Federal website.

Therefore, we request that no business proprietary information, copyrighted information, or personally identifiable information be submitted in response to this notice. In accordance with FAR 52–215–3(b), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government to form a binding contract. Additionally, the U.S. Government will not pay for response preparation or for the use of any information contained in the response.

To inform the Federal government's decision-making process, RBCS now seeks public input on the following questions.

1. The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) added food safety and food safety equipment as

eligible use of program funds. RBCS is seeking feedback on applicant eligibility requirements as it relates to food safety and food safety equipment.

a. The 2018 Farm Bill requires food safety to be an eligible activity in 7 CFR part 4284 Subpart J. In defining food safety, what can be included in the definition to further assist the applicants with understanding what qualifies as food safety?

b. The 2018 Farm Bill requires food safety equipment to be an eligible expense in 7 CFR part 4284 Subpart J. What can be included in the definition of food safety equipment to further assist the applicants with understanding what qualifies as food safety equipment?

c. The 2018 Farm Bill allows expenses relating to costs incurred in obtaining food safety certifications. Given that eligible cost must be related to post-harvest value-added activities for the VAPG program, what type of food safety certifications should be included as eligible expenses?

d. The 2018 Farm Bill allows for recipients to make changes and upgrades to food safety practices. Given that eligible costs for the VAPG program must be related to post-harvest value-added food safety practices, what would you like to see as eligible uses of funds?

e. The 2018 Farm Bill further states that a recipient may use not more than \$6,500 of the amount of a grant to purchase or upgrade equipment to improve food safety. Given that eligible cost for the VAPG program must be related to post-harvest value-added activities, what would you like to see included as eligible uses of funds as it relates to food safety equipment?

f. The 2018 Farm Bill requires that a reserve be established for food safety assistance of not more than 25 percent of the available funds. However, other statutory reserved fund categories (set-aside) such as Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Socially-Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, and Mid-Tier Value Chain projects are each currently capped at 10 percent of program funds. Are there any compelling reasons to establish a food safety set-aside higher than 10 percent?

2. RBCS is seeking feedback on the submission of a Business Plan related to a VAPG project. Currently, the VAPG program requires the Business Plan be completed by a Qualified Consultant and specifically for the proposed value-added project. However, RBCS has considered changing this requirement to allow applicants to prepare their own Business Plan associated with the value-added project without the assistance of a Qualified Consultant. Should an applicant be allowed to prepare their own Business Plan without the

assistance of a Qualified Consultant? Are there any unforeseen issues with allowing the applicant to prepare their own Business Plan?

3. RBCS is seeking feedback for evaluating and measuring the economic impact of the program on new and existing market outcomes related to the post-harvest value-added activities. Currently our program measures the production of value-added products, job creation, and increases in revenue return and customer base to the producer as a result of the value-added project. Are there other outcomes related to the value-added project that RBCS should be measuring?

4. RBCS seeks feedback on when the application deadline for the program should be. It is our intention to have a consistent deadline from year to year, rather than released at variable times through a **Federal Register** Notice. In keeping with traditional agricultural production cycles, we are trying to avoid an application deadline during production season. What would be an appropriate application deadline date for the VAPG program?

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (*e.g.*, Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720–2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877–8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD–3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at

<https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) *Mail*: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or

(2) *Fax*: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) *Email*: program.intake@usda.gov.
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Karama Neal,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

[Docket No. RBS-21-BUSINESS-0013]

Stakeholder Listening Sessions and Request for Information on the Agriculture Innovation Center Demonstration Program

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBCS) is hosting a listening session and opening a request for information for public input about the Agriculture Innovation Center Demonstration (AIC) Program. The AIC program provides grants to Centers that provide services to agricultural producers to assist them with marketing value-added agricultural products. RBCS is currently considering how it can streamline the application process, clarify eligibility requirements and reduce the burden for meeting them, revise the merit review process, and assess the program's performance.

DATES: The listening session will be held virtually on: October 5 at 2 p.m.–4:00 p.m. ET; <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3831947973149428235>.

Comments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on <https://www.regulations.gov>.

ADDRESSES: *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and, in the "Search" box, type in the Docket No. RBS-21-BUSINESS-0013. A link to the Notice will appear. You may submit a comment here by selecting the "Comment" button or you can access the "Docket" tab, select the "Notice," and go to the "Browse & Comment on Documents" Tab. Here you may view comments that have been submitted as well as submit a comment. To submit a comment, select the "comment" button, complete the required information, and select the "Submit Comment" button at the bottom. Information on using *Regulations.gov*, including instructions for accessing documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket after the close of the comment period, is available through the site's "FAQ" link at the bottom. Comments on this information collection must be received by October 25, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gail Thuner, Grants Division, Cooperative Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, MS 3201, Room 5803—South, Washington, DC 20250-3250, or call 202-720-1400, or email cpgrants@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview of AIC

The AIC Program was authorized in Section 6402 of the 2002 Farm Bill (Pub. L. 107-171), as amended by Section 7608 of the 2018 Farm Bill (Pub. L. 115-334). Terms you need to understand are defined in 7 CFR 4284.3 and 4284.1004. The intent of AIC is to provide technical assistance to agricultural producers to help them market value-added agricultural products.

The program currently awards grants of up to \$1,000,000 to Centers that can provide at least one-third of the project costs in matching funds and who have the capability to provide services to agricultural producers to assist them with marketing value-added agricultural products. The types of services that can be provided include:

- Financial advisory services related to the development, expansion, or operation of business owned by an agricultural producer(s) that will produce a value-added agricultural product, as long as the assistance is not to support forming a joint marketing effort by a group of producers, such as a farmers market, roadside stand, community-supported agriculture, and online sales

- Process development services, including:
 - Engineering services including scale-up of production systems (not to include cost of renovating or constructing a facility or system)
 - Scale production assessments, defined as studies that analyze facilities, including processing facilities, for potential value-added activities to determine the size that optimizes construction and other cost efficiencies
 - Systems development
 - Other technical assistance and applied research related to development, implementation, improvement and operations of processes and systems to produce and market a value-added agricultural product
 - Organizational assistance, including legal and technical advisory services related to the development, expansion, or operation of a business owned by an agricultural producer(s) that will produce a value-added agricultural product, as long as this assistance is not provided to support forming a joint marketing effort of food and food products by a group of producers, such as a farmers market, roadside stand, community-supported agriculture, and online sales
 - Outreach assistance, limited to assistance with connecting an agricultural producer to a distribution system, processing facility, or commercial kitchen
 - Technical assistance for product development (excluding R&D), where product development has the following definition: Stages involved in bringing a product from idea or concept through commercial-scale production, including concept testing, feasibility and cost analysis, product taste-testing, demographic and other types of consumer analysis, production analysis, and evaluation of packaging and labeling options
 - Grants of \$5,000 or less to agricultural producers for the above services
 - Costs associated with establishing and operating a Center, such as legal services, accounting services, clerical assistance, technical services, hiring employees, monitoring contracts, and Board of Director travel
- Centers may also use their matching funds to provide the following services:
- Business development services, such as feasibility studies, business plans, and other types of technical assistance