



Good Husbandry Grants Available for 2011

Farmers who raise pasture- or range-fed livestock can apply for funding to complete projects promoting good husbandry.

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Courtesy Stock.XCHNG

Farmers who promote increased outdoor access for livestock, such as raising free-range chickens, are eligible for AWA's Good Husbandry Grants.

Animal Welfare Approved announced that it will offer a third year of Good Husbandry Grants. AWA is seeking proposals for projects to improve farm-animal husbandry practices with a concentration on three areas: increased outdoor access, improved genetics and improved slaughter facilities.

Animal Welfare Approved is a free certification for family farms raising their livestock with the highest welfare standards, outdoors on pasture or range.

"We have awarded funding for 65 projects in 25 states and are delighted to be able to continue these grants for 2011," says Andrew Gunther, AWA program director. "The impact of these grants has been extraordinary—the finished projects prove that there is an inextricable link between high welfare, pasture- and range-based husbandry, and successful farms."

Current AWA farmers and those who have applied to join the program are eligible for grants of up to \$5,000.

Jeremy Vargo of AWA-certified Vargo Farms in Bullock, N.C, raises hogs and received a 2010 grant to improve his mobile housing system.

"The huts have greatly benefited my hogs by improving herd health and expanding our ability to rotate pastures while providing shelter from the elements," Vargo says. "This grant program, like AWA, is a win-win for the whole farm."

Organic Pastures Dairy Company, LLC, in Fresno, Calif., is the largest retail-approved raw and organic dairy in the United States. (California allows sales of raw milk in retail outlets.) It used a Good Husbandry Grant to improve its livestock shelters and allow its livestock greater pasture access.

"Our nutritionist has noticed an overall improvement in the health of our calves," says farmer Aaron McAfee. "This project was very beneficial to our herd and overall AWA standing."

Slaughter plants working with AWA farms are also eligible to apply but should contact the grants coordinator to discuss proposed projects before submitting a proposal.

The deadline for proposals is Oct. 1, 2010. Guidelines, FAQ's, project profiles and an application form are available on the AWA website or by contacting grant coordinator Emily Lancaster at 919-428-1641.