



620914

576-02406-18

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Appropriations  
(Appropriations Subcommittee on the Environment and Natural  
Resources)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to young farmers and ranchers;  
creating s. 570.842, F.S.; creating the Florida Young  
Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program within the  
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;  
specifying the purpose of the grants; requiring the  
department to select grant recipients based on certain  
criteria; requiring the department to adopt rules;  
specifying minimum grant selection criteria;  
specifying a grant award minimum and maximum;  
requiring that no more than one award per year may go  
to an individual recipient; specifying that grant  
funding is contingent upon specific appropriation from  
the Legislature; creating s. 570.843, F.S.; creating  
the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council  
within the department; specifying membership of the  
council; providing for staggered terms; specifying the  
meetings, powers, duties, procedures, and  
recordkeeping of the council; specifying that the  
council may submit findings and recommendations to the  
Commissioner of Agriculture; specifying the issues the  
council may examine; creating s. 570.844, F.S.;  
requiring the department to establish a clearinghouse  
on its website for resources to assist young and  
beginning farmers and ranchers; providing an effective  
date.



620914

576-02406-18

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Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 570.842, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

570.842 Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program.-

(1) To support the start-up functions associated with new farming and ranching operations, there is created within the department the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program.

(a) Grants administered by the department through this program must be for the purpose of fostering the creation and expansion of agricultural businesses by young farmers and ranchers in the state.

(b) The department shall select grant recipients based on selection criteria developed pursuant to subsection (2).

(2) The department shall adopt rules governing the operation of the program, an application process, and selection criteria for grant recipients. At a minimum, in order to be eligible to receive a grant, a person must:

(a) Be an agricultural producer who is at least 18 years of age but younger than 35 years of age or be an agricultural producer who is a veteran as defined by s. 1.01;

(b) Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;

(c) Demonstrate, at minimum, a dollar-for-dollar matching investment for grant money requested; and

(d) Submit, on a form prescribed by the department, a grant



620914

576-02406-18

56 application during the application period established by the  
57 department. The department may designate only one period each  
58 year for accepting applications.

59 (3) Each grant award under the program must be between  
60 \$5,000 and \$20,000, with no more than one award being made to an  
61 individual grant recipient per grant period.

62 (4) Annual grant funding for this program is contingent  
63 upon specific annual appropriation by the Legislature.

64 Section 2. Section 570.843, Florida Statutes, is created to  
65 read:

66 570.843 Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council.-

67 (1) There is created within the department the Florida  
68 Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council, to consist of 12  
69 members to be appointed by the commissioner. Initially, six  
70 members shall be appointed by the commissioner for a 1-year term  
71 and six members for a 2-year term. Thereafter, members shall be  
72 appointed for 2-year terms.

73 (2) The meetings, powers, duties, procedures, and  
74 recordkeeping of the Florida Young Farmers and Ranchers Advisory  
75 Council shall be pursuant to s. 570.232.

76 (3) The council may submit to the commissioner, annually,  
77 findings and recommendations for mitigating challenges facing  
78 aspiring farmers and ranchers in the early stages of their  
79 careers. The council may examine issues that include, but are  
80 not limited to, access to land, availability of credit and  
81 capital, and access to business skills training.

82 Section 3. Section 570.844, Florida Statutes, is created to  
83 read:

84 570.844 Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Resource



620914

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85 Clearinghouse.-The department shall establish on its website a  
86 clearinghouse for resources available to young and beginning  
87 farmers and ranchers, including, but not limited to, local,  
88 state, federal, and private sources of grants, loans, and  
89 scholarships, as well as general resources on finance and  
90 business planning. The clearinghouse also must include resources  
91 available to beginning agricultural producers who are veterans  
92 as defined in s. 1.01.

93 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.