

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to young farmers and ranchers;  
 3           creating s. 570.842, F.S.; creating the Florida Young  
 4           Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program within the  
 5           Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;  
 6           specifying the purpose of the grants; requiring the  
 7           department to select grant recipients based on  
 8           specified criteria; requiring the department to adopt  
 9           rules; requiring that applicants meet specified  
 10          eligibility requirements; specifying a range for grant  
 11          amounts; providing that a recipient may not receive  
 12          more than one award per year under the program;  
 13          specifying that grant funding is contingent upon  
 14          specific appropriation from the Legislature; providing  
 15          an effective date.

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

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

21           570.842 Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant  
 22   Program.—

23           (1) The Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant  
 24   Program is created within the department to support the start-up  
 25   functions associated with new farming and ranching operations.

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

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

32 (2) The department shall adopt rules governing the  
33 operation of the program, including an application process and  
34 selection criteria for grant recipients.

35 (a) At a minimum, in order to be eligible to receive a  
36 grant, an individual must meet all of the following  
37 requirements:

38 1. Be an agricultural producer, be an employee of a farm  
39 or ranch, or have been actively involved in Future Farmers of  
40 America for at least 1 year.

41 2. Be at least 18 years of age, but younger than 35 years  
42 of age.

43 3. Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10  
44 years.

45 4. Demonstrate, at minimum, a dollar-for-dollar matching  
46 investment for the grant amount requested.

47 5. Submit, on a form prescribed by the department, a grant  
48 application during the application period established by the  
49 department. The department may designate only one period each  
50 year for accepting applications.

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51        (b) In the application review process, the department  
52 shall give a preference to an applicant who is a veteran, as  
53 defined in s. 1.01(14).

54        (3) Each grant award under the program must be between  
55 \$5,000 and \$20,000, with no more than one award being made to an  
56 individual grant recipient per grant period.

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

59        Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.