

# Farm Bureau Applauds Land Rights Decision

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Farm Bureau Federation recently hailed a Supreme Court decision stating that landowners are entitled to seek compensation when they are forbidden by government from realizing their property's full economic potential.

"The court's decision is a considerable victory for landowners and the fight many have been forced to wage against government attempts to block landowner takings claims," said American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman. "The court weakened troublesome obstacles to landowner takings claims and expressed dissatisfaction with existing rules that hinder 'partial takings' claims."

AFBF and the Rhode Island Farm Bureau filed an amicus brief supporting landowner Anthony Palazzolo who was prevented from developing land by the state's Coastal Resources Management Council. Palazzolo bought 18 acres in 1959, with the long-term plan to build 74 homes. In 1978, Palazzolo changed title

of his land from his single shareholder corporation to himself individually.

Despite several attempts to satisfy the council's rulings, the state repeatedly rejected Palazzolo's amended plans for more than four decades. When he ultimately sought compensation for his loss, the state court rejected his claim, citing the change of title, and claiming his property had not

lost its entire value.

"Rejecting this landowner's best efforts to comply with the coastal council's changing demands clearly devalued the property," said Stallman. "The council's action effectively limited the use of the bulk of the land solely to a public wildlife refuge, without the public bearing any expense."

"Farm Bureau was also ex-

tremely troubled by the state's rules changes due to a 'paper change' in ownership. Such actions occur frequently when farm families transfer land ownership to assure that their land stays in farming and under their family's control. The Supreme Court rejected the state court's ruling that would have deprived heirs and successors of any right to file a compensation claim."

While the court remanded the case back to Rhode Island to determine whether there was a detrimental economic impact on Palazzolo's investment potential, Stallman said the organization will continue to monitor the case and support Palazzolo's right to fair compensation.

"Farm Bureau members hope the Rhode Island courts award a fair compensation to Mr. Palazzolo, taking into account the four decades of expenses and frustrations he has endured in attempting to follow the council's procedures," Stallman said.

"When government restricts the use of private property to create a public benefit, then the landowner should be compensated."

The court also ruled in Palazzolo's favor merely by considering the case because the state claimed he should have pursued other procedural options before litigation was necessary. According to Stallman, the council's constant delaying tactics resulted prevented the property owner from achieving his land's full economic potential.

## Blight-Resistant Potato Variety To Stop Potato Crisis?

WARSAW, Poland — Russia is teetering on the brink of a large-scale potato crisis ignited by the same virulent, fungal-like pathogen, *Phytophthora infestans*, more commonly called late blight, that was responsible for the 19th century Irish potato famine.

But there is hope in the form of a blight-resistant potato variety, New York 121, which Cornell University scientists have provided to Russia for testing in the hopes of preventing

food shortages. Cornell's CEEM program is the only non-Russian group actively trying to resolve the Russian potato problems.

Annually, Russia loses 4 million tons of potato, more than 10 percent of total production, because of late blight. Virulent strains of the pathogen are now spreading to important potato-producing areas in Russia and to central and eastern Europe.

The late blight threat is still very important and even critical in some

regions, said Alexei V. Filippov, of the All Russian Institute of Phytopathology, addressing a group of 58 international agricultural researchers from 12 countries at the Collaborative Research on Potato Late Blight workshop in Poland.

The scientists meeting in Warsaw said that New York 121 is not a silver bullet to solve all of Russia's agricultural woes, but is a small, early step toward sustainability and modernization of a system that has long been at the mercy of pestilence.

## USDA Announces \$5.7 Million In Business Development Grants

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Tuesday the USDA announced 48 applications, totaling \$5.7 million, have been selected as finalists for rural business grant funding consideration.

The funds will be used to facilitate the development of small and emerging private business enterprises and provide technical assistance, training, and planning

activities for economic development in 24 states.

The applicants selected represent 47 public bodies, private nonprofit corporations and federally recognized Indian tribes who will use the funds to assist some of America's more distressed rural areas. Distressed areas identified include federally desig-

nated rural Enterprise Communities and Empowerment Zones (EC/EZ), Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) zones, and Native American Tribes and tribal organizations.

Grant funding has been made available through the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) and Rural Business Opportunities Grant (RBOG) programs,

which are administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, an agency within USDA Rural Development.

The 24 states and their funding levels include Alaska, \$70,000; Arkansas, \$390,810; California, \$621,974; Georgia, \$85,190; Florida, \$327,863; Idaho, \$85,000; Illinois, \$252,100; Kentucky, \$375,000; Maine, \$148,180; Mississippi, \$336,500; Missouri, \$253,655; Montana, \$113,000; New Mexico, \$97,300; North Carolina, \$300,000; North Dakota, \$50,000; Oklahoma, \$146,900; Oregon, \$80,000; South Carolina, \$578,500; South Dakota, \$113,600; Tennessee, \$36,000; West Virginia, \$90,000; Washington, \$430,988; Wisconsin, \$694,910; and Vermont, \$25,909.

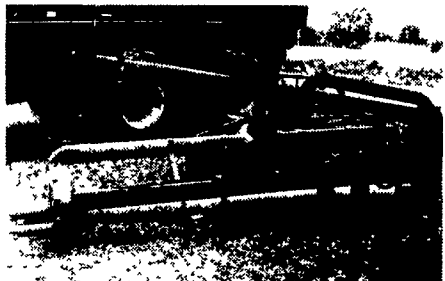
USDA serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs and administers program assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, and Rural Utilities Service.

More information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by visiting USDA's Website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>. A list of individual loan recipients being considered for funding can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>.

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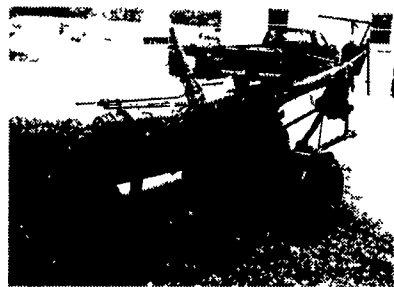
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