

The deadline is fast approaching for local school districts to compete for a grant of up to \$25,000 through America's Farmers Grow Rural Education, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund. The more farmers who nominate a school district, the more it demonstrates community support and strengthens the school district's application. Nominations will be accepted until April 15, 2013. School administrators have until April 30, 2013, to submit their applications. This year, the program expands to 26 new counties, for a total of 1,271 eligible counties across 39 states.

"We are dedicated to improving education in our farming communities," said Deborah Patterson, Monsanto Fund president. "Working together with farmers and rural school districts, we are providing resources necessary to accelerate math and science learning – inspiring the students of today to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow."

Grow Rural Education grants will be awarded based on merit, need and community support. The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education Advisory Council, a group of 30 agricultural leaders from across the country, will review and select the winning grant applications. Advisory Council members were selected based on their passion for farming and education, as well as experience in rural school districts.

Eligible farmers can nominate their favorite public school district by visiting www.GrowRuralEducation.com and following the "Nominate Now" link on the top, left-hand corner of the page. Farmers may also nominate a school district by calling 1-877-267-3332. School administrators are encouraged to use the website as well, which is equipped with tools to answer specific questions about the program, assists with the application writing process and offers personalized assistance.

In 2012, the following Nebraska school districts received a total of \$120,000 to enhance math and science curricula:

- Cambridge Public Schools, \$25,000
- Falls City Public Schools, \$25,000
- Hayes Center Public Schools, \$10,000
- Lyons-Decatur Northeast Schools, \$10,000
- Mitchell Public Schools, \$10,000
- Northwest Public Schools, \$10,000
- Osceola Public Schools,

- Rock County Public Schools, \$10,000
- Thayer Central Community Schools, \$10,000

One of last year's winners, Northwest Public Schools, used the \$10,000 grant to purchase Vernier technology and equipment for its middle school classrooms.

"Our goal, with the use of the Grow Rural Education grant, was to improve students' scores on the Nebraska State Accountability test in the areas of math and science," said Angela Blank, math teacher for Northwest Public Schools.

"We want our students to be more actively involved in the classroom, whether it is in a science lab or math discussion."

The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program is part of a broad commitment by the Monsanto Fund to partner with farmers to strengthen rural communities. Following a successful

pilot in Minnesota and Illinois, America's Farmers Grow Rural Education debuted nationally last year, awarding \$2.3 million to school districts coast to coast.

Another program that is part of this effort is America's Farmers Grow CommunitiesSM, which gives winning farmers the opportunity to direct a \$2,500 donation to a community nonprofit organization in their county.

For more information about the America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program and to view the official rules, visit www.GrowRuralEducation.com. A list of eligible states, counties and CRDs can also be found on the site.