

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Agriculture

BILL: SB 880

INTRODUCER: Senator Albritton

SUBJECT: Young Farmers and Ranchers

DATE: March 18, 2019

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Akhavein</u>	<u>Becker</u>	<u>AG</u>	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	<u>AEG</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

I. Summary:

SB 880 establishes the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) to support startup functions for new farming and ranching operations. To receive a grant, an individual must:

- Be an agricultural producer, be an employee of a farm or ranch, or have been actively involved in Future Farmers of America for at least one year;
- Be between the ages of 18 and 35;
- Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;
- Demonstrate, at minimum, a dollar-for-dollar matching investment for the grant amount requested; and
- Submit a timely grant application.

If funded by the Legislature, each grant award would be between \$5,000 and \$20,000, and a recipient may receive only one award per year.

II. Present Situation:

Opportunities exist within farming and ranching, but beginning farmers and ranchers have unique educational, training, technical assistance, and outreach needs. Capital access, land access, and access to knowledge and information to assist in ensuring profitability and sustainability are vital to those just entering agriculture and in their first ten years of operation.¹

¹ See <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp> (Last visited February 21, 2019).

Currently, there are no grant programs within the department specifically to assist young farmers and ranchers. The department does provide resources through its Grant Opportunity² public webpage.

To address the lack of resources and assistance, the 2018 Legislature created a 12 member Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council³ to provide an opportunity for young people to offer advice and to give recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture about the challenges facing aspiring farmers and ranchers in the early stages of their careers. The council is authorized to examine issues such as access to land, availability of credit and capital, and access to business skills training. The Legislature also directed the department to create the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Resource Clearinghouse on its website⁴ in order to provide career information and resources to young farmers who will be entering a wide range of jobs involving food production, natural resources, plant systems, animal management, and much more.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 570.842, F.S., to establish the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program. The bill requires the department to administer grants to foster the creation and expansion of agricultural businesses by young farmers and ranchers in Florida. The department is directed to adopt rules regarding the program. To be eligible, grant recipients must:

- Be an agricultural producer, employee of a farm or ranch, or have been actively involved in Future Farmers of America for at least 1 year;
- Be at least 18 years of age, but younger than 35 years of age;
- Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;
- Demonstrate, at a minimum, a dollar-for-dollar matching investment for grant money requested; and
- Submit a grant application during the time period designated by the department.

The bill requires the department to give preference to applicants who are veterans, as defined in s. 1.01(14), F.S. If funded by the Legislature, each grant award must be between \$5,000 and \$20,000, and a recipient may receive only one award per year.

Section 2 provides that this act shall take effect July 1, 2019.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

² See <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Business-Services/Grant-Opportunities> (Last visited February 21, 2019).

³ Section 570.843, F.S.

⁴ See <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Education/Preparing-for-Careers-in-Agriculture> (Last visited February 27, 2019).

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Indeterminate.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has not provided fiscal information for this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 570.842 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
