

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to the Florida Young Farmer and  
 3           Rancher Matching Grant Program; creating s. 288.06572,  
 4           F.S.; creating the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher  
 5           Matching Grant Program within the Department of  
 6           Economic Opportunity; specifying the purpose of the  
 7           grants; requiring the department to select grant  
 8           recipients based on specified criteria; requiring the  
 9           department to adopt rules; requiring that applicants  
 10          meet specified eligibility requirements; specifying a  
 11          range for grant amounts; providing that a recipient  
 12          may not receive more than one award per year under the  
 13          program; specifying that grant funding is contingent  
 14          upon specific annual appropriation by the Legislature;  
 15          providing 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 288.06572, Florida Statutes, is created  
 20   to read:

21           288.06572 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)(a) The department shall adopt rules governing the  
33 operation of the program, including an application process and  
34 selection criteria for grant recipients.

35        (b) 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 be an agricultural producer who is a veteran as  
40 defined in s. 1.01(14).

41        2. Be between 18 and 35 years of age.

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

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

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

50        (3) Each grant award under the program must be between

51 \$5,000 and \$20,000, with no more than one award being made to an  
52 individual grant recipient per grant period.

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

55 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.