

MEDIA ADVISORY

USDA Satellite Features Feed

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FEATURE – USADA/ARRA LOAN HELPS BEGINNING RANCHER IN KANSAS

INTRO: The US Dept of Agriculture is using stimulus funds to provide loans for beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA's Susan Carter has more from southeastern Kansas. (1:50)

VO: I'm Chris Helt, I'm a sandblasting contractor, I'm thirty four.

RANCHING ISN'T CHRIS HELT'S FULL-TIME JOB, BUT IT IS HIS FIRST LOVE. HE'S HELPED FRIENDS AND FAMILY RAISE CATTLE ALL HIS LIFE. AND NOW, THANKS TO A U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE LOAN PROGRAM, HE'S GOT HIS OWN HERD.

Chris Helt, Rancher, Cherryvale, Kansas: I wanted to buy cattle and I went to a conventional bank and was denied because of terms and repayment plan, was basically the biggest part. So I found out through a friend about FSA and it got me started basically.

U-S-D-A'S FARM SERVICE AGENCY MADE THE LOAN, USING RECOVERY ACT FUNDS. CHRIS HELT BOUGHT TWENTY FOUR BRED HEIFFERS AND FEEDING EQUIPMENT.

Jim Dark, USDA Farm Service Agency: Oh it really makes you feel good that you can help somebody out, to do that. Allows us to keep people in the rural area that may not be able to stay here, to keep themselves employed. With the age of the average farmer getting up to over 60 years old in this county, we need to get the younger people involved in it to try and keep a rural base here

OFFICIALS SAY THE BENEFITS FROM THIS LOAN WILL SPREAD THROUGH THIS RURAL COMMUNITY.

Dark: Every time they have to buy some fuel, they have to buy fertilizer, they have to buy chemical, that money is being spent locally here. The money they get from selling the crops and their livestock is also spent in this area.

Helt: If I didn't have that local FSA office, I wouldn't be, I mean I wouldn't have any cattle and I wouldn't, I guess, fulfill one of my dreams, my son wouldn't have the opportunity to do what he's doing, to be able to continue to grow his herd also.

CHRIS HELT'S SON IS USING A U-S-D-A RURAL YOUTH LOAN TO BUY FIVE COWS OF HIS OWN. TOGETHER THEY REPRESENT THE FUTURE OF FARMING HERE IN CHERRYVALE, KANSAS.

Helt: Taking care of the cows doesn't seem like a job to me because I really enjoy it.

FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M SUSAN CARTER.