

\$10,000 and \$25,000 grants available to rural school districts

Written by Kevin Stillman

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\$10,000 and \$25,000 grants available to rural school districts through America's Farmers Grow Rural EducationSM

ST. LOUIS (Jan. 6, 2012) – Statistics show that the U.S. ranks only 25th in math scores and 21st

in science compared to 30 industrialized nations. These facts show that education is strongly in need of support. To help, Monsanto Fund, the philanthropic arm of Monsanto Company, is launching America's Farmers Grow Rural EducationSM to aid rural school districts by providing \$10,000 and \$25,000 grants in 1,245 counties across 39 states.

"We believe our rural communities are the heart of America," said Deborah Patterson, Monsanto Fund president. "We want to help strengthen local communities and education systems, especially in the areas of science and/or math. A strong science and math education helps build a foundation for many careers in agriculture, but also will help our students to be more competitive with those in larger cities and other nations."

America's Farmers Grow Rural Education gives farmers the opportunity to nominate a public school district in their rural community to compete for a grant. Nominated school district administrators can then submit an application for either a \$10,000 or \$25,000 grant to support a science and/or math educational program by April 30, 2012. School districts that apply for a \$10,000 grant will compete against other school districts that are located in the USDA-appointed Crop Reporting District (CRD); except that CRDs with fewer than five eligible school districts will compete against each other for a single grant. A school district that applies for a \$25,000 grant will compete against schools that are located in its state or designated region.

The Monsanto Fund will award 199 grants this year. There will be 177 \$10,000 grants and 22 grants of \$25,000 awarded. Visit growruraleducation.com to see a complete list of eligible states and regions. Overall, the Monsanto Fund will donate more than \$2.3 million to school districts in 39 states through this program.

Grants will be awarded based on merit, need and community support. The America's Farmers

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Grow Rural Education Advisory Council will select the winning grant application. This group is made up of 26 farmer leaders from across the country, who are passionate about both farming and rural education. The council members, from across the country, are actively engaged in their local communities through various leadership positions, such as a member of the local School Board, an active Farm Bureau leader or a member of an educational organization or committee within various organizations. The council is responsible for reviewing the top grant applications to select the winning school. These individuals are passionate about both agriculture and education, which is essential when choosing the best grant. The program started with a successful pilot in Illinois and Minnesota, in which farmers were given the opportunity to nominate a public school district in 165 eligible counties in those two states. The Monsanto Fund awarded more than \$266,000 to local schools in 16 CRDs through the pilot. The America's Farmers Grow Rural Education program is part of a broad commitment by Monsanto Fund to highlight the important contributions farmers make every day to our society by helping them grow their youth. Visit www.growruraleducation.com for additional information and to view a complete list of winning school districts.

About Monsanto Fund

The Monsanto Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the farm communities where farmers and Monsanto Company employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at www.monsantofund.org.

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