

USDA Awards Livestock And Meat Marketing Study Contract

WASHINGTON, June 18, 2004 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) has been awarded the contract to conduct an exhaustive study on livestock and meat marketing. The study was funded by Congress in the FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. USDA awarded a single contract to RTI for \$4,319,373 to study the cattle, hog and lamb industries.

"This study will give producers better information on which to base their decisions on whether to participate in non-traditional marketing arrangements and, if so, which ones," said Donna Reifschneider, administrator of USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

"It also will provide information on the role of alternative marketing arrangements, the extent of their use, reasons why firms enter into them and the implications of their use. And, the study will help identify emerging marketing information needs of livestock producers and other market participants."

Reifschneider also said the study will provide objective information for market participants, Congress and USDA to consider while confronting the challenges facing the cattle, hog and lamb industries.

RTI, located at Research Triangle Park, NC, is an independent, non-profit corporation that conducts business in scientific research and technology development. It specializes in bringing a multidisciplinary team approach to research projects. RTI developed a coalition of researchers to conduct the study, including representatives from Colorado State University, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, Montana State University, North Carolina State University and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

USDA published initial plans for the study for public comment in the Federal Register on May 30, 2003. After considering the public comments and consulting with an interagency working group with members from USDA, the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, USDA released a request for proposals (RFP). Technical oversight on the contract will be provided by the USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). RTI was selected through a competitive contracting process.

Information about the study, including the Federal Register notice, the public comments, RFP notices, and other available information is available on GIPSA's website (www.usda.gov/gipsa), by following the "marketing study" icon.

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