

HOUSE BILL NO. 223
INTRODUCED BY J. MUSGROVE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM; CREATING REGIONAL RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TO INCREASE VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT MONTANA; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Regional value-added agricultural program -- purpose -- hosting of regional centers. (1) There is a regional value-added agricultural program, administered by the department, with the purpose of creating regional rural development centers that are committed to increasing value-added agricultural opportunities throughout Montana.

(2) To ensure statewide geographical coverage, the department shall establish seven regional centers throughout the state. Certified regional development corporations or economic development organizations, as defined in 90-1-201, shall serve as host agencies for a regional value-added agricultural program coordinator at each center. The regional coordinator shall provide technical assistance to agricultural producers and other persons interested in developing value-added agricultural opportunities in Montana.

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. The following amounts are appropriated from the general fund for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to the department of agriculture to establish and administer regional rural development centers as provided in [section 1]:

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Seven regional centers, \$60,000 each	\$420,000	\$420,000
Administrative costs	50,000	50,000
Total	\$470,000	\$470,000

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 80, chapter 11, and the provisions of Title 80, chapter 11, apply to [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2007.

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