

Farmers Help Benefit Their Communities

(NAPSA)—Among the more than 50 million rural American residents is a special group of people—a group responsible for feeding, fueling and clothing the world, stimulating the economy and caring for the land. They are a group deeply committed to their hometowns, and they grow much more than corn, soybeans or cotton. They are America's farmers, and they are growing their communities.

These dedicated farmers are making a difference thanks in part to a program from Monsanto Fund called America's Farmers Grow Communities. This program provides farmers with a chance to win \$2,500 for their favorite local nonprofit organization.

For Iowa farmer Jerry Varenhorst, his rural community has been "a great place to live and raise a family."

Varenhorst farms 600 acres of corn and soybeans on his family operation in Le Mars, Iowa. He was named the Plymouth County, Iowa, winner for a pilot program.

"I chose the Good Samaritan Society, a nursing home facility where many local retired farmers are residents, including my father," Varenhorst says.

"We need to remember that these retired farmers were the ones supporting our groups when we were younger, and they shouldn't be forgotten," he says. "After all, one day I will be a retired farmer, too."

Third-generation family farmer Allen Berryman, winner from Hobbsville, N.C., elected to direct his prize to the FFA youth agriculture organization.

"I chose the Chowan County FFA chapter because my 17-year-old daughter, Emily, is the local secretary," he says. "The FFA has



Farmer Allen Berryman used his prize to help FFA students.

done so much good for my daughter and she absolutely loves it. Because of it, she has been able to travel to a lot of different places and meet new people."

The chapter plans on using the funds to help students pay their FFA dues, which have gone up in recent years.

Now farmers in more than 1,200 counties across 38 states will be able to help grow their communities by more than \$3 million.

Eligible farmers can sign up online at www.growcommunities.com or call (877) 267-3332 until Dec. 31, 2010. Farmers age 21 and over who are actively engaged in farming a minimum of 250 acres of corn, soybeans and/or cotton or 40 acres of open-field vegetables or at least 10 acres of tomatoes, peppers and/or cucumbers grown in protected culture are eligible. One winner will be randomly selected for each eligible county.

As a bonus for each eligible farmer who signs up, Monsanto Fund will also donate \$1 to the United Way to help fight hunger in their community.

"Our rural communities are the heart of America," says Deborah Patterson, president of the Monsanto Fund. "We believe in rural America, and we want to help these dedicated farmers continue to grow their local communities."