

Organization for Competitive Markets
(Porterville, MS)
Countervailing Power Project

Total Award: \$150,000 over 2 years

Program Contribution

Environment Program, \$50,000

Interprogram Initiatives for Social and Economic
Justice, \$25,000

To support the Countervailing Power Project, an initiative to simultaneously establish a permanent funding base for the Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) and improve public policies affecting the environment by shifting the relative institutional power in agricultural policy advocacy by building strong farmer-led groups to compete with industry-dominated commodity organizations. OCM, a membership organization, think tank and advocacy group, brings together family farmers, ranchers, agricultural economists, attorneys and rural business people to promote a competitive agricultural marketplace and to protect those markets from abuses of power. NCF support will be used to develop the Hog Competition Fund as a positive alternative to industry-supported institutions that advocate for increased economic concentration in the livestock industry (its sister fund at OCM, the Cattlemen's Competitive Market Project, is already self-sufficient with \$144,000 in current year revenues, based on the first two months of 2004). The new organizations will allow independent food producers to redirect their financial contributions toward policies that promote decentralization, community health and environmental protection. The project will use research, education and media communications efforts (including its two weekly radio shows) to promote the new funds and government regulation of markets as necessary for markets to operate properly and to further the goal of reframing the debate from one of populist class warfare vs. free markets to one of pro-competition advocates vs. anti-competition monopolists.

Environment Program: *Objective I, Strategies 1 & 2, and Objective II, Strategies 1 & 2*

Interprogram Initiatives for Social and Economic Justice: *Objectives I & II*