

## Arkansas Agriculture Department Accepting Specialty Crop Grant Proposals

Arkansas Agriculture Department • #1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205  
Phone: 501-683-4851

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is accepting applications for proposals to enhance the competitiveness of Arkansas specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, floriculture and nuts. Applications will be considered for inclusion in Arkansas' grant proposal for funds provided by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Approximately \$307,000 may be available to Arkansas under the program. Funds are available as a result of the Agricultural Act of 2014.

Under grant guidelines, state corporations, commodity associations, non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, and colleges and universities may be eligible. Applicants and/or their business or educational affiliation must be located in Arkansas. USDA will not award grant funds for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, recipients and sub-recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Applicants are asked to submit proposals for projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by:

- Enhancing food safety;
- Assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain in developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices,"

and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers; packers and processors;

- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control; and development of organic and sustainable production practices;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems;
- Developing local and regional food systems; and
- Improving food access in underserved communities.

Applications must be received by the department by close-of-business May 29, 2015.

Questions regarding the program may be directed to Zachary Taylor, the department's director of marketing, at 501-219-6324 or email [Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov](mailto:Zachary.Taylor@aad.ar.gov). Application packets may be found at: [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.aad.arkansas.gov). A complete list of eligible specialty crops may be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/SCBGPdefinitions>

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