

**ARKANSAS  
AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT**



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**ARKANSAS TO RECEIVE OVER \$290,000 THROUGH USDA SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

Little Rock, Ark. – The Arkansas Agriculture Department is pleased to announce that Arkansas will receive more than \$290,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The purpose of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). This year, USDA AMS awarded \$62.5 million in funding through state departments of agriculture across the nation.

Arkansas organizations and projects to receive funds include:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project</b>
University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture	Identifying Marketable Attributes to Assist Breeding Efforts (For Peaches and Nectarines)
Arkansas Agriculture Department	Arkansas Grown Specialty Crop Promotions
University of Arkansas Department of Food Science	Development of low calorie nutrient rich healthy edamame snack chips with vegetable and fruits for commercialization
Raising Arkansas	Group GAP and GHP Certification Good Agricultural and Good Handling Practices
Arkansas Agriculture Department	Promoting Arkansas Specialty Crops at the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit 2017
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Improving the food safety capacity of entities in the specialty crop distribution chain

“Specialty crops are an important part of the agricultural landscape in Arkansas and across the U.S. We appreciate the opportunity to receive grant funds at the AAD to help keep this crop sector viable and accessible to the marketplace,” said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

Applications for 2017 Specialty Crop Block Grant funds will be accepted early next year. Please contact Christian Olson at [christian.olson@aad.ar.gov](mailto:christian.olson@aad.ar.gov) to request more information.

The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation.

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*The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*