



News for Immediate Release

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Agriculture Department Announces Federal Specialty Crop Grant Deadline

Deadline for Specialty Crop Block Grant Proposals is Feb. 29

Harrisburg – Proposals for projects that increase the visibility and competitiveness of the state’s nursery, horticultural and nut products are being accepted through Feb. 29.

The proposals are part of a two-phase competitive process for the federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which was authorized under the federal Farm Bill.

“Specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables, flowers and trees, play a significant part in the state’s economy, contributing more than \$1 billion in sales each year,” said Agriculture Secretary George Greig. “By investing in the specialty crop industry, we can make these healthy, affordable products more accessible to consumers and more profitable for producers.”

Applicants must submit a short concept paper for projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through market development, technology innovation, food safety, nutrition knowledge, sustainable practices and pest management.

Requests may be made for any amount, providing the amount reasonably represents the cost of the intended project.

Each project must have measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution or individual. Single organizations, institutions and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture administers the grant program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service. Proposals will be reviewed by a state-appointed specialty crop advisory board and approved by the state agriculture secretary. Successful applicants will then be asked to submit a full proposal based on the concept paper, which will be due April 20.

Last year, 17 projects were approved in Pennsylvania totaling more than \$1 million. Projects addressed a range of priorities in the agriculture industry, including food safety, marketing, nutrition and sustainability.

Concept papers must be received by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 29. Completed applications may be mailed to Lela Reichart, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Market Development, 2301 N. Cameron St., Room 310, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408. Hand-delivered applications can be dropped off at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center, 2300 N. Cameron St., Room F6, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

For more information about the grant program, contact Lela Reichart at 717-783-1394 or lreichart@state.pa.us, or visit www.agriculture.state.pa.us to download an application.

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