



News for Immediate Release

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Deadline for Federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Proposals is Feb. 28

Harrisburg – Proposals for projects that increase the visibility and competitiveness of the state’s nursery, horticultural and nut products are being accepted by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture through Feb. 28.

The proposals are part of a two-phase competitive process for the federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, authorized under the federal Farm Bill, pending notice of funding availability from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Specialty crops play an important role in Pennsylvania agriculture, contributing more than \$1 billion in yearly sales,” said Agriculture Secretary George Greig. “They’re healthy, affordable and grown here in Pennsylvania. These grants are investments that help make our crops 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, due April 20.

Last year, 22 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. Thursday, Feb. 28. Completed applications may be mailed to Samantha Snyder, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Market Development, 2301 N. Cameron St., Room 310, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

For more information about the grant program, call 717-772-1429 or visit www.agriculture.state.pa.us and search "specialty crops."

Media contact: Will Nichols, 717-787-5085

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