

Delaware Receives an Additional Round of Specialty Crop Grant Funds from USDA

DOVER, Del. (May 6, 2021) – The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) received an additional round of funding to enhance the competitiveness of Delaware-grown specialty crops through USDA's Pandemic Assistance Program. USDA awarded each state department of agriculture an allocation based upon their most recent available value of specialty crop cash receipts and acreage of specialty crop production in the state. As a result, Delaware received an additional \$465,433 under H.R. 133 – the Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding) to distribute through a competitive grant process.

Specialty crops cover agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, nursery crops, and floriculture. Projects should benefit the specialty crop industry as a whole, sustain the livelihood of Delaware farmers and strengthen Delaware's economy. Applicants should look to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through:

1. Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops;
2. Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops;
3. Expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and
4. Address local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

DDA is prioritizing applications under this funding that respond to needs relating to COVID-19 impacts that address local, regional and national challenges confronting the specialty crop industry. This may include projects to assist farmworkers, projects to fund farmers, food businesses, and other relevant entities to respond to risks and supply chain

disruptions, and other projects.

For this specific funding round, DDA is offering grants between \$5,000 and \$100,000 for projects that may last one to nearly four years in length. Grant applications are due no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 26, 2021.

Agricultural producers, nonprofit organizations, government entities, for-profit companies, or educational institutions based in Delaware or with a business or educational affiliation based in Delaware can submit applications. Funding cannot be used for field crops, such as corn and soybeans, or animal agriculture. DDA's [2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – H.R. Stimulus Funding Request for Proposal](#) outlines priority issues affecting the industry and needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that applicants should consider when putting together a submission.

The grant evaluation team will review submissions, with selected projects included in the Delaware State Plan for USDA review and approval.

Past Delaware projects have included research on biological control of spider mites in watermelons, developing and testing lima bean varieties, agricultural literacy projects to increase consumption of specialty crops in youth, and growing consumer awareness of Delaware's specialty crop industry.

The focus of many specialty crop grant projects in Delaware has often been on fruits and vegetables. However, qualified applicants should also consider projects related to Delaware's horticultural, floriculture, and nursery crop industries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program contact DDA's Marketing Specialist Ese.Jessa@delaware.gov, or visit online at <https://de.gov/scbg> to obtain an application.

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