



News for Immediate Release

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Nearly \$1 Million in Federal Grants Awarded to Help Specialty Crop Industry Grow

Harrisburg – Twenty-one Pennsylvania projects were recently awarded nearly \$925,000 in federal grants to increase the visibility and market share of the state’s produce, nursery, horticultural and nut products.

The federal grants are part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which was authorized under the federal Farm Bill.

“Agriculture plays a significant role in the state’s economy, with specialty crops 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.”

The 21 funded projects address a range of priorities in the agriculture industry, including food safety, marketing, nutrition and sustainability.

Grant recipients are selected by a state-appointed specialty crop advisory board and approved by the state agriculture secretary. Applications are then collectively submitted for approval to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service.

Grant recipients are:

- **American Mushroom Institute:** \$25,000 for grower food safety education and training and \$40,000 to expand the use of mushrooms in school meal programs;
- **Fay-Penn Economic Development Council:** \$20,000 to promote and improve access to locally grown fruits and vegetables;
- **Hunger-Free Pennsylvania:** \$35,000 to establish a safe, fast and convenient system for specialty crop producers to donate products to emergency food assistance agencies;
- **Linvilla Orchards:** \$20,000 to develop methods to best utilize drip and overhead irrigation;
- **Muncy School District:** \$20,000 to grow knowledge and consumption of local specialty crops;
- **Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Board:** \$20,000 to promote Pennsylvania apples;
- **Pennsylvania Farm Link:** \$23,000 to develop marketing workshops for beginning and established specialty crop producers;

- **Pennsylvania Vegetable Marketing and Research Program:** \$20,000 to promote Pennsylvania produce and \$30,000 to increase strategic partnerships to grow the industry;
- **Pennsylvania Winery Association:** \$32,000 to market Pennsylvania wines and wineries; and
- **SHARE Food Program Inc.:** \$43,000 to expand the geographic reach of a fresh food distribution program for low-income Philadelphia residents.

In addition, **The Pennsylvania State University** received four grants for the following:

- \$80,000 to develop best management practices for potato growing and provide current potato management and production education to growers;
- \$33,282 to evaluate table grape vines and fruit for insects and diseases;
- \$24,403 to develop methods to prevent surface water contamination of specialty crops; and
- \$20,000 to understand consumer peach purchasing behavior and preferences.

More than \$439,000 was awarded to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's bureaus of food distribution, food safety, market development and plant industry. The grants will allow these bureaus to promote best agricultural practices, continue outreach and educational support of Good Agricultural Practices, support the PA Preferred® branding program and ensure the health of Pennsylvania's tree fruit industry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded 56 block grants totaling \$55 million for 748 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For a complete summary of grants, visit www.ams.usda.gov/scgp.

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