

Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture
KENT A. LEONHARDT



304-558-3550

agriculture.wv.gov



Facebook: West Virginia Department of Agriculture



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Contact: Crescent Gallagher
Communications Director
304/558-3708; 304/380-3922 (cell)
cgallagher@wvda.us

WEST VIRGINIA RECEIVES MORE THAN \$230,000 IN SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS

Charleston, W.Va. – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the recipients of the 2017 Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG). Thirty-one projects from West Virginia were submitted for consideration, twelve of those were selected to share \$230,000 in funding.

The purpose of the SCBG program is to solely 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’s winners include: Winfield Elementary School’s “Come Grow with Us” campaign aimed at getting kids excited about growing and harvesting their own fruits and vegetables in the school’s high tunnel, the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producer Association’s “Syrup Knowledge” program will host a southern research symposium and syrup grading school to expand the market and Wayne County School’s “Mine to Mushrooms” project where high school agriculture students will grow mushrooms in the classroom.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) was also awarded SCBG funding to partner with West Virginia University’s Davis College of Agriculture to map areas of the state with the highest maple production potential, allowing producers to identify dense maple plots that can be developed cost-efficiently.

“USDA’s “Specialty Crop Block Grants are essential to many states like ours. We relayed that message to Secretary Perdue during his visit to West Virginia last month,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “We had a great batch of ideas this year to help grow agriculture in our state. I wish we had access to more funds.”

Grant recipients have three years to plan, implement and gather data on their respective projects.

The USDA handed out a total of \$60.5 million to 678 projects across the United States and its territories for 2017. For a complete list of West Virginia’s 2017 SCBG recipients, log on to:

<http://www.agriculture.wv.gov/divisions/marketinganddevelopment/Documents/SBCG%20Web.pdf>.

Information on the 2018 SCBG process should be available by December 1, 2017. Call (304) 558-2210 or email grants@wvda.us to be placed on our grant opportunity list for upcoming notifications.

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