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West Virginia Receives More Than \$271,000 in Specialty Crop Block Grants

Charleston W.Va. -- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the recipients of the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG). Eight West Virginia projects will share in \$271,980 of federal funding. The money will be used to enhance the production, processing and consumption of specialty crops within West Virginia. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

"Specialty Crop Block Grants have had a tremendous impact on West Virginia. From research to education, as well as expanding agricultural markets, these grants are vital to our state," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "It is imperative they continue to be included in the next and future Farm Bills."

This year total funding requests for projects was \$360,042 from West Virginia organizations, agencies and institutions. The SCBG program funded the following eight:

- **WVDA (Statewide)** - \$68,342: "Developing New Detection Methods to Enhance Food Safety in Specialty Crops in West Virginia"
- **WVDA (Statewide)** - \$50,000: "2018-2021: West Virginia Specialty Crop Producer Education Opportunities"
- **West Virginia University (Statewide)** - \$31,460: "Growing Farmers, Horticulturists, Nutritionists in West Virginia: Garden-Based Learning for Elementary Schools"
- **Raleigh County Schools (Raleigh County)** - \$25,000: "Creating Education and Market Opportunities for Students and Beekeepers in Southern WV"
- **West Virginia University (Jefferson County)** - \$24,522: "Initiative to Develop a Cider Apple and Cider Production Economy in West Virginia"

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- **Yew Mountain Center** (*Pocahontas County*) - \$19,932: “Yew Mountain Center Forest Farming with Non-Timber Forest Products Research and Education Project”
- **WVDA** (*Statewide*) - \$17,500: “2018-2021: Supporting GAP Audits of Specialty Crops”
- **West Virginia State University** (*McDowell County*) - \$15,000: “Southside K-8 Tunnel and School Farm Project”

Grant recipients have three years to plan, implement and gather data on their respective projects. The USDA handed out more than \$72.1 million to 788 SCBG projects across the United States and its territories for 2018. For complete project descriptions, log on to: <https://agriculture.wv.gov>.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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