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March 18, 2019

WVDA Is Now Accepting Applications for Specialty Crop Block Grants

Charleston W.Va. -- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is now accepting project proposals for the 2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Last year, eight West Virginia projects shared in \$271,980 of federal funding. The deadline to apply for this year is April 8, 2019.

“Grant programs like SCBGP, provide much-needed funding to research projects that focus on expanding markets for small producers. In previous years, these grants have helped West Virginia identify emerging market opportunities. Our maple industry is a perfect example of a niche, crop that has benefited from these grants,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt.

The SCBGP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by the WVDA. Monies must be used to enhance the production, processing and consumption of specialty crops within West Virginia. Grant recipients have three years to plan, implement and gather data on their respective projects.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.

“Specialty crop funding allows West Virginia agriculture commodities to explore and enhance their impact on our state’s economy. The Department is looking for projects that highlight how innovative programs and rural development groups can help West Virginia agriculture expand,” Leonhardt said. “Niche, specialty markets are West Virginia’s future.”

The USDA handed out more than \$72.1 million to 788 SCBG projects across the United States and its territories in 2018. The program is available to groups and

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organizations that qualify to receive grant funding but cannot be used to fund individual farms or enterprises.

For more information or to submit an application, contact Cindy Martel at grants@wvda.us.

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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