

News Release
1-29-14

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR 2014 WV SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is accepting applications for the 2014 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP).

Following a period of public input and program priority identification, applicants are invited to submit a "Concept Proposal" for projects meeting the criteria of specialty crops as defined by USDA. Fruits, vegetables, horticultural crops, tree nuts, maple syrup, Christmas trees, and honey are just a few of the examples of the types of agricultural products eligible for funding under this program. All projects must provide exclusive industry programming for research, education, production increases or marketing of these products.

Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick was encouraged by the feedback received in the recent public comment period.

"The program priorities identified in the statewide survey reinforce the commitment the Department has made to increase the production and availability of these products in our state. Emphasis on business development, initiatives designed to encourage young and new farmer production and increased education on the value of the food and specialty crop farmers in our state led the way. I will charge the review and selection committees with identifying and funding projects that work to meet those priorities."

Contingent on US Farm Bill funding availability, funding in 2014 is expected to be approximately \$180,000. The program is available to groups and organizations that are qualified to receive grant funding and cannot be used to fund individual farms or enterprises.

The grant Request for Proposals, [Concept Proposal application](#), and [Concept Proposal instructions](#) are available on the WVDA website (www.wvagriculture.org) in both PDF and Word formats. Scroll to the bottom of the page and look under "[Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Funds Available](#)" heading to find the information.

Applications are due to WVDA by the close of business Friday, March 14, 2014. Additional information including sign up and registration for an upcoming webinar can be obtained by contacting WVDA Marketing Specialist Melissa Beller at 304-558-2210, mbeller@wvda.us.

The SCBGP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by WVDA.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.