

News Release
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**APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR 2015 WEST VIRGINIA
SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is now accepting project proposals for the 2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). Deadline is close of business Friday, April 10, 2015.

"Our Department is proud to offer grant monies and resources to help expand the specialty crop industry in our state," said Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick. "This program allows our agriculture industries the opportunity to expand, develop new tools for their agribusiness enterprises and continue to move agriculture forward. I have asked the selection committee to maximize utilization of these program funds, and I look forward to seeing the innovative ideas that will emerge from these projects."

The scope of projects is deliberately open-ended, but they must deal with specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, horticultural products, tree nuts, maple syrup, Christmas trees and honey, among others. Products explicitly excluded are livestock, eggs and commodity-type crops such as corn and soybeans, to name a few. A more detailed list of specialty crops can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgpdefinitions>.

All projects must focus on industry-related research, education, improved production or marketing of specialty crops. 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 SCBGP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by WVDA. West Virginia expects to receive approximately \$200,000 in 2015.

The Grant Request for Proposals, Application Cover Sheet, Project Proposal Template, and 2015 Grant Application Manual, are available on the WVDA website (www.wvagriculture.org) in both PDF and Word formats. Applications are due to WVDA by the close of business Friday, April 10, 2015.

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.