



Specialty Crop Block Grant 2016 Project Awards

Thanks to the 2008 Farm Bill, the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) receives yearly grant funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enhance the competitiveness of Nevada's specialty crops through the Specialty Crops Block Grant Program (SCBGP). This year, the USDA granted \$250,000 to the NDA, to support specialty crop industries statewide.



In October 2016, the NDA awarded funding to 10 Nevada projects that promote and enhance the competitiveness of Nevada's specialty crops industry. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts and nursery crops.

The 2017 Request for Proposal will be announced in the spring. This is an effective funding opportunity to support Nevada's growing availability of specialty crops through production, education, research and promotion. For more information, grant timelines, workshops or to view descriptions of previously funded projects, please visit agri.nv.gov/SCBGP.

The NDA is pleased to announce the enclosed projects selected for 2016.

The USDA defines a specialty crop as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, legumes, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Plants must be used by people for food, medicinal purposes and/or aesthetics to be considered specialty crops.

The Nevada Department of Agriculture promotes a business climate that is fair, economically viable and encourages environmental stewardship that serves to **protect food, fiber** and **human health** and **safety** through effective **service** and **education**.



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More Information

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Nevada Specialty Crop Education at the Nevada Small Farms Conference

A partnership between the NDA and Western Nevada College (WNC) Specialty Crop Institute will increase specialty crop education by allowing WNC to secure industry expert speakers for the 2017-2019 Nevada Small Farms Conferences.

Goals

To increase new and experienced growers' knowledge on specialty crop production topics that will positively impact their business.

Beneficiaries

Nevada fruit and vegetable growers and individuals interested in pursuing a specialty crop business.



Edible Reno-Tahoe Farmers' Market and CSA Guide

To support local specialty crop growers, edible Reno-Tahoe will create a Farmers' Market and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) guide as a printed insert in the July/August 2017 issue of the magazine. The guide will highlight farmers producing Nevada specialty crops and will serve as a resource for consumers, retail, or restaurant food purchasers, detailing seasonal availability in the area and procurement options.



Goals

The overarching goal of the guide is to help consumers identify locally produced food and support Nevada specialty crop producers in marketing their products. The guide will also connect restaurant owners and buyers to local food, as they'll have increased awareness on seasonal availability.

Beneficiaries

Nevada specialty crop growers, consumers of local products, and local retailers/restaurants.

Organic Specialty Crops Education

A collaboration between the Healthy Communities Coalition and Basin and Range Organics to cultivate new organic specialty crop growers, increase the production of organic specialty crops and provide hands-on education to youth by introducing organic farming techniques.

Goals

To increase the number of certified organic specialty crops by 10 percent through providing technical assistance to interested growers. Create four online trainings to help new farmers and school youth garden managers understand organic certification processes. Train nine student garden managers on organic practices who will educate roughly 3,600 students in organic farming processes.



Beneficiaries

Interested organic growers, student garden managers and Nevada youth.



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High Altitude Vineyard: Part II

The Desert Farming Initiative at the University of Nevada, Reno, will support vineyards and wine industry expansion through coordinating trials on new varieties of grapes appropriate for high altitude climates.

Goals

To increase specialty crop farmers' knowledge on grape production in high altitude regions. Four new growers are anticipated as a result of this project.

Beneficiaries

The Nevada wine industry and Nevada high desert growers interested in grape production.



Winter Field Lettuce Production Research

The Desert Farming Initiative at the University of Nevada, Reno will use space at the Main Station Agricultural Experiment Station to test the viability and success of multiple types of crop covers for field lettuce production. This study will be replicated from a successful study performed in Australia that provided increased protection from pests and winter weather.



Goals

To increase the season extension potential of field grown lettuce and decrease the time of harvest. This project will also provide a viable prevention strategy for foodborne illness along the vegetable food chain.

Beneficiaries

Leafy greens producers and consumers.

Study of Healthy Convenience Stores for Marketing Specialty Crops in Small Communities

Canyon Gardens LLC will collaborate with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension to conduct a case study in Lincoln County to evaluate a healthy convenience store as a new business model for marketing locally grown specialty crops. The case study will work with local producers to create healthy convenient options for consumers to use their specialty crops.

Goals

To increase local specialty crop sales and the sustainability of small specialty crop growers in rural communities. Collaborate with producers to increase access and consumption of specialty crops by providing a tested business model that producers in other rural communities can adopt.

Beneficiaries

Nevada farmers, interested new growers and consumers.





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Moapa Valley Specialty Crop Education Hub

The Nevada Community Prevention Coalition will perform a feasibility assessment on developing a specialty crop education hub in Moapa Valley. This project will identify whether the education hub can eventually serve as a central location for local specialty crop growers and Clark County School District students to be educated in sustainable farming methods.



Goals

Assess the probability of successful implementation of a food education hub in Moapa Valley, including the environmental possibility of growing specialty crops in the region. Develop a business plan to outline the project in greater detail, including identifying potential community partners, food education hub location, funding options and methods for becoming self-sustaining.

Beneficiaries

The eight specialty crop growers in the Moapa community anticipated to participate in the development of a community business plan and Moapa Valley community members.

Branding Nevada Melons

Desert Farming Initiative at the University of Nevada, Reno will partner with both private and non-profit agencies to brand the “Nevada Melon” as a high-quality specialty crop.

Goals

To determine the dollar amount of existing sales of melons in Nevada, and work towards increasing sales for existing growers. This project also aims to increase consumer awareness of Nevada melons.



Beneficiaries

Melon growers and consumers.

Fallon Food Hub Specialty Crop Promotional Marketing Plan

This project, initiated by the Fallon Food Hub, will create and implement a marketing plan that will raise awareness of specialty crops sold at the food hub through customized specialty crop events.



Goals

To implement a strategic specialty crop marketing plan, and increase specialty crop sales an anticipated 20% for the 2017 growing season.

Beneficiaries

Specialty crop growers and consumers.