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AAD Opens 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program through April 13

STATEWIDE, ARK. – The Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD) is now accepting applications for the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, made available through funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These grants help to enhance the specialty crop industry of Arkansas, which includes the growing and selling of fruits, vegetables, floriculture and nuts. **Applications must be submitted to the AAD by April 13 and are available, [here](#).**

“For more than ten years we have administered funding for projects that have helped bolster this sector of our agricultural industry by providing producer training, research on a variety of issues important to the industry, and improving access to Arkansas specialty crops”, said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward. “The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds have made a difference for Arkansas agriculture and we look forward to receiving the 2018 proposals. “

Based on feedback from Arkansas specialty crop producers and stakeholders, funding will be prioritized in the following areas for 2018 grant recipients:

- Projects that develop new marketing opportunities or campaigns
- Projects to help farmers with business training
- Research projects regarding new disease and/or pest management practices or devices
- Projects that increase access to Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices training
- Projects that create or strengthen specialty crop producer/grower associations
- Projects that study the impact an in-state organic certifier would have on specialty crops

The AAD uses a two-phase application process for administering funds. Project concept proposals must be submitted using the online form, [here](#), by April 13. The project concept proposal will provide an outline of the project’s goals, tasks and budget requirements. After being reviewed by an advisory committee, the AAD will select projects and invite applicants to submit full applications with further details.

Additional guidelines and instructions on completing and submitting an application, including the full Request for Applications (RFA), is available, [here](#). For additional information, contact Christian Olson at (501) 219-6324 or christian.olson@aad.ar.gov.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit www.aad.arkansas.gov.

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The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

