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Arkansas to Receive \$351,220 through USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Little Rock, AR – Arkansas will receive \$351,220 from the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to fund nine specialty crop projects this year. Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds must be used to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops and provides resources to strengthen American agriculture. Nationwide, a total of \$72.15 million was awarded for 2018.

“The Arkansas Agriculture Department is pleased to help administer the Specialty Crop Block Grant funds that provide assistance to this important sector of Arkansas’s agriculture industry. These funds will help Arkansas organizations provide needed outreach and promotional efforts for Arkansas specialty crops, fund specialty crop research initiatives, and help create value-added products. We look forward to working with the recipients on these exciting projects that provide economic benefit to producers and our rural communities,” said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

Arkansas research projects funded this year include work on treatments for tomato pathogens, hop production in Arkansas, and fertilizer production from specialty crop food waste. Other projects will focus on increasing supply chain access and developing value-added uses for specialty crops. A complete list of the nine Arkansas grant recipient organizations and project descriptions can be found [here](#).

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is administered by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and state departments of agriculture. Specialty crops are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). The Arkansas specialty crop industry accounts for more than 27,000 jobs and contributes \$1.4 billion in value added to the largest industry in the state, the agriculture industry.

Arkansans interested in applying for Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding must apply through the Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD). Applications for the 2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program will be accepted by the AAD early next year. Contact Brooke Clanton at brooke.clanton@agriculture.arkansas.gov for more details.

The AAD 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. Learn more: www.agriculture.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.

