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2020 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Proposals Due April 8

LITTLE ROCK, AR. – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the 2020 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). These grants are funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enhance the competitiveness of the Arkansas specialty crop industry. Specialty crops are defined by USDA as fruits, vegetables, horticulture, floriculture, and tree nuts. Proposals must be submitted by April 8 through this link:

<https://www.cognitofirms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/SpecialtyCropBlockGrantProgramProjectConcept>

Applicants are encouraged to develop projects pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crop industry:

- Enhancing food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act (21 U.S.C. Chapter 27);
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture uses a two-phase application process for administering the grant funds. Project concept proposals must be submitted by April 8 and outline the project's goals, tasks, and budget requirements. After all concept proposals are reviewed by an advisory committee, selected projects will be invited to submit detailed project proposals. Only electronic applications will be accepted.

The full Request for Applications (RFA) is available:

https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2020_SCBGP_RFA.pdf. For additional information, contact Juan Hurtado, Juan.Hurtado@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture 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 <https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/>. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.