

## USDA Grants for Horticulture Products Awarded to Local Organizations

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has awarded grants to organizations across the state to promote education about and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded \$258,362.52 to the Kansas Department of Agriculture through the Specialty Crop Block Grant program. The program is designed to improve the Kansas specialty crop industry, which includes various horticulture products, including fruits and vegetables, turf grass, tree nuts, dried fruits, nursery crops and flowers. The Kansas Department of Agriculture then passed the funds along to other groups.

“These grants will help specialty crop producers improve their production practices, expand their operations and connect with new markets and new customers,” said Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Dale Rodman. “Local producers and specialty crops are an important component of agriculture in Kansas.”

The grant recipients for 2012 and 2013 are:

- **Brown County Healthy Foods Coalition**, \$53,814 for “Postage Stamp Production Project.” This project will assist local producers with growing, marketing and educating the public about their products.
- **Cultivate Kansas City**, \$9,000 for “Get Growing Kansas City.” This project will help support beginning producers and markets in and around the Kansas City metro area.
- **Highland Community College – Wamego Campus**, \$42,504 for “Viticulture and Enology Extension Project.” This project will provide assistance to prospective, beginning and existing grape growers and winemakers across the state.
- **Rawlins County Extension Council**, \$36,575 for “Feasibility of Expanding Vegetable Production in Western Kansas.” This project will study different production methods for vegetables.
- **Stafford County Economic Development**, \$41,615 for “Expanding Healthy Food Production through High Tunnel Technical Assistance.” This project will provide assistance for local growers to extend their growing season and work with local schools on entrepreneurial projects.
- **Kansas Department of Agriculture**, \$61,398 for “Improving the Kansas Specialty Crop Industry through Enhancements to the State Trademark Program.” This project will incorporate specialty crops into the state’s agricultural product trademark program.
- **Glacial Hills Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.**, \$13,456 for “Growing Healthy Communities and Economies through Northeast Kansas Specialty Crops.” This project will provide marketing and education of specialty crops in the northeast Kansas region.

Grants were available to projects involving research, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety and security, pest and disease, education, “buy local” programs, promotion, marketing, more efficient and cost-effective distribution systems, environmental and conservational concerns, product development and developing cooperatives.

Sixteen organizations submitted a total of 23 proposals for the annual grant cycle, requesting more than \$1.18 million in funding.

To learn more, visit the department’s specialty crop block grant web page at

[http://www.ksda.gov/kansas\\_agriculture/content/281](http://www.ksda.gov/kansas_agriculture/content/281) or contact Local Foods and Rural Outreach Coordinator Sarah Green at [Sarah.Green@kda.ks.gov](mailto:Sarah.Green@kda.ks.gov) or 785-296-4172.