

KDA Receives Specialty Crop Block Grant

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has been awarded \$283,597.28 through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a program which serves to enhance opportunities for specialty crops. According to the USDA, specialty crops are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” KDA has selected several recipients to further utilize the funds through specific projects.

“This grant program offers the outstanding opportunity to promote the growth of specialty crops in Kansas,” said Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Jackie McClaskey. “We have been granted these funds to help improve the education, innovation and availability of these agribusinesses in Kansas which will encourage economic growth of the agriculture industry.”

The following is a list of Kansas projects that will be funded by the grant:

- **Kansas Rural Center, Enhancing Specialty Crop Production and Profitability, \$47,337** — Provide research of best management and conservation practices for specialty crop production, as well as the dissemination of information, in order for producers to improve production and profitability of their operations.
- **Seward County Community College/Area Technical School, Specialty Crop Incubator Program, \$60,382** — KDA will continue its partnership with Seward County Community College to provide a specialty crop incubator program, allowing small specialty crop businesses to enter the industry. Conferences will be offered focusing on business management and specialty crop knowledge, while educational opportunities for area schoolchildren will be expanded.
- **Highland Community College, Wine Business Incubator Project, \$90,000** — Extend upon their previous efforts by creating and providing a wine incubator to be utilized by prospective Kansas enologists. Staff will be provided in order to assist with day-to-day activities of the incubator, as well as mentorship of clients.
- **Kansas Department of Agriculture, Education Program for Great Plains Growers Conference, \$34,090.81** — Provide conference registration reimbursement and stipend for specialty crop producers to attend the Great Plains Growers Conference located in St. Joseph, Mo.
- **K-State Research and Extension, Strengthening Food Safety Education for Kansas Fruit and Vegetable Producers, \$33,352** — Partner with K-State Research and Extension to provide training and resources for Kansas fruit and vegetable growers on produce safety, particularly related to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Personnel will undergo a train-the-trainer workshop, enabling them to provide training to producers within the state.

For more information about how the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is utilized in Kansas, visit KDA’s Specialty Crop Block Grant webpage at agriculture.ks.gov/specialtycropblockgrant. For information about these specific projects, contact Kellen L. Liebsch, KDA economist, at 785-564-6726 or kellen.liebsch@ks.gov.