

KDA Selects 2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Projects

The Kansas Department of Agriculture has been awarded \$373,525.24 through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. Funds for the program are presented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service to increase 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 other recipients to further utilize the funds.

“We have a wide variety of specialty crops grown in Kansas, and these awards will help provide resources to producers that can enhance their individual growing operations,” said Secretary of Agriculture Mike Beam. “The specialty crop sector has a bright future in our state, and we celebrate these recipients.”

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

- **Kansas State University: Improving the Yield, Quality, and Economic Potential of Strawberries Growing Under High Tunnels in Kansas, \$67,990.32** — The project will study the economic potential of growing day-neutral strawberries under high tunnel in comparison to high tunnel tomato production.
- **Johnson County Extension Council: Enhancing Density Apple Production in Eastern Kansas with Drape Netting, \$35,084.36** — The council will partner with local tree fruit producers to research and provide education on high density apple production systems and the adoption of drape netting management practices.
- **Kansas State University: Novel and Sustainable Wash-Water Systems for Improving the Safety and Quality of Leafy Greens, \$54,174.96** — A team will collaborate with growers to implement cost-effective and sustainable antimicrobial wash-water systems to increase the safety, shelf-life, and competitiveness of leafy greens.
- **Kansas State University: GAPs Certification Funding and Produce Safety Outreach for Kansas Growers, \$57,875.04** — This project will also assist in improving the safety of Kansas fruits and vegetables and assist producers to receive GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification.
- **Douglas County Research and Extension: Enhancing Beginning Farmer Training and Market Access in Northeast Kansas, \$44,739.00** — A collaboration will work on a long-term Sustainability Action Plan for an improved beginning specialty crop farmer training program, including a series of hands-on workshops for beginning producers.
- **Kansas Department of Agriculture: Specialty Crop Conference Education Support, \$25,500.00** — Kansas specialty crop growers will receive assistance to attend a conference on specialty crop growing techniques to increase their knowledge base, to help develop a plan of action for their operations.
- **Kansas State University: Identifying Best Management Practices for Upright Dry Bean Production, \$38,223.36** — Research will establish best management practices for upright dry edible beans, evaluate management questions, and communicate findings to current and potential future dry bean growers.
- **Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation: Increasing Regional Vegetable Production and Distribution Capacity for Western Kansas, \$42,250.00** — A local

collaborative group will assist producers in Northwest Kansas scale up vegetable production and prepare to deliver to local grocery markets.

For more information about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program including more detail about these grant projects, visit agriculture.ks.gov/specialtycrop.