



# State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

DOUGLAS H. FISHER  
*Secretary*

October 7, 2021

Dear Agricultural Organization Representative:

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) is pleased to announce the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) anticipates **funding** for the **Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP)** for the coming year. All prospective applicants are encouraged to review the 2021 SCMP Request for Applications on the USDA, AMS website

[https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2021\\_SCMP\\_RFA.pdf](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2021_SCMP_RFA.pdf).

For the purpose of this grant program “specialty crops” are defined as; vegetables, fruits including grapes for wine, nuts, horticultural products including Christmas trees, honey, herbs, potatoes, sweet corn and, other specialty crops including algae. Agricultural commodities which are NOT eligible for these grant funds include, but are not limited to: feed crops, food grains, seafood, livestock, dairy and poultry products including eggs, range grasses and oilseed crops.

To be eligible for a grant, projects must “enhance the competitiveness” of specialty crops and must implements activities with measurable outcomes that benefit **two or more U.S. States and/or Territories**. Projects address one or more of the following regional or national level specialty crop issues:

- Food safety,
- Plant pests and disease,
- Research,
- Crop-specific projects addressing common issues, or
- Marketing and promotion.

Projects must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Of special interest this year are projects that directly impact those affected by Covid-19 (producers and consumers). Funds will be available to selected and approved applicants after November 4, 2021.

All proposed projects will be required to follow a standardized format and comply with the enclosed USDA guidelines.

Examples of past SCMP projects have includes:

## 1. FOOD SAFETY

Projects that address the handling, preparation, and storage of specialty crops in ways that

reduce foodborne threats may include, but are not limited to:

- Improving detection, monitoring, control, and response to potential food safety hazards in the production, processing, and handling of specialty crops;
- Conducting research focused on issues related to (1) water quality; or (2) use of biological soil amendments of animal origin, on similar agro-ecological regions or localities; and/or;
- Strengthening regional and national traceback systems; promoting an outbreak response system that shortens the time between outbreak detection, resolution, and recovery; and improving methods for communicating with consumers about traceback of foodborne illness outbreaks.

## **2. PLANT PESTS AND DISEASE**

Projects that address threats from pests and diseases may include, but are not limited to:

- Developing safe, effective, and economical pest and disease management solutions for growers of specialty crops;
- Developing monitoring systems to enhance capabilities to predict pest and disease incidence, estimate damage, and identify valid action thresholds;
- Developing treatments for quarantine pests and diseases to maintain or open healthy markets with U.S. trading partners; and/or
- Developing diagnostic tools, particularly new ones, for plant pests and diseases and for detection of pesticide resistance in pest populations, including weeds.

## **3. RESEARCH**

Research projects are systematic studies directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied (2 CFR § 200.1). Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting research in plant breeding, genetics, and genomics to improve crop characteristics;
- Improving production, processing, storage, and distribution efficiencies for conventionally or organically grown specialty crops;
- Reducing environmental impacts; and/or
- Improving supply chain logistics.

## **4. CROP-SPECIFIC PROJECTS ADDRESSING COMMON ISSUES**

Crop-specific projects involve collaborative efforts to address issues that affect a specific specialty crop. An acceptable project would involve a specific specialty crop that is grown commercially in several distinct and widely dispersed geographic areas or regions of the country. Conducting research to determine consumer preferences, including studies of agricultural product price decision, value-added, sensory evaluations, focus groups, and other evaluative research methods that will enhance the impacts of agricultural marketing and promotion efforts.

## **5. MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

Marketing and promotion projects focus on multiple-state efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, generate publicity, attract new customers, enhance food transportation, and/or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue.

## 6. PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

Projects are not eligible for funding if the proposed activities:

- Duplicate the content of food safety training curricula or any resources or materials already developed;
- Provide direct financial assistance to producers; or processors to offset the cost of, or to cost share for, funding audits of production, handling, or management systems;
- Benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Funds cannot be used to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services; or
- Generate no direct, assessable benefits for the U.S. specialty crop producers or agricultural community.

The NJDA is requesting that all interested organizations representing New Jersey's Specialty Crop to submit project proposals for consideration for this funding **on or before November 1, 2021**. Any applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Please see the enclosed application information. ***Once you submit an application, you should receive a confirmation of receipt via email within 24 hours. If you do not receive that confirmation, please call or email me.***

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (609) 913-6628 or [deelip.mhaske@ag.nj.gov](mailto:deelip.mhaske@ag.nj.gov).

Sincerely,

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cc: Joe Atchison III, Director of Marketing & Development