

## The Honorable Adrian J. Polansky

Secretary

Kansas Department of Agriculture

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Base Grant: \$500,000

Specialty Crop Grant: \$210,000

Total Grant: \$710,000

### **USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant**

In mid-August 2002, President George Bush signed the agricultural economic assistance package, which included money for states to support activities that promote agriculture, especially specialty crops. Kansas' allotment was \$710,000. The Kansas Department of Agriculture was selected to receive and expend the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant.

KDA determined the grant fund expenditure focus after consulting:

- the Agriculture Marketing Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce;
- Kansas specialty crop stakeholders;
- legislative budget committees; and,
- a letter regarding the program to NASDA president Billy Ray Smith from U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman.

No grant funds were used for administrative overhead or indirect costs.

### **Midwest Conference on Agricultural Bioterrorism:**

**\$10,000.**

Funds were used to sponsor a consortium of Kansas organizations that held a two-day conference on agriculture bioterrorism in late March 2002. The conference brought together stakeholders from agriculture, law enforcement and emergency management. It was available to the general public, and it provided current information and relevant procedures to combat the threats of bioterrorism to the nation's food supply. The conference featured leading experts on agriculture and biological weapons.

### **Animal Disease Response Preparation:**

**\$55,000.**

The Kansas beef industry is a vital part of the Kansas economy. Cattle represent nearly 63 percent of Kansas' agriculture cash receipts, generating nearly \$5 billion annually. Kansas ranks second nationwide in commercial cattle

processed, with 7.2 million head, and second in fed cattle marketed, with 5.3 million head. Consequently, funding was provided to the Kansas Department of Animal Health — the Kansas agency responsible for foreign animal disease response — to complete the Kansas animal disease emergency response plan. Money also was used to retrofit and equip a mobile field command center for emergency response.

### **Pilot, Large-Scale Manure Composting Facility:**

**\$200,000.**

The Kansas beef industry, which accounts for nearly 63 percent of agricultural cash receipts, faces increasing pressure from all quarters to improve manure management. Grant funds were allocated to the Kansas Livestock Association to develop a pilot, large-scale, manure composting facility. This allocation will be leveraged with funds from the Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing, as well as from other state agencies working on this project. The goal is to determine the viability of a producer-owned composting company using waste from Kansas feedlots. The three-phase project — process verification, market and business development, and initial business start-up — will provide the information needed to develop a viable, sustainable composting company. Each phase of the project will provide information that will dictate the company's process for composting, the commercial products produced and marketed, and the most advantageous business structure. Livestock waste composting is not new to Kansas. Several composting facilities exist throughout the state, including two sole proprietorships that compost for several feed yards in western Kansas. These facilities are servicing local, small-scale, bulk compost markets. These existing facilities, as well as KSU composting programs, will provide a wealth of information for the design of the project's pilot composting facilities. However, the commercial pilot project will address areas

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**PILOT, LARGE-SCALE MANURE COMPOSTING FACILITY:**

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of composting where sufficient information is not available to implement a commercial composting facility serving the agriculture, horticulture and turf grass markets. Of primary concern is the lack of information about composting large volumes of livestock waste into a consistent soil amendment that meets the specifications of the commercial marketplace.

**Organic Meat Processing Inspection:**  
**\$4,000.**

KDA will draw on its meat and poultry inspection expertise to provide organic inspection to those state-licensed plants that want this service. A KDA veterinarian will be trained to provide the annual organic inspection through the Organic Crop Improvement Association. Training for KDA personnel is provided by the Independent Organic Inspectors Association.

**Pest Detection:**  
**\$30,000.**

KDA used funds to conduct pest detection activities in a number of non farm bill crops, such as potatoes and nursery stock, and in native plant communities, such as wetlands and forests. A federal noxious weed, giant salvinia, was found being offered for sale in a number of businesses specializing in water garden plants. All traps set for two exotic insects, leopard moth and grape berry moth, were negative for these pests. All potato samples collected and analyzed for Columbia root knot nematode were negative for this pest, which facilitated the export of Kansas potatoes to Mexico.

**Specialty Crop Producer Needs Assessment:**  
**\$65,000.**

The Agriculture Marketing Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing will conduct an assessment of the Kansas specialty crop industry. The assessment will focus on the marketing needs of this growing sector of Kansas agriculture and information gained will be used to focus state marketing programs to benefit those producers.

**Specialty Crop Grants:**  
**\$346,000.**

The Agriculture Marketing Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce & Housing awarded grants on a competitive basis and grant recipients are required to report measurable outcomes. Following is a list of grant recipients:

**Atchison Farmers' Market, Inc., \$1,684.**

Atchison Farmers' Market Educational Project: A \$1,684 award provides the Atchison Farmers' Market with funding for promotional materials. The market has seen an increase in vendors since its inception. They hope to provide information to consumers about the variety of produce that can be grown in the area, the nutritional value of fresh produce, instructions on how to prepare and preserve local produce, and the community value of meeting the people who produce the food we put on our tables. Funds also will be used for demonstrations by nutritionists and chefs during the market season.

**Downtown Topeka Farmers' Market, \$1,850.**

Acquiring New Farmer Marketers: An \$1,850 award provides the Downtown Topeka Farmers' Market with funding for promotional materials, including billboards and printed materials, to advertise the market. The goal is to increase the market's customer base and vendor base of operation.

**Salina Farmers' Market Association, \$5,630.**

Salina Farmers' Market Promotion Project: A \$5,630 award provides the Salina Farmers' Market Association funding for advertising and marketing materials. SFMA has seen that increasing its promotions results in increased customers and sales.

**Fieldstone Enterprises, \$21,751.**

Orchard of the Future—A Kansas Fruit Grower Project: A \$21,751 award provides Fieldstone Enterprises funding to diversify its operation to increase profitability. The proposal indicates they will be the first to introduce hi-density fruit planting in Kansas. They will work with the Kansas Fruit Growers Association, and the Kansas State University horticulture department will be able to use the facility to demonstrate to other Kansas producers the effectiveness of this type of planting. Fieldstone will develop a program of U-Pick harvesting and improve the methods of maintaining, pruning and harvesting the existing orchard.

**Garden Variety Greenhouse, \$24,163.**

Greenhouse Heating Improvement: A \$24,163 award provides Garden Variety Greenhouse funding to find cost-effective heating for the two greenhouses currently in operation. The proposal highlights using water and corn for heat production in the greenhouses, since current heating practices are very expensive. Garden Variety hopes to decrease expenses while

increasing production.

**Koelzer Bee Farm, \$12,122.**

Business Expansion: A \$12,122 award provides Koelzer Bee Farm funding to purchase the land and equipment it needs to increase honey production. Koelzer Bee Farm plans to increase honey production from 50 to 300 hives next year and to eventually expand to 1,000 beehives, which will support two families through the sale of quality honey.

**North American Turf, \$22,967.**

North American Turf Market Expansion: A \$22,967 award provides North American Turf funding to increase its advertising and its printed materials, and to increase its presence at home shows. The company already uses the Internet for advertising, for disseminating product information and for online ordering. North American Turf plans to expand its current market and grow a new market in north-central Kansas and Colorado.

**Brenda's Berries, \$15,850.**

Diversifying from Agronomic Crops into Fruit Crops: A \$15,850 award provides Brenda's Berries funding to identify which fruit crops produce best with irrigation, especially with variable summer rainfall. The project will help fund drip irrigation and an air sprayer to apply pesticides with better coverage.

**Smoky Hill Bison Co., \$20,000.**

Expanding Specialty Crop by Meat Sales and Agritourism: A \$20,000 award provides Smoky Hill Bison Co. funding to expand production and to offer a tourism stop in Kansas. The company identified a need for additional freezer space for finished products, a lack of space and equipment to efficiently process orders, and a lack of facilities to conduct tours.

**Gary's Berries, \$20,000.**

Enhancing Marketing Strategies for Gary's Berries: A \$20,000 award provides Gary's Berries funding to expand sales of berries and other specialty crop products. Currently, Gary's Berries operates from tents and open-air markets. These funds will help build an enclosed structure and to expand their product line.

**4 Star Hydroponics, \$18,983.**

Increasing Tomato Production to Meet Kansas Market Demands: A \$18,983 award provides 4 Star Hydroponics funding to pilot greenhouses with Dyna-Glas to increase tomato production. Greenhouses with Dyna-Glas covering receive

one to four hours of additional sunlight, which is expected to increase tomato production by 20 percent and provide lighting for the winter months.

**Kansas State University, \$20,000.**

Post-Harvest Handling and Production Facilities for Horticultural Crop Research and Extension: A \$20,000 award provides the K-State Research and Extension facility in Olathe funding for equipment to evaluate post-harvest handling of horticulture crops. The grant will provide haygrove high tunnels, walk-in coolers and washing facilities. This is a statewide project with a site location in Olathe

**Davenport Orchard and Vineyard, \$25,000.**

Winery Equipment: A \$25,000 award provides Davenport Orchard and Vineyard funding to purchase larger, more efficient wine processing equipment that will be phased in to the current operation. Increasing sales prompted Davenport to seek funding for equipment to keep up with demand.

**RWH Farms Inc. (dba R-W Milling Company), \$25,000.**

Value-Added Marketing of Kansas Alfalfa in Organic Fertilizers: A \$25,000 award provides RWH Farms Inc. funding to move alfalfa into a relatively new, rapidly growing, high-value market for Kansas alfalfa. This company is already developing new products to reach the market in fall 2002.

**Beaver Creek Ranch and Hunting Lodge, \$22,000.**

Direct Marketing Kansas Resources Through Tourism: A \$22,000 award provides Beaver Creek Ranch and Hunting Lodge funding to conduct marketing through hunting and vacation guests.

**KanSoy LLC, \$22,000.**

Soybean Oil Marketing and New Product Plan: A \$22,000 award provides KanSoy LLC funding for marketing and equipment. The business has identified a need to transform the operation into a more sophisticated, professionally marketed, new-product entity. With the funding, KanSoy LLC will be able to develop new products and to more aggressively brand and package current products.

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#### Wiedmann Farm Fresh Meats, \$6,000.

Wiedmann Farm Fresh Meats Diversification: A \$6,000 award provides Wiedmann Farm Fresh Meats funding for equipment and marketing. Wiedmann needs to increase its storage equipment to meet the current demand for its product and to provide for expansion. The company also will explore new marketing avenues for its products.

#### Grassland Farms, \$22,000.

Business Expansion: A \$22,000 award provides Grassland Farms funding for marketing, to purchase equipment necessary to introduce fresh products from homegrown commodities and to include an on-farm retail facility.

#### Wakarusa Valley Farm, \$22,000.

Specialty Mushroom Cultivation: A \$22,000 award provides Wakarusa Valley Farm funding to develop an indoor mushroom operation. Wakarusa Valley has identified an untapped market for fresh local produce in the Topeka, Lawrence and Kansas City areas. Current marketing strategies include a subscription service, farmers' markets, the Community Mercantile and local restaurants.

#### Kansas Christmas Tree Growers Association Inc., \$6,000.

Marketing Kansas Christmas Trees: A \$6,000 award provides the Kansas Christmas Tree Growers Association funding to develop a marketing campaign. To combat an increase in artificial Christmas tree usage, the association would like to target funds for a television advertising campaign. The funds will help defray the cost of that advertising.

#### Kansas Grape Growers & Wine Makers Association, \$5,000.

Promoting Kansas Wineries. The Kansas Grape Growers & Wine Makers Association was awarded \$5,000 to produce a four-fold, full-color brochure to advertise Kansas growing wine industry. The goal of the brochure is to attract visitors to Kansas' wineries, to educate them about the Kansas grape and wine industry, and to promote winery events. Attracting visitors to their operations will increase the visibility of Kansas vineyards and wineries, and increase agritourism opportunities in the state. The brochures will be distributed through travel information centers, farmers' markets, bus tour coordinators, travel publications and tourism operators.

#### Kansas Department of Commerce - Agriculture Products Development Division and Kansas Department of Agriculture, Miscellaneous Promotional Materials, \$6,000.

A small portion of the specialty crop block grant money was used by the departments of agriculture and commerce to develop miscellaneous promotional materials to publicize and promote Kansas agricultural products, especially specialty crops.