

News Release

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Agriculture Announces Grant Program To Boost State's Specialty Crop Industry

Phoenix, AZ – Pursuant to a federal appropriation, Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) Director Sheldon R. Jones today announced a one-time \$738,600 grant program designed for the state's specialty crops industry.

While specialty crops are generally fruits and vegetables, this grant program defines "specialty crop" as any agricultural crop except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts and tobacco. Additionally, under the program's terms, livestock are not considered crops.

"Profitability is one of the keys to keeping Arizona's farmers on the land," Jones said. "This grant program provides a unique opportunity for our state's specialty crops producers to enhance their profitability by creating or expanding their particular markets and their access to research and training."

According to Jones, grants may be used specifically for research, market development or public/industry education. They cannot be used to pay for administrative expenses.

The Specialty Crops Block Grant Program will be administered by ADA's Office of Marketing & Outreach. Applications will be reviewed by an evaluation panel and scored on fixed criteria.

All specialty crops producers and/or their commodity organization are welcome to apply.

Grant manuals and applications are available on the Arizona Department of Agriculture's web page at www.agriculture.state.az.us or by calling the Office of Marketing & Outreach at (602) 542-0978.

The mission of the Arizona Department of Agriculture is to regulate and support Arizona agriculture in a manner that encourages farming, ranching and agribusiness while protecting consumers and natural resources.

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