

## The Honorable John Etchepare

Director

Wyoming Department of Agriculture

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Base Grant: \$500,000

Specialty Crop Grant: \$70,000

Total Grant: \$570,000



BUSINESS COUNCIL  
AGRIBUSINESS DIVISION

### Specialty Turf Seed/Sod Project:

K & M Sod Farms, Pine Bluffs, WY, \$33,515.

The acreage planted has done very well. In June, Pawnee Butte Seed Co. put in test plots to determine which seeds worked best for the area. Several varieties are thriving. In early August, the remaining 7 acres were planted and are doing well. They are working with Mr. Randall and his Horticulture students regarding the soil and vegetation testers. They feel that they have a good marketable product, especially with the weather conditions this summer. Through their advertising efforts, customers have been asking when the product will be available. The estimated project completion date is April 2004.

### Lamb, Pelt & Wool Promotion Program:

Mountain States Lamb Co-op, Casper, WY, \$96,500.

MSLC, the Wyoming Wool Growers Association and the University of Wyoming, initiated a ram sire evaluation and test at the University of Wyoming. The rams that were tested performed above expectation. Several rams exceeded industry standards in terms of Average Daily Gain and Loin Eye Area. The University of Wyoming was extremely pleased with the participation and has agreed to conduct the test in 2003. The second phase of this portion of the grant program will involve a sire evaluation/progeny-testing program. A unique aspect of this portion of the project will be the testing of the Optibrand® retinal imaging technology. This technology will be able to identify a lamb without the use of other identification techniques (ear tags, brands, etc). The estimated project completion date is Spring 2003.

### Nutritional Human Food Supplement:

Niobrara Natural, LLC, Lusk, WY, \$64,609.

Scott Boerman is assisting in finding an internationally based food processor that would be interested in Niobrara Natural's product. They have applied for patents in Canada, Europe and Japan and are expecting them to be awarded at any time. The estimated project completion date is March 2003.

### Beef Quality Assurance Program:

University of Wyoming Department of Animal Science, Laramie, WY, \$36,690.

In August, the website was finished and online for an initial test. The website is unique in that it interacts with an access database to generate cattle and buyer listings. The finished website was presented to the Wyoming Beef Council, the WBCIA leadership committee, the Wyoming Beef/BQA cattle listing service, and the North Central Region BQA coordinators (Montana, North and South Dakota, and Nebraska). To further promote the website, newspaper press releases (picked up by the Associated Press) and a radio interview were distributed. Letters explaining the website and registration forms were mailed to all BQA certified producers in Wyoming. Letters and brochures were mailed to all of the Nebraska feedlots participating in the Nebraska Corn-Fed Beef program. (This program only accepts BQA-certified cattle). The estimated project completion date is May 2005.

### Osha Herb Project:

Elk Mountain Herbs, Laramie, WY, \$23,500.

This project focused on the increasing demand for high quality plants used in the manufacturing of herbal products. While Elk Mountain Herbs specializes in medicinal tinctures (liquid extracts) from Wyoming plants, the majority of the plants consumed in this health conscious market are in pill and capsule form. To become more competitive, EMH, Inc. expanded its product line to include processing the dried plant materials into capsule form. The grant allowed them to purchase the necessary equipment and infrastructure to dry, mill and encapsulate the herbs. It also helped them increase their marketing efforts with an improved logo and promotional materials. The grant also helped them to be more competitive in their ability to provide products with UPC information printed on the labels. They are in the process of finishing their final report, which will be available by October 31, 2002.

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**Garlic Farm:**

Wyoming Gourmet Garlic Growers Association, Powell, WY, \$36,800.

The first crop of garlic has been harvested and is now in curing and processing. They will replant in early fall. An Association logo and label have been developed. They have received good press coverage, which has increased interest with prospective growers. Marketing trips to Oregon have been made. Trips to learn growing techniques in Canada and southern Washington are planned. Their website has been updated. They are in the process of developing packaging for shipping and have utilized the services of MAMTC Field Engineer, Andy Rose. The estimated project completion date is April 2003.

**Value-added Marketing and Education Project:**

Wyoming Stock Grower, Cheyenne, WY, \$42,000.

Phase One of the project has been completed. The final written report will be at the printers no later than September 30. A total of 12 producer meetings have been scheduled across the state from November 4 through November 13. The estimated project completion date is February 2003.

**Sugar Factory Upgrade:**

Wyoming Sugar, Worland, WY, \$64,801.

The initial project had to be changed due to the drought. The new project that was approved was for the upgrade of the evaporators at the sugar factory. The project was successfully completed in August of this year.

**Grape Vineyard:**

Zimmerer Livestock, Huntley, WY, \$25,000.

In early May, 1700 vines were planted. Overall, the newly planted vines were a success. The combination of drought and extreme July heat did reduce the vines expected growth. Some beginning wine equipment has been purchased. The first batch of wine was made the summer. They are trying to purchase a used crusher and press filter from a nearby winery. This could amount to a substantial savings. The estimated project completion date is August 2004.

**Winter Produce Project:**

Crow Creek Farms, Fairview, WY, \$3,585.

The green houses have been erected. The first salad greens and lettuce crops have been planted. The hot, dry weather and an infestation of grasshoppers ruined the entire August and September crop of field greens. Planting and harvesting were delayed until the first frost killed off the majority of the grasshoppers. Planting will continue (every 3 to 4 days) and they will begin to harvest and market crops beginning in October. The estimated project completion date is April 2003.

**Genetic Spider Silk/Alfalfa Project:**

WyoBioGen, Laramie, WY, \$40,000.

They are working to develop and modify a working vector that will increase the expression of spider silk from the alfalfa plants. They have hired a full-time PhD to work on the project and have a part-time MS student assisting. They expect the gene construction to be completed by mid October and that the plants will be transformed within 30 days of that. They have subcontracted with the University of Wyoming for gene construction. The estimated project completion date is June 2004.