



# South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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## Agriculture Entrepreneurs Awarded \$125K in Project Funding

COLUMBIA – Seven agricultural innovators will receive money for their businesses from the South Carolina Department of Agriculture’s Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship ([ACRE](#)).

Entrepreneurs pitched their businesses to a panel of judges who selected seven to share \$125,000 in funding based on their business plans, presentations and demonstrated history of business success.

1. Kara and Matthew Rutter of [Project Victory Gardens](#) in Aiken County will expand their agritherapy and agricultural education program for military veterans, including building a teaching kitchen.
2. Ben Crawford and Rebecca Goldberg of [Woodland Valley Mushrooms](#) in Aiken County plan to expand their Aiken-area gourmet mushroom operation.
3. The brother-sister team behind [Twin Creeks Lavender](#) in Anderson County will build a drying and production barn to ensure expanded crop production at their Williamston lavender farm.
4. York County’s [Nance Farm Creamery](#), operated by a 12<sup>th</sup> generation farm family, was awarded funding to help market its dairy products locally.
5. Alicia Holbrook intends to expand remote educational offerings at her alpaca farm [Carolina Pride Pastures](#) in Newberry County.
6. Orangeburg County’s [Lowcountry Creamery](#), a value-added dairy operation located in Bowman, was awarded funding to provide their milk and yogurt direct to consumers.
7. Kristen Beigay of Pickens County worm farm [Earthen Organics](#) intends to purchase new equipment to expand her family’s organic worm castings business.

SCDA founded ACRE in 2018 to help identify and nurture new ideas and businesses in the Palmetto State’s agribusiness sector. In addition to the Advanced Entrepreneurship track whose 2020 awardees are announced here, ACRE offers a curriculum program each fall to train and mentor beginning agricultural entrepreneurs.

“The future of South Carolina agriculture depends on innovation – we must grow and develop to survive,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “I hope these seven entrepreneurs inspire continued development and innovation across South Carolina agribusiness.”

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