



South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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SCDA Now Accepting Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications

COLUMBIA – Projects that can strengthen South Carolina’s specialty crop industry could be eligible for funding in 2021.

The USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is committed to enhancing the market for specialty crops, which are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture (including honey), and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Applications for the program are available at scspecialtycropblockgrant.com and are due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, March 19, 2021. Applications must be submitted by email to bdorton@scda.sc.gov.

Funds and guidelines are provided by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) administering the program for the state.

Applicants should propose projects that provide one or more of the following benefits:

- Enhanced food safety
- Improved capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, Investment in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes
- Development of new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops
- Enhanced pest and disease control
- Increased child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops
- Increased efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems
- Enhanced sustainability

Previous Specialty Crop Block Grants have supported the development of a weed identification website, educated consumers about the health benefits of peaches, and helped evaluate and promote cold-hardy citrus for South Carolina, among many other projects.

An informational session with Q&A will be offered via Zoom on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 10 a.m. The link for the meeting can be found at scspecialtycropblockgrant.com.

For more information, contact Betsy Dorton at 803-734-2210 or bdorton@scda.sc.gov.

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