

Alaska’s 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program



Fiscal year 2018 Request for Proposals

Alaska’s Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds for the purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of Alaska’s specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, horticulture and nursery crops. These funds are awarded through a competitive review process guided by industry, nonprofit and government stakeholders.

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Timeline

The Alaska Division of Agriculture announces the availability of grant funds for the sole purpose of enhancing Alaska Grown specialty crops.

The timeline for this application cycle is:

January 19 th , 2018: Conference Call 10:00am – 11:00am January 22 nd , 2018: Conference Call 2:00pm – 3:00pm 1-800-315-6338 access code 7613870#
February 9 th , 2018: Letter of Intent (LOI) due by 5:00pm
February 28 th , 2018: LOI feedback returned to applicants
March 30 th , 2018: Full applications due by 5:00pm
April 16 th , 2018: Final decisions made
May 2 nd , 2018: State plan submitted to USDA (some adjustments to projects may be required by AMS at this point)
Fall, 2018: Funds disbursed from USDA (exact date TBA)

Contact

Johanna Herron

Office: (907) 761-3870

Email: johanna.herron@alaska.gov

Lyssa Frohling

Office: (907) 761-3853

Email: lyssa.frohling@alaska.gov

1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12

Palmer, AK 99645

Fax: (907) 745-7112

LOI and Applications are to be submitted to dnr.ag.grants@alaska.gov

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Funding Source and Available Funds

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) distributes block grant funds annually, which are administered by State departments/divisions of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. AMS has announced 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funding availability, and the Division intends to grant multiple projects.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, and nursery crops (including floriculture and turf production). The USDA maintains a list of eligible specialty crops on its website: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp. AMS encourages projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, sustain the livelihoods of American farmers, and strengthen local economies.

Projects that demonstrate innovative partnerships are encouraged. Applications that build on a previously funded SCBGP project may be submitted; in such cases, the application should clearly indicate how the project complements previous work. Applications for grant funds should show how the project impacts multiple businesses in the specialty crop supply chain and/or produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry, rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Alaska SCBGP funds will be distributed to the specialty crop industry through a competitive review process. Grants must follow USDA guidelines for eligible spending. Guidelines are available at: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp and are briefly covered in Appendix A.

Funding is contingent upon passage of a Farm Bill and available funding from the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS).

New for SCBGP 2018

Organization

The classifications of Tier I and Tier II have been removed.

Matching Funds

The matching funds recommendation has been removed.

Project Organization

For 2018, project proposals will be funded with an award up to \$60,000. We recommend the following kinds of funding requests: smaller awards designed for investigative projects, and more substantial awards for projects designed from evidence-based research or building on previous projects with strong industry support.

Budget Guidance

Investigative projects are expected to be entry level in concept, such as feasibility studies or small variety trial plots. Such projects that are completed successfully and considered to be in good standing with the granting agency will be considered competitive applications for future projects that expand upon the initial concept. We recommend that they be close to one year in duration – noting that funding typically arrives in October. Therefore, if the project can commence during the winter months, a contract could be in place from November 2018 – October 2019. If the project is set to start during the growing season, a contract could be in place from May 2019 – April 2020. Please list individual specialty crop producers as well as all organizations that formally support your project and include a letter of support from at least one entity.

Investigative project example:

- *A group of producers submit a proposal to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with growers throughout the State.*

Projects requesting more funds are expected to be professional level in concept, drawing from evidence based research and expertise. Research based projects will likely build upon a previously tested concept and will show strong industry support. They can be for up to two years in duration – noting that funding typically arrives in October. Therefore, if the project can commence during the winter months, a contract could be in place from November 2018 – October 2020. If the project is set to start during the growing season, a contract could be in place from May 2019 – April 2021.

Research-based project example:

- *An organization requests grant funds to help improve and expand new markets which benefit a wide array of specialty crop producers.*

Funding maximum:	\$60,000
Minimum number of producers impacted	10
Maximum duration of project	2 years
Industry Professional Partner	Required, with a letter of support
Letter of Support	At least one letter of support

Examples of Unacceptable Projects

- *A company requests grant funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.*
- *Requests by individual specialty crop businesses or roadside stands to promote their individual business.*

Eligibility

Any entity may apply, but projects must benefit more than one individual, business or organization.

- Proposed project benefits must benefit the specialty crop industry and align with program requirements, including funding restrictions.
- Projects must solely enhance the competitiveness of U.S. or U.S. territory-grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets. Visit <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop> for a list of eligible specialty crops and ineligible commodities.
- Each project must identify at least one expected measurable outcome that specifically demonstrates the project's impact in solely enhancing the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.
- Applications should describe how the project potentially affects and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single business, organization, or individual. AMS will not fund project that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single business, organization, or individual. Single businesses, organizations, or individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.
- If matching funds will serve as a mechanism to ensure all grant funds will solely enhance

the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops, the recipient must keep adequate records to identify and document the specific costs or contributions proposed to meet the match or cost-share and the source of funding or contributions as well as document how the valuation was determined.

- Applicants with previous participation that have incomplete or unsatisfactory performance may be ruled ineligible for participation at the sole discretion of the Division of Agriculture.
- The Division of Agriculture strongly encourages projects proposing innovative partnerships that will develop new knowledge to strengthen specialty crop producers' operations.
- Multi-state projects that address challenges and opportunities that cross state boundaries are eligible.

State Funding Priorities

The Alaska Division of Agriculture, in partnership with statewide specialty crop stakeholders, has identified the following program funding priorities for 2018. **Funding priorities are listed in no particular order of importance and are not ranked.**

- Projects focused on specialty crops or regions of the state not previously funded in prior grant rounds.
- Food safety – including the handling, preparation, transport, storage, or education of specialty crops and reduction of foodborne illness.
- Innovative production projects, including challenges due to climate change or ways to increase production efficiencies.
- Market access and food security.
- Market feasibility studies.
- Research on specific crop production optimization, efficiencies, and viability.

Alaska Division of Agriculture strongly encourages projects proposing **innovative partnerships between researchers and producers** that will develop new knowledge to strengthen specialty crop producers' operations.

LETTER OF INTENT OUTLINE

Your Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted by 5pm Friday, February 9th, 2018. The LOI should be submitted to the Division of Agriculture at dnr.ag.grants@alaska.gov. For questions please contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov; 907-761-3870.

Applicant Information

Applicants will need to provide their Name, Business or Organization, Mailing Address, Phone Number, and Email Address. You will be asked to self-certify that you are in compliance with State regulations and in good standing with the State of Alaska.

Project Information

Provide a concise project summary that addresses the following points:

- Which best describes you, the lead applicant? (Choose only one)
 - Nonprofit
 - University Researcher
 - University Extension Services
 - Producer
 - Producer association or cooperative
 - State agency or department
 - Other _____
- Identify the specialty crop industry need that your project is addressing and which state funding priorities your project will address. State funding priorities can be found on Page 7.
- Select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to your project from the list below.
 - Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (required for marketing projects).
 - Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption.
 - Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access.
 - Outcome 4:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources.
 - Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems.
 - Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety.
 - Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources.
 - Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development.

- Project title, duration, and proposed start date. Start dates must be after funds have been received at the Division, which is typically in October. Duration Maximum: 2 years
- Has this project been funded previously? If so, why is additional funding needed?
- Project Summary and Purpose (maximum 500 words)
 - Provide a brief description of your project including the specific issue, problem, or need your project will address. Include the objectives this project hopes to achieve.

Estimated Project Budget

Provide the estimated budget for this project, including funding from other sources, using the template below.

Estimated Budget Summary	
Expense Category	Funds Requested
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal	
Indirect Costs	
Match dollars	
	Total Budget

Project Support

For all projects, an industry professional as a partner on the project is required. Please include contact information for this person, as well as a letter of recommendation for the project. In addition to the industry professional component explained above, it is expected that projects will also have the support of other industry organizations, groups of farmers, and individual specialty crop producers. Please list all partner organizations that are formally participating with you on this project. If you are the only formally participating organization, please make that clear. Please list individual specialty crop producers as well as all organizations that formally support your project and include a letter of support from at least one entity.

Review Process

All potential applicants are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) to the Division by 5pm on February 9th, 2018. Please read the scoring criteria below to ensure that your LOI addresses the areas that will be evaluated by the review committee. Projects will be reviewed and ranked based on the information provided in the LOI. The Division will select which projects will submit a full application. Applicants who have previously participated in the SCBGP and have an incomplete or unsatisfactory performance record may be ruled ineligible for participation at the sole discretion of the Division of Agriculture.

SCORING CRITERIA FOR LETTER OF INTENT

Total Points available: 100 points

Proposal Summary: 20 points

The Letter of Intent is complete and thorough, addressing all format criteria. The project proposal is clear, the need is demonstrated, and the methodology stated.

Industry Need/Project Impact: 25 points

The proposed project responds to a specialty crop industry need and demonstrates the ability to impact that need. The project includes a strong monitoring and evaluation plan and explains clearly how outcomes will be measured. USDA Outcome Indicators are selected and clearly relate to project proposal. Expected project impacts are realistic and clearly stated.

Budget: 20 points

Budget aligns well with project, with no abnormal outlying costs. Work plan and budget are realistic. Please review eligible cost section (Appendix A, page 26).

Project Support: 30 points

The proposed project demonstrates that there is broad industry support for the project. Letters of support and/or formal commitments from all project partners are included. Applicant has sufficient organizational support to see project to completion.

Past Project Performance: 5 points

If applicant has never been funded they will automatically receive 5 points. Return applicants will be scored based on previous project management and reporting performance.

FOR EXAMPLE:

The ABC University will mitigate the spread of citrus greening (Huanglongbing) by developing scientifically-based practical measures to implement in a quarantine area and disseminating results to stakeholders through grower meetings and field days.

PROJECT PURPOSE

PROVIDE THE SPECIFIC ISSUE, PROBLEM OR NEED THAT THE PROJECT WILL ADDRESS

PROVIDE A LISTING OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT THIS PROJECT HOPES TO ACHIEVE

Add more objectives by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete objectives that aren't necessary.

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

Objective 4

Add other objectives as necessary

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Estimate the number of project beneficiaries:.....Enter the Number of Beneficiaries

Does this project directly benefit socially disadvantaged farmers as defined in the RFA?

Yes No

Does this project directly benefit beginning farmers as defined in the RFA? Yes No

STATEMENT OF SOLELY ENHANCING SPECIALTY CROPS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that this project **solely** enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops in accordance with and defined by [7 U.S.C.](#)

[1621](#). Further information regarding the definition of a specialty crop can be found at www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp.

CONTINUATION PROJECT INFORMATION

If your project is continuing the efforts of a previously funded SCBGP project, address the following:

DESCRIBE HOW THIS PROJECT WILL DIFFER FROM AND BUILD ON THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS

PROVIDE A SUMMARY (3 TO 5 SENTENCES) OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE PREVIOUS EFFORTS

PROVIDE LESSONS LEARNED ON POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

What was previously learned from implementing this project, including potential improvements?

How are the lessons learned and improvements being incorporated into the project to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting goals and outcomes?

DESCRIBE THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE PROJECT BECOMING SELF-SUSTAINING AND NOT INDEFINITELY DEPENDENT ON GRANT FUNDS

OTHER SUPPORT FROM FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

The SCBGP will not fund duplicative projects. Did you submit this project to a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP for funding and/or is a Federal or State grant program other than the SCBGP funding the project currently?

Yes

No

IF YOUR PROJECT IS RECEIVING OR WILL POTENTIALLY RECEIVE FUNDS FROM ANOTHER FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAM

Identify the Federal or State grant program(s).

-

Describe how the SCBGP project differs from or supplements the other grant program(s) efforts.

EXTERNAL PROJECT SUPPORT

Describe the specialty crop stakeholders who support this project and why (other than the applicant and organizations involved in the project).

EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

You must choose at least one of the eight outcomes listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#), which were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the performance of the SCBGP on a national level.

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

Select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable for this project from the listing below.

- Outcome 1:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales (required for marketing projects)
- Outcome 2:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption
- Outcome 3:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access
- Outcome 4:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources
- Outcome 5:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
- Outcome 6:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety

- Outcome 7:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of the ecology of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources
- Outcome 8:** Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development

OUTCOME INDICATOR(S)

Provide at least one indicator listed in the [SCBGP Performance Measures](#) and the related quantifiable result. If you have multiple outcomes and/or indicators, repeat this for each outcome/indicator.

PLEASE REFER TO [APPENDIX B](#) FOR INDICATOR LISTS THAT MATCH THE ABOVE OUTCOMES.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Outcome 2, Indicator 1.a.

Of the 150 total number of children and youth reached, 132 will gain knowledge about eating more specialty

MISCELLANEOUS OUTCOME MEASURE

In the unlikely event that the outcomes and indicators above the selected outcomes are not relevant to your project, you must develop a project-specific outcome(s) and indicator(s) which will be subject to approval by AMS.

This option is only to be used if there is truly an outlier that cannot fit into the outcomes and indicators as found in the ones provided.

DATA COLLECTION TO REPORT ON OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

Explain how you will collect the required data to report on the outcome and indicator in the space below.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

All expenses described in this Budget Narrative must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the SCBGP. If any matching funds will be used and a description of their use is required by the State department of agriculture, the expenses to be covered with matching funds must be described separately. Applicants should review the Request for Applications section 4.6 Funding Restrictions prior to developing their budget narrative.

Budget Summary	
Expense Category	Funds Requested
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal	
Indirect Costs	

Total Budget	
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PERSONNEL

List the organization’s employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities that solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. See the Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Salaries and Wages, and Presenting Direct and Indirect Costs Consistently under section 4.6.1 for further guidance.

#	Name/Title	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Personnel Subtotal	
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PERSONNEL JUSTIFICATION

For each individual listed in the above table, describe the activities to be completed by name/title including approximately when activities will occur. Add more personnel by copying and pasting the existing listing or deleting personnel that aren’t necessary.

Personnel 1:

Personnel 2:
Add other Personnel as necessary

FRINGE BENEFITS

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with SCBGP funds.

#	Name/Title	Fringe Benefit Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Fringe Subtotal	
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TRAVEL

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>. See the Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Travel, and Foreign Travel for further guidance.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
7							

Travel Subtotal	
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TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION

For each trip listed in the above table describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 2 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 3 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Add other Trips as necessary

CONFORMING WITH YOUR TRAVEL POLICY

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#) as applicable.

EQUIPMENT

Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. "Special purpose equipment" is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. See the Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - Special Purpose for further guidance

Rental of "general purpose equipment" must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Equipment - General Purpose for definition, and Rental or Lease Costs of Buildings, Vehicles, Land and Equipment.

#	Item Description	Rental or Purchase	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				

Equipment Subtotal	
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EQUIPMENT JUSTIFICATION

For each Equipment item listed in the above table describe how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Add more equipment by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete equipment that isn't necessary.

Equipment 1:

Equipment 2:

Equipment 3:

Add other Equipment as necessary

SUPPLIES

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal and solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Supplies and Materials, Including Costs of Computing Devices for further information.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

Supplies Subtotal	
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SUPPLIES JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT

Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant, each must be described separately. (Repeat this section for each contract/consultant.)

ITEMIZED CONTRACTOR(S)/CONSULTANT(S)

Provide an itemized budget (personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, other, etc.) with appropriate justification. If indirect costs are/will be included in the contract, include the indirect cost rate used. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants.

#	Name/Organization	Hourly Rate/Flat Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			

Contractual/Consultant Subtotal	
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CONTRACTUAL JUSTIFICATION

Describe the project activities each contractor or consultant will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area (for more information please go to <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2016/general-schedule/>), provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Contractual and Consultant Costs for acceptable justifications.

Contractor/Consultant 1:

Contractor/Consultant 2:

Contractor/Consultant 3:

Add other Contractors/Consultants as necessary

CONFORMING WITH YOUR PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through.326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

OTHER

Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

If you budget meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs. See Request for Applications section 4.6.2 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities, Meals for further guidance.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested

Other Subtotal	
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OTHER JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each item listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

INDIRECT COSTS

The indirect cost rate must not exceed 5 percent of any project’s budget. Indirect costs are any costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives that therefore, cannot be readily identified with an individual project, program, or organizational activity. They generally include facilities operation and maintenance costs, depreciation, and administrative expenses. See Request for Applications section 4.6.1 Limit on Administrative Costs and Presenting Direct and Indirect Costs Consistently for further guidance.

Indirect Cost Rate	Funds Requested

Indirect Subtotal	
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PROGRAM INCOME

Program income is gross income—earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant—directly generated by the grant-supported activity, or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.

Source/Nature of Program Income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income into the project to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops	Estimated Income

Program Income Total	
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Work Plan

Project Activity	Who will do the work?	When will the activity be accomplished?
Describe the project activities that are necessary to accomplish the objectives. Make sure you include your performance monitoring/data collection activities.	Indicate the project participants who will do the work of each activity, including sub-recipients, and or contractors. If you request grant funds for personnel and contractors, you must include them in the work plan to demonstrate the requested funding is warranted. If you request funds for travel, these activities must also be included.	Include a timeline that indicates when each activity will occur (at least month and year) and beginning and end dates for the project. Make sure the work plan timeline shows that the project will be completed within the allowable grant period.

SAMPLE WORK PLAN

Month	Responsible Authority Affiliation and title	Activities Performed
October – December 2018	Dr. Joe UAF, Professor	Collect and analyze fall-harvested root samples for protein content
April – June 2019	Dr. Joe UAF, Professor	Collect & analyze spring-harvested root samples for protein content
July 2019 – March 2020	Dr. Joe UAF, Professor Intern UAF, graduate student	Analyze results; prepare for 2016 harvest, share information to ARP members
May – September 2020	Dr. Joe UAF, Professor Intern UAF, graduate student	Prepare and publish final results

APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Total Points Available: 100

Application: 5 points

The application is complete and thorough, addressing all format criteria.

Project Purpose: 20 points

The proposed project responds to a specialty crop industry need and demonstrates the ability to impact that need.

External Project Support: 20 points

The proposed project demonstrates that there is broad industry support for the project. Letters of support and/or formal commitments from all project partners are included. Applicant has sufficient organizational support to forward the project.

Impact and Outcomes/Evaluation: 20 points

The proposed project demonstrates that it will increase the competitiveness of specialty crop producers, and will impact a significant number of beneficiaries. The project includes a strong outreach/information dissemination component to ensure a broad impact. Outcome measures are thoughtfully developed and realistic. The project includes a strong monitoring and evaluation plan and explains clearly how outcomes will be measured.

Budget: 20 points

Budget aligns well with project, with no abnormal or outlying costs.

Work Plan: 10 points

Work plan clearly identifies activities, the personnel that will work on them, and when each activity will be completed.

Past Project Performance: 5 points

If applicant has never been funded they will automatically receive 5 points. Return applicants will be scored based on previous project management and reporting performance.

Grant Award Agreement and Payment

Prior to beginning work on the proposed project or receiving funding, successful applicants will be required to sign a Grant Award Agreement (Agreement) with the Division indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks and authorizing the Division to monitor the progress of the proposed project. In addition to obtaining a DUNS¹ number (required prior to application submission), successful applicants will be required to register with the federally run System for Award Management, sam.gov. As a potential sub recipient of federal money, you must have an active and clear profile that matches your DUNS number and provide this information with your application. Registration is free.

Agreements must be signed and returned to the Division within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the Agreement within 30 days of receipt will result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the grantee. Grantees may submit an invoice for 40% of the total grant amount with their signed Agreement. An invoice for an additional 40% of the total grant amount may be submitted with the first report. The remaining 20% of grant funds will be retained until receipt of the complete final report.

Reporting Requirements

The Division reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted in any report to the Division will be a public record.

Annual Reports: For Tier I projects, a performance report is required six months after the date of the signed grant agreement. For Tier II projects, a performance report is required after the first year of the project. Reports must detail the project status and how grant monies were used to achieve project outcomes outlined in the project proposal submitted with the grant application packet. Reports must also include a detailed financial report that tracks all expenditures against the project budget submitted with the grant proposal.

The annual performance report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

- **Activities Performed:** Briefly summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance outcomes achieved during the reporting period for each project. Include favorable or unusual

¹ Obtaining a DUNS number: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

developments. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcomes by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets. If targets have already been achieved, amend the outcome measure to go beyond what was originally proposed. Identify the amended measurable outcome in the performance report.

- **Problems and Delays:** Note unexpected delays or impediments for each project. Make sure to review measurable outcomes to determine if targets are realistic and attainable. An objective that is too stringent should be scaled back and identified in the performance report. Keep in mind that targets may slip due to all kinds of factors, such as employee turn-over and bad weather. Include revised work plan timelines.
- **Future Project Plans:** Summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals to be achieved during the next reporting period for each project. Describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Describe any changes that are anticipated in the project.
- **Funding Expended To Date:** Provide information regarding the level of grant funds expended to date. In the event that a project gained income as a result of planned activities, provide the amount of this supplemental funding and how it will be reinvested into the project.

Final Reports - A **final performance report** will be required within 30 days following the end date of the grant agreement. The final report will be posted on the USDA-AMS web site and represents an important vehicle for sharing project findings with Federal and State agencies and the public.

The final report should be organized under, but not limited to, the following headings for each project:

- **Project Summary:** An outline of the issue, problem, interest, or need for each project.
- **Project Approach:** How the issue or problem was approached via the project.
- **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:** How the performance goals and measurable outcomes were achieved for each project(s). If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement. It is encouraged to clearly convey progress toward achieving outcome measures by graphing baseline data and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.
- **Beneficiaries:** Provide a description and quantitative data for the number of people or operations that have benefited from the project's accomplishments, and/or the potential economic impact of each project. Include information about your public presentation and

the number of specialty crop producers in the audience.

- **Lessons Learned:** Lessons learned, results, conclusions, for each project. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.
- **Contact Person:** Contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.
- **Additional Information:** We encourage submission of any supplemental publications, web sites, photographs, etc.
- **Budget Summary:** In addition to the final project report, the Division reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.
- **Reporting Compliance** – Applicants who do not submit the semi-annual reports or who submit reports that do not meet all of the above reporting requirements will be required to return all previously disbursed funds to the Division.
- **Budget Adjustments** - If a material change (10% or greater) in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request may be made to the Division to reallocate budget funds between budget categories. However, the total budget amount as dictated by the approved grant award cannot be adjusted.

APPENDIX A

ALLOWABLE COSTS AND FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Failure to mention a particular item of cost in these sections is not intended to imply that it is unallowable. See subpart E-Cost Principles of [2 CFR Part 200](#) for further guidance on cost principles.

Meals:

When paying for the travel of a person to attend a conference, meals and lodging may be included in the cost without additional justification. Meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost. Meals may be charged to the project if such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. Include a justification for meal costs. Some examples of acceptable reasons are that the conference facility is located in a remote area where public facilities are not accessible; there will be a speaker and business discussions during the meal;

there is insufficient time available to allow participants to go out on their own. If one or more of these justifications cannot be met, or if there are no other acceptable and compelling reasons, then the meals should not be charged to the award. The attendees should be responsible for providing their own meals. Breakfasts for conference attendees are usually considered unallowable as it is expected these individuals will have sufficient time to obtain this meal on their own before the conference begins in the morning.

Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

Compensation for Personnel Services: salaries, wages and fringe benefits for specialty crop specific events only.

Consultant Services or Subcontractors

- Advertising and public relations costs that solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops.
- Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees.
- Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill.

Contractual hourly rates should not exceed \$76.04 (the salary of a GS-15² step 10 Federal employee in Alaska), unless one of the following justifications is provided. This does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs or other expenses.

Materials and Supplies: Costs incurred for materials, supplies, and fabricated parts necessary to carry out the grant project. Purchased materials and supplies shall be charged at their actual prices, net of applicable credits. Withdrawals from general stores or stockrooms should be charged at their actual net cost under any recognized method of pricing inventory withdrawals, consistently applied. Incoming transportation charges are a proper part of materials and supplies costs.

Equipment and other Capital Expenditures: lease/rental or depreciation costs

- Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of \$5000 or more have the prior approval of AMS. "Special purpose equipment" means equipment which is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Examples of special purpose equipment include microscopes, harvesters, and produce coolers.

² State of Alaska Salary Table: https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2016/AK_h.pdf

- Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs with prior approval and in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015. To the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: rental costs of comparable property, if any; market conditions in the area; alternatives available; and the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased.

Other Miscellaneous Costs: i.e. telephone, meetings, publications, etc.

- Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like.
- Costs of meetings and conferences with the primary purpose of dissemination of technical information. This includes costs of rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences with the exception of entertainment costs as described under unallowable costs.
- Publication costs include the costs of printing (including the processes of composition, platemaking, press work, binding, and the end products produced by such processes), distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling. Page charges for professional journal publications are allowable as a necessary part of research costs where: (1) The research papers report work supported by the Federal Government; and (2) The charges are levied impartially on all research papers published by the journal, whether or not by federally-sponsored authors.
- The cost of training provided for employee development or agricultural producers.

Ineligible expenses include:

Capital Expenditures for General Purpose Equipment, Buildings and Land

- Capital expenditures means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.
- "General purpose equipment" means equipment, which is not limited to research, medical, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
- Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the

capitalization level established by the governmental unit for financial statement purposes, or \$5000.

Bad debts

- Paying off existing debt, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs.

Lobbying, political and other governmental activities

- Development or participation in lobbying activities including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are not allowed.
- Development or participation in political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7324-7326) is not allowed.

Entertainment and alcohol

- Alcoholic beverages
- Amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are not allowed.
- Meals as an entertainment expense

Other ineligible expenses:

- Donated or volunteer services may be furnished to a governmental unit by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor. The value of these services is not reimbursable either as a direct or indirect cost.
- Contributions or donations, including cash, property, and services, made by the governmental unit, regardless of the recipient.
- Fines, penalties, damages, and other settlements resulting from violations (or alleged violations) of, or failure of the governmental unit to comply with, Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations.
- Organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used.
- Costs of investment counsel and staff and similar expenses incurred to enhance income from investments.
- Tuition.

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Background

The Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make grants to be used by State departments of agriculture solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). All 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible to participate. Specialty crops are becoming an increasingly important commodity area within the United States agricultural arena. This is especially true since there is an increasing demand by the public for year-round, healthy, nutritious and sustainable food. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). The Agricultural Marketing Service administers the SCBGP.

The 2014 Farm Bill, Section 10010, extended the SCBGP and authorized Commodity Credit Corporation funding at the following levels: \$72.5 million for 2014 through 2017 and \$85 million for 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter. Each State department of agriculture is eligible to receive an estimated base grant and an additional amount based on the average of the most recent available value and acreage of specialty crop production for that State. Awards are made for a grant period of up to three years in length.

State departments of agriculture are encouraged by AMS to conduct outreach to specialty crop stakeholders, including socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers, to disseminate information about the program and identify funding priorities. AMS also encourages State departments of agriculture to develop their State Plans through a competitive review process to ensure maximum public input and benefit.

AMS provides guidance and assistance to States in developing and submitting State Plans, meeting the administrative, reporting, and audit requirements involved in managing a funded project, and participates in workshops, conferences, and other forums to facilitate interaction among States, USDA representatives, and industry organizations. AMS also performs site visits with State departments of agriculture to assess program performance and provide technical assistance. The site visits identify effective practices, initiate corrective actions, and improve public accountability.

FISCAL YEAR 2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

AMS is required to report on the outcomes of the SCBGP at a national scale to demonstrate the performance of this program. By collecting, aggregating, and reporting performance data across all states and territories, AMS can share the impact of the SCBGP with all stakeholders, including the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congress, the agricultural community, and the general public.

- Each project submitted in the State Plan must include at least one of the eight outcomes listed below, and at least one of the indicators listed underneath the selected outcome(s). If there are multiple sub-indicators under the selected indicator, select at least one.
- If the indicator(s) below the selected outcome(s) are not relevant to a project, a project-specific indicator(s) may be developed which will be subject to approval by AMS.
- The progress of each indicator must be reported in the Annual Performance Report and the result in the Final Performance Report.
- AMS will aggregate the data collected to assess the overall impact of the program and report to OMB and Congress on these national outcome measures.
- AMS will review the quality of the information we receive in subsequent performance reports and modify the outcomes and indicators as needed over time to lead to better results in showing the impact of the SCBGP.

Outcome 1: To enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased sales

THIS IS MANDATORY FOR ALL MARKETING AND PROMOTION PROJECTS.

OUTCOME DEFINITION:

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion projects focus efforts to sell, advertise, promote, market, and generate publicity, attract new customers, or raise customer awareness for specialty crops or a specialty crop venue. These include, but are not limited to:

- Uses of social media to market and promote;
- Specialty crop local, regional and national campaigns;
- Specialty crop only tradeshow;
- Website promotion and development;
- Use/development of billboards, radio, television, magazine and email ads, marketing materials such as direct mail, brochures;
- Agritourism;
- Export market development;
- Retail promotions including point-of-purchase items, labels, packaging etc.;
- Farmers market promotions; and
- Marketing and promotion campaigns with an education component directed to consumers.

The specific measure must be expressed as a dollar value and percentage increase in sales of one or more specialty crops in one or more States or foreign markets as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities. For example, an expected outcome of growth in sales from 5% to 10% is not acceptable by itself, but in combination with an increase in sales of \$1 million to \$2 million it is acceptable. This requirement means that an established baseline of sales in dollars must should already exist at the time of application. For projects that do not already have a baseline of sales in dollars, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine such a baseline in order to meet the requirement to document the value of sales increases by the end of the project.

Indicator: Sales increased from \$_____ to \$_____ and by _____ percent, as result of marketing and/or promotion activities

AMS understands that sales can be impacted by a host of unrelated issues including trade disputes, phytosanitary issues, export conditions, weather, and other factors affecting the farmer, supply chain, retailers, wholesalers and/or consumers. The above factors demonstrate that even a perfectly executed marketing campaign can result in sales remaining constant or even declining. These factors and events that either positively or negatively impacted the sales of a project can be explained in the performance report.

Outcome 2: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased consumption

Indicators:

1. Of the _____ total number of children and youth reached,
 - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
 - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
 - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
2. Of the _____ total number of adults reached,
 - a. The number that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops
 - b. The number that reported an intention to eat more specialty crops
 - c. The number that reported eating more specialty crops
3. Number of new and improved technologies and processes to enhance the nutritional value and consumer acceptance of specialty crops (excluding patents) _____
4. Number of new specialty crops and/or specialty crop products introduced to consumers _____

Outcome 3: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased access and awareness

Indicators:

1. Of the _____ total number of consumers or wholesale buyers reached,
 - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
 - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
 - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/preserved/obtained/prepared
2. Of the _____ total number of individuals (culinary professionals, institutional kitchens, specialty crop entrepreneurs such as kitchen incubators/shared-use kitchens, etc.) reached,
 - a. The number that gained knowledge on how to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
 - b. The number that reported an intention to access/produce/prepare/preserve specialty crops
 - c. The number that reported supplementing their diets with specialty crops that they produced/prepared/preserved/obtained
3. Number of existing delivery systems/access points of those reached that expanded and/or improved offerings of specialty crops
 - a. _____ farmers markets
 - b. _____ produce at corner stores
 - c. _____ school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events,

etc.)

- d. _____grocery stores
- e. _____wholesale markets
- f. _____food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
- g. _____home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
- h. _____lawn and garden centers
- i. _____other systems/access points, not noted
- j. _____total (if not reported above)

4. Number of new delivery systems/access points offering specialty crops

- a. _____farmers markets
- b. _____produce at corner stores
- c. _____school food programs and other food options (vending machines, school events, etc.)
- d. _____grocery stores
- e. _____wholesale markets
- f. _____food hubs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store specialty crops
- g. _____home improvement centers with lawn and garden centers
- h. _____lawn and garden centers
- i. _____other systems/access points, not noted
- j. _____total (if not reported above)

Outcome 4: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through greater capacity of sustainable practices of specialty crop production resulting in increased yield, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and/or conservation of resources.

Indicators:

- 1. Numbers of plant/seed releases (i.e., cultivars, drought-tolerant plants, organic, enhanced nutritional composition, etc.) _____
- 2. Adoption of best practices and technologies resulting in increased yields, reduced inputs, increased efficiency, increased economic return, and conservation of resources (select at least one below).
 - a. Number of growers/producers indicating adoption of recommended practices

 - b. Number of growers/producers reporting reduction in pesticides, fertilizer, water used/acre _____
 - c. Number of producers reporting increased dollar returns per acre or reduced costs per

acre _____

d. Number of acres in conservation tillage or acres in other best management practices

3. Number of habitat acres established and maintained for the mutual benefit of pollinators and specialty crops _____

Outcome 5: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems

Indicators:

1. Number of new or improved innovation models (biological, economic, business, management, etc.), technologies, networks, products, processes, etc. developed for specialty crop entities including producers, processors, distributors, etc. _____
2. Number of innovations adopted _____
3. Number of specialty crop growers/producers (and other members of the specialty crop supply chain) that have increased revenue expressed in dollars _____
4. Number of new diagnostic systems analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases.

[Diagnostic systems refer to, among other things: labs, networks, procedures, access points.]

5. Number of new diagnostic technologies available for detecting plant pests and diseases. _____

[The intent here is not to count individual pieces of equipment or devices, but to enumerate technologies that add to the diagnostic capacity.]

6. Number of first responders trained in early detection and rapid response to combat plant pests and diseases _____

7. Number of viable technologies/processes developed or modified that will increase specialty crop distribution and/or production _____

8. Number of growers/producers that gained knowledge about science-based tools through outreach and education programs _____

Outcome 6: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increasing the number of viable technologies to improve food safety

Indicators:

1. Number of viable technologies developed or modified for the detection and

- characterization of specialty crop supply contamination from foodborne threats _____
2. Number of viable prevention, control and intervention strategies for all specialty crop production scales for foodborne threats along the production continuum _____
 3. Number of individuals who learn about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices and number of those individuals who increase their food safety skills and knowledge _____
 4. Number of improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention technologies _____
 5. Number of reported changes in prevention, detection, control, and intervention strategies _____

Outcome 7: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through increased understanding of threats to food safety from microbial and chemical sources

Indicators:

Number of projects focused on:

1. Increased understanding of fecal indicators and pathogens _____
2. Increased safety of all inputs into the specialty crop chain _____
3. Increased understanding of the roles of humans, plants and animals as vectors _____
4. Increased understanding of pre-harvest and postharvest process impacts on microbial and chemical threats _____
5. Number of growers or producers obtaining on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices) _____

Outcome 8: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through enhancing or improving the economy as a result of specialty crop development.

Indicators:

1. Number of new rural careers created _____
2. Number of new urban careers created _____
3. Number of jobs maintained/created _____
4. Number of small businesses maintained/created _____
5. Increased revenue/increased savings/one-time capital purchases (in dollars) _____
6. Number of new beginning farmers who went into specialty crop production _____
7. Number of socially disadvantaged famers who went into specialty crop production _____

Additional information:

- Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment;

new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers.

- Beginning Farmer is an individual or entity that has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 years and substantially participates in the operation.
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer is a farmer who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.