

***Sample* Alaska Agriculture Innovation Grant Proposal**

Peony Planter

Contact Information:

**Patricia O'Neil
1800 Glenn Hwy Ste 12
Palmer, AK 99645**

**Patricia.O'Neil@alaska.gov
907-761-3858**

Project Abstract:

With interest rising in the Peony Industry, I have decided that I too am interested. I recently purchased and cleared three acres of land, with the intent of planting peony. Research indicates that fall is the most suitable time to plant the crowns. In Alaska, we have a very short time period between fall and winter, in which to plant these peony crowns. As a two person operation, we are looking to plant two of those acres this coming year, and plant the third acre in the fall of 2010.

In an effort to make a quick entrance into this industry, we will be planting thousands of crowns with this equipment. This planter will enable us to plant much more quickly than by hand. Currently, there is not a peony planter within Alaska. Considering the beginnings of the industry, we feel this would be an appropriate time to test a planter to see if it is worthwhile to the industry. We feel that it will benefit the industry and others who are seeking to enter the industry or expand production, as they will be able to use the planter also. This equipment will make our entry into the market successful and increase our initial production capacity by several hundred percent!

1. We are requesting funds for a peony crown planter
2. We expect the equipment will increase our production capacity by several hundred percent, by enabling us to plant ten to twenty times the amount of crowns that we would be able to plant otherwise. We will measure the increase by doing test planting by hand with the two-person team we have, and then we will use the planter and compare production. We will plant for three hours by hand, and then use the planter. We will compare the speed of planting with the planter, vs. by hand. We will do this trial for three different days, for consideration of soil, weather, and equipment problems.
 - a. We will not be able to measure actual production increase, as peony requires a few years to establish before harvesting. However, we anticipate an average of ten stems per year per plant, at the time of harvest. We can take the difference of plantings, and apply the ten stems per plant to see the production difference.
 - b. We can also estimate the time it would take to plant two acres of peony, by testing how many peony we plant per hour, and the time that would be available to plant. Consideration would also have to be given to body endurance/ fatigue.
3. The specialty crop that will be impacted is peony, although when the planter is received, it is possible that it could be used for another specialty crop. However, at this time, that it is unknown.
4. This project is innovative, because there is currently not another peony planter within the state of Alaska. While many have planted peony, all have done so by hand. Eventually, this equipment could be used by others looking to enter the industry or expand their own production. As part of the Alaska Peony Growers Association (APGA), I expect that many members would be interested in hearing about this planter and how it works. Additionally, I would be willing to share the planter with other producers in APGA. I chose the peony planter, as an innovative project, because I believe in the peony industry and I am anxious to begin peony production. This equipment will enable us to have a jump start into the industry.

5. The total cost of the equipment is \$12,275.00, excluding shipping and labor. We expect, if we receive this grant, that we will contribute \$7,275.00 for this equipment, while the AAIG will contribute \$5000.00.
6. We live in the south-central area, and I intend to do two things. First, I will have a field day during planting season. After we work with the equipment, perform our test days, we will set up a day for other peony producers (and anyone else who is interested), including staff from the Division of Agriculture, to view how the equipment works. This will be indicative of the time saved by purchasing this equipment, and others will see how they could either enter the industry, or expand their current production.
 - a. I will also take photos and plan on doing a Power Point presentation at a local conference, i.e., the Potato, Vegetable and Fruit Conference.
 - b. I will present my findings in a typed report, detailing the three day planting trial we ran. This will illustrate if the planter was the right choice to make, and if the project was a success. If it is not a success, it would be good for others to know that purchasing this equipment is not a valid business decision. I will detail how the planter works, and the advantages/disadvantages to using the equipment. If successful I will include operating tips within the final report, to be made available to other producers within the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply for this innovative grant. We really appreciate the opportunity to purchase such equipment. We believe this will be an invaluable asset to the industry as a whole, and feel that it will give us successful entry into the peony industry. We hope this will encourage additional interest in the peony industry in Alaska.

	AAIG Funds	Matching Funds
Peony Planter	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,275.00
Total Funds Expended	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 7,275.00
Total Cost of Equipment		\$ 12,275.00

I understand that grant monies cannot be used toward shipping or labor. These numbers do not include either shipping or labor.