AgNews

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Delaware DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
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DDA announces new specialty crop grant program

On July 1, Ed Kee, Delaware Secretary of Agriculture, announced the 2009 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to fund projects that solely enhance the competitiveness of Specialty Crops in Delaware. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program was established in the 2008 Farm Bill.

The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) has established a competitive grant process to award these federal funds in 2009. The Department will be administering funds totaling $225,990 for the development of projects that will benefit existing specialty crop producers. Grants will be issued from $5,000 to $40,000. DDA will fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measureable benefits to Delaware's specialty crop producers.

DDA is seeking applications from producers, non-profit organizations, government entities, for-profit organizations, and universities for projects that aim to promote or enhance the production of, and access to, Delaware specialty crops. Collaboration between these groups will be considered in a positive fashion. Applicants must reside or their business or educational affiliation must be in Delaware. Both the paper copies and the electronic copy of the grant applications must be received by 5:00 P.M. on Monday, August 3, 2009.

Applications for grant funds should show how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. Applicants must be a legal entity and have the legal capacity to contract.

An industry based review team will rank the applications for final decision by the Delaware Secretary of Agriculture.

In the past, the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program has been dedicated to specialty food crops only. This year the U.S. Department of Agriculture has defined specialty crops as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0 for a comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops.

To receive a copy of the grant application or for questions about the grant application, please contact Jo-Ann Walston, DDA Marketing Specialist, at (302)698-4523. The grant application packet will be available on the DDA website www.dda.delaware.gov – under Hot Topics beginning July 7.

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