

**Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Application  
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

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## **Abstract**

Although Kansas is notable for its production of grains and livestock, the specialty crop industry is small, but continues to increase in importance. Targeted assistance made possible by the USDA specialty crop grants will help maximize the opportunities that exist for specialty crops in many areas of our state.

The 2006 Kansas Horticulture Survey, conducted by Kansas Agricultural Statistics, showed that the horticulture industry added more than \$1 billion to the Kansas economy that year. Nurseries and greenhouses contributed \$157 million in sales and expenditures to the economy; florists, \$66.5 million; and arborists, \$61.2 million. Farmer's market sales of horticultural products totaled nearly \$1 million during 2006. Farmers' market total production area used was 359 acres. Farmer's markets had 310 paid and unpaid employees involved in the production and sales.

To enhance the competitiveness of the Kansas specialty crop industries, the Kansas Department of Agriculture requests \$102,197.15 in program funds under the fiscal year 2006 Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

We request funds for seven projects designed to increase production of horticulture crops, increase consumption and consumer awareness of Kansas-grown specialty crops, and strengthen business and marketing skills for direct marketers.

## **Project Summaries**

### *Production/Research*

1. *Ethnic Specialty Crops for Kansas: Crops and Cultivars for Diverse Markets.*

Partners on this project working with immigrant farmers in Kansas City will identify and evaluate specific crops for which there is likely to be market demand. They will target two sets of crops - sweet potato for leafy greens and non-standard root types; and a number of Asian or African vegetables identified as having a good market potential and probable adaptation in Kansas. They will obtain germplasm, conduct cultivar trials both on-station and on-farm, and develop fact sheets for both production and marketing (nutritional information and recipes) for the crops targeted.

2. *Enhance Kansas wine industry by increasing vineyard acreage planted to new and/or emerging varieties.*

To boost state grape and wine industries, this grant will increase current wine grape plantings by 5%, from 200 to 210 acres. Participating growers will be required to plant pre-specified wine grape varieties, plant them in pre-specified quantities, provide timely feedback, and host a workshop in their vineyard. In return, growers will be reimbursed one-third the cost of the plant stock. The growers and Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association will negotiate and agreement regarding specific details.

3. *Growing Growers Training Program: Training new fruit and vegetable growers for Kansas.*

The project is to train new fruit and vegetable producers in Kansas through on-farm apprenticeships and expose trainees to skill sets required for successful operations through workshops. The training will incorporate a fruit option/focus into the growing growers training program, a collaborative program focusing on the training of new organic vegetable market farmers for the Kansas City market. Adding fruit production to the growing growers program will broaden the focus to include new crops, and to include medium-sized family farms using sustainable practices which may not be exclusively organic.

*Retail Promotion/Research*

4. *Research for Overcoming Barriers to Institutional Purchases of Locally Grown Food.*

For this project, students will research the perceived barriers to institutions purchasing locally grown food. Students at the Kansas State University horticulture research farm will study barriers identified by dieticians at the KSU dormitory food service, including food safety, cleanliness and price. Student researchers will conduct experiments specifically on these barriers.

*Information*

5. *Promotion of Specialty Crops in Kansas Farmers' Markets.*

This grant through the Kansas Rural Center will provide funds and assistance to help 15 farmers' markets promote their markets, specialty crops of cut flowers, garlic, ginger root, herbs, honey, lavender, mushrooms, potatoes and sweet corn.

*Wholesale Promotion*

6. *Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association Marketing Program.*

This program will provide a new informational newspaper and brochures for all Kansas wineries including a map of the state showing the locations of Kansas wineries.

**Potential Impact**

The 2006 Kansas Horticulture Survey, conducted by Kansas Agricultural Statistics, showed that the horticulture industry added more than \$1 billion to the Kansas economy that year. Nurseries and greenhouses contributed \$157 million in sales and expenditures to the economy; florists, \$66.5 million; and arborists, \$61.2 million. Farmer' market s sales of horticultural products totaled nearly \$1 million during 2006. Farmers' market total production area used was 359 acres. Farmer's markets had 310 paid and unpaid employees involved in the production and sales.

There is great room for growth in the area of fruit and vegetable production and sales. Local and sustainable produced food markets are growing, yet Kansas only produces between five and ten percent of its produce needs locally. These targeted promotional and educational

programs can have a beneficial effect on production of and markets for Kansas specialty crops. All will increase the competitiveness of Kansas specialty crops.

### *Production/Research*

1. *Ethnic Specialty Crops for Kansas: Crops and Cultivars for Diverse Markets.*

There is an increasing regional demand for fresh, locally grown produce, but only a small fraction of total production actually comes from within the region even at the height of the production season. With annual produce consumption in excess of \$2 billion and with current sales by Kansas producers estimated at \$12 million, or 0.6% of total purchases, increasing local production to satisfy just 1% of demand would result in an increase of \$8 million in sales. Each additional increase of 1% of demand would result in \$20 million of additional sales. This project will contribute to the expansion and diversification of the Kansas vegetable industry.

2. *Enhance Kansas wine industry by increasing vineyard acreage planted to new and/or emerging varieties.*

An average acre planted to 550 plants, can produce on average 4 to 6 tons of grapes per acre, with the price per ton ranging from \$450.00 to \$1,250.00. Depending on the quantity, an acre of grapes can yield between \$1,800 to \$7,500 annually. Yields based on 200 acres could be between \$360,000 and \$1,500,000. Potential yields from the 5% increase in acreage could be between \$378,000 to \$1,750,000 showing an increase of between \$18,000 and \$75,000 annually.

3. *Growing Growers Training Program: Training new fruit and vegetable growers for Kansas.*

The project will train new fruit and vegetable producers in Kansas through on-farm apprenticeships and expose trainees to skill sets required for successful operations through workshops. The training will incorporate a fruit option/focus into the growing growers training program, a collaborative program focusing on the training of new organic vegetable market farmers for the Kansas City market. Adding fruit production to the growing growers program will broaden the focus to include new crops, and to include medium-sized family farms using sustainable practices which may not be exclusively organic.

### *Retail Promotion/Research*

4. *Research for Overcoming Barriers to Institutional Purchases of Locally Grown Food.*

This project will educate growers about techniques to achieve cleanliness and sanitation objectives. Buyers will be educated about how local growers achieve the cleanliness standards and the true price of food if workers are paid reasonable wages at local levels.

*Information*

5. *Promotion of Specialty Crops in Kansas Farmers' Markets.*

This grant through the Kansas Rural Center will provide funds and assistance to help 15 farmers' markets across the state of Kansas. The project will impact an estimated 225 farmers reaching over 25,000 customers.

*Wholesale Promotion*

6. *Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association Marketing Program.*

This program will provide a new informational newspaper and brochures for all Kansas wineries. This will increase the knowledge and interest in Kansas wines and increase volume for wine sales an estimated minimum of 5% per year, in turn increasing revenue for the state. The increase in wine sales and production will benefit the grape growing industry.

**Financial Feasibility**

The proposed projects are not projects currently funded with state dollars. Grant funds received by the Kansas Department of Agriculture will only supplement other expenditures of funds in support of the state's specialty crops. Grantees have been encouraged to provide a match to the federal dollars they receive.

These are the final projects to which FY 2007 specialty crop grant funds will be allocated. Adjustments, if any, will be minor.

*Estimated Budget – KDA Specialty Crop block Grant Proposals*

<b>Project</b>	<b>Specialty Crop Funds</b>	<b>Matching Funds</b>	<b>Total FY 2007 Funds</b>
Production/Research			
<i>Ethnic Specialty Crops for Kansas: Crops and Cultivars for Diverse Markets</i>	\$20,000	None	
<i>Enhance Kansas wine industry by increasing vineyard acreage planted to new and/or Emerging varieties.</i>	\$20,000	\$40,000	
<i>Growing Growers Training Program: Training new fruit and vegetable growers for Kansas.</i>	\$20,000	\$2,000	
<i>Research for Overcoming Barriers to Institutional Purchases of Locally Grown Food.</i>	\$20,000	\$5,294	
<i>Promotion of Specialty Crops in Kansas Farmers' Markets.</i>	\$20,000	\$5,000 Cash \$4,000 In-Kind	
<i>Grape Growers and Winemakers Association Marketing Program</i>	\$1,835	\$1,200 Cash \$900 In-Kind	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$101,835</b>		<b>\$101,835</b>

### *Administrative Costs*

KDA requests the remaining \$362.00 in allocated funds to pay for up to 15 audit hours to be performed by KDA's in-house auditor. This individual's position is funded by specific program fees, so other-than-state-dollars will be needed to allow for auditing of the individual projects. These are the only administrative costs requested by the cooperating state agencies for grant administration.

### **Expected Measurable Outcomes**

The Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas Department of Commerce will continue to work with the groups receiving these funds to develop metrics and instruments to measure the increased competitiveness of specialty crops achieved through these projects.

### *Production/Research*

*1. Ethnic Specialty Crops for Kansas: Crops and Cultivars for Diverse Markets.*

This project will assemble and evaluate sweet potato cultivars for quality and quantity of leafy greens and storage roots. The project also will evaluate Asian or African crops (including cucurbits and/or leafy greens such as amaranth, jute, bitter melon, was gourd, Korean melon, etc.) identified through market surveys; germplasm obtained and trailed in cooperation with an immigrant producer group in Kansas City. The grantee will develop production and marketing fact sheets for a broad audience of Kansas vegetable producers.

*2. Enhance Kansas wine industry by increasing vineyard acreage planted to new and/or emerging varieties.*

This project will increase the acreage by 5% from 200 to 210 acres of wine grapes planted in Kansas and raise the quality of grapes available to wineries in the state. The project promotes the exchange of knowledge about growing grapes and wine production in Kansas, and will increase the volume of Kansas wine grapes available to Kansas wineries.

*3. Growing Growers Training Program: Training new fruit and vegetable growers for Kansas.*

This program continues the growing growers training program with 12 apprenticeships in sustainable local food production on produce farms. It will offer a series of monthly workshops from March through October to an anticipated audience of 200. A fruit component of the growing growers program will feature 3 apprenticeships. The apprenticeships will include three fruit training events including workshops, field day activities and inclusion of 75 producers.

### *Retail Promotion/Research*

*4. Research for Overcoming Barriers to Institutional Purchases of Locally Grown Food.*

In this project, researchers will determine whether a compost source makes a difference in food safety. The research will show whether floating/polyester row covers are needed to keep salad greens free of E. coli. They will test commercial salad greens to compare

products for E. coli and coliform bacteria counts. A standard measure of distilled water used to wash a particular volume of salad will be used and the bacteria counts will be in cfu/ml of water. The researchers will measure cleanliness similarly to food safety. Researchers will study price with spreadsheets of detailed fixed costs, variable costs, and labor for all crops. They will calculate a break even price.

### *Information*

#### *5. Promotion of Specialty Crops in Kansas Farmers' Markets.*

The project will educate, train, and facilitate business planning and financial assistance to 15 farmers' markets in Kansas. It will increase sales at these markets by 15% and increase customer attendance at the markets by 10%. Then farmers' markets will introduce a new specialty crop product at their market.

### *Wholesale Promotion*

#### *6. Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association Marketing Program.*

The program provides an informational newspaper and brochures for all Kansas wineries to increase the knowledge and interest in Kansas wines. This promotion is expected to increase volume for wine sales an estimated minimum of 5% per year in sales and revenue for the state. The increase in wine sales will increase production and benefit the grape growing industry.

## **Goals**

The overriding goal of all the proposals submitted within the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant proposal is to increase the competitiveness of our state's specialty crop products through increased production, increased efficiency of production, increased interest in horticultural careers, increased ease of securing locally grown products, and increased consumer awareness and consumption of these products. There is great room for growth in the Kansas specialty crop industry, and we wish to target these funds toward that growth.

### *Production/Research*

The goal of the production/research projects is to increase the interest of producers in growing specialty crops, and increase the amount and efficiency of production.

### *Retail Promotion*

The goal of these projects is to increase the variety and amount of locally grown projects that are available and to increase markets for their products among customers.

### *Information/Retail Promotion*

The goal of these projects is to increase the number of consumers seeking specialty crops and to increase their consumption.

### *Wholesale Promotion*

Increasing purchases of locally grown foods in institutional settings will increase both the incomes of participating farmers and also provide nutritional benefits for children and the elderly who will consume the institutional foods.

## **Work Plans**

### *Production/Research*

1. *Ethnic Specialty Crops for Kansas: Crops and Cultivars for Diverse Markets.*

This project will identify and recruit host farms and apprentices to work on them, including some host fruit farms. It will program and conduct workshops covering a range of critical skill sets, in consultation with specialists and growers. It will encourage fruit growers and organic producers to meet and consult. We anticipate the work from beginning to completion to take 12 months.

2. *Enhance Kansas wine industry by increasing vineyard acreage planted to new and/or emerging varieties.*

Wine grape growers plantings will increase by 5% from 200 to 210 acres. Participating growers will plant pre-specified wine grape varieties, plant them in pre-specified quantities, provide timely feed back, and host workshops (tailgates) in their vineyards. In return they will be reimbursed one-third the cost of the plant stock.

**March, April May 2008**

Plant Vines. Pruning and Spraying Workshops

**May, June 2008**

Application from vineyards.

**June 2008**

Visit vineyards for review of applications

**June, July 2008**

Tailgates, (Workshops)

Award first round of funds to vineyards

**August, September, October 2008**

Tailgates at Vineyards

**November, December 2008**

Prepare for KGGWA Annual Conference.

**January KGGWA Annual Conference 2009**

**February, March 2009**

Pruning Workshops

**March, April 2009**

Plant vines and second round of application accepted and approved

If any funds left.

**May 2009 Final report.**

3. *Growing Growers Training Program: Training new fruit and vegetable growers for Kansas.*

This program will assemble cultivars for trial and evaluate them. It will provide market visits and literature survey. The program will provide extension production bulletins, selected crops and marketing tip sheets including recipes and nutrition information.

*Retail Promotion/Research*

4. *Research for Overcoming Barriers to Institutional Purchases of Locally Grown Food.*

Dr. Janke will be the faculty advisor to the student farm and supervise all student research. Ms. Guildord, senior in Horticulture and Leadership Studies, will be the student farm manager, and assist with supervision and day-to-day activities of all the student research projects. Four student interns will be hired and take responsibility for each of the four trials listed.

*Information*

5. *Promotion of Specialty Crops in Kansas Farmers' Markets.*

Fifteen farmers' markets will receive a total of \$14,250 in mini-grants to promote specialty crops and farmers' markets in Kansas. Eligible markets must meet the following requirements: Have a sponsoring organization, management team or board which provides management and oversight of the market. Participate in a business planning workshop facilitated by the Kansas Rural Center. Have a checking account and means of accounting for mini-grant expenses. Agree on a signed contract with KRC specifying the terms of agreement for the mini-grant. Agree to report back to KRC to fulfill the state of project outcomes.

*Wholesale Promotion*

6. *Kansas Grape Growers and Winemakers Association Marketing Program.*

This program will provide a new informational newspaper and brochures for all Kansas wineries to increase the knowledge and interest in Kansas wines. The program will increase volume for wine sales resulting in an estimated minimum of 5% increase per year in sales and revenue for the state. The increase in wine sales will increase production which will benefit the grape growing industry.

**Project Oversight**

The Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Department of Commerce are cooperating in the design of grant applications, outreach activities and project activities of the Specialty Crop grants. KDA Chief Fiscal Officer, representing Secretary of Agriculture

Polansky, works directly with Sarah Larison, domestic marketing specialist for the Department of Commerce's agricultural marketing and community development program. They are managing the projects. They have been communicating with industry representatives to request grant proposals and work with the industry to improve work plans and outputs. They will communicate with project managers to develop and receive quarterly reports on project progress.

KDA's internal auditor will perform required financial audits on projects that are funded.

### **Project Commitment**

The cooperating state agencies are supported by Kansas fruit and vegetable growers, Kansas State University, individual farmers' markets and the Kansas Rural Center. Letters of support are included with individual project requests. Federal and state guidelines will be adhered to during the course of these grants, and communication with the industries will be a constant.

### **Multi-State Projects**

No multi-state projects are included in this round of specialty crop grants for Kansas.