



July 10, 2008

## **FARM BILL GRANTS TO BENEFIT SPECIALTY CROPS**

The recently passed farm bill provided funding for the specialty crop industry in the form of block grants to state departments of agriculture. If anyone involved in the transportation of specialty crops has a need that could be addressed through this program you may want to pay particular attention to this.

The availability of this funding was announced in yesterday's Federal Register. The full text of this notice is below. A few points to note:

- Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture).
- Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are not limited to: food safety, food security, nutrition, trade enhancement, education, research, promotion, marketing, plant health programs, ``buy local" programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives.
- The deadline for applications is September 30, 2008.

[Federal Register: July 9, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 132)]

[Notices]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS-FV-08-0059; FV-08-380]

Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) Inviting Applications for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program--Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB)

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

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SUMMARY: The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announces the availability of approximately \$10 million in grant funds, less USDA administrative costs, to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The funds announced under this program (SCBGP-FB) are separate from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds announced by

AMS on March 5, 2008. SCBGP-FB funds are authorized by the recently enacted Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2007 Farm Bill). The application process to apply for the SCBGP-FB funds will parallel those currently found in 7 CFR part 1290. Regulations to implement the amendments made in the 2007 Farm Bill will be published in the near future. State departments of agriculture are encouraged to develop their grant applications promptly. The 2007 Farm Bill requires USDA to obligate the grant funds under this program by the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2008, which necessitates a short application period. State departments of agriculture interested in obtaining grant program funds are invited to submit applications to USDA. State departments of agriculture, meaning agencies, commissions, or departments of a State government responsible for agriculture within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are eligible to apply. State departments of agriculture are encouraged to involve industry groups, academia, and community-based organizations in the development of applications and the administration of projects.

DATES: Applications must be received not later than September 8, 2008.

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ADDRESSES: Applications may be sent to: SCBGP, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Stop 0235, Room 2077 South Building, Washington, DC 20250-0235.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Trista Etzig, Phone: (202) 690-4942, e-mail: [trista.etzig@usda.gov](mailto:trista.etzig@usda.gov) or your State department of agriculture listed on the SCBGP and SCBGP-FB Web site at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: SCBGP is authorized under Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note) and is currently implemented under 7 CFR Part 1290 (published September 11, 2007; 71 FR 53303). Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, Public Law 110-246 (the 2007 Farm Bill), amends the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004. AMS anticipates issuing regulations in the near future to implement the amendments made in the 2007 Farm Bill. The SCBGP and SCBGP-FB assist State departments of agriculture in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops.

#### Farm Bill 2007 Changes

Section 10109 the 2007 Farm Bill amended the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 by adding Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as eligible States and horticulture to the definition of specialty crop.

Also, the minimum base grant each State is eligible to receive was amended to an amount that is equal to the higher of \$100,000 or include 1/3 of 1 percent of the total amount of funding made available for

that fiscal year. AMS anticipates issuing regulations in the near future to implement the amendments made in the 2007 Farm Bill.

## SCBGP-FB

Under the SCBGP-FB, specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Examples of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops include, but are not limited to: Food safety, food security, nutrition, trade enhancement, education, research, promotion, marketing, plant health programs, "buy local" programs, increased consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, and developing cooperatives.

Each interested State department of agriculture is to submit one application on or before September 8, 2008 to the USDA contact noted in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section. Applications will only be accepted for funding under this Notice. State departments of agriculture who have not yet applied for the fiscal year 2008 SCBGP grant funds (published March 5, 2008; 73 FR 11859) will not be able to apply for both fiscal year 2008 funds in one application. The deadline for funding under the previously announced SCBGP remains March 5, 2009. The deadline for funding under this Notice is September 8, 2008. As a result of the 2007 Farm Bill, in fiscal year 2008 AMS will be administering two separate programs to assist State departments of agriculture in enhancing the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops. While similar, the SCBGP and SCBGP-FB are distinct with different definitions and separate deadlines. Other organizations interested in participating in this program should contact their State department of agriculture. State departments of agriculture specifically named under the authorizing legislation should assume the lead role in SCBGP-FB projects, and use cooperative or contractual linkages with other agencies, universities, institutions, and producer, industry or community-based organizations as appropriate.

Additional details about the SCBGP-FB application process for all applicants are available at the AMS Web site: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/>.

To be eligible for a grant, each State department of agriculture's application shall be clear and succinct and include the following documentation satisfactory to AMS:

(a) Completed applications must include an SF-424 "Application for Federal Assistance".

(b) Completed applications must include one State plan to show how grant funds will be utilized to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. SCBGP-FB grant funds will be awarded for projects of up to 3 years duration. An application that builds on a previously funded SCBGP project may also be submitted. In such cases, the State plan should indicate clearly how the project compliments previous work. The state plan shall include the following:

(1) Cover Page. Include the lead agency for administering the plan and an abstract of 200 words or less for each proposed project.

(2) Project Purpose. Clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest, or need to be addressed. Explain why each project is important and timely.

(3) Potential Impact. Discuss the number of people or operations affected, the intended beneficiaries of each project, and/or potential economic impact if such data are available and relevant to the project(s).

(4) Financial Feasibility. For each project, provide budget estimates for the total project cost. Indicate what percentage of the budget covers administrative costs. Administrative costs should not exceed 10 percent of any proposed budget. Provide a justification if administrative costs are higher than 10 percent.

(5) Expected Measurable Outcomes. Describe at least two distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcomes that directly and meaningfully support each project's purpose. The outcome measures must define an event or condition that is external to the project and that is of direct importance to the intended beneficiaries and/or the public.

(6) Goal(s). Describe the overall goal(s) in one or two sentences for each project.

(7) Work Plan. Explain briefly how each goal and measurable outcome will be accomplished for each project. Be clear about who will do the work. Include appropriate time lines. Expected measurable outcomes may be long term that exceed the grant period. If so, provide a timeframe when long term outcome measure will be achieved.

(8) Project Oversight. Describe the oversight practices that provide sufficient knowledge of grant activities to ensure proper and efficient administration.

(9) Project Commitment. Describe how all grant partners commit to and work toward the goals and outcome measures of the proposed project(s).

(10) Multi-State Projects. If a project is a multi-state project, describe how the States are going to collaborate effectively with related projects. Each State participating in the project should submit the project in their State plan indicating which State is taking the coordinating role and the percent of the budget covered by each State.

Each State department of agriculture that submits an application that is reviewed and approved by AMS is to receive \$100,000 to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. In addition, AMS will allocate the remainder of the grant funds based on the proportion of the value of specialty crop production in the state in relation to the national value of specialty crop production using the latest available (2006 National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cash receipt data for the 50 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, 2002 Census of Agriculture

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for Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and 2003 Census of Agriculture for American Samoa) specialty crop production data in all states whose applications are accepted.

The amount of the base grant plus value of production available to each State department of agriculture shall be:

(1) Alabama.....	\$125,779.00
(2) Alaska.....	101,521.00
(3) American Samoa.....	103,471.00
(4) Arizona.....	182,056.00
(5) Arkansas.....	107,059.00
(6) California.....	1,661,482.00
(7) Colorado.....	149,569.00
(8) Connecticut.....	123,322.00
(9) Delaware.....	106,240.00
(10) District of Columbia.....	100,000.00
(11) Florida.....	477,169.00
(12) Georgia.....	186,541.00
(13) Guam.....	100,273.00
(14) Hawaii.....	124,765.00
(15) Idaho.....	166,690.00
(16) Illinois.....	132,565.00
(17) Indiana.....	125,311.00
(18) Iowa.....	108,541.00
(19) Kansas.....	106,240.00
(20) Kentucky.....	107,995.00
(21) Louisiana.....	115,054.00
(22) Maine.....	120,202.00
(23) Maryland.....	131,941.00
(24) Massachusetts.....	122,932.00
(25) Michigan.....	203,740.00
(26) Minnesota.....	136,231.00
(27) Mississippi.....	109,771.00
(28) Missouri.....	112,168.00
(29) Montana.....	107,566.00
(30) Nebraska.....	111,817.00
(31) Nevada.....	104,017.00
(32) New Hampshire.....	106,279.00
(33) New Jersey.....	152,260.00
(34) New Mexico.....	120,670.00
(35) New York.....	189,895.00
(36) North Carolina.....	208,537.00
(37) North Dakota.....	125,740.00
(38) Northern Mariana Islands.....	100,117.00
(39) Ohio.....	168,562.00
(40) Oklahoma.....	118,798.00
(41) Oregon.....	240,868.00
(42) Pennsylvania.....	181,081.00
(43) Puerto Rico.....	120,631.00
(44) Rhode Island.....	103,978.00
(45) South Carolina.....	130,264.00
(46) South Dakota.....	102,418.00
(47) Tennessee.....	132,370.00
(48) Texas.....	257,521.00
(49) Utah.....	107,878.00
(50) Vermont.....	103,861.00
(51) Virgin Islands.....	100,078.00
(52) Virginia.....	132,643.00
(53) Washington.....	360,013.00
(54) West Virginia.....	100,780.00
(55) Wisconsin.....	161,035.00
(56) Wyoming.....	101,755.00

Funds not obligated will be allocated pro rata to the remaining States which applied during the specified grant application period to

be solely expended on projects previously approved in their State plan. In such event, a revised application shall be submitted, by a date before the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2008, determined by AMS, showing how the additional funds will be utilized to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Applicants submitting hard copy applications should submit one copy of the application package. The SF-424 must be signed (with an original signature) by an official who has authority to apply for Federal assistance. Hard copy applications should be sent only via express mail to AMS at the address noted at the beginning of this notice because USPS mail sent to Washington, DC headquarters is sanitized, resulting in possible delays, loss, and physical damage to enclosures. AMS will send an e-mail confirmation when applications arrive at the AMS office.

Applicants who submit hard copy applications are also encouraged to submit electronic versions of their application directly to AMS via e-mail addressed to [scblockgrants@usda.gov](mailto:scblockgrants@usda.gov) in one of the following formats: Word (\*.doc); or Adobe Acrobat (\*.pdf). Alternatively, a standard 3.5" HD diskette or a CD may be enclosed with the hard copy application.

Applicants also have the option of submitting SCBGP-FB applications electronically through the central Federal grants Web site, <http://www.grants.gov> instead of mailing hard copy documents. Applicants considering the electronic application option are strongly urged to familiarize themselves with the Federal grants Web site and begin the application process well before the application deadline.

SCBGP-FB is listed in the "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance" under number 10.170 and subject agencies must adhere to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bars discrimination in all federally assisted programs.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621 note.

Dated: July 3, 2008.

Lloyd C. Day, Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service.

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