



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WSDA grants promote farmers markets, local food economy and ag exports

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has approved 16 grants totaling more than \$200,000 to promote Washington’s food and agriculture industry. Grants range from \$5,900 to \$20,000 to assist both small and larger agricultural organizations with marketing and trade projects over the next year.

Several years ago, the Legislature established the grants to expose consumers to Washington’s products and to enhance market access—both domestic and international. To qualify for the funding, successful grant applicants presented a combination of matching funds and promotional agricultural products or services.

WSDA will sign contracts with the organizations by July. Projects will be completed by June 30, 2009.

“We’re encouraged by the continuing progress growers and agricultural support groups are making through these grants,” said Janet Leister, manager of WSDA’s International Marketing Program. “Several of the grants support new or developing farmers markets while others support ag commodity commissions to assist with promotions of fruit, beef, beer, wine and asparagus. These short-term projects will make a difference for Washington producers.”

This year’s grants were awarded to:

Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, Seattle – \$11,435 for market promotion using a direct mail newsletter to reach nearly 65,000 consumers.

Vashon Island Growers Association, Vashon – \$7,455 to expand the existing farmers market by promoting a new Wednesday market. It will also expand education, promotion and sales at the existing market that operates on Vashon Island on Saturdays.

Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association (WSNLA), Federal Way – \$20,000 to assist in expanding its efforts under a coupon “nursery passport” program that promotes products from local nurseries.

Washington State Farmers Market Association, Suquamish – \$20,000 will help fund the annual 2009 Washington State Farmers Market Association Conference where market managers, farmers and farmers market board members will receive training to support market operations. Printing costs for the 2009 Washington State Farmers Market Guides will also be funded.

Cascade Harvest Coalition, Seattle – \$15,000 to help fund a series of Farm-to-Table workshops in five counties. The goal of the workshops is to increase farm income and increase the market share of local agricultural products by bringing together local producers and food buyers to build sales relationships and to address issues that prevent localized sales.

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Island Vision, Mercer Island – \$10,000 to start a farmers market on Mercer Island. Support throughout the community has been tremendous and residents are enthusiastic about the opportunity to purchase fresh produce and directly support local farmers.

U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee, Moxee – \$15,400 to develop a database that will provide Washington growers and shippers with information vital to avoiding trade barriers over pesticide issues. Many countries are establishing their own pesticide residue regulatory systems.

Seattle Chapter of Chefs Collaborative, Seattle – \$10,200 to help fund The Farmer Chef Connection conference. The conference fosters marketing opportunities among local producers with local food buyers.

Community Agriculture Development Center, Colville – \$10,735 to help build marketing infrastructure to connect local farmers and their products with local consumers through farm marketing workshops, marketing outreach, Farm-to-Table buying guides and farm tours.

Coupeville Farmers Market, Coupeville – \$5,900 to promote the Coupeville Farmers Market. The goal is to increase market awareness, increase the number of farmer vendors and build a local community food system. They will also educate customers to the benefits of Washington agricultural products grown on local farms and provide greater sales opportunity for island farmers.

Washington State Apple Commission, Wenatchee – \$16,000 to create awareness for Washington apples in China and increase sales through a retail display contest in China.

Washington Asparagus Commission, Eltopia – \$15,000 to reproduce the Asparagus Buyers Directory and to participate in the Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit trade show in October.

Washington Beer Commission, Olympia – \$20,000 to promote Washington beer through a series of local festivals. Funding for increased advertising and promotion will help expand participation at the festivals.

Washington State Beef Commission, Seattle – \$20,000 to help produce a video about beef production. The video will help introduce consumers to the people and places where beef is produced and to demonstrate the commitment that each segment of the beef industry has to ensuring a safe beef supply.

Washington State Fruit Commission, Yakima – \$16,400 to promote fresh cherries in Mexico. The promotions will focus on store demonstrations and consumer educational leaflets.

Washington Wine Commission, Seattle – \$20,000 for market promotion at the Taste Washington Tokyo event. The commission will expand its presence at the event to accommodate more wineries and increase awareness of Washington wine among Japanese consumers.

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Note to editors: Contact names and phone numbers for groups receiving the grants are available on the WSDA Web site (www.agr.wa.gov) under [Marketing and Business Services](#).