



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Jason Kelly (360) 902-1815

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
Visit our Web site at: agr.wa.gov

Federal grants will help promote Washington farm products, improve farm practices

OLYMPIA –Ten Washington organizations will receive federal assistance as they work to expand economic opportunities for farmers and develop more efficient farming practices.

Under the federal Farm Bill approved by Congress this year, states received additional funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant Program designed to enhance the competitiveness of fruit, vegetable and horticulture products. Washington is the third leading producer of specialty crops in the nation.

“Washington farmers are world famous for their quality produce,” said Bob Gore, acting director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). “We’re looking forward to seeing positive results that promote the vitality and viability of Washington’s specialty crop industry. While this round of funding is limited, we anticipate that next year our total grant award will be significantly larger.”

The successful grant applicants announced today are sharing \$324,000 in funding. In awarding these funds, WSDA selected projects that build on the expertise and success of the industry, have the potential to boost the income of farming families and support economic growth in rural Washington. Projects that included matching funds by the applicant were given priority. Grants will be awarded to:

- Washington Apple Commission (\$29,500) to increase sales in India by training wholesalers and retailers on how to handle, display, and store perishable products;
- Northwest Agriculture Business Center (\$40,700) to support a farm-based Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) learning center to attract new farmers to agriculture and instruct them on marketing directly to consumers;
- Washington State Fruit Commission (\$25,000) to increase market share by educating Mexican consumers about Washington apricots and conducting a marketing program;
- Washington State Fruit Commission (\$20,000) to conduct a consumer-focused marketing program to increase sales of Washington cherries in Mexico;
- Pear Bureau Northwest (\$7,500) to produce a series of short videos showcasing pear growers from Washington’s Wenatchee, Yakima, and mid-Columbia pear growing regions;
- Pacific Coast Cranberry Foundation (\$32,100) to increase access and availability of the disease-free cultivars needed to grow the crop;

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- Washington State Seed Potato Commission (\$18,000) for research to improve the practices and technologies used for growing, harvesting, storing and handling potatoes;
- Washington State University (\$53,529) to help develop alternatives to methyl bromide fumigation in Washington's Christmas tree seedling industry;
- Washington State Potato Commission (\$53,443) to create a food safety training program and informational materials to help potato growers become USDA Good Agricultural Practices certified;
- Washington State University (\$44,241) to develop a microbial food safety risk assessment, collect data and conduct educational outreach to the apple industry.

After reviewing this year's grant applications, WSDA selected the most promising projects for inclusion in a single Washington state grant application. USDA gave final approval of the state's application this week.

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