



# Washington State Department of Agriculture

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## Washington receives \$4.1 million in federal specialty crop grant funds

**OLYMPIA** - The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture last week announced this year's recipients of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds, including \$4.1 million for Washington state.

The 2015 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant will fund 24 projects managed by WSDA in partnership with other organizations. Washington ranks second in the nation behind California in production of specialty crops, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Awards for individual projects range from \$43,000 to \$250,000 and will go to agricultural commodity commissions, agricultural associations, non-profit organizations and Washington State University. WSU is the grant recipient for 10 of the projects.

WSDA will be the lead on two projects, including one that expands farmworker pesticide education and another that will provide outreach and education to fruit and vegetable growers. The goal in this contract is to assist growers in meeting new produce safety regulations set by the Food & Drug Administration. Other research efforts involve hops and potatoes, onions and carrots, tree fruit and berries and Christmas trees. And, at least two contracts aim to boost trade of specialty crops, including a Pear Bureau Northwest project promoting pears in southern China and a Washington Potato Commission promotional effort involving Vietnam and Myanmar.

Visit [www.agr.wa.gov/Grants/SCBGP](http://www.agr.wa.gov/Grants/SCBGP) to see the list of [projects](#).

WSDA selected projects that will directly benefit producers in the near term to address plant disease, water-use efficiency and other critical industry issues. Projects that included matching funds or in-kind donations by the applicant were given priority. All projects are to be completed within 2.5 years.

WSDA has received more than \$23 million over the past eight years for projects supported by the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, most recently through the 2014 Farm Bill. The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service awarded \$63 million to projects nationwide. Visit [www.ams.usda.gov/scbgs](http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbgs) for more information.

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