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Specialty Crop Block Grant Applications Period Now Open

The Kansas Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the 2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant program. Funds are awarded to the agency by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service. The funds are in turn granted to projects and organizations that promote specialty crops in Kansas.

The purpose of the specialty crop program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as "fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture." The advancement of these crops aligns with KDA's mission of providing an environment that promotes economic and agricultural growth in all aspects of the Kansas agricultural industry.

In 2014 Kansas received - \$314,370.38 for the grant program. Kansas is expected to receive approximately the same amount for 2015.

Applications will be evaluated by a team of external reviewers. The team will rate proposals on their ability to successfully promote specialty crops in Kansas and make a positive impact on the Kansas economy, and submit those recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture, who will make the final awards.

Applications are due to KDA no later than May 15, 2015. For more information, and to download the 2015 application please visit www.agriculture.ks.gov/specialtycropblockgrant.