



Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

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Services by Affected Supply Line

Mission Area	Agency	Title of Service	Producer	Handler	Processor	Retail	Trade	
FNCS	FNS	TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Project	✓	✓	✓			
		Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)	✓					
		Emergency Relief Program (ERP) (Phase 1 and Phase 2)	✓					
		Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program	✓					
		Farm Loan Programs	✓					
		Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program	✓					
		FSA	Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program	✓				
			Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	✓				
		FPAC	Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)	✓	✓			
			Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP)	✓				
			Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) Program	✓				✓
			Tree Assistance Program (TAP)	✓				
		NRCS	Resource Conservation	✓				
		RMA	Specialty Crop Insurance Programs	✓				
MRP	AMS	Audit-Based Food Safety Verification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Commodity Procurement Program (CPP)	✓	✓	✓			
		Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)	✓	✓		✓	✓	
		Export Fruit Acts	✓	✓	✓			
		Federal Marketing Orders	✓	✓	✓			
		Inspection, Grading, and Certification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Laboratory Approval Program (LAP)	✓	✓			✓	
		Minimum Quality and Handling Standards for Domestic and Imported Peanuts	✓	✓	✓			
		National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (BE Standard)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
		National Organic Program (NOP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		National Science Laboratories (NSL)	✓					
		Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)	✓	✓	✓	✓		
		Pesticide Data Program (PDP)	✓	✓			✓	
		Research and Promotion (R&P) Programs	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) Cooperative Agreements		✓	✓					
Section 608e Import Requirements	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)	✓	✓	✓	✓				

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Mission Area	Agency	Title of Service	Producer	Handler	Processor	Retail	Trade
AMS		Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP)	✓	✓	✓		
		Specialty Crops Market News	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)	✓	✓	✓		
		U.S. Grade Standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MRP		Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response	✓	✓	✓		✓
APHIS		Domestic Specialty Crop Pests Program	✓	✓	✓		✓
		International Phytosanitary and Management Standards Program (IPMSP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		National Clean Plant Network (NCPN)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Plant Protection Act (PPA) 7721	✓	✓	✓		✓
OCE		Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
ARS		Investments in Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ERS	Research and Market Outlook Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
REE		Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4)					✓
	NIFA	NIFA Funding	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RD		Agriculture Innovation Centers (AIC) Program	✓		✓	✓	
		Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Intermediary Relending Program		✓	✓	✓	✓
	RBCS	Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG)	✓		✓	✓	
	RHS		Off-Farm Labor Housing	✓			
		On-Farm Labor Housing	✓				
TFAA		Agribusiness Trade Missions (ATMs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Cochran Fellowship Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Emerging Markets Program (EMP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
	FAS		Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102)				✓
		Facility Guarantee Program (FGP)		✓		✓	
		Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Global Pesticide Maximum Residue Level (MRL) Standards	✓			✓	
		Market Access Program (MAP)	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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Mission Area	Agency	Title of Service	Producer	Handler	Processor	Retail	Trade
TFAA	FAS	Quality Samples Program (QSP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program	✓	✓	✓		✓
		USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		U.S. Specialty Crops Trade Issues Reports	✓	✓			✓

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Glossary

Specialty Crops: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines specialty crops as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, floriculture, and processed products that have 50% or more specialty crops content by weight, exclusive of added water. A comprehensive [list of eligible specialty crops \(PDF\)](#) is available on the USDA's website.

Producer: An individual or entity that produces a specialty crops commodity through participation in the day-to-day labor, management, and field operations; a person or legal entity with a share in a crop on cropland on the farm and shares in the risk of producing the crop on the farm.

Handler: Any person who is engaged in the business of specialty crops product handling, except that a person who sells only those specialty crops products that the person has produced, or buys products for the person's own use, is not a specialty crops product handler.

Processor: Any person licensed and registered with the relevant authority for the transformation of specialty crops products by a process of value added for the local market.

Processing: The term "processing" means cooking, baking, heating, drying, mixing, grinding, churning, separating, extracting, cutting, fermenting, eviscerating, preserving, dehydrating, freezing, or otherwise manufacturing, and includes the packaging, canning, jarring, or otherwise enclosing food in a container.

Retail: the term "retail" describes the sale of commodities or goods in small quantities to final consumers.

Trade: Within the context of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative, agricultural trade refers to the buying and selling of U.S. specialty crops in foreign markets.

Beneficiaries: a person or entity that receives money, help, or an advantage because of something else; one that benefits from something.

Supply Chain: The supply chain includes farmers, transporters, warehouses, retailers, suppliers, and consumers. The processes include production, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption, and disposal.

Geographical Scope: Geographical scope includes international, national, Indian Tribe or Tribal entity, regional, state, and/or local.

Historically Underserved Groups: Some groups of people are identified in Farm Bill legislation and in USDA policy as being Historically Underserved. Members of these groups have been historically underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs. Four groups are defined by USDA as "Historically Underserved," including farmers

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or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource. For more information about these groups, please visit: From <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS)

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS)

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP) FARM TO FOOD BANK PROJECT

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: This project affect producers, processors, and distributors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: This project affects producers, processors, and distributors located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: This project provides food to individuals and families in need.

Summary

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Farm to Food Bank Project is a noncompetitive grants program to reduce food waste via donations from agricultural producers, processors, or distributors to feed those in need. It aims to build relationships between producers, processors, distributors, and emergency feeding organizations, like food banks and pantries.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/farm-to-food-bank-project-grants>

Authority

Section 4018(b) of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 ([PL 115-334](#)) amended Section 203D of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 to provide funding to state agencies administering The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to pay for projects to harvest, process, package, or transport commodities donated by agricultural producers, processors, or distributors for use by emergency feeding organizations (EFOs). Continued funding is contingent on the upcoming farm bill.

Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) indirectly affects producers of specialty crops by providing cost share to rehabilitate agricultural land and its structures.

Geographical Scope: The ECP indirectly affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: The ECP benefits farmers and ranchers who are beginning, socially disadvantaged, or of limited resources.

Summary

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland and conservation structures damaged by natural disasters and implement emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index>

Authority

The Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 420-434), as amended by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), Section 2403, and regulations at 7 CFR part 701 provide the statutory authority for ECP. ECP is a continuous service.

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EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM (ERP) (PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The Emergency Relief Program (ERP) affects producers of crops, trees, bushes, and vines.

Geographical Scope: The ERP affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: Under Phase 1 - A separate factor for producers that are considered historically underserved will apply if a producer certifies to being a socially disadvantaged, limited resource, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher by completing CCC-860. The increased payment is equal to 15 percent of the calculated payment. Under Phase 2 - the ERP factor will not exceed 70 percent for 2020 and 2021 program years. If total calculated payments exceed the total funding available for ERP Phase 2, the ERP factor may be adjusted, and a differential of 15 percent will be used for underserved producers with a cap at the statutory maximum of 70 percent. For example, if the ERP Factor is set at 50 percent, the factor used for underserved producers will be 65 percent, but if the factor is set at 55 percent or higher, the factor for underserved producers will be capped at 70 percent.

Summary

The Emergency Relief Program (ERP) covers losses to crops, trees, bushes, and vines due to a qualifying natural disaster event in calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-relief/index>

Authority

Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 117-43), FR on May 18, 2022, revised on August 18, 2022, and 7 CFR part 760, Subpart S provide the statutory authority for ERP. ERP expires December 31, 2023.

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FARM LABOR STABILIZATION AND PROTECTION PILOT PROGRAM (FLSP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: This program affects producers for all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: This program affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: This program benefits both U.S. workers and workers hired from northern Central American countries under the seasonal H-2A visa program.

Summary

The USDA Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP) will award up to \$65 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding to provide support for agricultural employers in implementing robust labor standards to promote a safe, healthy work environment for both U.S. workers and workers hired from northern Central American countries under the seasonal H-2A visa program. The program is funded by the Farm Service Agency and will be administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/flsp>

Authority

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117—2).

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FARM LOAN PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Farm Loan Programs affect producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: Farm Loan Programs affect producers located on all recognized tribal lands, and in all states and territories of the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: Farm Loan Programs reserve loan funds specifically for use by racial and ethnic minorities, as well as females and beginning farmers. Additionally, there are certain program benefits reserved for minorities and beginning farmers, such as eligibility for a down payment loan with special rates and terms (the loan is a type of Farm Ownership Loan).

Summary

The Farm Service Agency's Farm Loan Programs provide direct and guaranteed loan assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers. Farm Loan Programs provide a reliable source of credit for those who are unable to obtain credit elsewhere at reasonable rates and terms. Specialty crops producers sometimes find locating adequate credit difficult given the complexities of the operation. Farm Loan Programs cater to operations with limited financing options by providing reliable access to financing and working capital. The Operating Loan Program provides capital for a range of needs, including daily operating costs such as fuel, labor, fertilizer, family living expenses, as well as term operating loans for equipment or livestock purchases. This program has a direct loan limit of \$400,000 and a guaranteed limit of \$2,037,000. The Farm Ownership Loan Program can be used to purchase or improve a farm or ranch. This program has a direct loan limit of \$600,000 and a guaranteed limit of \$2,037,000. Direct Emergency Loans of up to \$500,000 are available to assist producers to recover from an eligible declared natural disaster. The Microloan Program, which is a type of Operating Loan or Farm Ownership Loan with limited application requirements, can provide an easier source of credit for smaller operations that can benefit more unique specialty crops. Microloans have a combined direct loan limit of \$100,000, with up to \$50,000 for Farm Ownership loans and up to \$50,000 for Farm Operating loans.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/index>

Authority

The Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-128) (7 U.S.C. 1921-1996), 7 CFR 761-774 provides the statutory authority for Farm Loan Programs. Farm Loan Programs are a continuous service.

Farm Loan Programs consist of the following loans with the amount available: This program is a grant or loan that has the following amount available: Direct Operating Loan Limit: \$400,000,

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Direct Farm Ownership Loan Limit: \$600,000, Direct Emergency Loan Limit: \$500,000, Guaranteed Operating and Farm Ownership combined loan Limit: \$2,036,000.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN (FSFL) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: This service affects producers of grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables, floriculture, hops, maple sap, milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, eggs, meat/poultry (unprocessed), rye and aquaculture.

Geographical Scope: This service affects producers located in the U.S.

Summary

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade facilities to store commodities. Eligible facility types include grain bins, hay barns, bulk tanks, and facilities for cold storage. Drying and handling and storage equipment is also eligible, including storage and handling trucks. Eligible facilities and equipment may be new or used, permanently affixed or portable. Also, the program provides storage and handling trucks (refrigerated and non-refrigerated) so that specialty crops producers may transport their commodities to the local market or storage. The FSFL Program is an excellent financing program for on-farm storage and handling for small and mid-sized farms, and for new farmers. Loan terms vary from three to 12 years. The maximum loan amount for storage facilities is \$500,000. The maximum loan amount for storage and handling trucks is \$100,000. In 2016, FSA introduced a new loan category, the microloan, for loans with an aggregate balance up to \$50,000. Microloans offer a 5 percent down payment requirement, compared to a 15 percent down payment for a regular FSFL, and waive the regular three-year production history requirement.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index>

Authority

The following statutes provide authority for the FSFL Program: 7 CFR part 1436, CCC Charter Act, 15 U.S.C. 714 et seq., Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, 7 U.S.C. 7971 and 8789. The FSFL Program is a continuous service and is a grant or loan that has the following amount available: \$400,000,000.

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FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (FSCSC) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The FSCSC Program affects producers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: The FSCSC Program affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: The FSCSC Program benefits farmers and ranchers who are beginning, socially disadvantaged, veterans, or of limited resources. These groups receive a higher payment percentage on the eligible costs.

Summary

The FSCSC program provides financial assistance for specialty crops operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 or 2023. This program helps offset costs to comply with regulatory requirements and market-driven food safety certification requirements.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/food-safety>

Authority

The CCC Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 c(e)) and NOFA provide the statutory authority for the FSCSC Program. The FSCSC Program expires December 31, 2023.

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NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: NAP affects producers of all commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available.

Geographical Scope: NAP affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: NAP benefits farmers and ranchers who are beginning, socially disadvantaged, veterans, or of limited resources, by offering, upon certification, a waiver of the service fee and a 50 percent premium reduction.

Summary

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevent crop planting. NAP offers coverage at reduced rates to all eligible crops, including specialty crops, ensuring risk protection for recipients.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index>

Authority

The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-127), and 7 USC 7333 as amended by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) are the statutory authorities for NAP. NAP is a continuous service.

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ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (OCCSP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: OCCSP affects producers and handlers of organic crops and livestock.

Geographical Scope: OCCSP affects producers and handlers located in Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Summary

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides organic producers and handlers with financial assistance to reduce the cost of organic certification. The Program reimburses producers and handlers for a portion of their paid certification costs. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to certified organic producers and handlers, thereby offsetting the cost of becoming certified organic.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index>

Authority

Section 10606(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 USC 6523 (d)), as amended by Section 10105 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) providing National Funding and 7 USC 1524, as amended by section 1609 of the 2014 Farm Bill providing AMA funding, 84 FR 17997 provides the statutory authority for OCCSP. OCCSP expires September 30, 2023.

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PANDEMIC ASSISTANCE REVENUE PROGRAM (PARP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: PARP affects producers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: PARP affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: Producers that certify as Historically Underserved will receive an increased payment factor.

Summary

The Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) provides direct financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who suffered at least a 15 percent decrease in allowable gross revenue in calendar year 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Payments to eligible producers will be based on a comparison of the producer's allowable gross revenue from 2020 compared to a base year of either 2018 or 2019, as elected by the producer.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/parp>

Authority

The authority for PARP is Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260), 7 CFR part 9, subpart D. PARP expired July 14, 2023.

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REIMBURSEMENT TRANSPORTATION COST PAYMENT (RTCP) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The RTCP Program affects producers of aquaculture, feed, fiber, floriculture, food, horticulture-including trees, insects, livestock-including elk, reindeer, bison, horses, and deer.

Geographical Scope: The RTCP Program affects producers located in Alaska, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Summary

The RTCP Program aids geographically disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in Hawaii, Alaska, and the insular area. The program reimburses producers for a portion of the transportation cost of their agricultural commodity, or transporting inputs used to produce an agricultural commodity during the fiscal year. In all the non-contiguous U.S. and insular areas except for some parts of Alaska, local farmers and ranchers must rely on sea or air transportation to ship their cargo to the continental U.S. and other markets. Limited transportation choices and the cost of fuel to transport agricultural commodities and inputs negatively impacts agricultural sustainability and viability in geographically disadvantaged areas. The RTCP Program specifically addresses the challenges of high cost of transporting agricultural commodities and inputs from those areas to markets in the continental U.S. and in other countries, and the high cost of transporting agricultural inputs to those areas.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/RTCP-Program/index>

Authority

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, as amended, and The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (7 CFR part 755) provide the statutory authority for the RTCP Program. The RTCP Program is a continuous service.

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TREE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: TAP affects producers of nursery trees, including ornamentals, fruit or nut bearing, and Christmas trees, and bushes and vines from which an annual crop is produced for commercial purposes.

Geographical Scope: TAP affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: TAP provides an increased cost share assistance for beginning and veteran farmers to replant eligible trees, bushes, or vines. The 2018 Farm Bill increased the reimbursement amount for applicants who meet the definition of a beginning or veteran farmer or rancher. The payment calculation is the lesser of the following: 75 percent of the actual cost of replanting, in excess of 15 percent mortality (adjusted for normal mortality), and, where applicable, 75 percent of the actual cost of rehabilitation, in excess of 15 percent damage or mortality (adjusted for normal tree damage and mortality); or the maximum eligible amount established for the practice by FSA.

Summary

The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines lost by natural disasters. TAP limits the out-of-pocket expenses to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, or vines lost to a natural disaster.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/tree-assistance-program/index>

Authority

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), as amended by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) provides the statutory authority for TAP. TAP is a continuous service.

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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Resource conservation services affect producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: Resource conservation services affect producers located in the U.S.

Summary

NRCS develops and maintains resource conservation practices that describe how to implement or install conservation technologies on farms and how to adopt new technologies into conservation practices.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives>

Authority

The statutes that provide authority for resource conservation services are 16 U.S.C. 3801 or 16 U.S.C. 590a. This is a continuous service.

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RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (RMA)

SPECIALTY CROP INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Specialty crop insurance programs affect producers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: Specialty crop insurance programs affect producers located in the U.S. and on tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: RMA provides veterans and beginning farmers and ranchers certain benefits to help them start their operation. These benefits include 1) exemption from paying the administrative fee for catastrophic and additional coverage policies; 2) additional premium subsidy for additional coverage policies; 3) ability to use the previous producer's production history in certain cases; and 4) an increase in the substitute Yield Adjustment which allows the farmer to replace a low yield due to an insured cause of loss from 60 to 80 percent of the applicable transitional yield (T-Yield). Additionally, fewer years of records are required for beginning farmers and ranchers to become eligible to participate in the Whole Farm Revenue Protection program, which is targeted to specialty crops producers. Limited resource farmers are also exempt from paying the administrative fee for catastrophic and additional coverage policies. RMA invests millions in risk management education and training that support historically underserved groups. The education helps these groups learn how to effectively manage long-term risks and challenges. RMA continues to grow post pandemic with Regional Offices meeting with over 200,000 stakeholders at over 600 separate events in fiscal year 2023. The outreach targeted over 30 different stakeholder categories, including underserved producers, specialty crops producers, and organic producers.

Summary

Specialty crop insurance programs provide risk management tools to American specialty crops producers to strengthen their economic stability. The service provides specialty crops producers with greater access to the crop insurance program which helps them recover after severe weather and bad years of production. Currently, there are over 70 individual specialty crops insured under crop insurance programs. Suggestions for new program development can be made directly to RMA or to private parties who may develop products under the authority of the Federal Crop Insurance Act. The education and training equip producers to manage business risks. Such outreach also helps RMA identify areas of the program that can be expanded or improved. All the aforementioned services are designed to increase access to the program. Reporting requirements can be challenging for specialty crops producers to participate in the crop insurance program. Particularly, direct marketers and vertically integrated producers often do not have disinterested third-party records needed to meet program requirements. Therefore, RMA implemented greater flexibility for these producers to use their own records, providing producers

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greater access to the program. RMA recently implemented new products for shellfish, production grown in a controlled environment, grapevines, kiwifruit, and pomegranates.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://rma.usda.gov/Topics/Specialty-Crops>.

Authority

The Federal Crop Insurance Act provides the statutory authority for specialty crop insurance programs. Specialty crop insurance programs are a continuous service.

Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP)

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE (AMS)

AUDIT-BASED FOOD SAFETY VERIFICATION

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Audit-based food safety verification affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: Audit-based food safety verification affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers in all countries with import requirements that are met by a USDA audit.

Summary

The AMS Specialty Crops Inspection Division audit-based services verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in a manner that minimizes the risks of microbial food safety hazards. Services are provided on a user-fee basis. Growers, packers, shippers, and handlers of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops use the audits to meet buyers' requirements and increase market access. For specialty crops processing operations AMS provides audit services that help ensure the efficiency and sanitation of facilities. AMS audits provide an expert, third-party assessment of an applicant's ability to conform to generally recognized "best practices" that minimize the risk of food safety hazards contaminating fruits, vegetables, and other specialty products during production, harvesting, packing, transportation, and storage. AMS audits verify adherence to applicable regulations and requirements, as well as industry-recognized food safety practices, which allows farmers to reach larger and more stable markets.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp/audit>

Authority

Audit-based food safety verification is authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7, United States Code, Title 7–Agriculture Chapter 38–Distribution and Marketing of Agricultural Products, Subchapter I–General Provisions, Section 622). Audit-based food safety verification is a continuous service.

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COMMODITY PROCUREMENT PROGRAM (CPP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: CPP purchases affect producers, handlers, and processors of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: CPP purchases affect producers, handlers, and processors located in all U.S. states and territories and on Tribal land.

Summary

The Commodity Procurement Program (CPP) partners with State agencies and other industry organizations for the benefit of nationwide growers, shippers, brokers, receivers, processors, retailers, direct to consumer sales, and the foodservice industry. CPP supports American agriculture by encouraging the consumption of domestic foods. CPP purchases a variety of 100% domestically produced and processed commodity food products. These purchases support American agriculture by encouraging consumption of domestically produced foods. The wholesome, high-quality products purchased—collectively called USDA Foods—are delivered to schools, food banks and households in communities across the country, and are a vital component of our nation’s food safety net. These purchases also support American agriculture by providing an outlet for surplus products and encouraging consumption of domestically produced foods under the Section 32 program.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/commodity-procurement>

Authority

The following statutes provide authority for CPP purchases: Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Unofficial Agriculture Regulation (AGAR); Service Contract Inventories are posted in accordance with section 743(a) of Division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010. CPP purchases are a continuous service.

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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING (COOL)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: COOL affects producers, handlers, and retailers of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, raw pecans, peanuts, macadamia nuts, and ginseng.

Geographical Scope: COOL affects producers, handlers, and retailers in all countries. The purpose of the COOL regulation is to provide a fair and competitive market to all countries.

Summary

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a mandatory regulatory program that requires retailers (most grocery stores and supermarkets) to provide country of origin information to consumers for certain covered commodities. COOL declarations can be made in a variety of ways, as long as the public can easily view the label. This regulation provides consumers with information regarding the source of certain foods, including specialty crops, they may purchase. The COOL regulation covers fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables (perishable agricultural commodities) sold by retailers subject to be licensed by PACA. A retail product containing two or more perishable agricultural commodities is considered a processed food excluded from COOL. For purposes of determining what is a new and different perishable agricultural commodity, AMS grade standards are relied upon. If the two items fall under the same grade standard (e.g., yellow squash and zucchini have the same grade standard, or a bag of apples containing multiple varieties), then when products are sold together the two colors of summer squash are considered the same because there is one grade standard for summer squash, and the various apple varieties are considered the same because there is one grade standard for apples. When two or more commodities with different grade standards are combined (e.g., iceberg and leaf lettuce) the retail item is considered a processed food excluded from COOL because iceberg lettuce has a different grade standard from leaf lettuce.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/cool>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.), and 7 CFR part 65 provide statutory authority for COOL. COOL is a continuous service.

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EXPORT FRUIT ACTS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Export Fruit Acts affect producers and marketers of table grapes and fresh whole apples.

Geographical Scope: Export Fruit Acts affect producers and marketers located in California for table grapes; and California, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington for apples. The services apply to U.S. exporters who must request inspection, and the service is intended to ensure a consistently high-quality product shipped throughout the world, thus fostering repeat purchases of U.S. grown products for the benefits U.S. producers and marketers.

Summary

The two separate laws enhance the quality and marketability of U.S. apples and grapes exported to foreign destinations, helping boost sales for U.S. marketers and encouraging repeat sales. The requirements for plums are suspended. It is unlawful for anyone to ship table grapes and fresh whole apples to foreign destinations without an accompanying inspection certificate (SC-205) issued by USDA's Federal or Federal-State Inspection Program. Apples shipped to Canada in bulk containers are exempt from inspection requirements. AMS ensures compliance with the regulations and administers penalties when uninspected shipments are detected. The service is intended to ensure wholesome and quality apples and grapes reach foreign markets, thus fostering repeat purchases for the benefit of U.S. producers and marketers. The service helps avoid low quality product from reflecting poorly on U.S. agricultural and economic interests.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/imports-exports>

Authority

The statutes that provide authority for Export Fruit Acts include Export Apple Act (7 CFR part 33) and Export Grape and Plum Act (7 CFR part 35). These are continuous services.

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FEDERAL MARKETING ORDERS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain and Geographical Scope: Federal Marketing Orders affect producers, handlers, and processors of almonds grown in CA; avocados grown in S. FL; sweet cherries grown in E. WA; tart cherries grown in MI, NY, PA, OR, UT, WA and WI; cranberries grown in MA, RI, CT, NJ, WI, MI, MN, OR, WA and Long Island, NY; dates grown in Riverside County, CA; table grapes grown in Southeastern CA; hazelnuts/filberts grown in OR and WA; kiwifruit grown in California; olives grown in California; onions grown in S. TX, ID and OR; sweet onions grown in Walla Walla Valley of WA and OR and Vidalia, GA; oranges and grapefruit grown in Lower Rio Grande Valley, TX; oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines grown in FL; fresh and processed pears grown in OR and WA; pecans grown in AL, AR, AZ, CA, FL, GA, KS, LA, MO, MS, NC, NM, OK, SC and TX; pistachios grown in CA, AZ, and NM; plums produced in CA; potatoes grown in ID and Malheur County, OR, and CO (Areas II and III); raisins produced in CA; spearmint oil produced in ID, OR, WA and parts of NV and UT; tomatoes grown in FL; and walnuts grown in CA. Marketing orders apply to commodities grown in the smallest practicable area in the United States.

Summary

AMS partners with committees throughout the United States that locally administer handling regulations authorized by Federal statute. AMS conducts rulemaking in response to committee and USDA requests for amendments, monitors handler compliance with regulations, conducts referenda to determine producer support for the individual programs, facilitates member and alternate appointments approved by AMS, and, overall, ensures program compliance with various laws, regulations, and policies. The service provides an industry-funded, self-help program that enables producers and handlers to overcome marketing challenges for the benefit of the specific sector of the U.S. produce or specialty crop industry. Through marketing orders, a commodity group in a defined U.S. production area has the option of combining resources to address marketing challenges that can be resolved by: (1) imposing mandatory grading and inspection services as a way to keep subgrade product from entering commercial channels; (2) standardizing the packaging and labeling of containers to facilitate handling and shipping of a product; (3) conducting production research and market promotion activities; and (4) setting volume regulations, which redirect a portion of the crop to storage when supply exceeds anticipated demand, all for the purpose of enhancing market conditions and the marketability of agricultural products.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 as amended ([7 U.S.C. 601-674](#)). This is a continuous service.

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INSPECTION, GRADING, AND CERTIFICATION

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Inspection, grading, and certification affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: Inspection, grading, and certification affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and any country with import inspection requirements. Tribal recipients and schools that receive USDA Foods purchases of specialty crops are also affected by these services.

Summary

The AMS Specialty Crops Inspection Division inspects fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, nuts, and specialty crops products to certify their class, quality, quantity, and condition upon shipping or receipt in interstate commerce. Anyone with a financial interest in a load of product may request grading services. Services are voluntary except when mandated by Federal marketing orders, school lunch and feeding program requirements, or other regulatory requirements. All services are provided on a user-fee basis. Applicants for service may specify the type of inspection they want according to U.S. grade standards or contract terms. AMS inspection services include a full inspection (quality and condition), condition only, weight or count only, temperature only, or a combination of these certifications. This service facilitates trade and helps provide for the competitive, efficient, and transparent marketing of all specialty crops by consistently ensuring that that consumer, the military, and customers receive specialty crops products of the quality and condition expected. Inspection, grading, and certification services provide trusted, impartial, prompt, and accurate third-party quality assurance.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grading>

Authority

Inspection, grading, and certification services are authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, (7, United States Code, Title 7–Agriculture Chapter 38–Distribution and Marketing of Agricultural Products, Subchapter I–General Provisions, Section 622). This is a continuous service.

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LABORATORY APPROVAL PROGRAM (LAP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: LAP affects handlers and processors of tree and ground nuts, including almonds, peanuts, and pistachios.

Geographical Scope: LAP affects U.S. handlers and processors that trade domestically and in the European Union.

Summary

AMS' Laboratory Approval Service (LAS) approves, or accredits, other labs to perform testing services in support of domestic and international trade. This service is required as part of the marketing orders and agreements or standards that aid tree and ground nut specialty crops producers and handlers to achieve marketing success through minimum quality requirements, marketing and promotion initiatives, and other authorized efforts that foster success for industry members. Marketing orders and agreements are authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937. At the request of industry, other Federal agencies, or foreign governments, laboratory approval programs verify that the analysis of food and agricultural products meet country or industry/customer-specified requirements, allowing specialty crops to be traded domestically or internationally. Specifically, the Laboratory Approval Program (LAP) for Analysis of Mycotoxins plays a role in supporting domestic and/or export trade of almonds, peanuts, and pistachio nuts by approving, or accrediting labs to perform testing for the mycotoxins, aflatoxin and ochratoxin A.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/lab-testing/lab-approval>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (AMA) (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and 7 CFR part 91 provide the statutory authority for LAP. LAP is a continuous service.

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MINIMUM QUALITY AND HANDLING STANDARDS FOR DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED PEANUTS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The minimum quality and handling standards for domestic and imported peanuts affects producers, handlers, and processors of farmers stock peanuts.

Geographical Scope: The minimum quality and handling standards for domestic and imported peanuts affects producers, handlers, and processors located in the southern region of the United States where peanuts are grown, including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.

Summary

AMS monitors and enforces compliance of mandatory inspections requiring aflatoxin testing and grading for quality to ensure each lot of peanuts meets the requirements for human consumption. AMS coordinates activities of the Peanut Standards Board that advises USDA on the standards. AMS maintains a memorandum of understanding with the Food and Drug Administration for reporting aflatoxin levels. AMS works to ensure each peanut lot maintains Positive Lot Identification/traceability system and that each certificate reflects the appropriate lot throughout the marketing chain. The compliance program includes: (1) monitoring and enforcing a traceability on all peanut lots; (2) ensuring all peanuts used for human consumption are subject to minimum quality and grade inspections; (3) ensuring all peanuts used for human consumption are tested for aflatoxin by a USDA laboratory or USDA-approved laboratory; and once tested, are negative in aflatoxin test results; (4) ensuring all peanuts used for non-human consumption are disposed of in approved outlets; (5) ensuring all peanuts imported for human consumption meet the same outgoing quality standards as domestically produced peanuts; (6) visiting all handlers to perform periodic on site visits and compliance follow-up visits to ensure compliance with the Standards; (7) compiling and analyzing monthly acquisition report data from handlers; (8) conducting handler audits; and (9) investigating potential violations and referring cases that have been substantiated to AMS for enforcement activities. The service helps keep harmful peanuts from reaching consumers.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/quality-and-handling-requirements-minimum-quality-and-handling-standards-domestic>

Authority

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) (Public Law 107-171) and 7 CFR part 996. This is a continuous service.

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NATIONAL BIOENGINEERED FOOD DISCLOSURE STANDARD (BE STANDARD)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The BE Standard affects processors, retailers, importers, and manufacturers of bioengineered foods.

Geographical Scope: The BE Standard affects processors, retailers, importers, and manufacturers located in all countries and on Tribal land. Imported products from all countries must disclose BE content. Products are added to the BE Food List if they are approved for legal production and are commercially produced somewhere in the world. A manufacturer on Tribal land with a BE product for sale would be required to disclose.

Summary

The BE Standard requires food manufacturers, importers, and certain retailers to ensure bioengineered (BE) foods are appropriately disclosed. Regulated entities have several disclosure options: text, symbol, electronic or digital link, and/or text message. The following specialty crops are currently on the bioengineered food list and require disclosure: apple (Arctic™ varieties), eggplant (BARI Bt Begun varieties), papaya (ringspot virus-resistant varieties), pineapple (Pink flesh varieties), potato, squash (summer). The BE Standard provides consumers with information regarding the status of bioengineered foods, including specialty crops, they may purchase. The regulated entities of specialty crops on the list of BE foods, who are using non-BE versions, are required to keep records to justify non-disclosure.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/be>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.) and 7 CFR part 66 provide statutory authority for the BE Standard. The BE Standard is a continuous service.

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THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The NOP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of organic agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The NOP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries.

Summary

The National Organic Program (NOP) develops and enforces consistent national standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States and internationally. By applying the organic standards, specialty crops can become organic thereby opening a market opportunity.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>

Authority

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501- 6524) provides statutory authority for NOP. NOP is a continuous service.

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THE NATIONAL SCIENCE LABORATORIES (NSL)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The NSL affects handlers and processors of operational rations for the military, domestic and imported peanuts, peanut flour, peanut butter, imported Brazil nuts, imported pistachios, and avocados.

Geographical Scope: The NSL affects handlers and processors located in the U.S. and internationally.

Summary: The National Science Laboratories (NSL) is a fee-for-service lab network utilized by both industry and government. Through laboratories located in Gastonia, NC, and Blakely, GA, NSL provides chemical, microbiological, and bio-molecular analyses to facilitate marketing of agricultural and food commodities. NSL provides testing services for USDA agencies, including AMS commodity programs, other federal and state agencies, U.S. military, academia and research institutions, and private sector food and agricultural industries. Specifically, NSL provides ongoing scientific and technical support for the Specialty Crops Program in establishing scientific specifications and standards and assisting in solving scientific/testing related issues. Also, NSL provides testing services that ultimately assists SCP Specialty Crops Inspection and Market Development Divisions in ensuring the quality and safety of operational rations for the military; aflatoxin levels of domestic and imported peanuts, peanut flour, peanut butter, imported Brazil nuts, and imported pistachios; and varietal verification activities of avocados.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/lab-testing/nsl>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (AMA) (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and 7 CFR part 91 Chapter 1 provide the statutory authority for NSL. NSL is a continuous service.

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PERISHABLE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES ACT (PACA)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: PACA affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Geographical Scope: PACA affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S.

Summary

The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) was enacted in 1930 at the request of the fruit and vegetable industry to promote fair trade in the industry. PACA protects businesses dealing in fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables by establishing and enforcing a code of fair business practices and by helping companies resolve business disputes. PACA facilitates fair trade practices through education, mediation, arbitration, licensing, and enforcement. PACA creates accountability for the wholesale fruit and vegetable industry, provides financial protection and accountability in the produce industry, and creates a level playing field throughout the supply chain.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/paca>

Authority

PACA is authorized by the following statutes: 7 USC, 499a - 499t and 7 CFR part 46 and 47. PACA is a continuous service.

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PESTICIDE DATA PROGRAM (PDP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: PDP affects producers and distributors of select commodity groups, including specialty crops. For a complete listing of commodities that have been included in the program, please visit the [PDP Commodity History](#).

Geographical Scope: PDP affects producers and distributors located in all countries. PDP data is used to address international maximum residue limit (MRL) concerns.

Summary

The Pesticide Data Program (PDP) is the nationally representative pesticide residue monitoring program in the U.S. PDP tests many commodities including specialty crops. PDP results can be used in export negotiations and when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency establishes domestic residue limits (known as tolerances). PDP data contribute to export negotiations when residue limits in a specialty crop are an issue, and to federal pesticide registration review to help continue registered uses on specialty crops.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/datasets/pdp>

Authority

PDP is authorized by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. PDP is a continuous service.

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RESEARCH AND PROMOTION (R&P) PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: R&P Programs affect producers, handlers, processors, and manufacturers of watermelons, softwood lumber, mangos, potatoes, Christmas trees, mushrooms, peanuts, paper and paper-based packaging, popcorn, Hass avocados, honey, highbush blueberries, and pecans.

Geographical Scope: R&P Programs affect producers, handlers, processors, and manufacturers in the U.S. and at some international levels. All programs promote, conduct research, and provide information nationally. Additionally, all programs, except for avocados, may promote their commodity internationally and receive Market Access Program funds from the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Summary

Specialty Crops Research and Promotion (R&P) Programs are established under Federal law at the request of their industries. R&P Programs derive funding through industry assessments (fees). These funds are used to increase the success of the businesses and farmers within their industries by allowing farmers and other stakeholders to pool funds and develop a coordinated program of research, promotion, and consumer information with the goals of improving, maintaining, and developing markets for their products. R&P Programs also yield many benefits for public health and nutrition, local and global economies, sustainability, and humanitarian efforts. These programs are created to help the produce and specialty crops industries expand domestic and foreign markets for their commodities. In addition to AMS, these programs are overseen by representatives of the industry, all of whom are nominated by their peers and appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. In 2022, specialty crops R&P programs collected \$176.4 million in assessments.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion>

Authority

The following statutes provide the authority for R&P Programs: Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 7411-7425); Potato Research and Promotion Act – (7 U.S.C. 2611-2627); Watermelon Research and Promotion Act (7 U.S.C. 4901-4916); Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6101-6112); Popcorn Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act (7 U.S.C. 7481-7491); and Hass Avocado Promotion, Research and Information Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 7801-7813). R&P Programs are a continuous service.

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RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (RFSI) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: RFSI Cooperative Agreements affect processors, manufacturers, and wholesalers of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Geographical Scope: RFSI Cooperative Agreements affect processors, manufacturers, and wholesalers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: RFSI Cooperative Agreements affect new and beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran producers, processors, and other middle-of-the-supply businesses owned by socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the Small Business Administration.

Summary

AMS is entering into cooperative agreements with each U.S. State and Territory for Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) Cooperative Agreements. Following execution of the agreement, states will submit State Plans to develop and administer coordinated initiatives to build resilience across the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain in their state. Funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry. Infrastructure Grants are used for the purpose of expanding middle-of-the food-supply-chain capacity for locally and regionally produced foods and offer more and better market opportunities and new streams of revenue to small and mid-sized agricultural producers, including those who may not have access to value-added opportunities or processing to meet market demand for premium or value-added products, such as underserved producers.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsi>

Authority

RFSI Cooperative Agreements are authorized by Section 1001(b)(4) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117—2). This service is a \$420 million grant program that expires May 24, 2027.

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SECTION 608E IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Section 608e import requirements affect foreign exporters and domestic importers, producers, and marketers of avocados, dates (other than for processing), hazelnuts/filberts, grapefruit, table grapes, kiwifruit, olives, onions, oranges, Irish potatoes, pistachios, raisins, field-grown tomatoes, and walnuts. The requirement for inspection applies to either foreign exporters or domestic importers. The service benefits domestic producers and marketers by helping maintain markets and consumers by having access to a consistent supply of certain products year-round.

Geographical Scope: Section 608e import requirements affect foreign exporters and domestic importers, producers, and marketers located in the federal marketing order region. Marketing orders apply to commodities grown in the smallest practicable area in the United States. That area can be as small as a few counties and extend to one state or multiple states. Marketing orders that have corresponding import requirements for products grown in a multi-state region under a combined marketing order or grown in more than one state under separate marketing orders exist in Florida and Texas (oranges and grapefruit); California-Arizona-New Mexico (pistachios); Oregon-Washington (hazelnuts/filberts); Idaho-Oregon (onions); and Idaho-Oregon and Colorado (potatoes). Marketing orders that have corresponding import requirements for products grown in a specific state exist in Florida (avocados and tomatoes) and California (dates, grapes, kiwifruit, olives, raisins, and walnuts).

Summary

AMS monitors imports of 14 specialty crop commodities to ensure compliance with minimum quality standards also applied to the handling of U.S. grown products under Federal marketing orders. The service fosters a fair-playing field between imports and domestic products when in U.S. marketing channels. AMS employees use the Compliance Enforcement Management System that connects to Customs and Border Protection's Automated Commercial Environment to gain access to documents necessary for monitoring imports and following up on non-compliance. The service helps avoid situations in which the quality of inferior products harms market opportunities for competing products. The service maintains the wholesomeness and high quality of products in U.S. channels for consumers, regardless of whether the products were domestically grown or imported. The service maintains the U.S. market for the benefit of foreign exporters, domestic importers, and U.S. producers and marketers.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/section8e>

Authority

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

Section 608e of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 as amended ([7 U.S.C. 601-674](#)) provides statutory authority for Section 608e import requirements. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBGP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: SCBGP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: SCBGP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S., which includes 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.

Historically Underserved Groups: State departments of agriculture are encouraged to perform outreach to interested parties, including underserved farmers and ranchers, new and beginning farmers or ranchers, veteran producers, and underserved communities, prior to the development and release of the State's request for proposals or applications, through a transparent process of receiving and considering public comment to identify the State's SCBGP funding priorities.

Summary

The purpose of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by issuing block grants to the agency, commission, or department responsible for agriculture within any of 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. These state agencies will each either issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) or internally develop projects pertaining to the following issues affecting the specialty crops industry: Enhancing food safety; Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crops distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act (21 U.S.C. Chapter 27), for example, developing "Good Agricultural Practices," "Good Handling Practices," "Good Manufacturing Practices," and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers and processors; Investing in specialty crops research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes; Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops; Pest and disease control; Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and Sustainability. SCBGP aids the specialty crops industry by enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops by leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops; assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops; expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crops producers. This program addresses local, regional, and national challenges confronting the specialty crops industry, based on each State's identified funding priority needs, conducted as part of their stakeholder outreach.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp>

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

Authority

Legislative authority for SCBGP is provided under section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. § 1621 note), as amended by section 10107 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. No. 115—334) (Farm Bill). SCBGP is a continuous service and is a grant funding opportunity with the following amount available for FY23: \$72.9 million.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

SPECIALTY CROP MULTI-STATE PROGRAM (SCMP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: SCMP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: SCMP affects producers, handlers, and processors located in the U.S., which includes 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.

Summary

The Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) offers grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by funding collaborative, multi-state projects that address the following regional or national level specialty crops issues: food safety; plant pests and disease; research; crop-specific projects addressing common issues; and marketing and promotion. A multi-state partnership is a project that implements activities with measurable outcomes that benefit two or more U.S. States and/or Territories. Projects should lead to measurable benefits for specialty crops growers, encourage partnerships among specialty crops organizations, and reduce duplication of effort among participating organizations. Funds are competitively awarded to state departments of agriculture and entities in nonparticipating states within any of 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.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scmp>

Authority

Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 1621 note). Assistance listing 10 authorizes SCMP. SCMP is a grant service with an annual availability of \$5 million.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

SPECIALTY CROPS MARKET NEWS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Specialty Crops Market News affects producers, handlers, processors, retailers, and wholesalers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: Specialty Crops Market News affects producers, handlers, processors, retailers, and wholesalers in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

Summary

Specialty Crops Market News disseminates detailed information on marketing conditions for hundreds of agricultural commodities at major domestic and international wholesale markets, production areas, and ports of entry. Using direct contacts with salespersons, suppliers, brokers, and buyers, Market News reporters collect, validate, analyze, and organize unbiased data on price, volume, quality, and condition, making the data collected available within hours of collection at no cost. Since 1915, Specialty Crops Market News reports have provided an exchange of information among growers, shippers, wholesalers, and others on current supplies, demand, and prices of over 400 fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, ornamental, and other specialty crops. Because of the perishable and seasonal nature of these commodities, prices and supplies fluctuate rapidly from day to day, and even from hour to hour. Thus, fast, timely, and impartial reporting of supply, price, and market conditions helps facilitate an efficient marketing system. The information is gathered through confidential telephone and face-to-face interviews carried out by skilled market reporters employed jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and State agencies. Information provided by Market News is impartial, current, and reliable. Reports are disseminated free of charge through the Market News website, newspapers, radio, and other Internet sources and are available by email through the USDA Economics, Statistics and Market Information System (ESMIS) and as Scheduled Reports through the Portal. About 375 different formatted reports are issued daily, weekly, monthly, or annually to assist industry members in making informed marketing decisions. Additionally, a nearly unlimited number of customized reports are available from the market News Portal through options selected by the Portal user. The produce industry is dependent on Market News information (prices and movement) to make better marketing decision. The information provides a level of playing field for all stakeholders.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/fruits-vegetables>

Authority

The Organic Act of the Department of Agriculture (1862), establishing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), states “Be It Enacted 10 11 by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that there is hereby established at the seat of government of the United States a Department of Agriculture, the general designs and duties of which shall be to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word, and to procure, propagate, and distribute among the people new and valuable seeds and plants”. In the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, the Congress declared that “a sound, efficient, and properly operated system for distributing and marketing agricultural products is essential to a prosperous agriculture and is indispensable to the maintenance of full employment and to the welfare, prosperity, and health of the Nation.” This act provides Market News with very broad authorities. It directs the Department of Agriculture to “collect, tabulate, and disseminate statistics on market supplies, storage stocks, quantity, quality, and condition of such products in various positions in the marketing channel, utilization of such products and shipments and unloads thereof.” Specialty Crops Market News is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (TOPP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: TOPP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: TOPP affects producers, handlers, and processors located in the U.S.

Summary

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) provides mentoring, technical assistance, and community building support to specialty crops producers wishing to transition to organic production. Transitioning to organic requires specific knowledge about local growing conditions and market dynamics. Mentoring and technical assistance helps specialty crops farmers to break down barriers to entry into the value-added market sector of organics.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp>

Authority

TOPP is part of the American Recovery Plan and expires October 1, 2027.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

U.S. GRADE STANDARDS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: U.S. grade standards affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: U.S. grade standards affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers in all countries. U.S. standards are a foundation of and inform the standards of countries around the world.

Summary

The Specialty Crops Inspection Division develops and maintains more than 300 U.S. grade standards for fresh and processed fruits, vegetables, nuts, and miscellaneous products that are the foundation of worldwide commodity communication and trade. U.S. grade standards are used in support of USDA specialty crops grading and verification programs; by other AMS and USDA programs, including Market News and procurement programs; and, by State departments of agriculture, as a common language for trade that reflects current market practices and needs.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards>

Authority

U.S. grade standards are authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 USC Title 7–Agriculture Chapter 38–Distribution and Marketing of Agricultural Products, Subchapter I–General Provisions, Section 622). U.S. grade standards are a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)

COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PEST SURVEY (CAPS) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The CAPS Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: The CAPS Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S.

Summary

The Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program's mission is to conduct exotic plant pest surveys through a national network of cooperators and stakeholders to protect American agriculture and natural resources. The CAPS Program provides funding for pest detection surveys, which enables early detection and response and allows for the U.S. to verify pest free areas to maintain export market access.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/caps>

Authority

The CAPS Program is authorized by 7 CFR § 371.3 and is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

DOMESTIC PEST EVALUATION AND RESPONSE

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities.

Geographical Scope: Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S.

Summary

Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response coordinates national pest programs and plant health emergencies, manages pest surveys and detections, and/or develops regulatory strategies for pest incursions. By responding promptly to pest incursions, Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response minimizes the impacts.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases>

Authority

Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response is authorized by 7 CFR § 371.3. This service has an expiration date of September 29, 2023.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

DOMESTIC SPECIALTY CROP PESTS PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The Domestic Specialty Crop Pests Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of stone fruit, citrus, grapes, berries, forest products, grains, seeds, nursery plants, potatoes, apples, and nuts.

Geographical Scope: The Domestic Specialty Crop Pests Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers in the U.S.

Summary

The goal of the Domestic Specialty Crop Pests Program is to protect U.S. fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops from adverse impacts associated with invasive pests, such as crop damage or threats to international trade and interstate commerce. The USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program works with State, Tribal, university, and industry partners to develop and implement practices, policies, and regulations that prevent or mitigate impacts for invasive pests of Federal regulatory significance. These activities include verifying pest distribution, identifying and mitigating risk pathways to prevent long distance spread of the pests, developing, and implementing diagnostic tools and pest mitigation strategies, and communicating with the public to gain support for program strategies. These efforts help U.S. farmers export their products, prevent damage to specialty crops production (helping to ensure the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables), and protect natural resources, including forests and residential landscapes. Among the pests and diseases, the program currently addresses are exotic fruit flies, a variety of citrus pests and diseases, the glassy-winged sharpshooter, spotted lanternfly, pale cyst nematode, the light brown apple moth, European grapevine moth, navel orange worm, and *Phytophthora ramorum*, among others. Overall, the program directly protects specialty crops production worth more than \$10 billion in 2020 (APHIS internal analysis based on National Agricultural Statistics Survey data). The program indirectly protects additional specialty crops production valued at \$7 billion in 2020, by preventing the spread of these damaging pests and diseases to new areas (based on APHIS analysis using Economic Research Service data). Without the SCP program, trading partners might not accept a variety of U.S. fruits and vegetables.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases>

Authority

The Domestic Specialty Crop Pests Program is authorized by 7 CFR §371.3. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS PROGRAMS (IPMSP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: IPMSP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all plants and plant products, including specialty crops.

Geographical Scope: IPMSP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries.

Summary

International Phytosanitary Management and Standards Programs (IPMSP) assist with trade negotiations and market access requests for importing and exporting specialty crop products while preventing the spread of plant pests and diseases. In addition, IPMSP works directly with U.S. industry to certify, facilitate, and promote safe trade of U.S. agricultural exports. IPMSP supports safe agricultural trade and expansion of specialty crop products into new markets.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/international/phytosanitary-management>

Authority

The statute that authorizes IPMSP is 7 CFR § 371.3. IPMSP is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

NATIONAL CLEAN PLANT NETWORK (NCPN)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The NCPN affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of fruit trees, hops, berries, grapes, citrus, sweet potatoes, and roses.

Geographical Scope: The NCPN affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S.

Summary

The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) works to establish a network of clean plant centers for diagnostic and pathogen elimination services to produce clean propagative plant material and maintain blocks of pathogen-tested plant material in sites throughout the United States. To carry out the program, NCPN consults with a wide range of stakeholders including State departments of agriculture, universities, and industry. Funded projects focus on producing clean plants covering specialty crops such as fruit trees, grapes, hops, berries, citrus, sweet potato, and roses.

Please see program homepage for more information:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/ppa-ppdmdpp/sa_ncpn

Authority

NCPN is authorized by 7 CFR § 371.3. NCPN is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

PLANT PROTECTION ACT (PPA) 7721

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: PPA 7721 affects industry, local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, Tribal entities, and academia serving to protect nursery plants, berries, grapes, citrus, and potatoes.

Geographical Scope: PPA 7721 affects industry, local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, Tribal entities, and academia located in all 50 states of the U.S., and Guam and Puerto Rico.

Summary

Under the PPA 7721's Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program, APHIS provides funding to its partners to help them prevent, detect, and mitigate invasive plant pests and diseases. PPA 7721 funding for plant pest and disease management and disaster prevention activities are organized into six major goal areas: 1) enhance plant pest/disease analysis and survey; 2) target domestic inspection activities at vulnerable points in the safeguarding continuum; 3) enhance and strengthen pest identification and technology; 4) safeguard nursery production; 5) conduct outreach and education to increase public understanding, acceptance, and support of plant pest and disease eradication and control efforts; and 6) enhance mitigation capabilities.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/ppa-projects>

Authority

The statute that provides authority for PPA 7721 is 7 CFR § 371.3. PPA 7721 is a continuous service.

Office of the Chief Economist (OCE)

OFFICE OF PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY (OPMP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: OPMP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: OPMP affects producers, handlers, and processors in all countries.

Summary

Summary

The Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) represents the voice of the grower in pest management policies made by federal agencies. The primary role of OPMP is to gather and furnish information about agronomic practices and needs of agricultural stakeholders as they pertain to pesticide regulatory decisions set forth by EPA, especially decisions affecting the availability of pest management tools for specialty and minor crops.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.usda.gov/oce/pest/about>

Authority

Section 614 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (1998 Farm Bill) (P.L. 105-85) authorizes OPMP. This is a continuous service.

Research, Education, and Economics (REE)

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE (ARS)

INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: ARS investments in research affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: ARS investments in research affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries and on Tribal lands.

Summary

As the USDA's in-house research agency, ARS research addresses the common concerns raised by most, if not all, specialty crop groups including the reduced availability of labor; pressure from insects and plant diseases; reduced availability of land, water, and energy resources; access to foreign markets; increasing costs and greater management complexities associated with compliance with Federal and State regulations; shifting market factors; maintaining productive and sustainable crops as the climate changes; and greater demand for improved food safety. ARS actively partners with other federal agencies and others where expertise in specialty crop research is critical for success including programs for Interregional Research Project #4 and National Clean Planet Network. Specific examples of ARS research that increases production and lowers costs include breeding new, improved varieties of fruits and vegetables through public-private partnerships across the U.S., leveraging ARS gene bank resources for exploring crop genetic diversity and wild relatives, and supporting genomics-enabled technology for fruits and vegetables in partnerships with Breeding Insight at Cornell University. Examples of new ARS varieties include romaine lettuce with resistance to lettuce drop disease; two inbred lines of broccoli adapted to hot summer environments of the eastern United States; new dwarfing apple rootstocks that are resistant to fire blight; three new peach cultivars ('Crimson Joy', 'Liberty Joy', and 'Rich Joy') that mitigate losses in the southeast due changing climate; a new northern highbush blueberry cultivar ('Talisman') that is adapted to mechanical harvesting; new strawberry cultivars ('Cordial' and 'Keepsake') adapted to mid-Atlantic production; two improved carrot lines, two pea varieties ('USDA Dint Winter' and 'USDA Mica Winter'), and the 'Rainier Russet' potato variety. ARS has developed upgrades to an intelligent spray system for specialty crops. A commercially upgraded version of the intelligent spray system was developed by ARS scientists in Wooster, Ohio, in collaboration with Smart Guided Systems LLC. New features in the system includes tree counting, tree size, foliage density heat map comparison capability, liquid volume sprayed per plant, maps of sprayed plant locations, cloud sync feature, and other options. The upgraded commercial system has been used as a retrofit kit

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

on existing sprayers by U.S. growers and other countries for crops including citrus, nursery, pecan, blueberry, peach, almond, apple, pear, and grape. Pesticide usage reduction ranges from 30 to 85 percent, depending on crop types and growth stages. The John Deere Company now sells the commercial intelligent spray control system mounted on tractors for high-value crop applications. This environmentally sustainable product received the 2021 SIMA Gold Metal, which is the largest agricultural innovation award in Europe. In addition, the Permanent Crop Analyzer, a part of the commercial intelligent spray system, was awarded the 2021 Top-10 New Product winners by the World Ag Expo (NP 305, Project No. 5082-21620-001-00D). ARS has active specialty crop breeding research and intellectual property protection. Developing and then protecting new, improved varieties in the U.S. and overseas is one way ARS contributes to improved specialty crop production and helping U.S. growers maintain their global competitive edge. ARS' default strategy is public release of new varieties but where IP protection is a valuable strategy, often with university partners. The goal is to help U.S. producers rapidly adopt a new fruit or nut variety that is not available anywhere else. For ARS cultivars, the default Intellectual Property (IP) position is public domain. IP protection and licensing is driven by the needs of the stakeholders for adoption. The IP strategy for specialty crops is very specific not only to the crop but to the cultivar. The strategy changes over time based upon stakeholder input. As an example, ARS pepper cultivars are generally placed in the public domain without IP protection. They are readily adopted by the industry.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/>

Authority

ARS research is authorized by the Department of Agriculture Organic Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. 2201 note); Act of June 29, 1935 (7 U.S.C. 427); Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1621 note); Food and Agriculture Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-113), as amended (7 U.S.C. 1281 note); Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198) (7 U.S.C. 1281 note); Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-624) (7 U.S.C. 1421 note); Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (FAIR) (P.L. 104-127); and Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-185). ARS derived most of its objectives from statutory language, specifically the “Purposes of Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education” set forth in Section 801 of FAIR. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE (ERS)

RESEARCH AND MARKET OUTLOOK PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: ERS research and market outlook programs affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crop commodities.

Geographical Scope: ERS research and market outlook programs affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries.

Summary

The mission of USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) is to anticipate trends and emerging issues in agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America and to conduct high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making. ERS's market outlook program on specialty crops generates outlook reports on fruit and tree nuts (March and September) and on vegetables and pulses (April and December). These reports provide market intelligence and forecasts and cover production, consumption, shipments, international trade, and prices received, among other topics, with details for the fresh market and processing use. ERS's research program generates economic research reports and articles on various topics, including specialty crops. These outputs tend to be in-depth explorations of a specific subject. Topics covered since 2021 include organic agriculture, U.S. export competitiveness in tree nuts, rising use of the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program, local food production, and international trade in specialty crops. ERS also publishes data visualizations and data products related to specialty crops. Examples include food availability per capita, forecasts of international trade, food consumption and nutrient intake, fruit and vegetable prices, and yearbook tables for fruit and tree nuts and for vegetables and pulses. This service anticipates trends and emerging issues of importance to the specialty crops industry and provides high-quality, objective economic research to inform and enhance public and private decision making on matters related to that industry. ERS research and market outlook programs address the challenges of anticipating trends and emerging issues of importance and of assembling in a timely fashion the economic analysis and statistical information needed by the specialty crops industry for public- and private-sector decision making.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/about-ers/agency-structure/market-and-trade-economics-division-mted/>

Authority

ERS research and market outlook programs are authorized by 7 CFR § 2.21(a)(8) Delegations of Authority Related to Economic Research and Statistical Reporting. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

INTERREGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT #4 (IR-4)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The IR-4 affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The IR-4 affects producers, handlers, and processors located in all countries.

Summary

The Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4) ensures that specialty crop farmers have legal access to safe and effective crop protection products. Within the REE agencies IR-4 is supported by NIFA (\$15M/year) and ARS (\$3.2M/year). The IR-4 program helps specialty crop growers address pest management concerns so they can produce healthy fruits, vegetables, herbs, and other crops as well as flowers, shrubs, and landscape plants. The IR-4 Project develops the data necessary for the registration of safe and effective pest management solutions with the EPA. IR-4 research takes place at land grant universities and ARS facilities. IR-4 helps with the establishment of global standards in instances where Codex MRLs (max residue limits) are absent, which in turn helps U.S. growers build export markets. IR-4 has also helped establish a global network of minor use pesticide programs and was pivotal in the establishment of the Minor Use foundation in 2018 and the harmonization of international MRLS to break down trade barriers for agricultural products.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/minor-crop-pest-management-program-interregional-research-project-4-ir>

Authority

IR-4 is authorized by the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157(e)). IR-4 is a continuous grant service with a current maximum amount available from NIFA of \$15 million.

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NIFA FUNDING

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: NIFA funding affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: NIFA funding affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Summary

NIFA funded plant breeding, genetics and genomics research includes projects to cut the time needed to develop new disease and environmental stress resistant cultivars by 50%. For example, genomic information for cucumbers, melons, grapes, blueberry, and cranberry has produced higher yielding varieties. NIFA funded pest management and pollinator health research has improved strategies for dealing with invasive insect pests like spotted-wing drosophila, brown marmorated stink bug, and spotted lanternfly and improved pollination strategies for blueberry, almonds, and cucumber. NIFA funding helps improve production efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness by developing and deploying tools to reduce losses caused by diseases, nematodes, insects, and weeds; developing new varieties better adapted to production systems and variable growing conditions; promoting technologies (e.g., machine harvest, automation) that reduce labor inputs; and, designing and demonstrating production practices (e.g., cover cropping) with low external input that preserve soil health, water quality and the environment.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants>

Authority

NIFA funding is authorized by 7 CFR part 3430 and is a continuous service. NIFA funding is a grant program that has awards available ranging from \$50,000 to \$10 million.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

SPECIALTY CROP RESEARCH INITIATIVE (SCRI)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: SCRI affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crop commodities.

Geographical Scope: SCRI affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries and on Tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Summary

The intent of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) is to promote collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate application of scientific discovery and technology to solving needs of the various specialty crop industries. The SCRI program has five legislatively mandated focus areas to address the critical needs of the specialty crop industry by developing and disseminating science-based tools to address needs of specific crops and their regions. The SCRI will give priority to projects that are multi-state, multi-institutional, or trans-disciplinary, and include explicit mechanisms to communicate results to producers and the public. The purpose of the SCRI program is to address the critical needs of the specialty crop industry by awarding grants to support research and extension that address key challenges of national, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of food and agriculture, including conventional and organic food production systems. The philosophy of the SCRI program is: Truly effective, long-term solutions to specialty crop industry challenges can best be achieved by understanding and treating those problems as complex systems of many interacting components.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/specialty-crop-research-initiative-scri>

Authority

SCRI was reauthorized by Section 7305 of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, which amends Section 412 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (AREERA) of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632). Section 412 of the AREERA of 1998 established a specialty crop research and extension initiative to address the critical needs of the specialty crop industry by developing and disseminating science-based tools to address needs of specific crops

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and their regions. Section 7306 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 added a requirement that, in addition to the scientific peer review NIFA regularly conducts, a panel of specialty crop industry representatives review and rank SCRI applications for merit, relevance, and impact. The regulations for SCRI may be found in Subpart F of 7 CFR 3430. This is a continuous service.

SCRI is a grant that has \$80 million in funding available annually. Project budgets, on average, are between \$50,000 and \$6 million.

Rural Development (RD)

RURAL BUSINESS COOPERATIVE SERVICES (RBCS)

AGRICULTURE INNOVATION CENTERS (AIC) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The AIC Program affects producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The AIC Program affects producers located in the U.S.

Summary

The purpose of the Agriculture Innovation Center (AIC) Program is to establish and operate Agriculture Innovation Centers (Centers) that provide technical and business development assistance to agricultural producers seeking to engage in developing and marketing of value-added agricultural products.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/agriculture-innovation-center-program>

Authority

The AIC Program is authorized by section 7608 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 1632b) and is implemented by 7 CFR part 4284 subparts A and K. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GUARANTEED LOAN (B&I) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The B&I Program affects producers, handlers, processors, retailers, and other levels in the food supply chain that provide distribution, aggregation, and value-add of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The B&I Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: The B&I Program offers priority points for projects in distressed communities, for rural communities meeting a poverty threshold, for communities meet state unemployment thresholds, and for veteran-owned businesses.

Summary

The Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) Program improves the economic health of rural communities by increasing access to business capital through loan guarantees. This enables commercial lenders to provide affordable financing for rural businesses, including value add, processing and other food supply chain businesses that source from specialty crop producers. USDA Rural Development published a notice in the [Federal Register](#) clarifying how the B&I Program can be used to support local and regional food-related projects.

Through fiscal year 2023, at least 5 percent of B&I funds are set aside for local food-related projects. Under this set aside, the B&I Program provides loan guarantees for entities that process, distribute, aggregate, store and/or market locally or regionally produced agricultural food products to support community development and farm and ranch income. Agricultural production is eligible only if the project is vertically integrated, ineligible for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm loan programs assistance, and it is part of an integrated business also involved in the processing of agricultural products. Commercial nurseries, forestry, and aquaculture operations are eligible without these restrictions.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/business-industry-loan-guarantees>

Authority

The B&I Program is authorized by Code of Federal Regulations, 7 CFR 5001 and by the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, 7 U.S.C. 1932. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

INTERMEDIARY RELENDING PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The Intermediary Relending Program affects handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities. The program could also potentially affect producers if it were to fund value-added processing or similar; the program cannot fund agricultural production.

Geographical Scope: The Intermediary Relending Program affects handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: The purpose of the Intermediary Relending Program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural communities, especially disadvantaged and remote communities. Under this program, loans are provided to local organizations (intermediaries) for the establishment of revolving loan funds for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients to promote community development, establish new businesses, establish and support microlending programs and create or retain employment opportunities in rural areas.

Summary

This program provides 1% low-interest loans to local lenders or “intermediaries” that re-lend to businesses to improve economic conditions and create jobs in rural communities. The purpose of the Intermediary Relending Program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural communities, especially disadvantaged and remote communities. Under this program, loans are provided to local organizations (intermediaries) for the establishment of revolving loan funds for the purpose of providing loans to ultimate recipients to promote community development, establish new businesses, establish and support microlending programs and create or retain employment opportunities in rural areas. Intermediary lenders are encouraged to complement state and regional strategies, and partner with other public and private organizations that can provide complementary resources. This includes food systems lending to supply chain businesses that might serve specialty crop producers – such as vegetable processors, aggregators, and value add producers. The Intermediary Relending Program provides a potential source of debt capital to finance businesses that are part of the food supply chain sourcing from specialty crop producers, bringing product to market and enabling access to those markets.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/intermediary-relending-program>

Authority

The Basic Program is governed by the Code of Federal Regulations, 7 CFR Part 4274. The Loan Servicing is governed by 7 CFR Part 1951. This program was originally authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, Pub L. 99-198 (1985 Farm Bill). This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (RBDG)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: RBDG affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities; however, agricultural production is not eligible.

Geographical Scope: RBDG affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Summary

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG) are designed to provide technical assistance and training for small rural businesses that have fewer than 50 new workers and less than \$1 million in gross revenue. Business and technical assistance for specialty crop producers provides knowledge, tools, and resources to operate viable businesses, build capacity, business operation efficiency, and profitability. RBDG money must be used for projects that benefit rural areas or towns outside the urbanized periphery of any city with a population of 50,000 or more.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants>

Authority

Rural Business Development Grants are authorized by the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (ConAct). Basic Program – 7 CFR Part 4280, Subpart E. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANT (RCDG) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The RCDG Program affects any business group seeking to form a cooperative, including producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities; agricultural production, however, is not eligible.

Geographical Scope: The RCDG Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S.

Summary

The Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) Program improves the economic condition of rural areas by helping individuals and businesses start, expand, or improve rural cooperatives and other mutually owned businesses through Cooperative Development Centers. Nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply for this program and provide technical assistance to specialty crop producers who want to form cooperatives. These cooperatives may help specialty crop producers to negotiate prices, access markets, and provide other key business levers to improve position in the market and improve economic condition and viability overall achieving enough critical mass of volume or market position to dictate own terms, enter markets and negotiate prices, and improve viability.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-cooperative-development-grant-program>

Authority

The RCDG Program is authorized by 7 USC 1932 (310)(B)(e). This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM (REAP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The REAP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The REAP affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands and small businesses in geographical areas under 50,000 people.

Historically Underserved Groups: REAP grants benefit projects in distressed or disadvantaged communities as described in the NOSA, while REAP loans provide priority points for underserved communities.

Summary

The Rural Energy for American Program (REAP) provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing. Energy efficiency and solutions for specialty crop producers reduce costs overall, including energy and utility expenses, the cost of doing business, and fixed costs.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act/rural-energy-america-program-reap>

Authority

REAP grants are governed by Code of Federal Regulation, 7 CFR Part 4280, while REAP loans are governed by Code of Federal Regulation, 7 CFR 5001. This program is authorized by Title IX of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (VAPG)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The VAPG affects producers and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The VAPG affects producers and processors located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Historically Underserved Groups: Ten percent of available funds for applications will be reserved for applicants qualifying as beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. An additional 10% of available funds will be reserved for applications from farmers or ranchers proposing development of mid-tier value chains. Beginning, veteran, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers and applicants proposing mid-tier value chains not awarded for reserved funds will compete with other eligible VAPG applications. In addition, any funds that become available for persistent poverty counties through enactment of FY 2023 appropriations will be allocated for assistance in persistent poverty counties.

Summary

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter value-added activities to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. Independent producers (includes harvesters and steering committees), agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures, as defined in the program regulation, are eligible to apply for this program. VAPG provides grants for working capital and planning activities.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants>

Authority

The VAPG program is authorized under section 231 of the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-224), as amended by section 10102 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) (see 7 U.S.C. 1627c) and implemented by 7 CFR part 4284, subpart J. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE (RHS)

OFF-FARM LABOR HOUSING

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Off-Farm Labor Housing affects producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: Off-Farm Labor Housing affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: Off-Farm Labor Housing benefits domestic farm laborers, which is defined as a person who receives a portion of his/her income from farm labor employment and may include the immediate family members residing with such a person. The beneficiaries of this program include earners of very-low to moderate-income: very-low income is below 50% of area median income; low-income is 50-80% of area median income; and moderate income is capped at \$5,500 above low-income limit.

Summary

Off-Farm Labor Housing provides affordable financing to develop housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm laborers, for specialty crop producers and other commodity producers.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multifamily-housing-programs/farm-labor-housing-direct-loans-grants>

Authority

Off-Farm Labor Housing is authorized by 7 CFR 3560-Subpart L, Title V of the Housing Act of 1949. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

ON-FARM LABOR HOUSING

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: On-Farm Labor Housing affects producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: On-Farm Labor Housing affects producers located in the U.S.

Historically Underserved Groups: On-Farm Labor Housing is available to very-low to moderate-income earners: very-low income is below 50% of area median income; low-income is 50-80% of area median income; and moderate income is capped at \$5,500 above low-income limit.

Summary

On-Farm Labor Housing provides affordable financing to develop or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for very-low income (1) domestic, migrant, and seasonal farm laborers, for specialty crop and other (commodity) producers.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multifamily-housing-programs/farm-labor-housing-loans>

Authority

On-Farm Labor Housing is authorized by 7 CFR 3560 Subpart M, Title V of the Housing Act of 1949. This is a continuous service.

Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs (TFAA)

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS)

AGRIBUSINESS TRADE MISSIONS (ATMs)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: ATMs affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: ATMs affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located internationally, domestically, on Tribal lands, regionally, and state-wide. USDA Agribusiness Trade Missions are hosted in countries around the world. The FAS Trade Missions and Shows team works closely with the Intertribal Agriculture Council, state and regional trade groups, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture to help target and recruit tribal-owned U.S. agribusinesses and small and medium U.S. agribusinesses in their respective states and regions.

Historically Underserved Groups: ATMs benefit socially disadvantaged and veterans, as well as women, minority, and tribal-owned companies.

Summary

USDA Agribusiness Trade Missions (ATMs) provide in-person opportunities for U.S. agricultural and food exporters to build relationships with potential customers overseas, gather market intelligence, and generate sales of U.S. agricultural and food products. The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Trade Missions and Shows team hosts week-long Trade Missions in business capitals around the globe to enable U.S. agricultural producers to access new or expand existing international markets. ATMs provide first-hand education to U.S. agribusinesses, state departments of agriculture representatives, state and regional trade groups, and USDA Cooperator groups about economic conditions and regulatory environments in host-country markets and facilitate one-on-one business meetings for U.S. exporters with foreign buyers from targeted countries. Trade Missions are led by a senior USDA principal who serves as the Head of Delegation at trade mission events and site visits and engages host government representatives in trade-related policy dialogue that furthers U.S. interests and bolsters bilateral relations. ATMs feature a diverse range of U.S. commodities, including U.S. agribusinesses that promote specialty crops, most commonly tree nuts, dried fruits, fruits, and vegetables. Trade Missions are implemented in close collaboration with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, state regional trade groups, and USDA Cooperators, including the Intertribal Agriculture Council. USDA prioritizes small and medium U.S. agribusinesses, targeting especially those that are minority, women, tribal, and veteran owned. USDA Trade Missions target small and medium U.S. agribusinesses, including those in the specialty crops

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sector, and offer a unique platform for opening a door to or increasing sales in markets overseas by arranging one-on-one matchmaking and business-to-business meetings with serious, prospective buyers.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-missions>

Authority

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 ([Pub. L. 115–334](#)), which reauthorized the program for fiscal years 2019–2023, increased the program's flexibility and usefulness to stakeholders by eliminating the 5-year limit on participation by branded products in the program and making minor legislative changes to the program. This is a continuous service.

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AGRICULTURAL TRADE PROMOTION PROGRAM (ATP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The ATP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The ATP affects producers, handlers, and processors in all countries.

Summary

The Agricultural Trade Promotion Program (ATP) supports activities in any foreign country to help U.S. agricultural exporters develop new markets for U.S. agricultural commodities to mitigate the adverse effects of other countries' tariff and non-tariff trade barriers. The ATP provides cost-share assistance to eligible U.S. organizations for activities such as consumer advertising, public relations, point-of-sale demonstrations, participation in trade fairs and exhibits, market research, and technical assistance. The ATP is available to all sectors of U.S. agriculture, including fish and forest product producers, mainly through partnerships with non-profit national and regional organizations.

The ATP is an FAS administered grant program that was created and launched by USDA in late 2018 to help U.S. agricultural exporters identify and access new markets and help mitigate the adverse effects of other countries' trade restrictions. The ATP is a one-time program that was open for applications in 2019 and is no longer accepting applications. Approved ATP participants have until September 30, 2024, to conclude their programs. The ATP forms a partnership between U.S. agricultural industries that suffered damages from the 2018/2019 tariffs imposed on U.S. agricultural products and USDA to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities aimed at finding new markets for U.S. agricultural products.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/agricultural-trade-promotion-program-atp>

Authority

The authority for the APT is 15 U.S.C. 714c(f). The ATP is a grant program with an expiration date of September 30, 2024, an available amount of \$300 million.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

COCHRAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The Cochran Fellowship Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The Cochran Fellowship Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located in all countries. The Cochran Fellowship Program is open to Fellows from eligible low- to middle-income countries (as defined by the World Bank Country and Lending Group list). The Cochran Fellowship Program is country-specific; however, training programs typically work with various agricultural stakeholders including regional and state groups. From a global perspective, training programs are designed and developed with consideration to the Fellows and their country's level of development.

Historically Underserved Groups: U.S. minority serving institutions are eligible to apply for funding opportunities to implement the Cochran Fellowship Program.

Summary

The Cochran Fellowship Program was established to assist eligible countries to develop agricultural systems necessary to meet the food and fiber needs of their domestic populations; and strengthen and enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and agricultural interests in the United States. Depending on the specific training program, the Cochran Fellowship Program strengthens trade relationships and sometimes results in the direct sale of U.S. commodity exports. The Cochran Fellowship Program fosters and encourages relationships with potential trade partners, thereby increasing sales/exports for the specialty crops industry.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/cochran-fellowship-program>

Authority

The Cochran Fellowship Program is authorized by 7 U.S. Code § 3293 - Agricultural fellowship program for middle income countries, emerging democracies, and emerging markets. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

EMERGING MARKETS PROGRAM (EMP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: EMP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: EMP affects producers, handlers, and processors located in all countries. Any country classified by the World Bank as upper middle income or lower income is eligible for the program.

Summary

The Emerging Markets Program (EMP) helps U.S. organizations promote exports of U.S. agricultural products to emerging markets by supporting market assessments to understand the needs of those markets and funding technical assistance activities to implement activities to address identified needs. Through the EMP, FAS provides cost-share funding for technical assistance activities such as feasibility studies, market research, sectorial assessments, orientation visits, specialized training, and business workshops. The EMP program supports activities to conduct assessments of the food and rural business system needs of emerging markets and transfer knowledge and provide technical assistance to develop those systems in eligible markets. Proposals may seek funding to conduct an assessment, implement technical assistance activities, or support travel to share knowledge and exchange information. The program complements other FAS market development programs through the underlying premise that emerging markets have distinctive characteristics that benefit from specialized assistance before the private sector moves to develop these markets through normal trade promotional activities. Once the basic technical issues have been addressed by the EMP, further market development activities may be considered under other FAS programs.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/emerging-markets-program-emp>

Authority

EMP is authorized by 7 USC 5623. EMP is a continuous grant service with \$8 million available in funding annually.

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EXPORT CREDIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM (GSM-102)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: GSM-102 affects exporters of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: GSM-102 affects exporters located domestically.

Summary

The GSM-102 Credit Guarantee Program guarantees financing for commercial exports of U.S. agricultural products including specialty crops to developing countries and emerging markets. The GSM-102 program assists the specialty crop industry in reducing the financial risk to lenders and encourage exports to buyers in developing countries. The program covers agricultural products including cultivated plants and their products that are of U.S. origin.

Interested parties, including U.S. exporters, foreign importers, and financial institutions, may request that the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) establish a GSM-102 program for a country or region. Prior to announcing the availability of guarantees, CCC evaluates the ability of each country and foreign financial institution to service CCC-guaranteed debt. New financial institutions may be added, or levels of approval for others may be increased or decreased, as information becomes available.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/export-credit-guarantee-program-gsm-102>

Authority

The GSM program is authorized by the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended (7 U.S.C. 5622 and 7 U.S.C. 7 USC 5623). This is a continuous export finance service with \$5 billion made available annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

FACILITY GUARANTEE PROGRAM (FGP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The FGP affects sellers of manufactured goods and services.

Geographical Scope: The FGP affects sellers located domestically. Prior to the announcement for each fiscal year, country eligibility is determined by examining specific qualifying criteria.

Summary

The Facility Guarantee Program (FGP) guarantees financing for commercial exports of capital goods or services for infrastructure improvements in countries where demand for U.S. agricultural products, including specialty crops, may be limited by lack of adequate facilities. The program is designed to boost sales of U.S. agricultural products in countries where demand may be limited due to inadequate storage, processing, handling, or distribution capabilities. The program provides credit guarantees to facilitate the financing of manufacture goods and U.S. services to improve or establish agriculture-related facility in emerging markets. Under the FGP, the Commodity Credit Corporation reduces the financial risk to lenders by guaranteeing payments due from approved foreign financial institutions to U.S. sellers or financial institutions. The program undertakes country, obligor, and environmental risk analysis to support these programs.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/facility-guarantee-program>

Authority

FGP is authorized by the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended (7 U.S.C. 5622 and 7 U.S.C. 7 USC 5623). This is a continuous export finance service with \$500 million made available annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT (FMD) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The FMD Program affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The FMD Program affects producers, handlers, and processors in all countries.

Summary

The Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, also known as the Cooperator Program, helps create, expand, and maintain long-term export markets for U.S. agricultural products. The program can support activities in any market around the world. The FMD Program focuses on generic promotion of U.S. commodities, rather than consumer-oriented promotion of branded products, and FMD funded projects generally address long-term opportunities to reduce foreign import constraints or expand export growth opportunities. For example, this might include efforts to reduce infrastructural or historical market impediments, improve processing capabilities, modify codes and standards, or identify new markets or new uses for the agricultural commodity or product. The FMD benefits U.S. farmers, processors, and exporters by assisting their organizations in maintaining or increasing market share in foreign markets by addressing long-term foreign market import constraints and by identifying new markets or new uses for the agricultural commodity or product in foreign markets. The FMD Program aims to address trade and other technical barriers to export of U.S. agricultural commodities.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/foreign-market-development-program-fmd>

Authority

The authority for the FMD Program is 7 USC 5623. The FMD Program is a continuous grant service with an available amount of \$34.5 million annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

GLOBAL PESTICIDE MAXIMUM RESIDUE LEVEL (MRL) STANDARDS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: Global pesticide maximum residue level (MRL) standards affect regulatory officials and producers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: Global pesticide maximum residue level (MRL) standards affect regulatory officials and producers located in the U.S., Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Summary

The Trade and Regulatory Capacity Building Division (TRCB) is working to align pesticide registration systems and maximum residue limit (MRL) standard setting across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and to do so based on the U.S. regulatory systems and international standard setting bodies. Aligned trade standards support U.S. agricultural products exports to foreign markets. TRCB is also working in partnership with the IR-4 project and the Minor Use Foundation to identify, prioritize, and generate residue data for CODEX MRLs to meet needs at a global scale, while promoting the use of reduced risk pest control. Aligned trade standards will support exports of U.S. specialty crops to foreign markets. Missing, inconsistent, or low MRLs can be trade barriers that limit U.S. agricultural exports.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/maximum-residue-limits-mrl-database>

Authority

The Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977 (PL 95-224, 31 USC § 6301) authorizes this continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM (MAP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The MAP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The MAP affects producers, handlers, and processors located in all countries.

Summary

Through the Market Access Program (MAP), FAS partners with U.S. agricultural trade associations, cooperatives, state regional trade groups, and state agencies to share the costs of overseas marketing and promotional activities that help build commercial export markets for U.S. agricultural products and commodities. MAP activities can be conducted in any foreign market, and MAP-funded activities help build markets for a wide variety of U.S. farm and food products. Through MAP, FAS provides cost-share assistance to eligible U.S. organizations for activities such as consumer advertising, public relations, point-of-sale demonstrations, participation in trade fairs and exhibits, market research, and technical assistance. MAP is an FAS administered grant program that provides funding for the development, expansion, and maintenance of foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products. It is USDA's flagship export development program. The MAP is one of the four Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation (ATPF) programs operated by FAS. MAP aims to provide support for promotion of products in overseas markets.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/market-access-program-map>

Authority

The authority for MAP is 7 USC 5623. MAP is a continuous grant service with \$200 million available annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

QUALITY SAMPLES PROGRAM (QSP)

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The QSP affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: The QSP affects producers, handlers, and processors in all countries.

Summary

The Quality Samples Program (QSP) enables potential customers around the world to discover the quality and benefits of U.S. agricultural products. The program is available in any foreign market and focuses on processors and manufacturers rather than consumers. Under the QSP, participants obtain commodity samples, export them to the target market, and provide the recipient with guidance on how to use the samples. Projects should focus on developing a new market or promoting a new use for the U.S. product. When a project is finished, USDA reimburses the participant for the costs of procuring and transporting the sample. Although all program participants are required to provide technical assistance to the recipients of their commodity samples, the costs for this assistance are not reimbursable. The QSP is a small but impactful program that is used extensively by the U.S. wheat, tree fruit and nuts, hides, rice, seafood, livestock genetics, and soybean industries to demonstrate the quality of their U.S. commodities and reach new potential target markets. Program participants often use QSP in conjunction with the other FAS market development programs to leverage the impact of the samples to spur interest in their products. In FY 2022, FAS funded more than \$1 million in QSP projects for the U.S. cranberry, hops, potato, blueberry, livestock genetics, and wheat industries. The QSP aims to improve foreign familiarity with U.S. products.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/quality-samples-program-qsp>

Authority

The authority for the QSP is 15 U.S.C. 714c(f). The QSP is a continuous grant service with \$2.5 million in funding available annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (TASC) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: The TASC Program affects producers, handlers, and processors of all cultivated plants and their products produced in the United States except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco.

Geographical Scope: The TASC Program affects producers, handlers, and processors located in all countries.

Summary

The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program provides funding to eligible U.S. organizations for projects that address sanitary, phytosanitary, and technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops. Activities can be conducted in any market where a potential or existing threat to U.S. specialty crop exports can be demonstrated. Eligible activities include seminars and workshops, study tours, field surveys, pest and disease research, and pre-clearance programs. Eligible crops include all cultivated plants and their products produced in the United States except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco. The TASC Program assists the specialty crop industry in overcoming trade barriers that inhibit the export of U.S. specialty crops.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/technical-assistance-specialty-crops-tasc>

Authority

The authority for the TASC Program is 7 USC 5623. The TASC Program is a continuous grant service with \$10 million available in funding annually.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

USDA-ENDORSED INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities.

Geographical Scope: USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers located internationally, domestically, on Tribal lands, regionally, and state-wide. USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows are hosted in countries around the world. The FAS Trade Missions and Shows team works closely with the Intertribal Agriculture Council, state and regional trade groups, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture to help target and recruit tribal-owned U.S. agribusinesses and U.S. agribusinesses in their respective states and regions for participation in the USA Pavilion at USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows.

Historically Underserved Groups: USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows benefit socially disadvantaged and veterans, as well as women, minority, and tribal-owned companies.

Summary

USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows highlight the quality and convenience of U.S. agricultural and food products, including specialty crops, featured in the USA Pavilion at some of the world's largest trade events, and help U.S. companies expand their reach to potential customers around the globe. USDA-endorsed Trade Shows provide in-person opportunities for U.S. agricultural and food exporters across diverse sectors, including specialty crops, to showcase the quality and dependability of U.S. agriculture and food products, to build relationships with potential customers overseas, and to generate sales of U.S. agricultural and food products. USDA-endorsed Trade Shows provide U.S. agribusinesses, including those in the specialty crops sector, a platform for directly showcasing product and building relationships with potential buyers overseas.

In collaboration with FAS overseas offices, the FAS Trade Missions and Shows team plans to continue endorsing between 22-24 international Trade Shows each year. USDA endorses international trade shows that will provide the best exposure and marketing opportunities for U.S. companies and producers. Trade shows are endorsed based on the markets they reach, size of the show, and quality of experience and services that are provided to U.S. exporters. This endorsement also allows USDA to provide funding to enhance the USA Pavilion to showcase the variety and quality of U.S. agricultural and food products to potential foreign buyers. USDA/FAS provides participating companies with marketing and promotion services, market intelligence, logistical support, and on-site assistance. The USA Pavilion at USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows typically promotes a diverse range of U.S. agricultural and food products, including specialty crops. USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows that endorse U.S. specialty crops specifically include Fruit Logistica and Asia Fruit Logistica.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-shows>

Authority

Authority for USDA Trade Mission and Trade Shows programs falls under: a) 7 USC §1761 “Foreign Market Development”, b) 7 U.S.C. 5693 “Export Promotion – Foreign Agricultural Service – Functions of the Foreign Agricultural Service,” and; c) 7 U.S.C. 1765b “Functions of the U.S. Agricultural Trade Offices.” This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Competitiveness Initiative Data Collection

U.S. SPECIALTY CROPS TRADE ISSUES REPORTS

Beneficiaries

Supply Chain: U.S. Specialty Crops Trade Issues Reports affect cooperators and exporters of all specialty crop commodities.

Geographical Scope: U.S. Specialty Crops Trade Issues Reports affect cooperators and exporters located in all countries.

Summary

Each year, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that contains, for the period covered by the report, a description of— (A) each factor that affects the export of specialty crops, including each factor relating to any— (i) significant sanitary or phytosanitary issue; (ii) trade barrier; or (iii) emerging sanitary or phytosanitary issue or trade barrier; and (B)(i) any funds provided under subsection (f)(3)(A)(iv) that were not obligated in a fiscal year; and (ii) the reason such funds were not obligated. For this publication, “specialty crops” are defined as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticultural crops, wine, and nursery crops.” The report highlights USDA and the U.S. agricultural industry's efforts and resources to facilitate U.S. specialty crop exports. Cooperation between USDA and the U.S. agricultural industry is not only important for maintaining existing export markets, but also for establishing new markets for U.S. products. Market access, expansion, and retention successes are outlined in the report. Trade barriers such as burdensome requirements related to pre-export plant health inspections, low or missing pesticide maximum residue levels, labeling, or quality certification may discourage some U.S. specialty crop producers from shipping products overseas. However, USDA is committed to assisting U.S. agricultural stakeholders to overcome trade barriers that deter U.S. specialty crop exporters and help them compete in the global marketplace.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/newsroom/us-specialty-crops-trade-issues-2021-report-congress>

Authority

U.S. Specialty Crops Trade Issues Reports are authorized by Section 203(e)(7) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5623) as amended by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (PL 115-34). This is a continuous service.