

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

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Services by Affected Supply Line

Mission Area	Agency	Title of Service	Producer	Handler	Processor	Retail	Trade
FPAC	FSA	Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)	✓				
		Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP)	✓				
		Farm Loan Programs	✓				
		Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program	✓				
		Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program	✓				
		Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC)	✓				
		Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)	✓				
		Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)	✓	✓			
		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
MRP	AMS	Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP)	✓	✓	✓		
		Specialty Crops Market News	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP)	✓	✓	✓		
		U.S. Grade Standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	APHIS	Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Domestic Pest Evaluation and Response	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		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)	✓	✓	✓		✓
REE	ARS	Investments in Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ERS	Research and Market Outlook Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	NIFA	Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		NIFA Funding	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RD	RBCS	Agriculture Innovation Centers (AIC) Program	✓				
		Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	
		Intermediary Relending Program		✓	✓	✓	
		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	FAS	Agribusiness Trade Missions (ATMs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Cochran Fellowship Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Emerging Markets Program (EMP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		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)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP)	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) Program	✓	✓	✓		✓
		USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		U.S. Specialty Crops Trade Issues Reports	✓	✓			✓

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 directory, 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.

Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP)

Beneficiaries

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) indirectly affects producers of specialty crops located in the U.S. by providing cost share to rehabilitate agricultural land and its structures.

Summary

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: [Emergency Conservation Program \(ECP\) | Farm Service Agency](#)

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.

FARM LABOR STABILIZATION AND PROTECTION PILOT PROGRAM (FLSP)

Beneficiaries

The Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection Pilot Program (FLSP) affects producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

FLSP is a grant program for agricultural employers throughout the United States. The program helps ensure that agricultural operations can hire and retain the workers they need to be competitive in the market, while also lifting rural communities across the country. In 2024, USDA awarded \$50 million to 142 grant awardees, reaching 177 unique agricultural operations with over 11,000 employees. The FLSP solicitation was made available to all farm employers; awarded agricultural operations range in size and scope, but the selected awardees largely represent small and mid-sized farmers across 40 states and Puerto Rico. While the largest percentage of FLSP awardees participate in the production of labor-intensive fruits and vegetables, awards also substantially support row crops, livestock production, nursery/greenhouses, and all agricultural commodities.

The awards to farm employers help improve the strength of U.S. food supply chains by addressing labor instability. The program assists farm employers through its provision of hands-on technical assistance and funding that helps support effective recruitment and labor management practices. Beyond direct grantees, many of FLSP's technical assistance tools are available to the broader public, so that all agricultural employers facing labor shortages or challenges can benefit. The program is funded by the Farm Service Agency and administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center.

For general technical assistance tools (created through FLSP) to support all agricultural employers, see: farmers.gov

Please see program homepage for more information:

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

Authority

FLSP is authorized by Pub. L. 117-2.

FARM LOAN PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Farm Loan Programs affect producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S. and its territories, and on all recognized tribal lands.

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 \$2,251,000. 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 \$2,251,000. 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>

Additional information on Farm Loan Program interest rates is also available: [Specialty Crops Farming Resources | Farmers.gov](#)

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 maximum amount available: Direct Operating Loan: \$400,000; Direct Farm Ownership Loan: \$600,000; Direct Emergency Loan: \$500,000; Guaranteed Operating and Farm Ownership Loans, combined: \$2,251,000.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN (FSFL) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) Program 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, hemp, and aquaculture located in the U.S.

Summary

The 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 crop 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 FSFL amount, per request is \$500,000. 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 annually: \$400,000,000.

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FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (FSCSC) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program affects producers of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S.

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, 2023, 2024, or 2025. 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 NOFAs provide the statutory authority for the FSCSC Program. The FSCSC Program expires January 31, 2026.

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MARKETING ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (MASC)

Beneficiaries

Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) affects producers of specialty crops grown in the U.S.

Summary

MASC helps eligible specialty crop producers engage in activities that will aid in expanding domestic specialty crop markets or in developing new markets for their specialty crops in 2025. MASC assistance helps specialty crop producers meet higher marketing costs related to perishability of specialty crops, specialized handling and transport equipment with temperature and humidity control, packaging to prevent damage, moving perishables to market quickly, and higher labor costs. MASC payments are based on a producer's total specialty crop sales (actual 2023 or 2024 calendar year sales or expected 2025 calendar year sales for new producers). The payment limitation is \$125,000, which may be reduced if program demand exceeds available funding of \$2 billion. The MASC application period began on December 10, 2024, and ended on January 8, 2025.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/marketing-assistance-specialty-crops-masc>

Authority

Section 5(e) of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act ([7 U.S.C. 714c\(e\)](#)) provides the statutory authority for MASC.

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NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

Beneficiaries

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) affects producers of all commercially produced agricultural commodities, located in the U.S., for which crop insurance is not available.

Summary

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 basic coverage, which provides coverage at 50 percent of a producer's approved yield and 55 percent of the average market price for the crop. Producers can also purchase higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of the approved yield and 100 percent of the average market price. Producers must obtain NAP coverage prior to a disaster event to be eligible for assistance.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/noninsured-disaster-assistance-program-nap>

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.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (OCCSP)

Beneficiaries

The Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) affects producers and handlers of organic crops and livestock located in the U.S.

Summary

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 or renewing organic certification.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/organic-certification-cost-share-program-occsp>

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 additional Agricultural Management Assistance funding for 16 states, provides the statutory authority for OCCSP. OCCSP expired September 30, 2023; however, the Farm Bill extension provided additional funding for fiscal year 2024 with some carryover to fiscal year 2025.

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REIMBURSEMENT TRANSPORTATION COST PAYMENT (RTCP) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Reimbursement Transportation Cost Payment (RTCP) Program affects producers of aquaculture, feed, fiber, floriculture, food, horticulture-including trees, insects, livestock-including elk, reindeer, bison, horses, and deer 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 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. 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

The Tree Assistance Program (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 located in the U.S.

Summary

TAP provides financial assistance to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines lost by natural disasters.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/tree-assistance-program-tap>

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.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

Beneficiaries

Resource conservation activities by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) affect producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

NRCS helps producers, soil and water conservation districts, and other partners protect and conserve natural resources on private lands throughout the U.S. NRCS develops and maintains resource conservation policy, technology, and conservation practice standards that describe how to implement or install conservation technologies on farms, ranches, and non-industrial private forest lands, and how to adopt new technologies into conservation systems.

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. Chapter 3B Soil Conservation §590a and 16 U.S.C. Chapter 58 §3801. This is a continuous service.

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (RMA)

SPECIALTY CROP INSURANCE PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Specialty crop insurance programs affect producers of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S. and on tribal lands.

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. Specialty crop insurance programs provide education and training that equip producers with skills to manage business risks. 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 greater access to the program. RMA recently implemented new tools for producers of 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

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

Purchases by the Commodity Procurement Program (CPP) affect producers, handlers, and processors of all specialty crops commodities located in all U.S. states and territories and on Tribal land.

Summary

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 Food – 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.

In FY2024, CPP purchased \$1.6 billion of specialty crops commodities, specifically \$716 million in Entitlement, \$563.5 million in Section 32, and \$322 million in CCC-TEFAP.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING (COOL)

Beneficiaries

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) affects importers and domestic producers, handlers, and distributors of certain “covered commodities” including the following specialty crops: fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, pecans, macadamia nuts and ginseng. Information on country of origin of these specialty crops must be conveyed through the supply chain and displayed at retail where the information will likely be read and understood by a customer. Importers, domestic producers and handlers are responsible for conveying records on origin to the retailer for proper labeling. Retailers are responsible for COOL when it is not pre-labeled by importers, domestic producers, and handlers. The purpose of the COOL regulation is to provide a fair and competitive market to all countries by requiring retail display of information on the source of foods.

Summary

COOL is a labeling law that requires retailers, such as full-line grocery stores, supermarkets and club warehouse stores, to notify their customers with information regarding the source of certain foods. COOL declarations can be made in a variety of ways, if the public can easily view the label. Origin records must be maintained for one year. Retailers are defined as those subject to be licensed by the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. Generally, that is any retailers who buys or sells more than 2,000 pounds of fresh or frozen fruits or vegetables in any given day. Restaurants and other food service establishments (cafeterias, lunchrooms, institutions, etc.) are exempt from COOL. Processed food items are not subject to COOL. A processed food is defined as a covered commodity that has undergone specific processing resulting in a change in the character, or that has been combined with at least one other commodity or food component.

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.

EXPORT FRUIT ACTS

Beneficiaries

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 authorities for the Export Fruit Acts are the Export Apple Act (7 U.S.C. 581 *et seq*) and the implementing regulations at 7 CFR part 33, and the Export Grape and Plum Act (7 U.S.C. 591-599) and the implementing regulations at 7 CFR part 35. These are continuous services.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

FEDERAL MARKETING ORDERS

Beneficiaries

Federal Marketing Orders affect producers and handlers 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; 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; dried prunes 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 industry-funded, self-help programs 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

Federal Marketing Orders are authorized by the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 as amended ([7 U.S.C. 601-674](#)). This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

INSPECTION, GRADING, AND CERTIFICATION

Beneficiaries

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

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

LABORATORY APPROVAL PROGRAM (LAP)

Beneficiaries

The Laboratory Approval Program (LAP) affects U.S. handlers and processors of tree and ground nuts, including almonds, peanuts, and pistachios, that trade domestically and internationally (i.e., the European Union and Japan).

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.

MINIMUM QUALITY AND HANDLING STANDARDS FOR DOMESTIC AND IMPORTED PEANUTS

Beneficiaries

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

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

NATIONAL BIOENGINEERED FOOD DISCLOSURE STANDARD (BE STANDARD)

Beneficiaries

The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard (BE Standard) affects processors, retailers, importers, and manufacturers of bioengineered foods located in all countries and on Tribal land. Importers and domestic producers are required to identify the crops or foods that are available in a bioengineered form, and for which regulated entities must maintain records. Products are added to the AMS List of Bioengineered Foods (the List) if they are approved for legal production and are commercially produced.

Summary

The BE Standard requires food manufacturers, importers, and certain retailers to ensure bioengineered foods are appropriately disclosed and provides consumers with information regarding the status of bioengineered foods, including specialty crops, they may purchase. Regulated entities have several disclosure options: on package text, symbol, electronic or digital link. The following specialty crops are currently on the List and require disclosure: apple (Arctic™ varieties), eggplant (BARI Bt Begun varieties), papaya (ringspot virus-resistant varieties), pineapple (Pink flesh varieties), potato, and squash (summer, coat protein-mediated virus-resistant varieties). If a specialty crop appears on the List, the regulated entity must either make a disclosure or keep records demonstrating the food is not bioengineered.

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.

THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)

Beneficiaries

The National Organic Program (NOP) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of organic agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

NOP develops and enforces consistent national standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States and internationally. To enforce the organic standards and protect farmer and consumer confidence in the value and integrity of the USDA organic seal, the Program accredits and provides oversight of third-party organizations, called certifiers. USDA accredited certifiers inspect and certify organic farms and businesses to the USDA organic regulations. NOP also grows and supports the sector through technical assistance and education for those interested in transitioning to organic production. 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.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

THE NATIONAL SCIENCE LABORATORIES (NSL)

Beneficiaries

The National Science Laboratories (NSL) affect producers, handlers, and processors of operational rations for the military, domestic and imported peanuts, peanut flour, peanut butter, imported Brazil nuts, imported pistachios, pecans, almonds, hazelnuts, and avocados located in the U.S. and internationally.

Summary

NSL is a fee-for-service lab network with locations in Gastonia, NC, and Blakely, GA. NSL provides chemical, microbiological, nutritional, 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 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) and 7 CFR part 91 Chapter 1 provide the statutory authority for NSL. NSL is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

PERISHABLE AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES ACT (PACA)

Beneficiaries

The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables located in the U.S.

Summary

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.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

PESTICIDE DATA PROGRAM (PDP)

Beneficiaries

The Pesticide Data Program (PDP) affects producers and distributors of select commodity groups, including specialty crops, located in all countries. For a complete listing of commodities that have been included in the program, please visit the [PDP Commodity History](#).

Summary

PDP is the nationally representative pesticide residue monitoring program in the U.S. that is used to address international maximum residue limit (MRL) concerns. PDP tests many commodities including specialty crops. PDP data contribute to export negotiations when residue limits in a specialty crop are an issue and are also used in the harmonization of international MRLs. Additionally, PDP results are often used in the federal pesticide registration review to help continue registered uses on specialty crops. All residue results are available on the PDP website.

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.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

RESEARCH AND PROMOTION (R&P) PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

Specialty Crops Research and Promotion (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 located 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 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 2023, Specialty Crops R&P Programs collected \$182.4 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.

RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (RFSI) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Beneficiaries

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (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, located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Summary

AMS is entering into cooperative agreements with each U.S. State and Territory for 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.

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 Public Law 117—2. This service is a \$420 million grant program that expires May 24, 2027.

SECTION 608E IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

Beneficiaries

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, and field-grown tomatoes located in the federal marketing order region. 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. 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 13 specialty crop commodities to ensure compliance with minimum quality standards are 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

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 in 7 CFR parts 994, 980, and 999. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (SCBGP)

Beneficiaries

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S. and its territories.

Summary

SCBGP aims to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by issuing block grants to the agency, commission, or department responsible for agriculture within any of the U.S. States and its territories. 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>

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 awarded for FY24: \$72.9 million. Funding for FY25 will be announced soon.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

SPECIALTY CROP MULTI-STATE PROGRAM (SCMP)

Beneficiaries

The Specialty Crop Multi-State Program (SCMP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S. and its territories.

Summary

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 U.S. States and its territories.

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 Resource Directory

SPECIALTY CROPS MARKET NEWS

Beneficiaries

Specialty Crops Market News affects producers, handlers, processors, retailers, and wholesalers of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, South and Central America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

Summary

Specialty Crops Market News disseminates detailed information on market 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 disseminate 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 700 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, accurate, 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, industry publications, and other Internet sources. About 375 distinct reports are issued daily, weekly, monthly, or annually to assist industry members in making informed marketing decisions. Additionally, all Market News data is available via customized queries on the Application Programming Interface (API) on My Market News. The produce industry is dependent on Market News information (prices and movement) to make better marketing decision. The information provides a level playing field for all stakeholders.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.marketnews.usda.gov/mnp/fv-home>

Authority

The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627) provides authority for Specialty Crops Market News. This is a continuous service.

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (TOPP)

Beneficiaries

The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

TOPP is a collaborative effort between six regional leads, two national leads, and hundreds of State-level partners to support producers, handlers, and processors wishing to transition to organic production. TOPP partners across the U.S. facilitate workshops, webinars, and field days to cover topics such as organic production practices, conservation planning, business development, supply chains, regulations, and marketing. Through the TOPP mentorship program, experienced organic producers are paired with mentees new to organic, or those looking to expand their existing organic operation. Mentors and mentees meet one-on-one to discuss how to navigate the organic transition and certification process, discuss organic best practices, and network with other organic farmers in the community. TOPP programming and mentorship helps specialty crops farmers 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 authorized by Pub. L. 117-2 and expires October 1, 2027.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

U.S. GRADE STANDARDS

Beneficiaries

U.S. grade standards affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities 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 Resource Directory

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)

COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PEST SURVEY (CAPS) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crops commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

The CAPS Program conducts science-based exotic plant pest and disease surveys through a national network of cooperators and stakeholders to protect American agriculture and natural resources. These surveillance activities are accomplished primarily under USDA funding provided through cooperative agreements with State departments of agriculture, universities, and other entities, allowing early detection and response to pests and diseases of regulatory concern.

Please see program homepage for more information: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/caps>

Authority

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

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

DOMESTIC PEST EVALUATION AND RESPONSE

Beneficiaries

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

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

DOMESTIC SPECIALTY CROP PESTS PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

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 located 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 that the program currently addresses are exotic fruit flies, a variety of citrus pests and diseases, the glassy-winged sharpshooter, spotted lanternfly, pale cyst nematode, European grapevine moth, navel orange worm, and *Phytophthora ramorum*, among others. Overall, the program directly protects specialty crops production worth more than \$11.5 billion in 2022 (APHIS internal analysis based on National Agricultural Statistics Survey data). The program indirectly protects additional specialty crops production valued at \$7.6 billion in 2022, by preventing the spread of these damaging pests and diseases to new areas (APHIS internal analysis based on National Agricultural Statistics Service data). Without the SCP program, trading partners might not accept a variety of U.S. fruits and vegetables. The value of trade in specialty crops that could potentially be disrupted without the SCP program was \$3.6 billion in 2022, according to an internal APHIS report using data from the Foreign Agricultural Service's Global Agricultural Trade System.

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 Resource Directory

INTERNATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY MANAGEMENT AND STANDARDS PROGRAMS (IPMSP)

Beneficiaries

International Phytosanitary Management and Standards Programs (IPMSP) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all plants and plant products, including specialty crops, located in all countries.

Summary

IPMSP assists 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:

Plant and Plant Product Exports: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-exports>

Phytosanitary Issues Management (PIM): <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/phyto-issues>

International Phytosanitary Standards (IPS): <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/international-standards>

Authority

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

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

NATIONAL CLEAN PLANT NETWORK (NCPN)

Beneficiaries

The National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of fruit trees, hops, berries, grapes, citrus, sweet potatoes, and roses located in the U.S.

Summary

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/funding/ncpn>

Authority

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

PLANT PROTECTION ACT (PPA) 7721

Beneficiaries

The Plant Protection Act (PPA) 7721 affects industry, local, state, and federal regulatory agencies, Tribal entities, and academia serving to protect nursery plants, berries, grapes, citrus, and potatoes located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

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

The Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) affects producers, handlers, processors, regulators (federal, state, and/or local), and the regulated industry for all agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

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 the 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

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

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.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE (ERS)

RESEARCH AND MARKET OUTLOOK PROGRAMS

Beneficiaries

ERS research and market outlook programs affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crop commodities located in all countries.

Summary

The mission of 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, July, and September) and on vegetables and pulses (April, July, 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 Workers Program, local food production, controlled environment agriculture, 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.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

INTERREGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT #4 (IR-4)

Beneficiaries

The Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

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.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA) FUNDING

Beneficiaries

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funding affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Summary

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. NIFA funded plant breeding, genetics and genomics research include 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.

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 Resource Directory

SPECIALTY CROP RESEARCH INITIATIVE (SCRI)

Beneficiaries

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all specialty crop commodities located in all countries and on Tribal lands.

Summary

The intent of 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 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

The Agriculture Innovation Centers (AIC) Program affects producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

The purpose of the AIC Program is to establish and operate Agriculture Innovation 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 6402 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, as amended by section 7608 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (see 7 U.S.C. 1632b), and is implemented by 7 CFR Part 4284 Subpart K. This is a continuous service.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GUARANTEED LOAN (B&I) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (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 located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands.

Summary

The 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 2028, 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.

INTERMEDIARY RELENDING PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Intermediary Relending Program affects handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands. The program could also potentially affect producers if it were to fund value-added processing or similar; the program cannot fund agricultural production.

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. 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 Resource Directory

RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (RBDG)

Beneficiaries

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG) affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands; however, agricultural production is not eligible.

Summary

RBDGs 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 Resource Directory

RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANT (RCDG) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) Program affects any business group seeking to form a cooperative, including producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.; agricultural production, however, is not eligible.

Summary

The 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.

RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM (REAP)

Beneficiaries

The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S. and on Tribal lands, and small businesses in geographical areas under 50,000 people.

Summary

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

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (VAPG)

Beneficiaries

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) affects producers and processors of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S., including its territories, and on Tribal lands.

Summary

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter value-added activities to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. Independent producers (including 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.

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE (RHS)

OFF-FARM LABOR HOUSING

Beneficiaries

Off-Farm Labor Housing affects producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

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 Resource Directory

ON-FARM LABOR HOUSING

Beneficiaries

On-Farm Labor Housing affects producers of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

Summary

On-Farm Labor Housing provides affordable financing to develop or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for very-low to moderate income 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

USDA Agribusiness Trade Missions (ATMs) affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located internationally, domestically, on Tribal lands, regionally, and state-wide. USDA Agribusiness Trade Missions are hosted in countries around the world.

Summary

USDA 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 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.

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.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

ASSISTING SPECIALTY CROP EXPORTS (ASCE) INITIATIVE

Beneficiaries

The Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE) Initiative affects producers, handlers, processors, and exporters of specialty crops located in the U.S.

Summary

The ASCE Initiative is an innovative partnership between USDA and the specialty crops sectors to break down non-tariff trade barriers that hinder U.S. exports of fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, pulses, horticultural crops, and other specialty crop products.

This Initiative is led by the Foreign Agricultural Service's Trade and Regulatory Capacity Building Division (TRCB). The Initiative aims to open new international markets and solidify existing ones, ensuring that U.S. exports compete on fair and level playing field and helping producers and exporters better understand the regulations and requirements that affect their ability to sell their products to foreign customers. ASCE projects are diverse and address trade barriers which limit U.S. exports which have been raised by specialty crops stakeholders to USDA. Projects funded through ASCE include objectives such as to: 1) Help U.S. exporters better understand foreign food safety systems and requirements; 2) Help importing countries adopt international standards that facilitate trade; 3) Assist U.S. growers to understand and meet requirements in export markets; and, 4) Support investment in research and solutions so U.S. companies can meet other countries' sustainable packaging requirements.

Please see program homepage for all the active ASCE projects, open funding opportunities, resources for specialty crops exporters, and for more information:

<https://fas.usda.gov/programs/assisting-specialty-crop-exports-asce-initiative>

Authority

The authority for this initiative is 15 USC 714c(f). This is a continuous service.

COCHRAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Cochran Fellowship Program affects producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located in 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.

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.

EMERGING MARKETS PROGRAM (EMP)

Beneficiaries

The Emerging Markets Program (EMP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities 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 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.

EXPORT CREDIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM (GSM-102)

Beneficiaries

The Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102) affects exporters of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S.

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 encourages 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. 5623). This is a continuous export finance service with \$5 billion made available annually.

FACILITY GUARANTEE PROGRAM (FGP)

Beneficiaries

The Facility Guarantee Program (FGP) affects sellers of manufactured goods and services located in the U.S. Prior to the announcement for each fiscal year, country eligibility is determined by examining specific qualifying criteria.

Summary

The 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. 5623). This is a continuous export finance service with \$500 million made available annually.

FOREIGN MARKET DEVELOPMENT (FMD) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

The 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 U.S.C. 5623. The FMD Program is a continuous grant service with an available amount of \$34.5 million annually.

GLOBAL PESTICIDE MAXIMUM RESIDUE LEVEL (MRL) STANDARDS

Beneficiaries

Global pesticide maximum residue level (MRL) standards affect producers, handlers, and exporters of all agricultural commodities located in the U.S., and all countries which export agricultural products.

Summary

The Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Plant Division leads the U.S. government's interagency review of new foreign regulations relevant to specialty crop exports, participates actively in trade negotiations, and partners with USTR to enforce U.S. rights under existing trade agreements and international commitments. USDA and other relevant agencies engage with trading partners on proposed regulations at an early stage when possible. FAS also leads an interagency review process to provide formal comments on certain measures notified by member countries to the WTO.

FAS's Trade and Regulatory Capacity Building Division (TRCB) is working to align pesticide registration systems and MRL standard setting across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, based on international standards. Aligned and science-based trade standards support U.S. agricultural products exports to foreign markets. FAS 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, which facilitate trade. Missing, inconsistent, or low MRLs can be trade barriers that limit U.S. agricultural exports. FAS has additional resources to support U.S. specialty crop exporters to understand MRLs and other foreign import regulations:

- MRL Database; Access to the basic level of access to the Regulatory Limits FoodChainID MRL database is covered through support from USDA/FAS for all U.S.-based individuals. Please see FAS page for more information: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/maximumresidue-limits-mrl-database>
- MRL Quick Reference Sheets for Specialty Crops; commodity-specific resources listing import requirements to access the top foreign markets for each commodity, supported through the Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE) initiative. Please see program page for more information: <https://fas.usda.gov/programs/assisting-specialty-crop-exports-asce-initiative>
- FAS has offices in 100 countries representing and supporting U.S. agriculture abroad. These offices can support U.S. specialty crop exporters, and they develop resources and reports on foreign export market requirements and regulations: <https://fas.usda.gov/international-offices>.

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

- FAS produces Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) reports and reports on required certificates in export markets, which are particularly helpful for specialty crop exporters and available by searching here: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/home>

Authority

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

MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM (MAP)

Beneficiaries

The Market Access Program (MAP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

Through 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. 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.

QUALITY SAMPLES PROGRAM (QSP)

Beneficiaries

The Quality Samples Program (QSP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all agricultural commodities located in all countries.

Summary

The 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.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL PROMOTION PROGRAM (RAPP)

Beneficiaries

The Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP) affects producers, handlers, and processors of all U.S. agricultural commodities located in most countries.

Summary

The RAPP supports activities in certain foreign markets to build demand for American food and farm exports in high-potential markets around the globe. The program will help U.S. exporters expand their customer base beyond traditional and established markets, focusing on regions such as Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South and Southeast Asia, where consumer demand and purchasing power are growing. RAPP funding will enable U.S. exporters to expand their footprint in diverse and dynamic new markets, creating more, new, and better markets for U.S. producers and agribusinesses.

The RAPP 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 RAPP 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 RAPP is an FAS administered grant program that was created and launched by USDA in 2024 to help grow export markets for American farm and food products around the world.

Please see program homepage for more information:

<https://fas.usda.gov/programs/regional-agricultural-promotion-program>

Authority

The authority for the RAPP is 15 U.S.C. 714c(f).

Specialty Crops Resource Directory

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (TASC) PROGRAM

Beneficiaries

The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (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.

Summary

The 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 \$9 million available in funding annually.

USDA-ENDORSED INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS

Beneficiaries

USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows affect producers, handlers, processors, and retailers of all agricultural commodities located internationally, domestically, on Tribal lands, regionally, and state-wide. USDA-Endorsed International Trade Shows are hosted in countries around the world.

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.

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 Resource Directory

U.S. SPECIALTY CROPS TRADE ISSUES REPORTS

Beneficiaries

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

Reports can be found at the FAS Newsroom under Congressional Reports:

<https://fas.usda.gov/newsroom>.

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.