

media release

Colorado Department of Agriculture

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Grants Available to Help Colorado's Specialty Crops

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – From established crops such as potatoes and sod to crops new to Colorado such as hops and lavender, the diversity of Colorado's specialty crop industry is evident across the state. To help develop and promote the state's specialty crops, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is seeking proposals for the *Specialty Crops Block Grant Program*. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and nursery crops including floriculture and sod.

“Specialty crops are an important part of Colorado's agriculture industry,” said Tom Lipetzky, CDA's Markets Division Director. “These funds will help develop and promote the state's diverse specialty crops.”

Colorado's specialty crops represent approximately 11 percent of Colorado's total agricultural cash receipts. In 2010, cash receipts from specialty crops totaled more than \$645 million.

The grant program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) which partners with state departments of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers in areas such as marketing, promotion, education, research, trade and nutrition.

“The department must submit a request outlining projects to the USDA in order to receive these funds,” continued Lipetzky. “This application process will help determine which projects are included in our application to the USDA.”

CDA anticipates that more than \$680,000 will be available to support the specialty crop grant, and funds are expected to be available for projects to start early in 2013. Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and local organizations, academia and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply either as single entities or in combined efforts. Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment.

Proposals must be received by close of business (4:30pm) on April 4, 2012. For more information and an application, visit www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant or call (303) 239-4117.

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