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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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DIRECTOR

To: Commissioners of Agriculture and Rural Development

From: Nancy Nyquist, Market Development Specialist

Date: November 12, 2014

Subject: Specialty Crop Block Grants

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development recently announced the recipients of \$1.9 million in Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. These funds are made available to MDARD through the United States Department of Agriculture-Agriculture Marketing Services.

The grants are used to enhance the competitiveness of Michigan specialty crops through processors, agri-businesses, producers, local units of government, and legislatively authorized commodity boards in Michigan; including, but not limited to: research, promotion, marketing, nutrition, trade enhancement, food safety, food security, plant health programs, education, increased knowledge and consumption, increased innovation, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems, environmental concerns and conservation, product development, good agricultural practices, good handling practices, and good manufacturing practices.

Grant applications were evaluated, scored, and ranked by a Joint Evaluation Committee composed of MDARD and industry representatives not directly involved in any grant proposals.

Attached is a list of grant recipients.

**Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development  
FY 2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
Michigan Vegetable Council	Development of Irrigation and Chemigation practices in MI Asparagus.	\$73,729.00
Michigan Christmas Tree Association	Increasing Consumer Interest in Michigan-grown Christmas Trees Utilizing a Social Media Campaign	\$34,084.00
Forgotten Harvest	Will Cover Crops and Conservation Tillage Increase Yield and Reduce Drip Irrigation when Growing Winter Squash	\$23,488.00
Michigan Bean Commission	Assessment and optimization of pre-harvest strategies suitable for direct-cut dry beans within Michigan	\$74,994.00
Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council	Michigan Sustainable Wine Grape Program - Feasibility Study	\$75,000.00
Michigan Asparagus Industry Development Program	Improving Harvest Efficiency, Worker Safety, & Food Security Through the Creation of a Bilingual Training Video	\$11,720.00
Michigan Carrot	Advancing Disease Control Strategies for Michigan's Processing Carrot Industry to Reduce Reliance on Fungicides	\$67,176.00

Commercial Maple Syrup Producers of Michigan	Enhancing the Competitiveness of Michigan's Maple Syrup Industry through Education, Outreach and Strategic Market Development	\$49,016.00
MBG Marketing	Soil Supplements to Hasten Blueberry Plant Establishment and Productivity	\$20,994.00
Michigan Cherry Committee	Partnering with Grower-Cooperators to Establish Trials to Determine the Profitability of Tart Cherry Production Using High-Density Orchard Designs	\$57,196.00
Michigan Apple	Trade Advertising for Promoting Michigan Apples	\$35,000.00
National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc.	Enhancing the Competitiveness of Niagara Grapes for Expanded Processing and Export Opportunities	\$75,000.00
Michigan Food & Farming Systems	Building a Competitive Pathway For Underserved Michigan Specialty Crop Farmers	\$69,417.00
Michigan Potato Industry Commission	Increase Awareness and Expand Understanding of Factors That Influence Post-Harvest Tuber Quality in Potato	\$20,079.00
Michigan Floriculture Growers Council	Producing Nursery and Greenhouse Plants in Michigan that are Safe for Pollinators	\$66,317.00
Allen Neighborhood Center	Providing Place-Sensitive Marketing and Other Services to Mid-Michigan Specialty Crop Growers to Increase Visibility, Capacity and Competitiveness	\$75,000.00
Michigan Maple Syrup Association	Improved Marketing of Michigan Maple Syrup	\$75,000.00

Michigan Potato Industry Commission	Michigan Potato Impetus & Education	\$56,000.00
Institute for Sustainable Living, Art & Natural Design (ISLAND)	Specialty Crop Education in Hops, Soil Fertility for Fruit & Vegetable Crops, & Agroforestry Systems at the 2015 Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference and Preconference	\$27,527.64
Cherry Marketing Institute (CMI)	Strategic Modernization of the Enviro-Weather IPM Information System for Fruit Production In Michigan	\$79,088.00
Lakeshore Environmental, Inc. & Peterson Farms	A study of Water Repurpose and/or Water Use Reduction at Michigan Fruit and vegetable Food Processors	\$80,448.00
Michigan Vegetable Council	"Survey to Develop Data on Labor-Shortage Responses by Michigan Vegetable Growers for Use as Planning Tools for Future Industry Competitiveness."	\$57,000.00
Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association	Michigan Nursery & Floriculture Product Mix, Sales, Energy, and Labor Survey	\$75,000.00
Michigan Farm Bureau	Fruit Acreage Inventory Survey	\$145,000.00
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development – F & D	Food Safety Needs Assessment for Michigan Farmers	99,741.00
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development - ESD	Specialty Crop Field Sanitation Septage Hauling and Food Safety	90,600.00
Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development - AgD	International and Domestic Marketing Activities to Increase Sales for Specialty Crops	117,068.72
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,880,683.36</b>