



Agrivolution, Groton

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner



Linda Piotrowicz, Editor
Wednesday, February 12, 2014

ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF CONNECTICUT SPECIALTY CROPS

Jaime Smith, Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Preservation

The beginning of the year brings many new things. One is the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg)'s request for concept papers for the 2014 program year of the Specialty Crop Block Grant-Farm Bill .

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program was first authorized on December 21, 2004, by [Section 101 of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004](#). The act authorized the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide grants to states to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

In 2008, [Section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 \(the Farm Bill\)](#) amended the act, which established the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB).

The minimum base grant each state is eligible to receive is equal to the higher of \$100,000 or one-third of one percent of the total funding available in a given fiscal year.

In addition, USDA will allocate the remainder of the grant funds based on the value of specialty crop production in each state in relation to the national value of specialty crop production using the latest available cash receipt data. As a result, and due to the varying production from year to year, the DoAg has received a yearly allocation ranging from as low as \$116,864 to as high as \$442,964. The 2014 allocation has yet to be determined.

The goal of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is to "solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in domestic and foreign markets." This language elicits many questions each year.

The most popular question is about the term "specialty crops."

USDA defines "specialty crops" as any fruit or vegetable, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, or nursery crops, including floriculture. Also included are honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees, and processed foods/food products made of at least 50% specialty crops (excluding added water).

An eligible plant must be intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered a specialty crop. The complete definition of specialty crops can be found on the USDA's website at www.ams.usda.gov/scbqp.

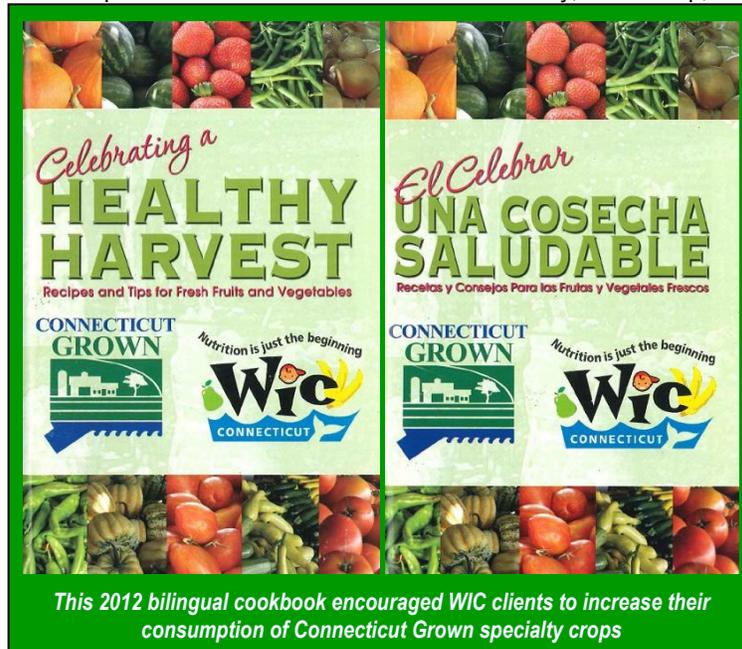
While Connecticut producers and consumers typically do not categorize these products as "specialty crops" unless they are an heirloom variety, ethnic crop, or have some unique characteristics,

they are in fact classified as such by USDA. In broader terms, "specialty crops" are those commodities without national association representation.

"Solely enhancing the competitiveness" is a phrase that brings additional questions. USDA is emphasizing two things with this terminology:

1. Only (solely) specialty crop producers can benefit from these funds.
2. A project should make the focused specialty crop(s) more aggressive in an economic or industry-related way on a local, state-wide, regional, national, or international level (enhance their competitiveness).

(continued on Page 3)



This 2012 bilingual cookbook encouraged WIC clients to increase their consumption of Connecticut Grown specialty crops

**WHOLESALE GREENHSE PRODUCE
U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL**

	Low	High
CUCMBR,prsn,20lb,DR	32.00	32.00
LEEK,5kg,NT	16.00	19.00
PEPPR,bl,rd,11lb,MX	16.00	22.00
PEPPR,bl,yllw,1 ¹ / ₉ bu,CN	20.00	24.00
RHUBARB,15lb,NT	45.00	50.00
TOMATO,12lb,vnpr,ME	24.00	25.00
TOMATO,25lb,lg,ME	20.00	21.00

NEW HOLLAND, PA, HOG AUCTION

Sold by actual weights; prices quoted by hundred wt.

		Low	High
49-54	220-300 lbs	67.00	71.00
	300-400 lbs	66.00	71.50
45-49	220-300 lbs	58.00	66.00
	200-400 lbs	60.00	64.00
Sow; US1-3	300-500 lbs	56.00	60.00
	500-700 lbs	50.00	56.00
Boars	300-700 lbs	17.00	22.00

PA GRADER FEEDER PIGS

Lancaster, PA, per cwt.

		Low	High
Gr US 1-	wt 20-30	100.00	110.00
	wt 30-35	150.00	180.00
	wt 35-40	110.00	140.00
	wt 40-50	130.00	160.00
	wt 60-90	100.00	130.00

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Middlefield, February 10, 2014

Live animals brought the following ave. prices per cwt.

	Low	High
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	20.00	25.00
61-75 lbs.	35.00	37.50
76-90 lbs.	40.00	42.50
91-105 lbs.	45.00	47.50
106 lbs. & up	50.00	55.00
Farm Calves	60.00	85.00
Starter Calves		n/a
Veal Calves	90.00	135.00
Open Heifers	80.00	110.00
Beef Steers	106.00	122.50
Beef Heifers	124.00	138.00
Feeder Steers	125.00	143.00
Stock Bulls	105.00	137.50
Beef Bulls	105.00	111.00
Boars		n/a
Sows		n/a
Butcher Hogs		n/a
Goats each	115.00	200.00
Kid Goats	140.00	145.00
Canners	up to	88.50
Cutters	89.00	92.00
Utility Grade Cows	93.00	96.00
Replacement Heifers		n/a
Replacement Cows	1 at	950.00
Rabbits each	5.00	20.00
Chickens each	4.00	15.00
Ducks each	7.00	12.00
Feeder Pigs	10.00	40.00
Lambs	120.00	155.00
Sheep	70.00	85.00



**WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES
NEW ENGLAND GROWN**

(Boston Terminal and wholesale grower prices)

	Low	High
APPLE,hnycrsp,fcy,80ct	26.00	28.00
APPLE,mcntsh,12/3lb,fcy	15.00	16.00
APPLE,mcntsh,no1,80ct	17.00	18.00
CIDER,4/1gal	16.00	16.00
POTATO,10lb	2.75	2.75
POTATO,chnf,50lb	12.00	12.00
POTATO,rd,50lb,szA	15.00	15.00
SQUASH,bttrnt,md,1 ¹ / ₉ bu	14.00	15.00



SHIPPED IN

	Low	High
ARUGULA,2lb,CA	9.00	9.00
BEAN,grn,bu,FL	25.00	28.00
BLUEBERRY,12/1pt,CL	28.00	32.00
BRUSSEL SPRT,25lb,CA	20.00	22.00
CELERIAC, 20lb CN	15.00	15.00
CILANTRO,60s, TX	26.00	26.00
EGGPLANT,1 ¹ / ₉ bu,FL	15.00	19.00
JERUSLM ARTCHK,10ct,CA	42.00	42.00
LETTUCE,grn lf,24ct,CA	14.00	17.00
MUSHROOM,oysr,3lb,PA	13.00	13.00
ONION,yllw,50lb,NY	15.00	17.00
ORANGE,nvl,113ct,CA	27.00	28.00
PEAR,bsc 80ct,OR	36.00	36.00
PISTACHIO,25lb,CA	165.00	165.00
PLUM,49ct,CH	32.00	34.00
SWEET CORN,4dz,FL	26.00	30.00
TANGERINE,80ct,FL	32.00	33.00



**RETAIL BEEF, USDA
NORTHEAST U.S. MAJOR SUPERMARKETS**

Prices per pound

	Low	High
BEEF SHORT RIB	6.99	6.99
BOTTOM ROUND ROAST	3.74	4.99
GROUND,80-89%	5.49	5.69
LONDON BROIL	2.99	4.69
NY STRIP STEAK	3.99	9.99
PORTERHOUSE STEAK	5.99	9.99
SIRLOIN STEAK TIPS	3.99	4.99
STEW MEAT	3.99	5.99
T-BONE STEAK	5.99	8.99
TOP ROUND ROAST	3.29	5.99

PA LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

February 10, 2014
Average Dressing

SLAUGHTER COWS:		
breakers 75-80% lean	87.75	91.25
boners 80-85%	82.75	87.25
lean 85-90%	77.50	82.00
CALVES graded bull		
No 1-95-120lbs	157.75	175.00
No 2 95-120lbs	138.75	159.25
No 3 80-120lbs	89.05	126.50
SLAUGHTER BULLS yield gr		
High dressing	113.50	119.00
Avg.dressing	103.75	109.00
Low dressing	88.75	93.50
SLAUGHTER HEIFERS		
HiCh/Prm2-3	145.50	149.00
Ch2-3	140.00	143.00
Ch1-3	132.25	136.50
SLAUGHTER STEERS.		
HiCh/prm2-3	148.25	153.25
Ch1-3	143.00	148.00
Sel1-2	135.00	140.75
SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS		
HiCh/prm2-3	124.00	128.75
Ch2-3	116.50	120.50
Ch1-2	107.50	113.50
VEALER 60-120lbs	29.75	60.00
SLAUGHTER LAMBS: ch/pr 2-3 hair sheep		
40-60lbs	235.00	266.00
60-80lb	230.00	240.00
80-110lbs	202.00	227.00
SLAUGHTER EWES: good 2-3		
110-120lbs		n/a
130-160	95.00	105.00
160-200	100.00	115.00
Bucks	140-150lbs	102.00 102.00
	180-200lbs	66.00 82.00
	200-250lbs	72.00 90.00
SLAUGHTER GOATS:Sel.1, by head, est.		
	40-60lb	132.00 176.00
	60-80lb	150.00 194.00
	80-110lb	160.00 187.00
Nannies/Does:	90-120lbs	145.00 165.00
	120-135lbs	162.00 182.00
Bucks/Billies:	120-150lbs	212.00 290.00
	150-160lbs	310.00 325.00

EASTERN PA GRAIN

Average price per bushel

BARLEY		n/a
CORN		4.57
OATS		3.57
SOYBEANS		13.16
WHEAT		6.67

NORTHEAST EGG PRICES USDA

Per doz., USDA Grade A/Grade A white in cartons (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.36	1.40
LARGE	1.34	1.38
MEDIUM	1.26	1.30

NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS

Per doz., wholesale Grade A brown in cartons (delivered)

XTRA LARGE	2.26	2.36
LARGE	2.20	2.30
MEDIUM	1.43	1.53

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut's first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal's Power Fence 860-491-2290.

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227.

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.

8-R. Corn silage stored in corn pit. Augur Farm. 203-530-4953.

15-R. 400 bales 2nd Cutting Hay-mixed grass-weight approx. 50 lbs-hay is in Bristol-no delivery. 860-635-1379.

18-R. 4 row Stanley Seeder, 2 sets of boxes and belts. Recently tuned up, manual included. 860-234-1328.

20-R. Dracena Spikes 48/tray \$17. Geranium-Calliope Burgundy, 50 cents per rooted cutting. Woodland Gardens 860-643-8474.

22-R. 1st cutting, 4X5 net wrap. Stored inside. \$45/bale. 860-672-6237.

23-R. 4 - Sundair 190,000 BTU Oil fired heaters. Used only 6 seasons. Set up for under-bench heating with 24" poly-tube. List for \$2,350, asking \$1,100 each. 3 - GroWell oil furnaces, 300,000 BTU. Great for a greenhouse or shop area. 2 units \$700 each, 1 unit \$1,000. All work fine - replaced with propane heaters. 4 - 275 oil tanks, 2 asking \$275, 2 asking \$150. 42" two speed slant-wall exhaust fan with shutter and 45" and 36" motorized intake louvers: \$850. 24" single speed slant-wall exhaust fan with shutter and 40" motorized intake louver: \$450. Winco PTO driven 25 KW generator. Mounted on trailer for highway travel. Older unit but always dry and clean: \$1,700. Delivery available. 860-974-0045.

MISCELLANEOUS

10-R. Farm/Land specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tustin Realty (860) 644-5667.

13-R. \$500/acre. Landowners, I am looking to lease 25+ acres of "A" land for up to \$500 per acre per year. Tell your friends or call Doug at 203-952-8542.

WANTED

19-R. Simple pipe frame style plastic mulch layer, either flat or raised bed. 860-234-1328.

24. Wanted to Rent. Farm Stand for flower sales and local produce for spring and summer. Call 860-361-9074.

The Connecticut Week Agricultural Report offers affordable classified advertisements for your farm-related needs. See Page 4 for details and rates, or call Jane Slupecki at 860-713-2588 for more information.

ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF CONNECTICUT SPECIALTY CROPS

(continued from Page 1)

Eligible applicants include commodity groups, agricultural organizations, colleges and universities, municipalities, state agencies, and agricultural nonprofits.

USDA requires funds to benefit the industry as a whole, not a single organization, business, or commercial product, thus helping as many entities as possible during project's duration.

As a result, individual farms or businesses are encouraged to partner with other eligible applicants, rather than apply themselves.

USDA requires a competitive process for sub-granted projects. In addition to meeting the program's goal of solely enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops and benefiting the industry as a whole, projects must be completed in no more than three years.

While there is no guarantee funding will be available this year, it is anticipated. With the fate of the 2013 Farm Bill uncertain as of writing of this article, proposed changes to the program are uncertain but likely. These proposed changes include the following:

1. Reauthorization and increase of funding.
2. A funding formula that takes into account the average of both the value of specialty crop production and the acres of specialty crops planted in a state.
3. A portion of funding allocated to multistate projects.
4. A reduction in the amount allowed for state and sub-grant administrative costs.

Since 2006, 105 entities have applied, requesting a total of \$3.7 million. The maximum award is \$75,000. USDA has awarded nearly \$3 million in program funding during that time to DoAg, which has funded 63 projects, many proposed and conducted by sub-grantees.

The application process begins early each year. To streamline the process, a two-phase system was implemented in 2013, which includes concept proposals followed by invitation-only full applications. Full applications are reviewed by an industry review panel.

In 2013, DoAg received a total of 25 concept proposals and invited nine applicants to submit full applications. Five projects were recommended to DoAg Commissioner Reviczky for funding.

A number of projects, both completed and ongoing, have had success and progress towards solely enhancing the competitiveness of Connecticut specialty crops. Several examples follow.

The Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut was awarded \$28,800 in 2010 for a project focused on three areas: (1) opening more forests to maple farming; (2) increasing sap flow per tap through the use of tubing vacuum systems and check-valve spout; and (3) showing greater evaporator productivity through the application of steam-away, max-flue, and reverse-osmosis units.

The most noteworthy of the goals was the one opening more land to state forests. The first-ever, five-year lease agreement between the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and a Connecticut maple producer was established, and an additional 650 taps installed in a state forest in Glastonbury.

A sizeable portion of the grant was allocated to installation of a vacuum-assisted tubing collection system at that location, on which another 150 taps will be added in 2015 for a total of 800 taps.

Another producer, encouraged by the Glastonbury success, gained a yearly renewable lease on six acres of state land in Harwinton on which 300 taps were installed in 2012. An additional 460 taps, with vacuum assisted tubing, were added on two private land parcels in Litchfield.

In total, taps in Connecticut increased 10 percent during the grant period, from 70,000 in 2010 to 78,000 in 2013.

Another successful project was *Getting it On the Air: Promoting the availability of Connecticut specialty crops to Connecticut radio listeners*. DoAg used \$20,000 for radio promotions in late 2013 focusing on five Connecticut specialty crops: apples in September, mums and pumpkins in October, wine in November, and Christmas trees in December.

(continued on Page 4)

ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF CONNECTICUT SPECIALTY CROPS

(continued from Page 3)

The promotion included 75 sponsor identifications, 225 promotional spots, 160 marketing spots (15-seconds), and banner placement on WNPR's website and in the station's print and email blasts.

The campaign encouraged listeners to visit www.CTGrown.gov to find information about Connecticut specialty crop farms and products. Website visits by consumers looking to purchase Connecticut Grown specialty crops increased a total of 56 percent during the project duration.

During the summer of 2012, DoAg printed and distributed to eligible clients enrolled in Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program 20,000 bilingual English/Spanish cookbooks with a \$3 voucher inside. The cookbook and voucher encouraged clients to increase their consumption of specialty crops, using them in new and different ways.

At the project's conclusion, \$26,049 in specialty crops had been purchased by WIC clients with these vouchers, equating to an overall redemption rate of 35 percent and an increase in specialty crop consumption by WIC clients of 5 percent.

Another noteworthy project involves an ongoing project in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection. Grant funds were used to conduct a course, Better Process Control School for Acidified Foods, in December 2013, which 27 specialty crop farmers attended. Participants took exams at the end of the course to measure knowledge and earn a passing grade.

The course was administered by the Better Process Control School at the University of Massachusetts. The school was a direct response to the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act pursuant to Section 21a-115-59, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The training met the criteria established in Connecticut Public Act 10-103, "An Act Concerning Farms, Food and Jobs," for certain exempt retail processors. This legislation's purpose is to encourage job growth and expansion through production and sale of value-added products by Connecticut farms.

These are just a few of the many successful Connecticut projects funded through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill. For more information about the program or for a concept proposal application form, visit www.ctgrown.gov/grants (click on "Specialty Crop Block Grant Program") or contact Jaime Smith at 860-713-2559 or jaim.smith@ct.gov.

SPRING INTO ACTION: FREE WEBINAR/TWITTER CHAT ON MAINTAINING A HEALTHY (AND GROWING) FLOCK

USDA APHIS is hosting a free Bird Health Awareness Week webinar and Twitter chat on Thursday, February 27, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. EST with Dr. Jo Anna Quinn, USDA poultry health specialist, Andy Schneider, "The Chicken Whisperer," and Dr. Casey Barton Behravesh, CDC public health specialist.

For more information and/or to register for this free event, go to <http://communique.adobeconnect.com/healthybirds/event/registration.html>.



Agriolution, Groton

Advertising Rates: Fifteen or fewer words: \$3.75 per insertion. More than 15 words: 25 cents per word per insertion. (Initial letters, hyphenated words, phone numbers, and addresses are counted separately.) Print or type copy. Advertisements accepted on a first-come, first-served basis; publication on a specific date cannot be guaranteed. Ads with payment must be received by noon the Friday before a publication date to be considered for insertion in that issue. Only ads of an agricultural nature with a Connecticut phone number will be accepted. Remittance with copy required. Make check or money order payable to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
www.CTGrown.gov www.CT.gov/doag
 860-713-2500

Commissioner	Steven K. Reviczky 860-713-2501
Marketing	Joseph Dippel 860-713-2503
Regional Market	Joseph Dippel 860-566-3699
State Veterinarian	Dr. Mary J. Lis 860-713-2505
Regulation & Inspection	Dr. Bruce Sherman 860-713-2504
Farmland Preservation	Dr. Cameron Weimar 860-713-2511
Aquaculture	David Carey 203-874-2855

The Connecticut Weekly Agricultural Report (ISSN: 1059-8723, USPS 129-340) is published weekly by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106, except for the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas, two other weeks each year, and when the Governor closes state offices. Print subscriptions are \$40.00 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Hartford, CT.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106.

Print subscriptions expire Dec. 31, 2015.

**VOL. XCIV
 No. 6
 February 12, 2014**