**State of Connecticut, Department of Agriculture**
**Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Preservation**
**Governor Dannel P. Malloy**
**Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky**

# USDA SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT – FARM BILL PROGRAM
## *Fiscal Year 2013*

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES
## *PHASE ONE: CONCEPT PROPOSALS*

**Concept Proposal Deadline: April 30, 2013 at 4:30pm**

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****NEW INFORMATION****

Due to the high volume of applications received in past program years, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's 2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is a **two-phase application process**.

The first phase is the submission of a Concept Proposal. This step allows applicants to explain the main points of the project without the high level of detail that is necessary during the second phase of the application process. Those that pass the Concept Proposals phase will be asked to complete the second phase of the application process by submitting a full application.

## Program Description

The Connecticut Department of Agricultural (hereinafter, "CT DoAg") is soliciting concept proposals for projects that specifically address the goals the United States Department of Agriculture (hereinafter, "USDA") has for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB).

The goals of a submitted project must **solely** enhance the competitiveness of United States specialty crops in domestic and foreign markets. *Specialty crops are defined by the USDA as fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture (including maple syrup and honey), and nursery crops (including floriculture)*. A complete list of eligible and ineligible specialty crops can be found on the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant website: www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp.

The USDA is the funding entity and has the final approval of projects. Prior to the USDA's approval, CT DoAg will make the initial review of the concept proposal and a review panel of industry representatives will make the secondary review and award recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture. The USDA will make the final award decisions.

The funds available through the SCBGP-FB are authorized under the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act, amended by the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. All projects are subject to the availability of federal funds.

## Who Can Apply

Commodity groups, agricultural organizations, colleges and universities, producers, municipalities, state agencies, and agricultural nonprofits are all eligible for this grant program, provided their concept proposals meet the specifications of this Request for Concept Papers and the USDA's Notice of Federal Assistance, CFDA 10.170.

Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. Projects are required to impact and produce measurable outcomes for the specialty crop *industry and/or the public* rather than a single organization, institution or individual.

## Number of Grantees and Maximum Award

This is a competitive grant process. The maximum award to any applicant is $75,000.00, however, the Department will entertain applications that request lesser amounts.

CT DoAg is looking to award multiple grants. Connecticut's total award from the USDA is based upon a formula analyzing specialty crop sales in the state of Connecticut.

## Project Duration

Projects cannot begin until January 1, 2014. Prior to starting a project the USDA has to make their official award announcement (expected in October 2013), a contract must be signed with the State of Connecticut ***and*** a State of Connecticut Purchase Order (PO) must be issued.

Projects must be completed by September 30, 2016 however, the proposal must justify the timeline. Projects with shorter timeframes are welcomed. No extensions of any kind are allowed. Please see Appendix C for USDA's regulations regarding Administration of Grants, which is dependent upon the type of applicant.

## State and Federal Priority Issues

Projects must *solely* enhance the competitiveness of US specialty crops in domestic and foreign markets; specifically in regards to the following issues specified by USDA:

a. Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption
b. Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems
c. Developing "Good Agricultural Practices", "Good Handling Practices", Good Manufacturing Practices", and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers, and processors
d. Investing in specialty crop research, including organic research to focus in conservation and environmental outcomes
e. Enhancing food safety
f. Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops
g. Pest and disease control
h. Development of organic and sustainable production practices
i. Improving food access, developing local and regional food systems for specialty crop farmers including Native American and disadvantaged farmers

CT DoAg has identified the following priority issues:

a) Increasing access to healthy, local food
b) Increase consumption of CT agricultural products
c) Increase consumer awareness/education of local agricultural products
d) Promotion of the CT Grown brand for specialty crops

e) Establishing baseline data regarding wholesale purchases of CT agricultural products.
f) Increasing on-farm sales through agritourism education for producers
g) Increases acres in production and season extension of specialty crops.

## EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE AND ACCEPTABLE PROJECTS:

Applicants must describe how the project impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the specialty crop *industry and/or the public* rather than a single organization, institution or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

**Unacceptable** projects; based upon information provided by the USDA:

1. A company applied for funds to purchase starter plants or equipment used to plant, cultivate, and grow a specialty crop for the purpose of making a profit, or to expand production of a single business.
2. A proposal for funds from a specialty crop organization to promote their members' businesses.
3. A sole proprietor request grant funds to redesign his/her logo in order to make her/his specialty crop value-added product stand out at the local farmers market.

**Acceptable** projects; based upon information provided by the USDA:

1. A State requests funding to contract with a university to conduct research on the feasibility of planting, cultivating, and growing a specialty crop in a particular area, the results of which can be shared with many growers throughout the State.
2. A single grower requests funds to demonstrate the viability of organic small fruit production and partners with Cooperative Extension to publicize the working model of diversification to other regional growers.
3. A single company requests funds to provide a viable pollination alternative to specialty crop stakeholders in the region, which currently does not have one.
4. A single specialty crop organization requests funds to conduct an advertising campaign that will benefit their specialty crop members.

## SUBMISSION PROCESS:

**Phase One:** Concept Paper Submission – Deadline: April 30, 2013

**Phase Two:** Full Application Submission – Deadline: June 7, 2013

*All submissions are required via email to Jaime Smith, jaime.smith@ct.gov by close of business (4:30pm) on the day specified.*

Late applications will not be considered. Please keep in mind there is an occasional delay with email, therefore it is recommended you allow ample time for the email to be successfully received by CT DoAg. Once your application is received, a confirmation email will be sent.

## CONCEPT PROPOSAL REQUIRED INFORMATION:

The Concept Proposal must be submitted by using the Concept Proposal Application Form which can be found in Appendix D.

In addition to providing information on the type of organization, contact information, project title, organizational DUNS number, and funding history, you must also provide information on:

1. *Area of Focus:* You must identify an area of focus (select only one) which takes the federal and state priority issues into consideration. They are:
    a. Agricultural education and outreach
    b. Crop research/conservation
    c. Enhancement of food safety/security
    d. Promotion/marketing of CT specialty crops
    e. Plant pest and disease control/management
    f. Nutrition education and consumption
    g. Good Agricultural Practices, Good Handling Practices, and/or Good Manufacturing Practices
    h. Organic and sustainable production practices
    i. Increasing production and consumption

2. *Beginning or Socially Disadvantaged Farmer:* A beginning farmer means an individual or entity that has not operated a farm for more than ten years and substantially participates in the operation. A socially disadvantaged farmer means a farmer who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group which is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. *If you are an organization and the majority of your target audience is one of these groups, please check YES on the application form.*

3. *Project Purpose:* In one or two paragraphs, clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest and/or need, <u>and how the project will address it</u>. Explain why the project is important and timely.

4. *Estimated Timeline:* Enter the estimated timeline for the proposed project. Projects cannot start until January 1, 2014, and can last up to three years in length. All projects must be completed on or before September 30, 2016.

5. *Expected Measurable Outcomes:* Identify the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project.
    *a.* Goals are long-term broad visions. *(EXAMPLE: Our goal is to increase sales)*
    *b.* Objectives should focus and work towards the outcome. *(EXAMPLE: People will write a business plan as a result of attending the business planning workshop)*
    c. Each goal should have one or more objectives.
    *d.* Describe at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose. Typically, outcomes are those measures that are quantifiable, measure a direct benefit, which are documented through data or information collection. *(EXAMPLE: Sales will increase by 15% for that those that attended the workshop and developed a business plan)*

6. *Preliminary Project Work Plan:* List the major tasks of the proposed project and approximately when it will be accomplished (table format is preferred).

7. *Projected Budget:* Provide the total budget amount and the total amounts for each of the sections below. If a project is selected to submit a full application, a much more detailed budget will be required.
    NOTE: A cash match is not required, however if additional funds are contributing to the project, please note accordingly. In-kind matches are not applicable.
    a. Personnel
    b. Fringe Benefits
    c. Travel – Total travel costs include destinations, number of trips, days traveling, transportation, estimated lodging and meals, and estimated mileage rate.
    d. Equipment – This category includes items having a acquaistion cost of $5,000 or more and a useful life of more than one year. If the cost is under $5,000, then include these items under Supplies. If purchasing or renting equipment, include an itemized list of each item along with a brief narrative on the intended use of each equipment item and the cost for all the equipment purchases or rentals. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable.
    e. Supplies – This includes anything with acquisition cost under $5,000 and could be anything from office supplies and software to education or field supplies.
    f. Contractual – If contractual work will be involved with carrying out the work of the project, identify the total contractual expenses. When determining the total cost for this category, include the fees for the professional services, travel costs, lodging expenses, indirect costs, and any other related contractual expenses.
    g. Other – This includes fees for conferences or meetings, facility and equipment rental, lodging and meal expenses, communication costs,

speaker fees, publication costs, data collection, etc.

h. Indirect Charges – Indirect costs shall not exceed three percent of the proposed budget. Indirect costs represent the expenses of doing business and are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the implementation of SCBGP-FB related activities. These costs benefit more than one cost objective and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective without effort disproportionate to the results achieved.

i. Program Income – If program income is earned, it may be used for (1) expanding the project or program; (2) continuing the project or program after grant/sub grant support ends; and (3) supporting other projects or programs that further the objectives of the grant program. Any earned income must be fully reinvested to help sustain and grow the project.

## Concept Proposal Evaluation:

Concept Proposals will undergo an evaluation by multiple agency staff. The final award recommendations will be made by an industry review panel. Those recommendations will be determined based on how well the application meets the following:

1. Does the application meet all the submission requirements?
2. Does the project increase the competitiveness of specialty crops? How?
3. Is the project needed by the industry?
4. Is it a project noted as an area of importance by the USDA?
5. Is it a project noted as an area of importance in Connecticut?
6. Is the project work plan reasonable and achievable? Is the strategy for implementation appropriate?
7. Does the project affect specialty crops as a whole and not an individual in any way? Does the application elaborate on how that will be accomplished?
8. Is there a well constructed budget showing, in the highest detail possible, how funds are to be expended.

**If you are asked to submit a full proposal, you will be required to participate in a training workshop. This workshop will break down the entire application in an effort to enable a successful application.**

## Anticipated Timeline of Events

| | |
|---|---|
| March 15 | Announcement of open RFA/Concept Proposal submission |
| April 30 | Concept Proposals due |
| May 11 | Full application requests announced |
| May – June 1st | Training workshop for applicants |
| June 7 | Full applications are due via email by 4:30pm |
| June 25 | Review Panel Meeting |
| July 2 | Announcement of awards |

| | |
|---|---|
| July 2013 | CTDoAg submits compiled application to USDA |
| October 1 | Expected date of federal award announcement |
| January 1, 2014 | Release of funds to sub-grantees (aprox) |

*Dates are subject to change, please check the agency website for the most current timeline of events.*

## APPENDICES THAT FOLLOW:

A: Restrictions and Limitations on Funds
B: Allowable Costs
C: Administration of Grants
D. Concept Paper Application *(also available on our website, www.ctgrown.gov/grants)*

## ***APPENDIX A***

### RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS ON GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds may not be used to fund political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. 1501-1508 and 7321-7326).

Development or participation in lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352 including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying are unallowable.

Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable as direct and indirect charges.

Capital expenditures means expenditures for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make improvements to capital assets that materially increase their value or useful life. Acquisition cost means the cost of the asset including the cost to put it in place. Acquisition cost for equipment, for example, means the net invoice price of the equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in transit insurance, freight, and installation may be included in, or excluded from the acquisition cost in accordance with the governmental unit's regular accounting practices.

General purpose equipment means equipment, which is not limited to research, scientific or other technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds $5000.

Capital expenditures for special purpose equipment are allowable as direct costs, provided that items with a unit cost of $5000 or more have the prior approval of AMS. (Note: Prior approval from AMS means that the special purpose equipment must be included in the State Plan, and the State Plan must receive approval from AMS. If special purpose equipment was not originally included in the approved State plan, then the grantee must request approval from AMS to purchase the equipment before utilizing grant funds.)

Special purpose equipment means equipment which is used only for research, scientific, or other technical activities. The special purpose equipment must solely enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops and benefit the specialty crop industry.

Rental costs of buildings and equipment are allowable as direct costs in accordance with the cost principles in Subpart T of 7 CFR 3015.

## ***APPENDIX B***

### ALLOWABLE COSTS

All subawards are subject to those cost principles applicable to the particular organization concerned. For example, if a State government subawards to a university, the cost principles applicable to a university will apply. All costs must be associated with project activities that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

State and Local Governments and Indian Tribal Governments - 2 CFR 225 (OMB Circular A-87).

Colleges and Universities - 2 CFR 220 (OMB Circular A-21).

Non-Profits - 2 CFR 230 (OMB Circular A-122).

For Profits - 48 CFR Part 31.2.

## ***Appendix C***

### ADMINISTRATION OF GRANTS

AMS applies the following federal grant uniform administrative requirements to the management of each grant award, and the State department of agriculture shall in turn apply these requirements to their subgrantees based on the type of organization through their contractual or cooperative linkages. For example, if the State government subawards to a non-profit, the administrative requirements applicable to a non-profit will apply.

State and Local Governments and Indian Tribal Governments - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3016

Colleges and Universities - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019

Non-Profits - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019

For Profits - 7 CFR 3015 and 7 CFR 3019

***Appendix D***

## Fiscal Year 2013

# SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT – FARM BILL

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# CONCEPT PROPOSAL

## *Application Form*

*All projects are subject to availability of funding.*

**APPLICANT DETAILS**

Organization / Business Name:

Organization / Business Type:

- ☐ Agricultural Non-Profit/Commodity Associations
- ☐ Municipalities/Agricultural Commissions
- ☐ For-Profit/Producers
- ☐ College or University
- ☐ State Government

DUNS #:

Instructions as to how obtain a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) Number can be found at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/duns_num_guide.pdf

Address:

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

Web Site Address:

E-mail Address:

Project Coordinator:

**Requested Grant Amount for the Entire Project**:

**Project Title:**

Has the applicant received grant funds through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture in the past? ☐ No ☐ Yes, Please elaborate:

**AREA OF FOCUS** *(check only one category)*

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Agricultural Education and Outreach | ☐ Nutrition Education and Consumption |
| ☐ Crop Research / Conservation | ☐ Good Agricultural Practices, Good Handling Practices, Good Manufacturing Practices |
| ☐ Enhancement of Food Safety / Food Security | ☐ Increasing Production and Consumption of Specialty Crops |
| ☐ Plant Pest and Disease Control | ☐ Organic and Sustainable Production Practices |
| ☐ Promotion / Marketing of Specialty Crops | |

**Are you a Beginning Farmer** (in operation 10 years or less) **or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer?** ☐ No ☐ Yes

**Is this a Multi-State Partnership?** ☐ No ☐ Yes **If so, name the other state(s)?**

**Project Purpose** In one or two paragraphs, clearly state the specific issue, problem, interest, or need, and how your project will address it. Explain why your project is important and timely:

| **Estimated Timeline**<br>Project start date: January, 1, 2014 (or later)<br>Project completion deadline: September 30, 2016 (or earlier) | **Start date:** **End Date:** |
|---|---|

**Goals, Objectives, and Expected Measurable Outcomes** Describe the overall goal(s) and objective(s) and describe at least one distinct, quantifiable, and measurable outcome that directly and meaningfully supports the project's purpose.

**Preliminary Project Work Plan** List the major tasks of the proposed project

**Projected Budget** Complete the below budget for the proposed project.

| Category | SCBGP-FB | Cash | Total | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | | | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | | | |
| Travel | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | |
| Contractual | | | | |
| Other | | | | |
| Indirect Charges | | | | |
| Program Income | | | | |
| **Total** | | | | |

**When complete, e-mail this document to:**

Jaime Smith, Marketing Rep and SCBG-FB Program Coordinator
Jaime.smith@ct.gov
**By 4:30pm on April 30, 2013**