

# Specialty Crop Block Grant

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## *Funded Projects*

### **12-25-B1681 | 2013-2016**

**Amount Awarded:** \$304,803.65 | **Number of Projects:** 7

- Partner with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center to improve specialty crop producer profitability by selecting and trialing organic vegetable seed crops that can be further processed for a value added return; educating specialty crop producers' on integrating seed production into diversified specialty crop farms for the purpose of building farm financial sustainability; and promoting Montana grown, regionally adapted organically grown vegetable seed
- Partner with Montana State University to improve grower's management decisions and reduce pulse crop losses by evaluating isolates for sensitivity to QoI and DMI fungicides in pulse crops so that growers can be notified quickly when fungicide resistance exists. Results of the project will be distributed through routine extension activities such as presentations, agricultural alerts, press releases, and radio and television media
- Partner with Montana State University to better understand the role of pathogens in honey bee colony losses by monitoring colony size and pathogen incidence and abundance in select colonies before, during, and after almond pollination and communicating important findings to all registered commercial beekeepers in Montana
- Partner with Montana State University to study and document the native pollinators involved in huckleberry pollination by surveying huckleberry stands to establish insect associates of the plants, evaluating those associates for pest status, identifying the species responsible for the fruit damage and monitoring for the penetration of the spotted wing drosophila
- Partner with Montana State University to meet the requirements of federal land management agencies to utilize locally adapted plants, promote sustainable maintenance through reduced water and energy consumption, and help to alleviate economic constraints and human health risks of small scale agriculture through reduced fertilizer and pesticide use by researching greenhouse protocols for the production of high-demand yet difficult to propagate native perennial plants and promoting information sharing of native plant production, installation, maintenance, and growth protocols between buyers and sellers
- Partner with Montana State University to increase plantings of Montana certified seed potatoes in home gardens by creating an online garden seed directory and developing a wholesale distribution and delivery network using Montana county extension offices. A second objective of the project is to adopt multiplex PCR techniques for identification of potato diseases in one assay, decreasing reagent and labor costs
- Partner with Williston Ag Diversification Group to enhance the potential of potato processing and marketing in the MonDak region by providing a commercial supply of MonDAK Gold potatoes for test marketing with fresh pack, restaurant, grocery store chains, specialty potato product processors, and other marketers

### **12-25-B-1472 | 2012-2015**

**Amount Awarded:** \$328,766.49 | **Number of Projects:** 9

- Partner with Lake County Community Development Corporation to increase knowledge and consumption of specialty crops by developing an effective marketing campaign that highlights the benefits of specialty crop consumption, assisting specialty crop producers enter local, regional markets; improving specialty crop producers' and processors' efficiency in product aggregation and distribution; providing expertise in food safety regulations; and assisting local coops in meeting the new regulatory requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act. Matching funds will be used to cover any inclusion of non-specialty crops
- Partner with Montana State University to promote increased production and higher levels of consumption of organic lentils in Montana by creating opportunities for collaborative relationships among lentil producers and chefs at two

conventions, providing training for Montana's dietetic professionals on the benefits of organic lentils, and by creating new visually appealing marketing materials

- Partner with the USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council to improve market access and development programs for pulses as mainstream ingredients through the training and education of food industry professionals at an educational, informative, and hands-on product/menu development course targeting food scientists and executive chefs from around the world
- Partner with Montana State University to increase the market share of U.S. dry pea in China by screening the populations of dry peas and selecting or breeding dry pea cultivars with suitable starch characteristics for Chinese vermicelli production
- Partner with Montana State University to develop sterile cultivars of the Russian olive for use as an ornamental, without the noxious invasiveness characteristic of non-sterile Russian olive trees
- Partner with Montana State University to provide growers with alternative strategies for managing Ascochyta blight in lentils by studying how far Ascochyta blight spores can move from the previous year's infected residue; determine how large fungicide buffer strings should be; quantify the impact of Ascochyta blight on yield and quality; and educate growers about crop rotation, seed health, and fungicides that are effective against Ascochyta
- Partner with Montana State University to minimize the effects of pathogens such as late blight, powdery scab, potato cyst nematode, ring rot, and others on potatoes in Montana by adopting the use of real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and protocols which will then be included in a laboratory manual with detailed instructions for assays for each pathogen. In addition, the team will collect samples of seed potatoes from garden centers throughout the state to determine the source of the pathogens
- Partner with Montana State University/Lewis & Clark County Extension to determine which cultivars of apples, pears and plums would thrive best in Montana by planting and studying six apple varieties, five pear varieties, and three plum varieties in various regions of Montana and creating a fruit tree growers' guide based on the results of the study

## 12-25-B-1239 | 2011-2014

**Amount Awarded:** \$296,701.95 | **Number of Projects:** 7

- Educate specialty crop producers and other interested stakeholders about the market and food safety need for Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP), which will include an introduction to GAP/GHP, follow-up educational training to develop grower GAP/GHP plans, and further assistance with audit preparation upon request of training participants
- Partner with Lake County Community Development Food and Ag Center and the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Processing Facility to increase the capacity to meet Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) standards for the Farm to Institution Program and the specialty crop clients that utilize the processing center, deliver a technical assistance program in the GFSI standards to specialty crop processors throughout Montana, and deliver education programs that build a foundation for meeting GFSI standards to specialty crop processors throughout Montana. SCBGP funds will be used solely for specialty crop producers and other funding resources and cost-sharing will be utilized to deliver technical services to non-specialty crop processors
- Partner with the Montana State University's Seed Potato Certification Program to develop a garden seed directory for distribution to all nurseries, garden centers, and produce distributors in Montana; obtain four new specialty varieties to expand the selection of varieties available to gardeners; and conduct an educational campaign to inform the public of the importance of growing Montana seed potatoes
- Partner with USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council to improve market access and development programs for pulses (dry, edible peas, lentils, chickpeas, and beans) as mainstream ingredients through training and a hands-on product/menu development course targeting food scientists and executive chefs from food manufacturers and food service entities from around the world

- Partner with Montana State University Extension to establish cold hardy grape varietal trails in western Montana, which will establish data that will help small acreage and commercial grape growers as well as local wineries determine the requirements to develop and grow the wine industry in Montana
- Partner with Montana State University to identify low glycemic index potato cultivars that may be adapted for production in Montana as a value-added crop
- Partner with Montana State University to develop and provide a range of pest and disease diagnostic services for commercial and amateur beekeepers to support the honey bee industry in Montana

## 12-25-B-1079 | 2010-2013

**Amount Awarded:** \$292,954.57 | **Number of Projects:** 7

- Partner with Montana State University to investigate the agronomic drivers of nutritional content in vegetable crops and develop produce marketing tools based on nutritional quality
- Partner with Lake County Community Development Food and Ag Center and the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Processing Facility to increase the farm to institution market opportunities for western MT specialty crop producers through value added processing and cooperative purchasing; collaborate with Oregon State University Food Innovation Center to create the Montana lentil burger alternative for the institutional marketplace; develop a web-based specialty crop recipe resource; and launch a Buy Fresh Buy Local Farm to Institution market campaign to outreach and communicate the results of the recipe tastings and the lentil burger
- Partner with the Central Agricultural Research Center at Montana State University to evaluate disease resistance and quality of dry beans and peas in Montana soil and climate conditions
- Partner with Montana State University to adopt real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for the testing of potato pathogens and develop a more economical method of micro/mini-tuber production, and improve the size profile and quality
- Provide support that will offset the increasing costs of the USDA APHIS PPQ Phytosanitary Export Certification Program, while other methods of covering costs are explored
- Partner with Montana State University to introduce Camelina Sativa to the sprout industry to revitalize the industry
- Partner with Montana State University Agriculture Extension to establish research trials that test six new varieties of sweet cherries on Flathead Lake