**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**:

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**MDA Announces 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Awardees**

**Helena, Mont.** – The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) and USDA have partnered to announce the recipients of the state’s $3.071 million investment in projects through the Montana Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program.

“*The quality of Montana’s agricultural products and the producers raising them are unmatched*,” said Montana Department of Agriculture Director Christy Clark. “*These grants support vital research and outreach efforts that directly benefit Montana’s farmers and ranchers to diversify, innovate, and grow their operations*.”

**2023 SCBG AWARDS**

**MSU-Bozeman has been awarded the following grants:**

* A $55,839 award for “Preserving Pulse Crop Acres by Solving Soil Erosion Risk”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Perry Miller.
* A $123,867 award for “Variety and Seeding Date Evaluation of Cowpea in Montana”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Perry Miller.
* A $200,627 award for “Control of Soilborne Disease Using Beneficial Bacteria for Organic Pea Growers”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Qing Yan.
* A $328,949 award for “Pea Ascochyta Blight-Resistant Variety Development by Genomic Approaches”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Li Huang.
* A $386,105 award for “The Wild Bees of Montana 3, Research for Specialty Crop Pollination Security”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Michael Ivie.
* A $142,326 award for “Exploring Intercropping and Essential Oils to Control Fusarium Root Rot of Pea”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Frankie Crutcher with the Eastern Agricultural Research Center in Sidney.
* A $328,857 award for “Managing Grasshoppers Damaging Pea, Lentil, and Chickpea Crops in Montana”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Kevin Wanner.
* A $88,256 award for “Investigating Novel Approaches to Improve PVY Detection in Dormant Tubers”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Nina Zidack.
* A $113,585 award for “Characterization of the Ecological and Epidemiological Factors Driving Pathogen Spread in Chickpeas”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Frankie Crutcher with the Eastern Agricultural Research Center in Sidney.
* A $254,174 award for “Testing Dibutyldithiophosphate as a Fertilizer to Improve Yield of Pulse Crops”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Michael Giroux.
* A $373,949 award for “Enhancing Innovation Service Capability and Offering Extrusion Training for Specialty Crops Stakeholders”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Wan-Yuan Kuo.
* A $186,353 award for “Evaluating Desiccants for Crop Dry Down and Weed Seedbank Management in Pulses”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Lovreet Shergill with the Southern Agricultural Research Center in Huntley.
* A $201,444 award for “Salsa 2.0: High Value Vegetable Variety Screening and Quality Optimization”. Primary Investigator is Dr. Andrej Svyantek with the Western Agricultural Research Center in Corvallis.

The Specialty Crop Block Program also supported a grant for $60,000 for “Expanding Specialty Crop Education and Marketing Through Harvest of the Month” for the National Center for Appropriate Technology, based in Butte, Montana.

The Montana Department of Agriculture is serving Montana Agriculture and growing prosperity under the Big Sky. For more information on department programs and services, visit [agr.mt.gov](https://agr.mt.gov/).

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