



State of Utah

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## Department of Agriculture and Food

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## UDAF Requests Public Comment for Upcoming Specialty Crop Block Grant Application Cycle

Taylorville, UT — The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) is seeking public comment for the upcoming Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) application cycle, which will be open from February 26 - April 5, 2024. The SCBGP is a competitive grant program operated by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to administer federal funds from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service; this grant is open to farmers, private businesses, schools, trade associations, non-profits, farming and ranching co-ops, etc. headquartered in Utah. Specialty crops include fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

In 2024, \$342,390 will be awarded for projects designed to enhance the competitiveness of Utah-grown specialty crops by (1) leveraging efforts to market & promote specialty crops; (2) assisting producers with research & development relevant to specialty crops; (3) expanding availability & access to specialty crops; and (4) addressing local, regional, & national challenges confronting specialty crop producers.

UDAF is requesting public input on the following issues impacting Utah's specialty crop industry for this year's application cycle. This input will help shape the ranking and rating criteria priorities to maximize benefit for Utah's specialty crop industry.

- Enhancing food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act (21 U.S.C. Chapter 27)
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Please submit comments by February 23, 2024 at 12pm by email to: [aross@utah.gov](mailto:aross@utah.gov) with the subject line "PUBLIC COMMENT." For more information, contact Allison Ross at [aross@utah.gov](mailto:aross@utah.gov) or visit: [ag.utah.gov/specialty-crop-block-grant-program](http://ag.utah.gov/specialty-crop-block-grant-program).

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