

## **MDA ANNOUNCES NEW SPECIALTY CROP GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Application Deadline is May 12**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 15, 2011) – The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) today announced a grant program to fund projects that solely enhances the competitiveness of specialty crops. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program was established by the 2008 Farm Bill.

MDA expects to administer funds totaling approximately \$300,000 based on previous funding cycles, though; MDA has not received confirmation from USDA on the total amount of grant funds available. Of this amount, Food Safety, Marketing with Maryland's Best and Specialty Crop Distribution Chain grants will be awarded for projects with a minimum level of \$20,000. MDA intends to fund projects that can produce the highest degree of measurable benefits to Maryland specialty crop producers in relation to each dollar spent and need to have the support from specialty crop producers. New this year, organizations are required to have DUNS numbers (Data Universal Numbering System) which can be obtained online via this website: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or over the phone: 1-866-705-5711. You must have a DUNS number before you apply for the grant.

Specialty crops are defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops. Visit [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0) for a comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops.

MDA is seeking applications from eligible non-profit organizations, government entities, for-profit and organizations for projects that aim to promote or enhance the production of and access to Maryland specialty crops. Applicants must reside or their business or educational affiliation must be in Maryland.

Electronic grant applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on May 12, 2011. Paper applications must be postmarked by May 12, 2011. MDA will conduct a conference call on March 31 to go over details of the program for interested applicants. For questions about the grant application, to register for the conference call, or to download the application, visit [www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/specialtycrop.pdf](http://www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/specialtycrop.pdf), or contact Karen Fedor at [FedorKM@mda.state.md.us](mailto:FedorKM@mda.state.md.us) or 410-841-5773.

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