

NEWS RELEASE

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Attention Specialty Crop Growers: Grant Apps Available

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Specialty crop growers in Minnesota can now apply for the 2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). The grants help growers of specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables and nursery plants compete in today's marketplace. Minnesota's federal allocation for the grants is just over \$797,000.

The Specialty Crop Block Grants may be used to support local and rural agriculture interests, increase the competitiveness of small producers, and to promote or create direct marketing opportunities for specialty crop producers. They may also be used to invest in specialty crop research, to increase consumers' nutritional knowledge about specialty crops, to develop new and improved seed varieties, and for pest and disease control.

A list of eligible and ineligible commodities can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/scbgrp>.

MDA will accept grant applications through April 1, 2010.

A grant manual is available on the MDA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/specialty.aspx>.

Questions regarding the grant program or the application process can be directed to Amanda Baesler, at 651-201-6680, or email: Amanda.baesler@state.mn.us.

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