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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ohio Department of Agriculture Expands Eligible Grant Candidate List**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (May 20, 2009) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture today added additional eligible candidates that may apply for a share of a Specialty Crop Block Grant. Universities, research institutions, and non-profits are now able to submit a proposal.

The department is seeking project proposals that will advance long-term economic viability and sustainability of Ohio's specialty crop industry while increasing the marketability of specialty crops. These projects should enhance the competitiveness of Ohio's specialty crops through market promotion, improved efficiency and reduced costs of distribution systems.

Specialty crops range in variety from fruits and vegetables to dried fruit and tree nuts to nursery crops, including floriculture. Funding for the grants is made available by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Grants can range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$60,000. In addition, all applicants must provide a minimum match of 25 percent of total project costs.

Projects may focus on, but are not limited to, developing markets for Ohio specialty crops, providing technical assistance or production oriented options to enhance specialty crop production, or offering outreach and education.

All proposals should address obstacles or opportunities that impact Ohio's specialty crop industry. Those who submit a proposal should create a plan to improve the obstacles and opportunities and identify a measuring system that can quantify the outcome. Proposals must be received by the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Markets no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2009. They may be mailed or hand-delivered to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Division of Markets, 8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068, to the attention of Amalie Lipstreu.

For more information, contact the Ohio Department of Agriculture at 614-728-6200. To obtain a copy of the request for proposals, visit [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov).

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