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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ohio Department of Agriculture Accepts Specialty Crop Grant Proposals**

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Feb. 26, 2010) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture is now accepting proposals for the 2010 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, which will provide funding for projects that will enhance the competitiveness of Ohio’s specialty crops.

The department is seeking project proposals that will advance long-term economic viability and sustainability of the state’s specialty crop industry while increasing the marketability of specialty crops. The USDA Agriculture Marketing Service will make approximately \$670,000 of grant funding available to Ohio.

“Specialty crops play an important role in helping to diversify Ohio’s agricultural sector,” said Ohio Agriculture Director Robert J. Boggs. “By enhancing the competitiveness of Ohio’s specialty crops with this grant program, we can strengthen the state’s number one industry – food and agriculture.”

Specialty crops range in variety from fruits and vegetables to dried fruit and tree nuts to nursery crops, including floriculture. Grants will range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. In addition, all applicants must provide a minimum match of 25 percent of total project costs.

Parties eligible to submit proposals include food and agricultural non-profit organizations, cooperatives, associations or commodity groups, universities and research institutions that represent specific specialty crop sectors. Proposals must be submitted electronically using the online application by 4 p.m. on April 9, 2010.

For more information, available forms or a copy of the request for proposals, visit the new Specialty Crop Promotion Program page on the department’s Web site at [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov).

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