

## FY2011 Oregon Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) received funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to fund the following 23 projects, which seek to enhance the competitiveness of Oregon's specialty crops.

State allocation:	\$1,717,699.58
Indirect Costs & Coordination/Outreach:	\$269,962.58
Project allocation:	\$1,447,737.00

### **Export Preparedness and Market Access Seminar**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) will hold a series of export seminars for Oregon specialty crop producers and processors to develop and expand international sales. Our largest and traditional export markets are strong and we are seeing impressive growth trends in emerging markets in South Asia and Latin American Countries. We have seen an up-tick interest in US food products from foreign markets, as well as increasing interest from specialty crop producers and processors. We feel that this is the optimum time to provide quality market information and export training to Oregon's specialty crop industry. Specialty crop suppliers from surrounding states will also be invited to attend the seminars and will coordinate with their Departments of Agriculture. *Funding Level: \$47,056*

### **Greater China Market Development for Oregon Specialty Crops**

Despite the global economic slowdown of 2009, the Chinese economy resumed course in 2010, thanks in part to the 4 trillion RMB stimulus package from the government that helped dampen effects of the global economic recession. Recently released reports on 2011 Lunar New Year retail spending showed consumers spent aggressively at shops and restaurants nationwide, to the tune of 404.5 billion yuan (\$61.3 billion) in sales—a new 12-year record. Likewise, the food ingredient sector in the Greater China region continues to show strong growth. For 2008, exports of US food ingredients to China were \$340.5 million, a 1% increase over the previous year and a 70% increase since 2003. There are approximately 500,000 food manufacturers and processors in China whom are dependent on foreign imports to supply Western food ingredients that are not available locally. Meanwhile, food safety related concerns, enflamed by media reports of re-used cooking oil, melamine in dairy products and animal feeds, etc., continue to influence consumers' attitudes, and open new opportunities for high-quality exports from the US.

In Oregon, agricultural exports to China have increased drastically over the past decade, with total sales reaching over \$430 million in 2010. However, over 96% of these products are in bulk feed, seed, grains and cereal categories. Consumer incomes and spending are growing in China, but targeted, dedicated efforts are required in order for Oregon specialty crop exporters to access this dynamic market. The activities proposed include but are not limited to targeted trade meetings, product showcases, trade tastings, and educational seminars, focusing on key, influential cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai. *Funding Level: \$58,324*

### **Native Bees and Their Importance to Oregon's Specialty Crops**

About two thirds of the food and fiber crops grown worldwide depend on pollination for reproduction. The recent drastic rise in numbers of commercial honeybee hives that have disappeared in the US due to the "colony collapse disorder" (CCD) poses a significant threat to our agricultural production. In Oregon, native pollinators in general, and bumblebees and bees in particular, are critical pollinators of many specialty crops and native plants. There is increasing concern about the health of native bee populations because of competition with introduced exotic bumblebees, transmission and proliferation of exotic diseases brought in with these and other exotic bees, and adverse habitat alteration. This underscores the increasing importance of protecting and enhancing native bee populations to secure continuous pollination of Oregon's specialty crops. This project plans to address the native bee issue on three levels with the overall goal to ensure continuous and successful pollination of specialty crops:

Establishment of baseline data of native bee populations in specialty crop settings; Development of native bee identification aides for specialty crop producers, and Establishment of native bee restoration demonstration sites in specialty crop settings in order to enhance native bee populations. *Funding Level: \$75,000*

### **Oregon FoodCorps Pilot Program**

The school food market presents an emerging market for Oregon specialty crops, and fruits and vegetables in particular. Every school year children in Oregon consume over 20,000 tons of fruits and vegetables in addition to center of the plate entrees that contain Oregon specialty crops. Farm to School programs connect local food producers with school food buyers. Effective programs also combine food and garden-based education with the classroom, lunchroom, and community through activities such as field trips to farms and on-site gardening. There is a growing interest in Farm to School programs across Oregon, but we lack capacity and need people to implement quality, consistent programming. To address this critical gap, the Oregon Department of Agriculture will pilot FoodCorps, a new national service program. FoodCorps members will build Farm to School supply chains, expand food system and nutrition education programs, and build and tend school food gardens. ODA will act as the Host Site managing up to 14 Service Sites in Oregon during the two year project period. *Funding Level: \$69,534*

### **Phase Two of Integrated Farm to School and School Garden Pilot Program in Oregon**

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### **Low-Income Latino Producer to Consumer Connection**

In cooperation with **Adelante Mujeres**: The Low-Income Latino Producer to Consumer Connection will address the following issues: 1) Lack of access to marketing opportunities for low-income immigrant Latino farmers in Oregon due to social barriers including lack of access to local institutions, and 2) Lack of consumer education and access to fresh and local produce for low-income immigrant families and children. This pilot project, managed by Adelante Mujeres, will impact the success of low-income Latino farmers by enhancing their local marketing capacity. By establishing a coalition of organizations that support industry participants, the project will also build momentum for healthy foods within the Latino community by creating more low-income producers and consumers of regionally sourced whole foods. We project by the 2012 growing season, 15 Latino farmers will provide produce to four Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC) sites in Washington County and serve 809 children. Children who participate in statewide Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs coordinated by the OCDC will gain access to fresh and local foods. Adelante Mujeres coordinates the sustainable farming program Adelante Agricultura. The program encourages economic viability for local Latino farmers by providing access to farmland, training in small-scale, diversified, organic agriculture, and direct marketing outlets. *Funding Level: \$45,200*

### **Adoption of the United States Nursery Certification Program (USNCP) by Small and Mid-sized Nurseries**

In cooperation with **Ascent Agricultural Services, LLC**: This project will partner four small to mid-sized nurseries, the USDA APHIS and the ODA in the adoption and accreditation of the USNCP at these businesses. Consultant services to provide training, manual documentation, development of a systems approach to control pests and pathogens and project coordination will be provided by Ascent Agricultural Services, LLC. This project will also provide core supplies to the nurseries to meet the documentation and training requirements of the accreditation. Adding four small to mid-sized nurseries to the USNCP pilot will demonstrate that the program is scalable to these businesses, will provide a source of metrics necessary to evaluate the USNCP at smaller business and will allow increased market access and competitiveness to smaller companies seeking access to foreign markets. *Funding Level: \$65,000*

### **Telling The World About How Treasure Valley Onions Have Been Voluntarily Tested for Pesticide Residue**

*In cooperation with **Certified Onions, Inc.***: The farming area of eastern Oregon and southwest Idaho (*the Treasure Valley*) grows approximately 1.5 billion pounds of onions annually. With an industry this large a food safety issue could have a devastating effect on Oregon's and Idaho's economy. In an effort to protect this onion industry, in 2009 Certified Onions, Inc. (a nonprofit corporation) was created to develop and implement a voluntary uniform pesticide testing program. *In the Treasure Valley* during the 2009 growing season 54% of the onion acreage was tested and during the 2010 growing season 72% of the onion acreage was tested representing approximately 1.1 billion pounds of onions. The success of the program has exceeded all expectations. Now that the project has proven itself effective it is time to get the word out to the public. The organization intends to embark on an aggressive marketing campaign to take advantage of this one of a kind voluntary pesticide testing program. This program should allow the onion industry of the Treasure Valley to gain additional market share as well as create added value. *Funding Level: \$ 91,900*

### **Corvallis Farm to School Project: A Model for Farmer Direct Purchasing by School Districts in Oregon**

In cooperation with **Corvallis Environmental Center**: The Corvallis Farm to School (CF2S) project will 1) increase purchases of Oregon specialty crops by school districts, 2) promote Oregon fruits and vegetables to children and their families, and 3) serve as a model for emerging farm to school programs in Oregon. The CF2S project is a 2-year pilot partnership between the Corvallis Environmental Center and the Corvallis School District to provide the information, materials, programs and training necessary for the District to implement and sustain a farm to school program. The CF2S project is a multi-faceted program that positively impacts market for Oregon specialty crops by engaging Food Service staff, farmers, students and families. *Funding Level: \$89,368*

### **Marketing & Sales of Oregon Cranberries in China**

In cooperation with **Curry Soil and Water Conservation District**: The Oregon Cranberry industry is in trouble. Oregon Cranberry Growers are in need of lucrative markets to purchase large amounts of cranberries. Our proposal is requesting funds to assist with implementation of our marketing plan for selling Oregon Cranberries to China. The marketing plan is being developed with the help of funding from a 2010 ODA Specialty Crop Grant (# ODA 2083-IG). We are proposing to hire a marketing & sales firm to work closely and continuously with the involved Oregon Cranberry Growers. The primary goal will be to establish long-term, high volume sales channels for Oregon Cranberries in China. Involved Oregon cranberry growers will assist with the project implementation. We see selling 25,000 barrels (2,500,000 lbs.) per year of Oregon Cranberries to the Chinese market as a conservative & achievable goal. Oregon Cranberry Growers will benefit through sales of their crop, secure income, farm stability, ability to plan for the future of their farms & families, economic & social benefit and security for our small rural communities (Langlois, Port Orford, Bandon). Selling 2,500,000 lbs. yearly to China at market prices ranging from \$0.25-0.65 per pound will result in \$625,000-\$1,625,000 paid to Oregon Cranberry Growers. *Funding Level: \$90,000*

### **Growing the Community of Practice in Support of Specialty Crop Producers**

In cooperation with **Ecotrust**: Ecotrust respectfully requests a grant of \$85,600 to support our project titled: *Growing the Community of Practice in Support of Specialty Crop Producers*. Through this project, Ecotrust will develop a new, feature-rich Associate membership category within FoodHub, our online directory and marketplace for buyers and sellers of regional food. The Associate member category includes specialty crop commodity commissions, trade associations, logistics and transport operators and similar support entities that can enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers throughout Oregon.

We have been inundated by requests to create resources within FoodHub for Associate members, and this project addresses this expressed need by creating and implementing new features and tools so that Associate members can maximize an effective marketplace for specialty crop producers and buyers. These new features will allow Associate members to:

- 1) Champion specialty crop products, and the producers and industry entities behind them,
- 2) Provide a targeted audience of food buyers with relevant information to help them utilize more specialty crop products, and,
- 3) Provide specialty crop producers with easy access to information that will improve their bottom line.

Through these activities, Associate members will be able to actively promote market development and access for specialty crop producers. *Funding Level: \$85,600*

### **Expanding Markets for CSA Farms by Accepting SNAP Funds**

In cooperation with **Friends of Zenger Farm**: An increasing number of Oregon farms are utilizing the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model because it allows farmers to directly market, plan, and finance operations before the start of the growing season while ensuring a constant demand for the food produced. However, this model has been criticized for only being accessible to participants who can afford the upfront cost. The Expanding Markets for CSA Farms project will increase the number of CSA farms that accept SNAP funds for CSA shares from the current four to at least 20 in two years. In Phase One of the project Zenger Farm will run a pilot project with a fifty- member CSA to determine effective marketing strategies, the cost and time to set-up and administer a SNAP program, and any extra support needed to retain SNAP members through the season. In Phase Two Zenger Farm will train farmers based on the results of the pilot, provide a guide with marketing templates, offer individual support, and raise public awareness about CSA farms accepting this new payment option. *Funding Level: \$54,740*

### **Growing Through the Seasons: Developing Shoulder-season Markets and Growing Techniques for Gorge Vegetable Producers**

In cooperation with **Gorgre Grown Food Network**: This project will expand local vegetable producers' ability to extend their growing season and capture greater market share, improving farm business viability. This project has three primary objectives, all of which will directly benefit Oregon vegetable growers based in the Columbia River Gorge: 1) offer hands-on season extension education classes and workshops on highest-priority grower-determined topics, utilizing the expertise of Extension professionals and experienced producers in other regions; 2) develop and maintain a demonstration site in Hood River that will house several season extension method demonstration plots suited to the Gorge's climate specifics, including construction plans and detailed specs; and 3) conduct targeted marketing for shoulder-season crops to local purchasers of fresh vegetables, including end consumers and institutional buyers. **Goal:** Equip vegetable growers in the Gorge region of Oregon with relevant and measurable knowledge, skills, and marketing support that will allow them to learn about and implement season extension techniques and increase market opportunities and sales. *Funding Level: \$23,448*

### **Portland Growers Alliance: Collaborative Direct-Marketing for New and Disadvantaged Growers**

In cooperation with **Grow Portland**: The purpose of the Portland Growers Alliance is to help new and disadvantaged vegetable farmers succeed. We are a new grower-led marketing collective founded in 2010 and modeled after other successful distribution projects throughout the country. We jointly market and distribute naturally grown vegetable crops through diverse direct-market channels including restaurants, food service, farmers markets and community supported agriculture. We are building a self-supporting social enterprise specifically designed to increase market access and sales for new and disadvantaged growers.

*Funding Level: \$48,000*

### **LIVE Winery Certification Program**

In cooperation with **Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE)**: Low Input Viticulture and Enology, Inc (LIVE) aims at the preservation of human and natural resources in the wine industry of the Pacific Northwest. We accomplish this through internationally recognized third-party certification of collaborative science-based standards of wine growing.

The LIVE Winery Certification is a relatively new service for our membership that has been extremely successful in its first three years. This certification verifies sustainable production of wine, including responsible water management, worker health and safety, reductions in energy use and emissions, and sustainable winegrape sourcing.

The continued growth of this program requires LIVE to increase operational capacity by hiring one full-time employee dedicated to its management. This program will have positive environmental, human, and financial impacts on the winegrape industry of Oregon and the broader Pacific Northwest.

Post-grant funding of this project will be funded entirely by program income. This will be possible if the goals of this project are met. *Funding Level: \$87,178*

### **Building the Web-based Tool Connecting Plant Buyers and Growers**

In cooperation with **Oregon Association of Nurseries**: No single, widely recognized Web site offers the opportunity for wholesale buyers to search for plant availability and new sources of plant material at a time when online searches for this type of information is increasing and traditional nursery industry marketing methods are becoming less effective. Proposed in this grant request are activities that implement and promote a robust online buyers guide to create awareness of the Oregon and northwest nursery industry, make introductions and help make purchasing from regional growers an easy choice for buyers in an increasingly competitive environment.

Currently, almost 90% of the target industry segments use the Internet to find plant information and almost three-quarters of those go online daily or weekly. The outcome of this project will be an online tool that will help targeted industry segments—garden centers, other growers, landscape contractors, designers, and architects, rewholesalers, and brokers—find the information of most value to them. The highest priority functionality includes new varieties information, my-state/my-zone plant information, shopping list help, RFP-type functionality and “type in a plant name and you would get back a contact list of growers who report that they grow or carry this plant.” *Funding Level: \$92,000*

### **Promoting U.S. Grown Hops and Developing Educational and Promotional Materials for the Oregon Hop Commission and Hop Growers of America**

In cooperation with **Oregon Hop Commission**: The overall goal of this grant will be to develop additional promotional materials for the Hop Growers of America and the Oregon Hop Commission. We will be developing two event booth displays – one for research activities and Oregon Hop History and one for the 2012 World Brewing Congress; hosting a tour of Oregon hop farms for brewers attending the 2012 World Brewing Congress; and traveling to St. Louis, MO to the Anheuser Busch headquarters with our USDA public hop breeders to meet with Anheuser Busch management.

We hope to develop marketing materials that will highlight the hop industries current research activities and tell the rich history of the Oregon hop industry. We will work with Hop Growers of America on a

professional trade show display for the 2012 World Brewing Congress where growers can interact directly with brewers in our trade show booth. By visiting the Anheuser Busch corporate offices we hope to open the lines of communication between the new Anheuser Busch management, the public hop breeders and our hop growers. This will help the hop breeders to develop a new publicly available hop variety that could be grown in Oregon for Anheuser Busch. *Funding Level: \$33,690*

**"Northwest Berries Fresh From Your Freezer" - Promotion of Processed Pacific NW Raspberries, Blackberries & Strawberries to Food Service/Restaurant Markets in East Asia and the United States**

In cooperation with **Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission**: Oregon Raspberry & Blackberry Commission (ORBC) in cooperation with Oregon Strawberry Commission (OSC) and Oregon packers will promote processed NW berries as a viable addition for use in high-end food service, restaurant and hotel applications in East Asia and the US. NW berry promotion will be undertaken in Tokyo and Chicago at FoodEx and the National Restaurant Association show. Booth space will be reserved at each show and team members will coordinate a multi-disciplinary promotions approach involving professional chefs, ORBC & OSC members, Oregon packers, an Oregon cookbook author and marketing staff. Outreach at these shows will include: cooking demonstrations using processed Oregon berries in gourmet applications, the creation and use of a downloadable high tech smart phone application that will allow show attendees to access packer lists, Oregon berry nutrition, handling and usage information; collateral promotional material will be handed out and copies of "The Berry Bible" will be given away at each show by the author, who will speak and further promote the high end use of processed Oregon berries.

Outreach will enhance the competitiveness of processed Oregon berries in relation to fresh berries through an increased awareness and a forum for discussion with Oregon packers and new consumers.

*Funding Level: \$52,362*

**Oregon Seed Council**

In cooperation with **Warehouse Fumigation Research**: The Oregon fine turf seed industry produces over 500 million pounds of seed annually. EPA has recently disallowed the use of traditional fumigants for rodent and insect control in warehouse and containers. There is currently only one product available, and its use is tenuous at EPA. Rodent damage to bagged and stored seed is greater than 1% of the total production, with some estimates as high as 10%. Quarantine regulations of many foreign countries, as well as the seed quality expected by domestic customers, requires a complete absence of rodent damage. Recleaning and rebagging five million pounds of seed has an annual economic impact of over \$1.5 million. The discovery and development of new products and technologies for rodent control in seed warehouse and containers is vital for Oregon to remain the source of the highest quality seed in the world. This study is to identify products or methods which could be available for rodent control in seed warehouses and containers. Information gathered will be disseminated to all stakeholders in the fine turf seed industry, and also to potential vendors of products and technology for rodent control. Assistance in registration and labeling of new products will also be available.

*Funding Level: \$30,000*

**Promoting Sustainable Apiculture by Training and Education and Enhancing Pollination Efficiency of Honeybees in Specialty Crops**

In cooperation with **Oregon State Beekeepers Association**: Pollination requirement is huge for many specialty crops in Oregon, and hence a healthy and strong beekeeping industry is of immense value. Recent honey bee colony losses attributed to colony collapse disorder and a steady decline of colonies for past two decades have caused serious concern. Best management practices are becoming important in the wake of bee declines, and hence appropriate training is vital. There is huge gap in dissemination of current information and knowledge on best management practices related to honey bees. Currently there is no formal structured program to educate and train beekeepers and agricultural professionals on honey bee management in Oregon. This grant proposal aims to

develop a Master Beekeeper program for Oregon to educate and train agricultural professionals, beekeepers, farmers and other interested citizens.

Another big challenge facing growers of specialty crops such as carrot seed, blueberry and pear is ensuring adequate pollination. Hence there is a need to explore tools or strategies that enhance pollination efficiency of honey bee colonies and increase overall pollination. This grant proposal will also evaluate potential of synthetic honey bee brood pheromone to enhance pollination efficiency of honey bees in specialty crops such as carrot seed, blueberry, cherry and pear. *Funding Level: \$75,750*

#### **Northwest Organic Farmer Food Safety Education and Certification Initiative**

In cooperation with **Organically Grown Company** With the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act, various private industry mandates, and recent high-profile food-borne illness outbreaks, farmers, including those that grow organic, specialty crops, must develop comprehensive on-farm food safety plans and earn third-party certification—yet many Oregon farms still lack such food safety procedures. This project will provide 26 Oregon organic growers that farm close to 2,000 acres of diverse specialty crops with training, guidance, 3<sup>rd</sup> party food-safety certification, and follow up that will preserve their future market access to wholesale, export, retail, and food serve channels. Further, this project will serve as a model for encouraging and helping additional growers (beyond the target 26) to achieve similar status through the resource materials developed including the web portal, Tool Kit, direct involvement, and/or as case studies utilized in Extension outreach efforts.

*Funding Level: \$69,564*

#### **Salem-Keizer Education Foundation Learning Gardens Program**

In cooperation with **Salem-Keizer Education Foundation**: In 2009-2010, the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation (SKEF) established a Learning Garden program in Grant Elementary School, Parrish Middle School, and Houck Middle School in the Salem-Keizer School District (SKSD) as part of the need for additional extended learning opportunities that supplement bell-time learning and bring specialty crops into children's learning experiences by exposing children at a young age to the importance of healthy lifestyles, nutrition, and local specialty crop agriculture. The Learning Gardens are a partnership between the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Sodexo, the Salem-Keizer School District, and Marion-Polk Food Share to provide nutritious meals, increase physical activity and healthy habits, and reduce childhood obesity for K-12 children.

The Learning Gardens program actively promotes healthy eating and nutrition while exposing children to Oregon specialty crops, and with the success of the pilot project seeks to expand from its current capacity to serve 5 schools in the district. This expansion will add McKinley Elementary School and North Salem High School, and will create the first K-12 learning gardens program in the state that will link feeder schools to build lifelong healthy choices and behaviors for K-12 youth in five of the most impoverished schools in Marion County.

*Funding Level: \$91,250*

#### **Rogue Valley Local Foods: Nutrition Outreach & Market Develop**

In cooperation with **The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy**: Thrive will increase specialty crop sales in the Rogue Valley by connecting consumers with beginning and established specialty crop growers through a targeted education and outreach campaign centered around a new online farmers market, Rogue Valley Local Foods, as well as existing farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs. Through a seasonal fruit and vegetable resource booklet, community events and a media campaign, the project provides community members with the tools and motivation to incorporate more fresh, nutritious food into their diets and provides them with education about the benefits of nutrient dense food as well as information about how to prepare and store it. The program will educate Oregon Trail Card clients about the option of using their benefits to purchase fresh, locally grown food through Rogue Valley Local Foods as well as at traditional farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs. This marketing and education effort will increase farm direct sales by increasing consumer awareness of where and why to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables as well as how to incorporate it into their diets. *Funding Level: \$51,786*