



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program FY2022 Project Summaries

As prepared by
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
635 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-6473

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act,
this publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Oregon Department of Agriculture – IPPM	5
2. ADELANTE MUJERES	6
3. FAMILY NURTURING CENTER	7
4. INTERNATIONAL FOOD PROTECTION TRAINING	8
5. NORTHWEST BERRY FOUNDATION	9
6. NORTHWEST CIDER ASSOCIATION	10
7. OREGON AGLINK	11
8. OREGON BLUEBERRY COMMISSION	12
9. OREGON POTATO COMMISSION	13
10. OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – CAPPELLAZZI.....	14
11. OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – CONTRERAS	15
12. OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – KAUR.....	16
13. OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – SELMAN	17
14. OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY – MELATHOPOULOS	18
15. OUTGROWING HUNGER	19

1. Oregon Department of Agriculture – IPPM

PROJECT TITLE

Establish, Maintain PFA-FF Area for Milton-Freewater

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Viability of M-F fruit industry relies on early access to markets before larger competitive regions. This access is maintained only with an Fruit Fly-Pest Free Area (FF-PFA) standing. Such status is threatened with a fluctuating presence of Apple Maggot (AM) in the neighboring cities (Pendleton and Walla Walla County Washington). Since 1980 through 2019 M-F has been declared AM free. In 2020 three AM were found in different locations in the M-F area, threatening the FF-PFA standing. In 2021, two AM were detected separately within a ½ mile of two of the 2020 detections in the production area. The third detection from 2020 in the town of Milton-freewater outside the production area did not have any detections in 2021.

This project will determine the occurrence and origin of the three separate AM detections in 2020 and the two separate detections in 2021. 2021 AM detections were in the same vicinity as the 2020 AM detections, additional trapping and delimitation for three growing season will further narrow down the sources of introduction. Finally, these efforts should reestablish FF-PFA standing for AM in Milton-Freewater. Reestablishing FF-PFA standing will allow for early access to the market for M-F fruit industry.

To accomplish project goals intensive trapping and fruit sampling will be needed in M-F area. Depending on results of trapping, a variety of mitigation procedures will be recommended to the production community.

2. Adelante Mujeres

PROJECT TITLE

Farm to Families: Expanding the Market for Specialty-Crop Farmers

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Adelante Mujeres (Adelante), if awarded, will establish a contractual relationship with the State Department of Agriculture to lead and execute this project. Adelante and its key partners (at the school district and county level) will collaborate to expand the local farm-direct market for fresh produce from Latinx farmers to be purchased by community partners and the community at large to be distributed to food-insecure families across Washington County, OR.

During the grant period we will connect Oregon specialty crop vegetable, fruit, and herb farmers to new food-insecure consumers through diverse food bank distribution sites. Adelante will achieve the following goal:

- 14 weeks of fresh produce delivery at 4 school sites
- 27 weeks of fresh produce delivery at 2 farmers market sites.
- 31 Latinx specialty-crops farmers will be trained and coached through the best practices and requirements for selling to food banks and schools, including food safety, and washing, and transportation and packaging.

We will achieve the above outcomes through:

- Training and educating Latinx growers on regenerative growing practices and farm business development through courses and workshops.
- Cultivating new market channels for locally grown specialty crops produced by Latinx farmers.

Each participant for this project will work with the Adelante staff (who are trained) in determining if a farmer is a specialty crop farmer. Each participant fills out a questionnaire that determines their qualifications.

With Adelante's 19-year track record as a culturally-specific organization, we are ready to lead this essential project to ensure increased market development and sales for specialty crop farmers. But more importantly, to support the long-term solution to ensure health and economic prosperity of our communities is achieved through equitable food distribution systems.

3. Family Nurturing Center

PROJECT TITLE

Family Nurturing Center - Growers' Cooperative Family Food Education Site

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

The Family Nurturing Center's Farm and Food Program will establish a Growers' Cooperative Family Food Education Site to increase families' access to local fresh food and nutrition education, to increase local consumption of specialty crops, and to provide local farms a market for their product that educates consumers about local agriculture.

4. International Food Protection Training

PROJECT TITLE

Enhancing the Safety of Oregon Specialty Crops

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

In collaboration with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI) will enroll specialty crop personnel (growers, packers, and processors) into two online certificate training programs, creating a cadre of “go to” individuals.

Training will include the Listeria Control Specialist (LCS) and the Enteric Viruses Control (EVC) certificate programs, developed by food safety professionals from the frozen food industry and IFPTI Instructional Systems Designers. The programs are self-paced, interactive, and upon successful completion learners receive a certificate from IFPTI’s learning management system.

The LCS certificate program addresses risks associated with *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm.*), an invasive bacterial foodborne pathogen that presents challenges to packers and processors. *Lm.* is ubiquitous in nature, persists in food processing environments, and can survive the freezing process and grow during thawing or in refrigerated environments.

The EVC certificate program presents recommendations aimed at the prevention and control of Norovirus and Hepatitis A, viruses that present challenges to berry growers and packers and frozen fruit processors, as outbreaks can occur from food on the farm being sprayed with contaminated water.

IFPTI will conduct various marketing activities to recruit specialty crop personnel for the programs, depending on the need i.e., packers/processors into the LCS program and growers/packers into the EVC program. In some instances, specialty crop personnel may be enrolled in *both* certificate programs.

Program success will be measured through: 1) a pre- and post-assessment measuring knowledge gained; and 2) time-delayed (3 & 6-month) follow-up surveys measuring application of knowledge.

5. Northwest Berry Foundation

PROJECT TITLE

Developing an Integrated Pest Management Program for Spotted Wing Drosophila

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

The Northwest Berry Foundation (NBF), in partnership with the Oregon Blueberry Commission and the Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission, will address the bottlenecks in shifting Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) management strategies at the grower, packer, and buyer level. This project plans to demonstrate an effective SWD Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in the field, produce online resources for IPM SWD management, and bring together stakeholders from every aspect of the Oregon berry industry through industry forum events to find ways to refine management standards and expand knowledge and use of alternative management strategies around this pest.

The overall goal is to develop an effective Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for SWD that utilizes fewer insecticide applications and spares beneficial insect populations, saving farmers money, and lessening the environmental impact of multiple sprays thereby advancing the competitiveness and producibility of blueberries and caneberries in Oregon.

6. Northwest Cider Association

PROJECT TITLE

Oregon Craft Cider Market Development via National Cider Conference

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

The Northwest Cider Association (NWCA) is the applicant and will execute this project to address domestic market development and access issues that will benefit up to 80 Oregon cideries. Craft, alcoholic ciders are value-added products that utilize Oregon farmers' supplies of apples, grapes, cane berries, stone fruit, cranberries, hops and botanical herbs.

In January 2024, the American Cider Association will bring CiderCon®, the annual national cider conference, to Portland attracting over 1,000 cideries, media, buyers and suppliers to Oregon. The industry has identified this event as an unprecedented opportunity to address market development needs through relevant market information, product exposure, and marketing opportunities that will not come around again for a decade.

Through this grant, the NWCA will be able to collaborate with the American Cider Association to accomplish the following three objectives and key activities: (1) provide conference content that meets the marketing and operational needs of Oregon cideries and specialty crop farmers they purchase from; (2) Increase Oregon cideries' product exposure through (a) hosting in-bound buyers events, (b) media / influencer events, (c) promoting Oregon Cider Week and (d) building out a trade focused web portal on existing website so product availability content for buyers lives on past the grant period; (3) Collaborative marketing opportunities. NWCA will focus marketing activities on (1) telling the story of Oregon cider by highlighting diverse production practices, cidermakers, specialty crop farmers, and growing locations, and (2) distinguishing Oregon craft cider from its competitors to justify the higher prices in the market.

7. Oregon Aglink

PROJECT TITLE

Before Harvest – Behind the Scenes of Oregon’s Specialty Crops

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Oregon Aglink will create in-depth educational video series for middle school classrooms with supplemental extension activities showcasing production practices and highlighting the stories behind the choices farmers make throughout the growing season for Oregon specialty crops in different growing regions around the state. By partnering with farms, students will hear directly from the voices working to bring crops to market while seeing the various stages, including risks and threats, of specialty crops before harvest which will increase their knowledge, appreciation, and familiarity with Oregon specialty crops.

8. Oregon Blueberry Commission

PROJECT TITLE

Oregon Blueberry Export Expansion to Southeast Asia

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

The Oregon Blueberry Commission (OBC) will conduct retail, foodservice, and culinary school promotions in Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia. This is an expansion of programming initiated in 2021 to include one new market (Malaysia). Since Vietnam and the Philippines opened to fresh Oregon blueberries in 2019 and 2020, respectively, OBC has proactively worked to generate attention for Oregon blueberries. Unfortunately, the timing has not been ideal as these market openings coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on social gatherings and movement in these countries has limited the type and reach of promotions available to OBC. Nevertheless, in 2021, OBC successfully completed various online retail promotions, social media marketing initiatives, culinary school tie-ins, and similar activities to support sales of Oregon blueberries. Funds are set aside to continue this work in 2022 but with the hope of direct consumer interaction with live retail sampling promotions.

Through this Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funding request, OBC hopes to receive resources that will enable ongoing support in key Southeast Asian markets in 2023 and 2024, including an expansion of activity to Malaysia. OBC's promotional strategy will emphasize retail promotions as these remain the most important mechanism through which product trial and purchase can be affected. Activities will include point-of-sale material production, advertising, retail demos, and in-store sampling, along with culinary school trainings to help educate foodservice targets about the versatility of blueberries. Where possible, some promotions will include frozen blueberries and processed products that incorporate Oregon blueberries as an ingredient.

9. Oregon Potato Commission

PROJECT TITLE

Cultivating seed starting champions! Driving sales of 50 Specialty Crops

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

The Oregon Potato Commission (OPC) is submitting this proposal and will be the organization with the contractual relationship with the state. OPC will establish agreements with Oregon State University Extension (OSU). OSU Food Hero will lead this project and coordinate partners.

This is a market access and development project rigorously designed to enhance the competitiveness of 50+ specialty crops through increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops by expanding access and sales at schools.

Project activities are based on results from two previous years of activities and will expand OSU's successful Grow This! social marketing campaign to strategically reach up to 60,000 youth across Oregon through curating and distributing (1) 500 Oregon Potato Champion classroom kits and (2) 1,500 Seed Starting kits. Empowering teachers with knowledge and skills to engage students in growing, preparing and eating a variety of specialty crops is an evidence-based, cost effective, sustainable way to increase access and drive current and future sales.

Supplies provided to teachers will include seed potatoes, soil, grow bags, peat pots, spray bottles, bookmarks, pollination book, and other fruit, vegetable and herb seeds. Marketing and educational materials will include culturally relevant Food Hero garden monthlies, including videos on how to grow, tend, harvest, and prepare specialty crops at schools and home.

This project is a creative public-private partnership-based solution to (1) the ongoing needs of local market development for multiple specialty crops, (2) engaging diverse communities in culturally relevant ways, and (3) sustaining and tracking changes in sales and consumers' knowledge and consumption over time.

10. Oregon State University – Cappellazzi

PROJECT TITLE

Overcoming Barriers to Cover Crop use in Hazelnut Production

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

This project will collect and communicate information that will help producers incorporate cover crops into hazelnut production. Cover crops can increase Oregon hazelnut producers' competitive edge by increasing resilience to weather and market fluctuations, decreasing input costs such as fertilizers and herbicides, and increasing the marketability of hazelnuts based on sustainability and soil health goals. We will conduct a survey to identify the major barriers for grower adoption and aggregate data on the methods and practices local producers are using to make cover crops work. We will conduct follow up interviews to create a partial budget analysis comparing net farm profitability after a change to new practices. In the survey, we will gauge willingness to participate in a peer-to-peer network for sharing successful strategies. Based on survey results, we will perform in-field soil health assessments, and collect soil and tissue samples from interested growers' fields. This analysis will provide data to demonstrate impacts on harvesting operations, orchard access, water infiltration, pest pressure, nutrient availability, and water availability to the trees. We will provide farm-scale data from this project through an extension publication, field-day workshops, and online resources in collaboration with the OR Hazelnut Commission. We will organize a working group to determine a set of standards for inclusion of orchard systems into carbon markets. We expect this multifaceted approach will increase the use of cover crops in hazelnut production, thereby increasing the environmental and economic resiliency and sustainable marketing ability of OR grown hazelnuts on a local and international scale.

11. Oregon State University – Contreras

PROJECT TITLE

Fertility, population dynamics, and pollinator attractiveness of standard and “sterile” butterfly bush to inform regulation

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Oregon State University help inform regulation of butterfly bush by Oregon Department of Agriculture by collecting field and greenhouse data for 34 cultivars with varying levels of fertility and using modeling to predict the relative ecological threat of each by comparing to known distribution of fertile varieties. The current amendment to the ban of *Buddleja davidii* was made more than 10 years ago and requires assessment and update – our findings will help determine how successful the amendment has been and serve both the ecological and economic sustainability of Oregon. Additionally, our evaluation of pollinator attraction will be correlated with fertility to determine how breeding for low fertility impacts pollinator visitation.

12. Oregon State University – Kaur

PROJECT TITLE

Viable solutions for symphylans in specialty crops- Alternatives to chlorpyrifos

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Symphylans, a soil pest with a broad host range, affect numerous specialty crops in Oregon, ranging from strawberry to grass seed to vegetable crops to mint. Growers typically manage symphylans with soil applications of chlorpyrifos at planting; however, this product is being phased out under increasing regulations at both the Federal and Oregon state level. In two separate *chlorpyrifos critical use surveys* conducted in 2021, growers across all production types identified symphylans as the targeted pest for 12 to 25% of their chlorpyrifos applications. To address this priority issue, the project team at Oregon State University and USDA-ARS seeks funding to identify viable solutions for symphylan management by establishing a cross-commodity collaborative project for a comprehensive understanding of this pest's biology and ecology across cropping systems and enhancing crop productivity by utilizing new management tools. We will evaluate the extent of symphylan damage by conducting field surveys in spinach grown for seed, strawberry, and grass grown for seed. Field and lab bioassays will be conducted to evaluate the efficacy of new insecticide chemistries against symphylans. Identification of promising alternatives and knowledge gain of their viability by analyzing cost-benefit data will be disseminated to the Oregon Department of Agriculture and growers promptly through publications, social media tools, field days, growers' meetings, etc. The project findings will help growers to incorporate these strategies in their integrated pest management (IPM) plans to enhance the productivity of specialty crops of Oregon.

13. Oregon State University – Selman

PROJECT TITLE

Collaborative Market Development for Climate Resilient Vegetables in Oregon

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have made life difficult for Oregon vegetable growers. Climate resilient farming practices and resilient cultivars are essential for the future of Oregon agriculture, but consumers need a better understanding of these practices, their benefits, and the specific cultivars. Additionally, many Oregon vegetable growers lost revenue during the pandemic due to closed restaurants and canceled events, with certain vegetable sales affected more than others. The Culinary Breeding Network and OSU will lead collaborative market development and promotion efforts for dry-farmed tomatoes, dry-farmed melons, chicory greens (radicchio, frisée, endive), and winter radishes to support growers during pandemic recovery. The specific goals are: 1) promote dry-farmed tomatoes and melons, chicory greens, winter radishes through a marketing and education campaign; 2) increase consumer interest and understanding of these vegetables; 3) increase sales of Oregon grown dry-farmed tomatoes, dry-farmed melons, chicory greens, and winter radishes; 4) evaluate project impacts.

To achieve these goals, the project team will work with partners to: 1) create marketing materials for growers, distributors, and restaurants to use at different points-of-sale; 2) create a “Sampler Box” pilot program; 3) plan and host four sagra events; and 4) utilize surveys and interviews to assess project impact on growers, retailers, and consumers.

Marketing and educational materials will be developed with insights from the project team that spans the whole supply chain to ensure the campaign is useful and effective. These resources will be available freely on a project website for stakeholders in Oregon and elsewhere.

14. Oregon State University – Melathopoulos

PROJECT TITLE

Certifying Oregon Wine Grapes as Bee Friendly.

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

This project provides vineyards with new strategies to mitigate the potential effects of industry-wide expansion at the expense of semi-natural areas rich in bee biodiversity and the native plants that the bees rely on. While bee habitat may not contribute to overall production, vineyards in Oregon are highly motivated to adopt bee friendly and environmental farm practices, particularly when tied to an environmental certification initiative. Although there is growing interest among vineyards to adopt bee friendly practices, relatively few acres are certified to date. This creates a unique opportunity for extension staff and industry leaders to make inroads in providing on-farm habitat for bees while concurrently increasing interest in Oregon grown wines. Towards this aim, Oregon State University, in partnership with LIVE (Low Input Viticulture & Enology), Pollinator Partnership and eight commercial vineyards, will develop: 1) a tool to evaluate the nectar and pollen resources for bees in Oregon vineyards, 2) a reporting system and vineyard management program enabling vineyards to be certified as a bee friendly farm, 3) an Oregon Bee Friendly Farming Vineyard Workshop to train growers on bee friendly farming practices, and 4) an Oregon Bee Friendly Wine Tour with accompanying promotional materials. Ultimately, this work looks to bridge the gaps between bee friendly vineyard practices, bee biodiversity, plant diversity that supports bees, and public recognition of the efforts being made to protect bees.

15. Outgrowing Hunger

PROJECT TITLE

Expanding and Developing BIPOC Specialty Crop Farm Businesses and Markets

PROJECT PARTNER AND SUMMARY

Outgrowing Hunger will provide support to immigrant, refugee, and African American new and beginning farmers in the Portland metro area to preserve and enhance demand for traditional specialty crops. Tasks will include increasing capacity and effectiveness of growers and producers, conducting marketing campaigns, providing support and leadership for farmer organization into co-ops to leverage efforts into three distribution channels, and developing appropriate point of sale systems. This will increase the supply of traditional specialty crops, increase the ability of community-based farmers to meet supply needs and preserve and expand latent demand for traditional specialty crops in the population.