



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON  
COMMISSIONER

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact: Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations**  
**(601) 359-1163 / cell: (662) 312-5897**  
[Paige@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:Paige@mdac.ms.gov)

**Hannah East, Marketing Specialist**  
**(601) 359-1179**  
[HannahE@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:HannahE@mdac.ms.gov)

## **MDAC Now Accepting Applications for Specialty Crop Block Grant Through H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding**

**JACKSON, Miss.** – Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is accepting proposals for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program - H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding.

This additional funding has been provided due to COVID-19 impacts to the food system. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages projects that respond to COVID-19 impacts. This may include projects to assist farmworkers, farmers, food businesses and other relevant entities to respond to risks and supply chain disruptions.

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is funded by the USDA and authorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill). The purpose of the program is to enhance the competitiveness of Mississippi's specialty crop industry by leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops; assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops; expanding availability and access to specialty crops; and addressing local, regional and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers. Funding priorities for H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding include promotion and marketing; grower educational programs; increasing market opportunities for specialty crops; enhancing food safety; pest and disease control; increasing knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; and COVID-19 related impacts to the specialty crop industry.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. Specialty crops are an important part of Mississippi's agriculture, accounting for more than \$218 million of the state's agriculture industry last year.

Eligible applicants include producer groups and associations, non-profits, colleges and universities. Funding will not be awarded to projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a

profit to a single organization, institution or individual. Single organizations, institutions and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Applications must be submitted to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce by Thursday, June 23, 2022. To obtain an application, visit the Alerts and Announcements section at [www.mdac.ms.gov](http://www.mdac.ms.gov), call Susan Lawrence at (601) 213-7542, or email [susan@mdac.ms.gov](mailto:susan@mdac.ms.gov).

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