

California Department of Food and Agriculture
2013 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Marketing Enhancement

Alameda County Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League **\$82,900**

Title: Bay Area Urban Agriculture Marketing Association

Abstract: The project will strengthen the growth and development of urban production farms in the San Francisco Bay Area in order to increase access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate specialty crops in underserved low-income communities. The project will recruit small urban farms to join the Bay Area Urban Agriculture Marketing Association (BMUAMA) for product aggregation, distribution to member farms, and market expansion. The project will provide training, technical assistance, networking opportunities, and best practices for urban farmers. The project will build on relationships between urban farms and low-income consumers to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach and nutrition education; increase the number of low-income consumers enrolled in SNAP benefits; and increase knowledge about the importance of California Grown fruits and vegetables to a healthy diet.

American Pistachio Growers **\$294,724**

Title: Baking Seminars for Food Professionals in Japan and South Korea

Abstract: American Pistachio Growers (APG) and the California Dried Plum Board (CDPB) are partnering to host a series of seminars promoting pistachios and prunes as ingredients for the baking industry in Japan and South Korea. These target professional bakers will educate them on the technical aspects and nutritional benefits of cooking with both products. Combined, the baking industry in Japan and South Korea was valued at U.S. \$36.7 billion in 2012, making the region one of the most lucrative markets in the world for baked goods. APG and CDPB will create new industrial demand for pistachios and prunes in these key markets and will help to ensure the economic viability of the two valuable specialty crop industries in California.

Buy California Marketing Agreement **\$1,000,000**

Title: "California, Always in Season"

Abstract: The Buy California Marketing Agreement (BCMA) and the California Travel and Tourism Commission (Visit California) will coordinate a paid media program with Food & Wine, a national food and wine publication that goes beyond mere eating and drinking, to highlight the seasonality, diversity, and uniqueness of "California Grown" specialty crop products. The media program will leverage the baseline culinary campaign that currently exists as part of Visit California's domestic /global marketing efforts allowing for additional owned/earned media visibility through specialty crop specific content development. This campaign, "*California, Always in Season,*" will link the iconic imagery and marketing of California as travel destination with the specialty crop products grown and harvested in the state.

California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers **\$237,000**

Title: Inbound Marketing and Mobile Gardening Application

Abstract: California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers (CANGC) is a 101 year old non-profit trade association tasked with promoting and protecting the interests of the California nursery industry. CANGC is applying for a grant to get young people into gardening. Today's youth is attached to their electronic devices and not into gardening. In fact, today's young consumer does not know how to select or grow a plant. The mobile revolution is taking hold of marketing and a new consumer is emerging, but the nursery and garden center is not attracting this consumer. Retail trends show that the consumer of today is using brick and mortar stores as showrooms and doing most of their purchasing online or on their mobile

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device. Due to the nature of the nursery business and the variability in product selection this is not a preferred business model. This project plans to utilize modern marketing techniques and mobile media to attract and transition a new set of consumers from urban dwellers into urban farmers—ultimately increasing nursery product sales.

California Cut Flower Commission (CCFC)

\$224,350

Title: Sustaining California's Flower Farmers through Sustainability Certification

Abstract: Low cost imported flowers from South America are putting tremendous competitive pressure on the California cut flower industry. Research and experience by California farmers indicate they must differentiate themselves by telling their unique sustainability story to the U.S. consumer and have a third party certification program designed exclusively for them to validate their high standards. The objectives of this project are to develop and implement a practice and performance-based certification program to: (1) enhance the marketability and competitiveness of California's flowers through a certification program that educates consumers and buyers on the unique sustainability practices of California's farms; (2) encourage California's farms to expand stewardship and natural resource conservation by providing tools that assist them with continuous improvement for environmental and financial performance. The outcomes of the project will be a fully implemented sustainable certification program for California cut flowers and greens.

California Fig Advisory Board

\$237,000

Title: Creating Value-Added Demand for California Figs - Foodservice/Food Manufacturing Ingredient Education Program (California Fig Ingredient Program)

Abstract: 88%. This is a big percentage that translates into big concern for California fig growers. Imports of figs and fig products into the U.S. have increased 88% over the base year of 2007-2008. The continued influx of imports has had a devastating effect on this U.S. specialty crop, threatening the economic viability of fig growers, processors, suppliers and workers. Due to this aggressive import pressure, the California fig industry requests funding to create a comprehensive ingredient education program to educate key target audiences about domestically grown- and produced-figs and fig ingredients and the importance of choosing figs from California.

California Flower Growers Cooperative (CFGC)

\$126,456

Title: Removing barriers to commerce to reverse market share decline

Abstract: California produces 75%+ of U.S. cut flowers but U.S. cut flowers have dropped from 60% of U.S. wholesale sales in 1989 to 29% in 2011 as imports (mainly Colombian) grew. This keeps prices stagnant (up just 2.7% over the past decade). Further, most South American imports enter a single port of entry (Miami) and are aggregated in warehouses with which buyers deal directly. This supply chain structure allows buyers to deal efficiently with a few sellers offering wide selections rather than multiple sellers for California flowers. This project would create an online marketplace allowing buyers and California farmers a single point of contact for all California varieties to ease this burden. The industry must address this to remain viable and stop further market share loss; accordingly the California Flower Growers Cooperative (CFGC) is supported by the California Cut Flower Commission, representing all California cut flower farmers. As a farmer-owned cooperative, any profits would flow back directly to the farmers and benefit only them. CFGC membership is open to all California cut flower farmers.

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Center for Ecoliteracy

\$239,495

Title: CA Food for CA Kids

Abstract: Cooking with California Food introduces the concept of the dynamic 6-5-4 School Lunch Matrix, based on six dishes students know and love, five ethnic flavor profiles, and four seasons. It offers ideas for adding more fresh, local, healthy foods to school lunches; helps meal services devise an appealing variety of menus around dishes that children already prefer; honors California's rich history and cultural heritage; and describes a tested plan for effective professional development for food services staff. The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) proposes a targeted marketing campaign to increase the use of specialty crops in school meals by providing nutrition service directors and district personnel with the recipes and technical expertise they need to procure, prepare, and serve specialty crops throughout California schools. This project will also design and launch a communications strategy to build enthusiasm for locally grown food in school meals with parents and students.

Ecology Center

\$399,258

Title: Market Match Consortium

Abstract: The Market Match Consortium (MMC) is a statewide coalition of farmers' market (FM) operators and organizations working to enhance the competitiveness of California specialty crops (CSCs) by driving California's 8-to-17 billion dollars in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (aka CalFresh or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)) directly to CSC growers. To increase CSC market share, the MMC promotes the purchase of FM CSCs to CalFresh recipients, engages in CalFresh enrollment, expands the number of FMs accepting EBT, and incentivizes participants to spend their benefits on CSCs at farmers' markets by offering a Market Match on CSC purchases. One hundred percent of revenue received goes directly to the CSC growers. To open this \$8B-\$17B market for CSC growers, in 2014 the MMC will: (1) promote the purchase of CSCs to 500,000 CalFresh recipients; (2) prescreen 3,500 new CalFresh participants; (3) help 20 new FMs accept EBT; and (4) partner with 15 organizations representing 150 FMs and 1,140 CSC growers for over \$1M in farm-direct CSC sales.

North Coast Opportunities, Inc.

\$390,021

Title: NCO Food Hub Project

Abstract: North Coast Opportunities (NCO) will work with California specialty crop growers to create a distribution hub that will make it possible for them to market and distribute their produce more efficiently and economically while retaining brand and location identity. The Food Hub will increase market access for specialty crop producers, supporting their economic vitality and linking Mendocino and Lake Counties to the emerging North Coast Regional Food System Network (NCRFSN). Many local producers currently cannot access mainstream markets because they lack infrastructure for aggregation, processing, and distribution. The Food Hub Project will build on existing centralized resources, including warehouse and limited cold storage, a commercial kitchen, a refrigerated delivery truck, and an online ordering system. The Food Hub will assess and address producer needs in terms of technology, storage, packaging, marketing, and distribution to facilitate their participation in the Food Hub.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments

\$387,038

Title: Food System Multipliers for Specialty Crops in the Sacramento Region

Abstract: As with much of California, agriculture in the Sacramento region is not only highly productive and diverse; it is a major economic driver. In 2011, the farm-gate value for all agricultural products in the

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six-county Sacramento region was \$1.8 billion, with specialty crops accounting for approximately \$929 million—nearly 51 percent. However, agriculture is often overlooked by economic development groups due to a poor understanding of the industry's economic impacts. To address this, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) proposes estimating a set of economic multipliers under various conditions that will capture the economic impact of specialty crops up and down the supply chain. The model will include revenue, input purchases, taxes, job creation and regulatory costs. California specialty crop stakeholders are seeking this tool to provide much-needed data to support agricultural investments and appropriate policies.

Solano Grown

\$55,120

Title: Solano Grown Online Farmer's Market

Abstract: This project proposes to expand a newly developed online Farmers Market outlet for Solano County specialty crop producers. Solano Grown, a cooperative marketing organization for Solano County growers, is working to promote and encourage purchases of local specialty crop products. This project would leverage those promotional activities by providing an online market place for consumers to purchase the products directly.

Sunsweet Growers, Inc.

\$400,000

Title: Building the Dried Plum Market with Younger Consumers with Dried Plum Granola

Abstract: California prune sales are stagnant. Most prune consumers are age 55+; market growth and stability depends on attracting younger consumers. This project would fuel sales of California prunes to consumers aged 25-45 with the introduction of a new granola product that is 51% prune bits (from low-value small and blemished prunes, 100% California), 9% other fruit, and 40% granola. Granola is popular with the target age demographic; U.S. sales grew 13% in 2012 alone. Sunsweet Growers, Inc. (Sunsweet) seeks funds to conduct public relations campaigns and online, print and TV advertising to support new product introduction efforts focused on the prune content. Sunsweet forecasts this will result in \$2 million+ in incremental returns over bulk prune prices by Year 3; as a farmer cooperative, all "our" returns flow back to the growers and benefit only them. Sunsweet represents over 300 prune growers and 70% of U.S. prune sales; accordingly this project is supported by the California Dried Plum Board, which notes benefits to all California prune growers by attracting younger consumers to prunes.

The Regents of the University of California, Davis

\$142,425

Title: Building a Farm Trail: Developing effective agritourism associations to enhance rural tourism and promote specialty crops

Abstract: This project will provide training, technical assistance and networking opportunities for community agritourism associations engaged in collaborative marketing of specialty crop agritourism enterprises in order to enhance the economic viability of these growers and develop tourism in their rural communities. The project representatives will work with marketing, tourism and economic development professionals in year one to assist three newly-formed specialty-crop community agritourism associations in contiguous California regions to build effective grower-based organizational structures, to develop community partnerships, to develop, publish, distribute and promote farm trails maps, and to hold collaborative events that promote California specialty crops to Californians. In the second year, the project will support the growth of a collaborative network for the many California community and county-based agritourism associations by organizing a statewide summit, a communications network and a resources library.

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The Regents of the University of California, Davis

\$99,484

Title: Making the California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program Work for California Farmers and WIC Program Participants

Abstract: The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program Farmers' Market Nutrition Program permits eligible families to receive \$20 in vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at WIC-approved Farmers' Markets. Just under \$3 million was expended in this program in 2010 in California. However, over \$83.5 million is expended annually through the California WIC Program for participants to purchase fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables using cash-value vouchers (CVV). Presently only a small fraction of these CVV are redeemed through farmer marketers, resulting in great loss in potential revenue to California's specialty crop producers. This project proposes to analyze the California WIC Program with respect to CVV for fruits and vegetables, including conducting scientific surveys of WIC Program participants and farmers who participate and do not participate in the WIC Program. Based upon results of the analysis, strategies for increasing the share of fruits and vegetables purchased by WIC Program participants direct from farmers will be recommended.

Valley Vintners Association

\$357,000

Title: Recovering Returns on Sonoma Valley AVA Winegrapes

Abstract: Sonoma Valley Vintners Association (SVVA) represents nearly all growers/vintners in the American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) of Sonoma Valley (SV) in Sonoma County. The economy has hurt returns as consumers switch to non-AVA labeled wines; the average winegrape prices for SV dropped 6.19% since 2009 due to lower wine prices. Research shows consumers pay more if they see value; a 2009 Wine Opinions study shows SV wines are well valued in the wine community but there is a major need to promote this to consumers and the trade. SVVA spent ~\$50k on research and consulting to define the issue and develop messaging, target audiences, creative materials, and approaches; SVVA seeks assistance to sell more wine as SV-AVA labeled rather than bulk including website redesign, social media and email campaigns, and print and online ads. As this kind of value messaging benefits all Sonoma and California growers, this project is supported by the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission, Sonoma County Vintners, California Association of Winegrape Growers and the California Wine Institute.