

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
2012 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

**Marketing-Agriculture Education/Outreach**

*Ag Innovations Network*

**\$271,325**

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**Title:** California Food Systems Alliance Network

**Abstract:** The California Food System Alliance (FSA) is a county-based network of farmers and their community allies that is dedicated to assuring the long-term viability of agriculture in the state. This project's purpose is to: (a) respond to requests to establish new FSAs by adding four new county Alliances between October 2012 and June 2015; (b) increase the collective effectiveness of the FSAs by improving the capacity to act together on issues of statewide importance; (c) disseminate throughout the Alliance network the best practices for influencing local community attitudes, county regulations and relationships needed for effective action on behalf of specialty crop agriculture; (d) assist each FSA in creating a platform for local communications; and (e) develop programs that link specialty crop producers with new or emerging markets. At the conclusion of the project, 12 county FSAs with more than 350 members will be allied with and working effectively for specialty crop agriculture and producers.

*American Pistachio Growers*

**\$130,666**

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**Title:** American Pistachio Growers New Product Research

**Abstract:** Pistachios are already the number one snacking nut in America but very few forms of pistachios are available other than roasted, salted in-shell. The development and introduction of additional forms of product are needed for demand to keep up with the expected doubling of production over the next several years. This project will identify new pistachio product opportunities through consumer research. The industry has been investing in the development of prototype new products that needs to be grounded in clearly defined consumer needs and wants. At the completion of this project, American Pistachio Growers (APG) will know what new pistachio products consumers will purchase and what message points will be most successful.

*California Avocado Society, Inc.*

**\$65,108**

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**Title:** Avocado grower training for Spanish speakers

**Abstract:** The California Avocado Society (CAS) seeks to create an agricultural outreach program to provide technical education that gives critical job skills to a group that has little formal education, in an effort to improve the competitiveness and sustainability of California avocado producers. Hundreds of orchard managers, foremen, and workers are not fluent in English; need training in Spanish, as well as bulletins, advisories, and other educational materials that are oriented to their language, culture, and educational level. With this funding, the CAS, and its collaborators, will develop educational materials and hold classroom and in-the-field seminars to deliver training on subjects such as irrigation, pruning, fertilization, chemigation, pesticide safety, and personal hygiene for food safety. Additionally, simultaneous translation into Spanish of the currently running Grower Seminar Series would leverage CAS's existing program.

*California Bountiful Foundation formerly: California Farm & Food Foundation*

**\$398,730**

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**Title:** Consumer Education - California Bountiful Television Program

**Abstract:** This project will educate consumers about the health and economic benefits of California specialty crop production by producing specialty-crop-themed episodes of the California Bountiful television program and maintaining its extended reach through purchases of airtime on commercial television stations in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

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*California FarmLink*

**\$194,028**

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**Title:** Digging In: Guiding Farm Success through In-Depth Business and Land Tenure Education

**Abstract:** California (CA) FarmLink will establish an education series in three CA regions that provides small to mid-sized, beginning and low-resource specialty crop growers the tools and resources to overcome challenges including access to land, access to capital, and a lack of business and financial management knowledge. FarmLink will work with collaborators in each region to develop an educational workshop series that addresses business and financial education, land tenure and marketing. Following the workshops, participants will have access to one-on-one technical assistance from FarmLink staff, consultants and peer advisors. The project will create three regional advisory groups made up of experienced local farmers, and financial and business professionals to provide continued assistance to participants during and after the project. FarmLink will develop a targeted landowner outreach plan to find available lease land for participants, and hold facilitated Mixers to introduce landowners to the beginning farmers.

*California State University, Fresno Foundation*

**\$224,185**

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**Title:** Water Use Efficiency Education for San Joaquin Valley Specialty Crops

**Abstract:** The proposal will improve irrigation practices for California's specialty crop growers and laborers by developing and implementing an outreach program of sustainable irrigation practices. The seminars would enhance competitiveness of California's specialty crops by assuring adequate and more efficient use of California's dwindling water supply. Furthermore, this program would empower the target audience; specialty crop growers, their employees and industry professionals through acquiring new skills and practices. The program will be available in English and Spanish and will concentrate on areas hit hardest by water shortages such as the Central Valley's Westside and Kern County. It will focus on some of the primary crops grown in those regions such as almonds, grapes, citrus, pistachios and canning tomatoes). Growers will have access to the most current irrigation techniques and equipment to encourage them and/or their staff to adopt sustainable irrigation practices.

*Community Alliance with Family Farmers*

**\$275,315**

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**Title:** Linking Nutrition Education with California Grown Specialty Crops Statewide

**Abstract:** Since 2001 California Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has run Farm to School programs that increase specialty crop consumption, improve student knowledge of nutrition and agriculture, and generate a steady revenue source for California farmers. The Harvest of the Month (HOTM) Tasting Kit program connects the Network for a Healthy California's (Network) HOTM nutrition education curriculum to California grown specialty crops. CAFF delivers packages of nutrition and local food systems curriculum, farmer profiles, and varieties of seasonal produce to classroom teachers each month. Currently the program operates on the Central Coast, serving over 10,000 students in 500 classrooms across 5 counties. Thousands of teachers in other regions use the curriculum but need help in connecting with local sources of the featured produce. CAFF plans to replicate the HOTM Tasting Kit program in Sonoma County and work with the Network's statewide partners to connect their HOTM programs to sources of California grown specialty crops.

*Community Alliance with Family Farmers*

**\$245,952**

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**Title:** Promoting California Grown Specialty Crops in Santa Clara County

**Abstract:** In Santa Clara County, efforts to address agricultural economic viability in the south part of the county are disconnected from the movement to improve equal access to healthy food in the urban centers. California Alliance with Family Farmers' (CAFF) Farm to School and Local Food Systems programs

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work together to merge these interests in a way that benefits both consumers and producers. CAFF proposes to launch a county-wide campaign that creates access to California grown specialty crops while educating residents about their importance and benefits. Staff will work with schools, restaurants, hospitals, and retail outlets to connect them with sources of California specialty crops and marketing materials. Simultaneously, CAFF will launch a media/educational campaign that will coordinate marketing efforts around featured "Harvest of the Month" (HOTM) produce across the various consumer venues. Building these components together will foster an informed population of consumers educated about and engaged with their food system.

*County of San Joaquin*

**\$203,055**

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**Title:** San Joaquin County AgVenture

**Abstract:** AgVenture, an agriculture and nutrition education program, sponsored by San Joaquin County (SJC), provides SJC third and fourth graders and parents the opportunity to learn about SJC specialty crops, nutrition, and the importance of agriculture through field days and farmers' markets. The program hosts three free field days where 1,100 specialty crop farmers, producers, and volunteers donate their expertise to bring presentations to educate over 11,000 third graders from 142 schools. Volunteers introduce students to healthy food choices, create an awareness of the importance of eating locally-grown specialty crops, and address the role student's play as consumers in helping maintain agriculture as a strong component of the local and State economies. AgVenture will also host free after school farmers' markets for over 1,000 fourth graders and 250 parents at 10 low-income schools to increase and reinforce student knowledge learned from the previous year's field day.

*El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom*

**\$154,924**

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**Title:** Expanding Specialty Crop Education Programs for Students in the Sierra Nevada Region

**Abstract:** This project expands and enhances specialty crop education programs to reach more K-12 students and teachers in the Sierra Nevada region of California. The Fields of Learning (FOL) school/farm partnership program will broaden its impact by adding six new school partnerships, piloting a program to train high school students as FOL field coordinators, and developing an orientation program for new partnerships. To educate and inform more teachers about the benefits of specialty crops and local agriculture, the multi-day Teachers' Ag Summer Institute (TASI) will offer two learning tracks: one for K-6 teachers and one for 7-12th grade teachers. To increase outreach to socioeconomically disadvantaged students, El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom will pilot Tahoe Farm Day, introducing students to the importance of specialty crops and the concepts of healthy food choices, and provide "Ag Day" field trips for children and mentors in the local Big Sisters and Big Brothers program.

*Project Apis m.*

**\$56,325**

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**Title:** Honey Bee Best Management Practices Outreach Program

**Abstract:** This project will raise awareness of honey bee Best Management Practices (BMPs) through an easily-accessible social media campaign. The outreach program would ensure wide-spread dissemination of information resulting in a healthier bee supply. Sixty percent of bees pollinating California (CA) specialty crops originate out-of-state. Instant access to web-based information on honey bee pest and disease control, nutrition, and mitigating transportation and pesticide stress is vital to beekeepers and growers. Traditional and electronic BMP formats are necessary for adoption of management practices that result in improved pollination of CA's specialty crops. Print media, presentations and trade show presence will occur; however emphasis will be on social networks, blogs, and content communities. Internet-based development will include Facebook presence, Twitter dialogue, video blogging and YouTube content.

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Growers would have access to BMPs to encourage their beekeepers to adopt colony management practices.

*Regents of University of California, Davis*

**\$387,796**

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**Title:** Consumer Outreach to Enhance Awareness and Marketing of Specialty Crops in the Sierra Foothills

**Abstract:** Placer and Nevada counties of California have a vibrant local food movement but less than two percent of the population buys local produce regularly. University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) will connect consumers to local specialty crop farmers and raise awareness of these crops and their health benefits. An outreach campaign will reach 50,000 consumers via an "Eat Local" website, other social media, and sampling and tastings at farmers' markets and events such as the Farm & Barn Tour. Outreach will educate consumers about nutritional value, preparation, and where to purchase seasonal local produce. This project will reduce barriers for lower income residents to purchase with vouchers and transport to farmers' markets. This project will develop point of sale materials and train 1,200 specialty crop producers to share nutrition and preparation information with customers in order to increase sales. Increasing consumption will lead to a healthier population and greater sales will improve the economic viability of specialty crop farmers.

*The Learning Centers at Fairplex*

**\$389,260**

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**Title:** Fresh Farming for the Future at Fairplex: A Specialty Crops Education Project

**Abstract:** Utilizing the myriad resources of the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, this multi-faceted agricultural education and outreach project will expand the current space fully dedicated to agriculture (1/3 acre) to a three-acre organic farm, thus enabling the organization to better enhance the visibility and customer awareness of 100+ "California Grown" specialty crops on grounds. The project will not only promote this rich variety of crops to the 1.5 million guests that visit the annual Fair, but will educate and connect these guests to the crops on a personal level. The farm will also serve as an accessible public venue for an additional 50,000 community members through several year-round components: the horticulture/agriculture program of the Career & Technical Education Center; the onsite Sheraton Fairplex Hotel; the onsite Child Development Center; new public events/learning opportunities (e.g. farm to table dinners, school field trips, farm store, farmers' market).

*U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service*

**\$253,019**

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**Title:** Determination of post fumigation recovery of soil microbial communities over time

**Abstract:** Cut flowers and ornamental crops rely heavily on soil fumigation. Fumigants with broad biocidal activity can affect both target and non-target soil organisms, but the recovery of microbial communities are largely unknown until recently. Since soil microorganisms are crucial in sustaining health of agricultural soil by contributing to nutrient cycling, plant nutrient uptake; it is very important to know the recovery of soil microbial community structure after fumigation. The goal is to determine the initial impacts of fumigants on both target (*Pythium* spp. and *Fusarium oxysporum*) and non-target (gram positive bacteria, gram negative bacteria, fungi, Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi (AMF), actinomycetes and protozoa) organisms and soil microbial community structure recovery after fumigation with different time frames. Results could be used to determine if reinoculation of fumigated soils with specific microbes (AMF, rhizosphere bacteria, etc.) that facilitate plant growth is required.