



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

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 29, 2016

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MS Department of Agriculture Accepting Applications for the Specialty Crop Grant and the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program

Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) is now accepting FY 2016 proposals for both the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP).

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and authorized by the Farm, Food, and Jobs Bill (Farm Bill). The purpose of the program is to solely enhance the competitiveness of Mississippi's specialty crop industry. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). Projects funded through this program must address at least one of the following priority areas: research and development; promotion/marketing; education/extension; economics or ag policy. 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. Applications must be submitted to MDAC by May 16, 2016. To obtain an application, visit the Alerts and Announcements section at www.mdac.ms.gov, call (601) 359-1196, or email susan@mdac.ms.gov.

FSMIP is funded by the USDA and provides matching funds on a competitive basis to state departments of agriculture, state colleges and universities, and other appropriate state agencies. The purpose of the program is to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system. Eligible agricultural categories include poultry; livestock, dairy and poultry products; food, feed and fiber crops; fish and shellfish; horticulture, viticulture, apiary and forest products; and processed or manufactured products derived from such commodities. FSMIP also accepts proposals dealing with nutraceuticals, bioenergy, compost, agroforestry products and products made from agricultural residue.

Federal funds awarded through FSMIP projects must be matched dollar-for-dollar by non-federal funds and/or in-kind resources. Funding will not be awarded to projects that solely benefit one individual or one agribusiness. Applications must be submitted to MDAC by 5:00 p.m. on April 29, 2016. For additional information about this program or to obtain application guidelines, contact Michael Lasseter at (601) 359-1120 or michaell@mdac.ms.gov or visit the Alerts and Announcements section at www.mdac.ms.gov.

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About the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce

Under the leadership of Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith, the mission of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is to protect and promote agricultural-related businesses within the state and to promote Mississippi's products throughout both the state and the rest of the world for the benefit of all Mississippi citizens. This is accomplished through many bureaus and departments within the agency including the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, Mississippi Farmers Market, Mississippi Agricultural and Livestock Theft Bureau, Bureau of Plant Industry, Market Development Division and Bureau of Regulatory Services. To learn more about MDAC, visit www.mdac.ms.gov.