2019 SCBGP State Coordinators Conference

February 20-21, 2019
Welcome from Dr. Lisa Benson

Dr. Lisa Benson, NASDA Foundation
Thank you to our Sponsor!

• John Miklozek, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
• Nicole Nelson Miller, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
• Carly Borgmeier, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Welcome from Nicole Nelson Miller

Nicole Nelson Miller, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grants Division
USDA’s Role in Supporting Specialty Crops Across the Country

Lorren Walker, USDA Marketing and Regulatory Programs
FY 2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program Update

Carly Borgmeier, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grants Division
Using Social Media for Promotion and Training

Perry Harlow, NASDA Foundation
Lyssa Frohling, Alaska Div. of Agriculture
Nicole Moore, Illinois Dept. of Agriculture
Jen Holton, Michigan Dept. of Agriculture
Cindy Martel, West Virginia Dept. of Agriculture
The Importance of Food Safety and the SCBGP

Tricia Kovacs, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Kristina Sweet, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Betsy Dorton, South Carolina Dept. of Agriculture
The Landscape of Food Safety for SCBG Coordinators

Tricia Kovacs
Agricultural Marketing Service
Local and Regional Food
Why the focus on food safety?

1. Many buyers require food safety assurances
2. Farms and other food producers subject to certain laws and regulations
3. Food safety is good practice to reduce foodborne illness outbreaks
## On-Farm Food Safety

### Practice Areas to reduce pathogen movement and food contamination on the farm

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Humans</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Animals</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Soil</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Water</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Farms are pathogen free

Farms are unique ecosystems
### Steps to Food Safety

1. **Assess Produce Safety Risk**
2. **Implement Practices**
3. **Monitor Practices**
4. **Use Corrective Actions**
5. **Keep Records**

- Farms are unique ecosystems
- Farms are pathogen free
Voluntary or Buyer-Driven Food Safety

Audits and Certifications

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP): Set of best practices to minimize food safety risk on the farm
- Fruit and vegetable only
- Industry-driven
- Voluntary standard
- Public and private certifications available
What is FSMA?

FDA FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT

- Produce Safety Rule
- Preventive Controls for Human Food
- Sanitary Transportation of Food
- Preventive Controls for Animal Food
- Foreign Supplier Verification Programs
- Intentional Adulteration of Food
- Accredited Third Party Certification Rule
First Federal Rule for Produce Farms

Adulterated Food - Impure, unsafe, unwholesome or otherwise unfit for human consumption
“Covered” Produce

Covers
• Domestic and imported produce
• Produce for human consumption

Does not cover
• Produce for personal or on-farm consumption
• Produce not a “raw agricultural commodity”
• Certain specified produce rarely consumed raw
• Farms with produce sales of ≤ $25,000 per year

Eligible for exemption (with modified requirements)
• Produce that will receive commercial processing (“kill-step” or other process that adequately minimizes hazards)
• Qualified exemption
USDA Harmonized GAP Audit

What One USDA Audit Can Do For You

USDA GAP / FDA PSR Alignment
One Audit – Multiple Uses

Market Access AUDIT
Regulatory INSPECTION

USDA
- Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) option via USDA H-GAP Plus+ audit
- Compliance with Produce Harmonized GAP Standard
- Aligns with Produce Safety Rule technical requirements
- Voluntary, fee-for-service
- Annual
- USDA-licensed auditor
- USDA certification of meeting audit standard and acceptance criteria
- Result on USDA website

FDA
- Produce Safety Rule
  - Confirms compliance with Produce Safety Rule
  - Mandatory
  - Intermittent
  - No cost
  - FDA or State regulatory inspector
  - Documentation provided to farmer
  - Significant deficiencies recorded for correction

USDA’s alignment of the requirements of USDA Harmonized GAP audit to the minimum regulatory requirements of the FDA’s Produce Safety Rule means your USDA GAP audit will:
- Confirm you are in compliance with the Produce Harmonized GAP Standard AND implementing the relevant technical components of the Produce Safety Rule
- Provide you metrics that help you meet the Produce Safety Rule’s ultimate goals of increasing food safety

August 2018
## USDA Audits

### USDA GAP & GHP Audits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For market access, I need:</th>
<th>Global Food Safety Initiative Technical Equivalence</th>
<th>FDA FSMA Produce Safety Rule Alignment</th>
<th>Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative Alignment</th>
<th>Adherence to Industry and FDA Best Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USDA Harmonized GAP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USDA GAP &amp; GHP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Assistance for Produce Growers

- a joint effort by USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to increase market access for fruit and vegetable producers
- USDA will cover the costs of voluntary USDA Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits.

Under the Federal Crop Insurance Act, Congress authorized Agricultural Management Assistance funds to provide financial assistance for conservation and financial risk mitigation to producers in the following states:

How are we helping farmers with food safety?
South Carolina
Current Projects

Fruit and Vegetable Inspections Division
• GAP Workshops
• GAP Cost Share

Marketing Division with Specialty Crop Growers Association
• Cold Storage Cost Share
• Water Analysis Cost Share
GAP Workshops

- Educate growers on GAP/FSMA and clear up misconceptions
- Provide GAP readiness training
- How to create food safety manual
- Schedule consultation with GAP Coordinator
- 4 different regions of the state
- No cost to growers
GAP Cost Share

- Building upon previous successful projects
- Reimbursement by application
- $750 for first time GAP audit
- $300 for additional annual audits
- Completion of questionnaire required with application to track and evaluate impact on growers
Water Analysis Cost Share

• Water quality analysis for generic E Coli and fecal Coliform bacteria
• Reimbursement by application with receipts and affidavit ensuring sole use for specialty crop farm
• Up to $1000 per grower, per year
• Other requirements: must use certified laboratory that reports data in numerical values and must agree to provide follow up information via survey
• http://agriculture.sc.gov/divisions/agency-operations/grants/
Cold Storage Cost Share

- Using Cool-Bot cooler system and traditional window-unit air conditioner
- Reimbursement by application with receipts and affidavit ensuring sole use for specialty crops
- Up to $750 per cold storage unit built
- Other requirements: proof of food safety workshop attendance, photos of completed project, on site verification by SCDA staff, and follow up survey
For More Information

- Website: [http://agriculture.sc.gov/](http://agriculture.sc.gov/)
  (Type GRANTS in the search box)
- Betsy Dorton – [bdorton@scda.sc.gov](mailto:bdorton@scda.sc.gov)
  Grants Administrator
- Vanessa Elsalah - [velsalah@scda.sc.gov](mailto:velsalah@scda.sc.gov)
  GAP Outreach Specialist
- LauraKate Anderson – [landerson@scda.sc.gov](mailto:landerson@scda.sc.gov)
  Specialty Crop Marketing Specialist
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS)

• Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association
• University of Vermont Extension
• Vermont Agency of Agriculture & Department of Health

• CAPS Participation
• CAPS Accreditation
• CAPS+ Accreditation (CAPS plus on-farm verification audit)

practicalproducесafetvт.wordpress.com
capsvt.org
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Upstream Ag/Pitchfork Farm

• Awarded $18,000 in 2016
• Partnering with University of Vermont Extension Ag Engineering
• Develop a food-grade stainless steel leafy greens spinner and wash-line kit

Upstream Ag: www.upstreamag.com
UVM Ext Ag Engineering: blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Produce Safety Improvement Grants

• Grants of up to $5,000 to help fruit and vegetable growers implement produce safety improvements, comply with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, and meet buyer requirements
• Received 22 eligible applications with requests of over $112K
• Will award $60,000 in April 2019
  – $50,000 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
  – $10,000 Castanea Foundation, Inc.

agriculture.vermont.gov/ProduceSafetyGrants
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Contact Us

Kristina Sweet
AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov
(802) 522-7811
GAP Cost Share

- At least 21 States have (or have had) a GAP cost share
- Some are for all producers, some first-time audits
- Some are a percentage of the cost
- Most or all have a cap on the dollar amount per grower
Thank You!

Tricia Kovacs

Tricia.Kovacs@ams.usda.gov

202-572-5440
Networking Lunch

Salon D&E
Open Competitive Process: Applicant Training Tools

Lisa James, Arizona Dept. of Agriculture
Emily Cook, New York Dept. of Agriculture
Glenda Mostek, Colorado Dept. of Agriculture
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Lisa James, Grant Program Manager
Ashley Estes, Grant Program Coordinator
Arizona Grant Solicitation Requirements

- State Agencies shall award any grant in accordance with the competitive grant solicitation requirements of Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 41, Chapter 24.

- Shall prepare and issue a request for grant applications (RFA/Grant Manual) that includes at least the following information:

  1. A description of the nature of the grant project, including the scope of the work to be performed by an awardee.
  2. An identification of the funding source and the total amount of available funds.
  3. Whether a single award or multiple awards may be made.
  4. Encouragement of collaboration by entities for community partnerships, if appropriate.
  5. Any additional information required by the applications.
  6. The criteria or factors under which applications will be evaluated for award and the relative importance of each criteria or factor.
  7. The due date for submittal of applications and the anticipated time the awards may be made.
Arizona Grant Solicitation Requirements

• Adequate public notice shall be given **at least six weeks** before the due date.
• IF a preapplication conference (Webinar) is held, it shall be held at least twenty-one days before the due date.
• Grant applications shall be publicly received at the time and place designated in the RFA/Grant Manual.
• The name of each applicant shall be publicly read and recorded.
• All other information in the grant application is confidential during the process of evaluation.
• All applications shall be open for public inspection after grants are awarded.
Grant Evaluation Requirements

• Applications shall be evaluated by at least three evaluators who are peers or other qualified individuals.

• Oral presentations are allowable but not feasible for us due to the time commitment.

• The evaluators shall review each application based solely on the evaluation criteria or factors set forth in the RFA/Grant Manual.

• The evaluators and staff shall maintain a written record of the assessment, which shall include comments regarding compliance with each evaluation criteria, and a clear differentiation between comments based on facts presented in the application and comments based on professional judgment.

• Evaluator assessments shall be made available for public inspection no later than thirty days after a formal award is made. Not until AMS approves.

• The evaluators shall make award recommendations to the Director.

• The evaluators' recommendations may include the adjustment of the budgets of the applicants individually or collectively.
Grant Statute Director’s Authority

• The Director may affirm, modify or reject the evaluators' recommendations in whole or in part.
• Modifications may include the adjustment of the budgets individually or collectively by an amount or percentage.
• If the Director modifies the recommendations, it shall be justified and documented in writing.
• The specific justifications shall be made available for public inspection no later than thirty days after the action is taken.
• The Director may enter into agreements with other state governmental units to furnish assistance in conducting the solicitation of grant applications.
• **The Director may seek a waiver of certain solicitation and award procedures that are considered impracticable, unnecessary or contrary to the public interest.**
• The waiver request is submitted in writing to the Department of Administration for review and approval.
AZDA’s RFA/Grant Manual

• Develop “draft” RFA/Grant Manual beginning in December.
• Consider State Plan deadline and preparation time, evaluator availability for review and evaluation meeting, adequate public notice and webinar timing.
• Determine if grant statute waiver is necessary.
• Consider input from stakeholders and feedback from previous grant cycle.
• Finalize and publish RFA/Grant Manual in January or February with a mid to late March due date.
AZDA’s Evaluation Process

- Applicants are offered an “early review” opportunity to submit draft grant applications for technical (completeness only) review approximately 1 week prior to deadline.
- Applicants may correct technical (completeness only) issues prior to the final deadline.
- Applications are submitted prior to final submission deadline as identified in the RFA/Grant Manual.
- **LEVEL ONE REVIEW - Three** AZDA staff members conduct internal technical review for eligibility based on published “Application Packet Screening Criteria”.
  - Eligible specialty crop?
  - Cover sheet with authorized signature?
  - Completed project profile within page limits, etc.?
  - Previous reporting compliance?
  - General compliance with instructions?
- Only application packets that adequately address the criteria will receive further consideration by the evaluators.
AZDA’s Evaluation Process

- Evaluation Committee is comprised of pest control advisors, academia specializing in education, general agriculture and marketing, specialty crop-vegetable producers, green industry specialists, nursery/greenhouse owners/operators and specialty crop food safety specialist.

- Assign specific grants to evaluators based on their technical expertise and to negate any possible conflict of interest.
  
  - One primary evaluator per application.
  - Two secondary evaluators per application.

- Prepare and send evaluator packets with instructions for review and conflict of interest statement for signature.

- Evaluators receive ALL applications and notify staff of any potential conflicts of interest with assigned applications.

- Staff re-assigns grant applications where real conflicts of interest exist.

- Evaluators review assigned applications to prepare for Evaluation Committee meeting.
AZDA’s Evaluation Process

- Evaluation Committee meeting held in April at AZDA (avg. 6 hours)
  - Legal Counsel makes a brief Conflict of Interest presentation and answers any questions.
  - Evaluators submit signed conflict of interest forms.
  - Applications are reviewed in numerical order.
  - Any evaluator that has a conflict of interest on an application being discussed is expected to refrain from discussion on that application.
  - **LEVEL TWO REVIEW** - The three evaluators that have been assigned to each application will first assess to what extent the proposed project meets the following four criteria by making the recommendation to Fund, Maybe Fund or Do Not Fund:
    - enhances the competitiveness of the specialty crop(s) benefiting from the project;
    - **clearly defines a challenge** that is facing today's Specialty Crop industry or a lack of education about and/or access to specialty crops and indicates a project that **assists in finding a solution**;
    - includes well justified and appropriate budget information; and
    - is feasible.
AZDA’s Evaluation Process

- ALL members of the Evaluation Committee briefly discuss the application and agree on a Fund, Maybe Fund or Do Not Fund recommendation (by consensus).

- Based on the review of these four criteria and the recommendations, the Evaluation Committee determines if projects will need further consideration prior to funding through the scoring process.

- **LEVEL THREE REVIEW** - For those applications receiving further consideration through the scoring process, the Primary and Secondary evaluators provide a set of scores for the application (to initiate discussion) based on the published criteria. ALL members of the Evaluation Committee will then briefly discuss the application and agree on a score (by consensus).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>RATING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>To what extent will the proposed project enhance the competitiveness of the specialty crop(s) benefiting from this project?</td>
<td>0 to 5 with 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>To what extent does the proposal clearly define a challenge that is facing today’s Specialty Crop industry and indicate a project that assists in finding a solution?</td>
<td>0 to 5 with 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>How will the results of the project or the project itself be shared with the appropriate target audience(s)?</td>
<td>0 to 5 with 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Does the budget align with the activities of the project and only contain necessary costs?</td>
<td>0 to 5 with 0 being the lowest and 5 being the highest</td>
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</table>
AZDA’s Evaluation Process

o The Committee also develops **comments for the application** that can be conveyed directly back to the applicant.

o Recommendations and Scores (if applicable) for each application are entered into a master score sheet and put on display.

o Evaluation Committee agrees on final recommendations to the Director.

• Per the Director’s authority, he or she either accepts or modifies the recommendations.

• Recommendations along with AZDA internal projects are included in the State Plan.
Open Competitive Process

Pros and Cons of a Two Phase Process

Emily Cook
emily.cook@agriculture.ny.gov
518-474-5538
New York State Specialty Crop Award 2019

- $1.3 million in 2018
- 50% Competitive research, education, marketing grants
- Internal Projects: Marketing, Farm to School, Food Safety
- Administration
$650,000 Competitive Grants

Phase 1: Contract with Administrator

Phase 2: Administrator sub-contracts individual awards

Why Two Phase?

- Short-staffed
- Better able to ensure competitive process
Contract Administrator

- RFP and application
- Formation of review Committees
- Review of Applications
- Score tallying and reviewer meetings
- Sub-contracts
- Communications between NYSDAM and Researchers
- Review of claims prior to submission to NYSDAM
- Collection and formatting of annual/final reports
- Organizing and accompanying NYSDAM on site visits for projects under their oversight
- Helping Principal Investigators disseminate project findings
Phase 1: Finding an administrator

- RFP???
- Single Source???
Finding the Right Partnership: NY Farm Viability Institute

- Non-profit
- Led by farmers
- Depth of expertise in applied research, outreach education, business planning & marketing
- Not receiving SCBG funding
- No administrative funding requirement
Phase 2:

- **December**: Meeting of the NYS SCBGP Advisory Board industry priorities are set for the coming year.
- **January**: NYSDAM and NYFVI announce the RFP using various outlets
  - NYFVI holds a live Webinar which remains accessible on their website after the event
  - NYFVI lists all questions answered on website
- **February**: Deadline for submission
- **March**: Farmer and NYFVI Board Review
- **April 1**: Proposals due to NYSDAM
- **May**: NYSDAM submits to USDA
Phase 2 continued.

- **September**- NYSDAM drafts contact with NYFVI
- **October**- Contract sent to NYFVI after notice of award, signed and returned
- **December**- May??!! State internal review of contract
Multi-Layered Review Process

1. **Farmer- Industry Review Team (99% farmers/ 1% industry)**
   NYFVI establishes small review panels of three farmers for each Specialty Crop represented in a proposal. Apple Team, Veg Team, Greenhouse etc.

2. **NYFVI board of directors** independently scores and comments on each proposal.
   NYFVI staff will record all scores and comments from all reviewers into an application management database.
   NYFVI board will systematically work through the entire list of proposals, looking at each proposal’s scores and comments, and discuss the merits and shortcomings of each proposal. This creates a definitive ranking of all proposals received.

3. **NYSDAM** reviews NYFVI’s rankings.

4. **NYSDAM** presents all proposals to the NYS SCBGP Advisory Board and a determination is made on how many proposals to fund.
Ensuring a fair and competitive process

Extensive Outreach

Evaluation and scoring:
• Priority Ranking- highest to lowest
• Project Team Confidence: Yes/No
• Criteria Scoring matrix (50 pts): Producer Involvement, Relevance to NY Agriculture, Work Plan, Outreach Plan, Evaluation Plan, Budget (20%)  
• EGAW Score (1-5) Excellent, Good, Average, Weak, DNF

Conflict of Interest Declarations

2018 Conflict of Interest Report

SCG 18 018 Walter Blackler I have annually discussed with the researcher the storage research that should be done in the following year.

SCG 18 018 Jennifer Crist Kohn Our farm is one of the Hudson Valley collaborators and we have worked closely with Dr. Chris Watkins on many projects beneficial to the industry. We grow a large acreage of these varieties and thus have a high stake in their success.

SCG 18 018 Jill MacKenzie My husband, Mark Russell, is one of the grower cooperators.
PROs of Two Phase Process

• Significant administrative duties outsourced
• Outreach and organization of farmer/industry review panels outsourced
• Sophisticated scoring portal and data management system that NYS lacks
• ONE contract to move through State review process
Cons

• State Comptroller and fiscal management unhappy with 3rd party contracts
• Indirect contact with principal investigator
• Less control over review process
• 2 layers of claims to review
• Possible additional administrative charges - less grant funding
• Timing of USDA SCBG Release is often after release of sub-contractor RFP

2020- No more Single Source Exemption
Colorado’s Competitive Process

• In the last 4 years we have transitioned from a full-proposal one-step process to a concept paper–two-step process.

• We have also gone from an advisory committee to a review panel.
Colorado’s Competitive Process

• Concept paper vs. full proposal
  • Strength: Concept paper is much shorter and easier
  • Strength: easier to propose, perhaps more proposals
  • Weakness: more proposals/lower quality
  • Strength: easier, shorter for review committee to review and weed out weak proposals
  • Weakness: Program coordinator must facilitate concept papers being developed into full proposals

• Updates this year:
  • Limited submitters to ONE outcome, with multiple indicators if they wish
  • This leads to more focused proposals, simpler to report. Also makes it obvious when applicants don’t read directions.
Advisory Council vs Review Committee

Advisory council
• Comprised of Colorado SCBGP stakeholders.
• Members did not change from year to year.
• Did not closely read/score proposals.
• Met in person to discuss and award.
• Almost everyone on council had at least one direct COI.
Advisory Council vs Review Committee

• Advantages: they knew most of the players; knew CO SC industry well

• Disadvantages: COI, even though disclosed. More difficult for new applicants to get grants, members tended to vote for projects of other members. One member could have influence over other members during discussion.
Advisory Council vs. Review Committee

Review committee
• Review committee follows rubric for scoring, reviews closely.
• No financial COI permitted, knowing the applicants allowed but must be disclosed.
• Experts on SC, grants, agriculture from out of state and in-state.
  • Advantages: Significantly less COI; bring significantly different perspectives; they don’t know the players
  • Disadvantages: More time for Coordinator, need to educate panel on CO SC, they don’t know the players; harder to discuss and maybe change amounts because we don’t meet in person
Concept Paper System

• Scoring rubric adapted from the Local Foods Promotion Program. This is a very clear scoring system and outlines exactly how to use the range of scores.

• Requirement of at least one support letter this year – I think that helps the reviewers determine if this research is just something some researcher wants to keep a grad student busy, or if it is something of value to the industry.

• If applicants can’t follow instructions to fill in your concept paper that may give you an indication of how they will manage a grant.

• Concept paper form and scoring rubric available in the “Resources” section on NASDA website for this conference.
# Scoring Rubric

## Application Information
- **Applicant Name:** 01 Aces Scout LLC
- **Project Title:** 01 Aerial Crop Scouting Program for the Benefit of Colorado Farmers
- **Amount Requested:** $22,000.00  
  - Matching Amount: $6,720.00

## Evaluation Criteria Scoring Summary

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Project Purpose</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Measureable outcomes/indicators</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Project plan</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Budget</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. External support</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note the scores in this column autopopulate from your scores below.*

## Evaluation Criteria

### Project Purpose (25 Points):
1. The extent to which the applicant describes the specific and existing issue, problem, or need the project will address.
2. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates the tractability and relevance to the Colorado Specialty Crop industry.
3. The extent to which the project will provide a direct benefit to Colorado’s Specialty Crop industry.

| Excellent | No deficiencies. Strong, convincing justification. Contains a concise, well-conceived problem statement. The approach is innovative and likely to succeed. The project will have broad impact on Colorado Specialty crops. | 21 - 25 |
| Very Good | Slight deficiencies. Convincing justification. Contains a very good problem statement. The approach is rational and sound. The project will likely succeed. The project will have broad impact on Colorado Specialty crops. | 16 - 20 |
| Good      | Minor deficiencies. The justification is sound. Contains a good problem statement. The approach is reasonable. The project seems likely to succeed. The project will have an impact on Colorado Specialty crops. | 8 - 14 |
| Fair      | Several deficiencies. The justification could use further development. The problem statement could have been better stated. The ideas are not well-developed and may not be feasible to support a successful project or significantly impact the beneficiaries. | 1 - 7 |
| Poor      | Major deficiencies in one or more aspects of the project. Fails to make a case for the project. The project does not fit the intent of the grant program. Required section or details are missing. | 0 |

---

**Reviewer Score:**
Colorado’s Competitive Process

• After reviewers return score sheets to Program Coordinator, a Master score sheet adds all the scores together. You do have to have some excel abilities to do this, but then the scores can be manipulated to see averaged, high/low, etc.

• Key: Start early. Moved up the deadline for concept papers to leave successful applicants time to generate a full proposal in cooperation with program coordinator. USDA moved their deadline up w/little notice a few years ago, and I have heard they would like to make it even earlier.

• You can go ahead with the review process without knowing how much money your state will be awarded.

• Applicants may complain about earlier deadlines, but you are the one giving them free money.
Colorado’s Competitive Process

• Working with proposals after the concept paper round
  • Most flexible outcome: Outcome 5: Enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops through more sustainable, diverse, and resilient specialty crop systems
  • Indicators: 1. Number of new or improved innovation models (biological, economic, business, management, etc.), technologies, networks, products, processes, etc. developed for specialty crop entities including producers, processors, distributors, etc. _______
Colorado’s Competitive Process

• Recommendation: Participate in a grant review – LFPP, Multi-state SC, etc. You can glean a lot from this process and it gives you ideas and resources for your own program. You hear input on grants from the rest of the review team, and make valuable connections.
Working with Sub-Awardees

Melissa Ball, Virginia Dept. of Agriculture
Kathlyn Terry, Appalachian Sustainable Development
Break
Outcomes from SCBGP Evaluation

Wilella Burgess, Purdue University
Outcomes from the 2013 SCBGP Evaluation

Evaluation and Learning Research Center

Wilella Burgess, director

February 20, 2019
Summary of Evaluation

Agenda

• Purpose
• Approach
• Key Outcomes and Conclusions
• Recommendations
• Limitations
• Discussion
2013 SCBGP Evaluation

Purpose
Purpose

Primary Objectives

- Describe successful outcomes of SCBGP and evidence supporting this attribution
- Characterize the extent to which the SCBGP enhances the SC industry’s capacity nationally and within states
- Identify barriers preventing the SCBGP from addressing its primary purpose
2013 SCBGP Evaluation Approach
Approach

Data Sources

Final Reports

Surveys

Interviews

79
## Approach

### Analysis Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Reports</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 664 projects</td>
<td>• Web-based</td>
<td>• Semi-structured</td>
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<td>• Qualitative Document Analysis</td>
<td>• 45 Grantees</td>
<td>• Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Content Analysis (Nvivo)</td>
<td>• 113 Sub-grantees</td>
<td>• 12 Grantees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Likert and open-ended</td>
<td>• 9 Sub-grantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>• 15 States/Territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thematic analysis</td>
<td>• Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approach

Outcome and Evidence Identification and Coding

**Evaluation Question**
- Data analysis framework constructed based on 3 objectives and 11 evaluation questions
- Iterative and emergent analysis scheme

**Outcome**
- Deductive and inductive approach to outcome identification yielded 6 final outcomes.
- All 664 Final Reports coded for outcomes

**Evidence**
- Used word frequency charts for each outcome to generate lists of potential evidence types.
- Lists collapsed into 5 major evidence type classifications with subtypes.
- Outcome data coded to evidence type and subtype.
6 Broad Outcomes defined using deductive (conversations with USDA AMS staff) and inductive (data analysis) methods.

- Capacity and Growth
- Learning
- Safety and Quality
- Communication and Networking
- Discovery or Innovation
- Nutrition or Disease
Evidence Types

5 Broad Categories derived from word frequency charts for each outcome.

- Economic
- Human Factors
- Monitoring and Detection
- Products
- Reach
2013 SCBGP Evaluation
Key Outcomes
Outcome by Project Type (Reports)
Frequency of Outcome Types

Frequency of Outcome Types reported in 2013 Final Reports

Frequency of Outcomes Reported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th># of Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity and Growth</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery or Innovation</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication or Networking</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition or Disease</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and Quality</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

87
Significant Outcomes

- **Learning** -- Increased awareness, knowledge, attitudes or behaviors relative to SC production, processing, distribution, use, health, or safety (706)
- **Capacity & Growth** -- New or improved plants, products, markets, or other indicators of SC industry growth (684)
- **Discovery** -- New knowledge, technology, products, processes, innovations (441)
- **Communication/Networking** -- New or improved connections (203)
- **Nutrition/Disease** -- Improved human or environmental health (150)
- **Safety and Quality** -- Prevention, control, identification or intervention strategies that improve safety or quality of SCs and their products (136)
91% of Grantees that strongly believe SCBGP increased performance of SC industry in state, territory, or community (85% sub-grantees)

- Identified 5 categories of successful SCBG outcomes:
  - **Education** for growers and producers
  - **Research** to identify better plants, methods, or consumer needs
  - **Marketing and Promotion** that increase awareness and recognition
  - **Pest and Disease Management information** to help identify, respond, manage, and minimize crop loss and safety issues
  - **Tools** to improve decision making, productivity, management, access, or education.
Evidence of Success -- Economic

- Included in 49/54 final reports
- New Careers, jobs, markets, or businesses
- Price premiums or increased revenues
- Savings from innovations, adaptions, or trainings

84% SDA personnel report moderate to great impact of SCBGP on:
- Agricultural Revenues
- Supporting new and existing farmers
- Increasing SC production
- Creating or maintaining small businesses
Evidence of Success – Human Factors

- All final reports
- Wide range of audiences
- Documentation varies widely including: surveys, pre/post exams, performance evaluation, observation, inference, estimates, extrapolation, anecdotal reports
Evidence of Success -- Products

- New or improved:
  - plant varieties (22)
  - Plant growth or nutrients (9)
  - Production techniques (24)
  - Pathogen, pest, or weed management (47)
  - Storage (9)
  - Consumer preference (7)
  - Economic models (5)
  - Market opportunities (6)
Evidence of Success -- Products

- Community Gardens, farm markets
- Lesson plans or fact sheets
- News reports, media contact, video production
- Publications and presentations
- Trainings, workshops, info sessions
- Websites and newsletters

Most common evidence type reported
All outcome and project types
Both tangible and intangible outputs
Evidence of Success -- Reach

• Increased access:
  – Producers -- new or expanded markets
  – Veterans, low income, and underserved – to new and/or healthier food Consumers – availability of specialty crops

• Increased awareness:
  – Attendees
  – Print materials
  – Social media, circulations, ...

Reported for all project types. Increased access or awareness.
Evidence of Success — Monitoring and Detection

- Certifications and audits
- Trainings and implementation supports
- Scouting, detection, and prevention activities
- Sampling and testing
- New methods and tools

Detecting, monitoring, or mitigating risks; decreasing loss; increasing production, safety, or quality.

Most often associate with food safety projects.
Challenges

Lack of consistency in data collection and reporting makes meaningful quantitative estimates of cumulative impact impossible.

Wide array of project types, audiences, products and outcomes require range of outcome measures.
Conclusions

Project level qualitative and quantitative evidence supports important role for SCBGP in:
• Supporting SC industry;
• Contributing to community health and well-being

States and Territories see SCBGP as important tool for fostering new or emergent capacities:
• New varieties of crops
• Shared resources (capital equipment, databases, distribution, marketing, legal services)
• Knowledge and capacity to address emerging pests and diseases
• Education and training
Conclusions

SCBGP funding enables innovation by providing funding that:

• Seeds new industries
• Enables public/private partnerships
• Supports innovative education
• Fosters adoption of innovative production practices

SCBGP supports adaptation and agility in the SC industry by supporting projects that address challenges related to:

• Economic and environmental factors
• New and emerging pests and pathogens
• Evolving Consumer preferences or tastes
Evidence supports a critical role of SCBGP in supporting:

- Research to increase production, fight pests and diseases, and develop new plant varieties;
- Marketing to increase local and global competitiveness;
- Education and training to improve safety, enhance production and management, and increase consumer awareness of SCs;
- New ventures and small farmers;
- Shared resources or infrastructure;
- Access to fresh and nutritious food.
Conclusions

Objective 2 – SCBGP Enhances SC Capacity
Conclusions

➢ Block grant format allows states and territories flexibility to target priorities and needs.

➢ SCBGP funds small market products without other funding options.

➢ Shared resources enhance SC capacity and competitiveness.

➢ SCBGP funds lead to sustainable products and seed additional funding opportunities.
2013 SCBGP Evaluation
Recommendations
Recommendations

➢ Standardize and/or provide guidance on data collection methods and models, including baseline determinations.

➢ Align outcome measures with project term (e.g. what outcomes are reasonable to expect during the term of the grant?)

➢ Consider proximal measures for long-term outcomes (e.g. revenue)

➢ Consider capturing distal outcomes (e.g. improved health benefits, agro-tourism, community engagement) at the program level
Collect both quantitative and qualitative data to more fully illustrate the outcomes and impacts of the SCBGP on individuals and communities. (e.g. collect success and challenge stories)

Survey sub-grantees and SC commodity groups periodically to validate and enhance data collection criteria and success indicators

Continue to foster cross-state communication (e.g. conferences and webinars)
2013 SCBGP Evaluation
Limitations
Limitations

Time and Resources
Limited detailed document analysis to final reports

Retrospective Nature
May over or under-represent some views

Reporting or Coding Bias
May result from interpretation due to lack of standardized evaluation framework

Long Term Outcomes
Not captured
2013 SCBGP Evaluation

Discussion
Coffee with a Coordinator: Networking and Product Exchange

Perry Harlow, NASDA Foundation
Wrap Up

Dr. Lisa Benson
NASDA Foundation
Introduction to the Day

Dr. Lisa Benson, NASDA Foundation
Grant Monitoring and Evaluation

Carlos Coleman, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Ashley Jeppson, Nevada Dept. of Agriculture
Casey Foster, Nebraska Dept. of Agriculture
Jen Erdmann, Georgia Dept. of Agriculture
Nevada SCBGP-Monitoring & Evaluation
Ashley Jeppson
Challenges

• Diverse program staff wearing many hats
• Limited applications received—inexperienced in grants
• Assessing high-risk recipients
• Reporting-templates tool for monitoring and defining risk
Limited program staff

• $250-300K typically received for NV SCBGP
• Limited funding for staff support for evaluation & monitoring
• Many Nevada applicants often intimidated to apply-handholding
• Balance of providing support and taking action on problematic sub-grantees
Assessing Risk

• As confessed-NV holds-hands which has resulted in several tough lessons
• Limited applications so we greatly assist through the application-Balance critical or you are a broken record on requirements
• Incomplete applications submitted and revisions don’t come close to your request, likely later management nightmare
• Know your limits and staff capabilities-how much follow-up and technical assistance can you provide
Assessing Risk Continue

Communication-If you aren’t receiving:

- reports
- Follow-up information
- Project updates it’s likely things are falling through the cracks-action plan and firm follow-up deadlines
Reports-initial tool

• NV relies heavily upon initial reporting process for flagging potential problems:
  - Sub-grantee communication
  - Effort in completing reports
  - Vagueness in reports
  - Viewpoint on reporting process (grants are handouts?)
Corrective Action

• NV requires a workplan and timeline in the initial application
• Sub-grantee is not referencing scope of work-document in email necessity
• Establish corrective action plan and set deadlines for follow-up in calendar
• No response, document communication leading up to reallocation
• Sub-grantee outlook greatly weighs on continued technical assistance or reallocation steps
• Nevada Lesson—Perhaps fewer awards but higher dollar value from reputable agencies moving forward?
Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Nebraska receives over $600,000 each year
Average grant award is $46,000
Receives approximately 30 applications each year
Fund approximately 15 projects each year
Business unit for each fiscal year
Signed contract for each sub-recipient
Internal audit once a year
State audit once every 10 years
Tracking Expenditures

Ag Promotion – Assistant Director – Finance Dept. – submit advancement of funds each month for exact amount.
Send out payments to sub-recipients 3-5 business days upon receipt of funds from USDA.
Our agency policy is net term 30 days upon receipt of funds.
State statutes requires us to send out payments to sub-recipients within 45 calendars days upon receipt of funds.
Non-interest bearing account
Tracking Expenditures

Utilize agency accounting system and supplemental spreadsheet for financial management.

When awards are announced, build a spreadsheet that includes each project, respective awards, contract numbers, reporting deadlines, and length of projects.

Spreadsheet is used to record each invoice, amounts, invoice dates, total expenses, and remaining funds.
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<th>Recipient</th>
<th>Contract #</th>
<th>Funds awarded</th>
<th>Date contract signed</th>
<th>1st annual report due to NDA</th>
<th>1st annual report due to USDA</th>
<th>2nd annual report due to NDA</th>
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<th>Contract ends</th>
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### SCBGP - FY 2016 FB

16-SCBGP-NE-0020

September 30, 2016 - September 29, 2019

SEPTEMBER 2016 -- SEPTEMBER 2019

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| Sub-Total                           | 37,800.00 | 32,648.31 | 32,648.31 | 5,151.69 |
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and State Departments of Agriculture: Opportunities and Challenges

John Miklozek, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Grants Division
Assessing and Reflecting  • Perry Harlow, NASDA Foundation
Wrap Up

Dr. Lisa Benson & John Miklozek
NASDA Foundation & USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
Visit our website.

www.nasda.org/foundation

Questions?

Lisa at lisa.benson@nasda.org
Perry at perry.harlow@nasda.org