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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NDA'S SPECIALTY CROP GRANT PROPOSALS DUE JAN 31**

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is currently accepting grant proposals for its 2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). NDA administers the program, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Specialty crops are generally defined as fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey and some turf and ornamental crops. The deadline for submitting proposals is Jan. 31, 2019.

“The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program helps grow Nebraska’s ag industry by supporting research, development and marketing of specialty crops,” said NDA Director Steve Wellman. “For example, Nebraska leads the nation in beef exports, but we’re also first in the nation in Great Northern Bean production and second in pinto bean production and light red kidney bean production, all of which are considered specialty crops.”

For the 2019 SCBGP, NDA anticipates approximately \$600,000 will be available to fund new projects. Producers, organizations and associations, as well as state and local agencies, educational groups and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply.

Last fall, NDA and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln were awarded nearly \$700,000 in funding from the USDA to: study hops, wine grapes and dry beans; monitor invasive pests; and encourage healthy snacking in schools.

This year’s proposals will be reviewed and scored using select criteria. Applicants who make it through the first round will be asked to submit additional information. NDA and USDA will announce the projects receiving funding in the fall.

Instructions for submitting a proposal, proposal applications, performance measures and program guidelines are available on NDA’s website at [nda.nebraska.gov/promotion/scbgp/index.html](http://nda.nebraska.gov/promotion/scbgp/index.html). All proposals should be saved as a Microsoft Word .docx file and sent electronically to [casey.foster@nebraska.gov](mailto:casey.foster@nebraska.gov) by the Jan. 31 deadline. For additional information contact: Casey Foster at (402) 471-4876, or by the email listed above.

To view a comprehensive list of eligible specialty crops and examples of projects funded under the SCBGP, visit USDA’s website at [ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp](http://ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp).

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