



## Transportation and Marketing Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program

### Fiscal Year 2022 Description of Funded Projects

**Number of Grants Awarded:** 5  
**Amount of Funds Awarded:** \$1,008,352.00

For more information, please visit the grant program's website: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/fsmip>

**NOTE:** The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients.

#### Kansas

<b>Recipient:</b>	Kansas State University Manhattan, KS	<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$144,350.00
<b>Project Type:</b>	Market Development	<b>Match Amount:</b>	\$144,350.00
		<b>Total Project Amount:</b>	\$288,700.00

#### ***Kansas Specialty Livestock Barriers and Opportunities to Market Expansion***

Barriers to entry and lack of resources can hinder a business from thriving. Smaller sectors within the agriculture sector may face these challenges, especially in states with significant traditional agricultural production systems that lack adequate infrastructure for other livestock species. The specialty livestock sector within Kansas has grown to be differentiated from the traditional livestock production system. Due to the unique challenges the specialty livestock sector faces, producers may lack the knowledge, labor, or other inputs needed to successfully market their products in the downstream segments of the supply chain. This project seeks to improve the livelihood of specialty livestock producers in the state of Kansas. Through the coupling of a mail-in producer survey and an online consumer survey, information will be gathered surrounding the supply and demand dynamics of the specialty livestock sector within Kansas. Industry stakeholder partners will be leveraged to ensure the data collection is robust as well as to disseminate results to livestock producers across the state.

#### Minnesota

<b>Recipient:</b>	Regents of the University of Minnesota Minneapolis, MN	<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$114,421.00
<b>Project Type:</b>	Market Development	<b>Match Amount:</b>	\$114,421.00
		<b>Total Project Amount:</b>	\$228,842.00

#### ***Expanding Markets for Thermally Modified Wood Products from Underutilized Species***

Thermal modification of wood, a collection of well-known industrial processes, can improve the performance of wood in outdoor and indoor applications, and present opportunities for developing new, high-value applications. University of Minnesota proposes to help sustain and improve the health of U.S. forests while supporting the Forest products industry by effectively promoting the increased production, sales, and utilization of thermally modified wood (TMW) from underutilized species in the Upper Midwest Region. This project goal will be met by: (1) establishing the status of the thermal modification industry in the US, including installed treatment capacity and production, treatment and distribution facilities, treatment technologies, species, and products; (2) identifying species and products with highest market potential, including geographic markets and market segments; (3) evaluating the mechanical and physical properties of TMW compared to untreated material; (4) investigating consumers' preferences for TMW; and (5) producing and distributing key product and market information via the preparation of a Marketing Guide, reports, presentations, and others, with content focused on the production and use trends, business logistics, benefits of the technology and products, market opportunities, barriers to

implementation, and needs related to the expansion of thermally modified wood production and markets in the U.S. The proposed project, once complete, will greatly improve customer and market acceptance of thermally modified wood in the U.S. because it can aid in facilitating market acceptance and trade, build consumer confidence, and ensure quality.

## Tennessee

<b>Recipient:</b>	University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN	<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$249,581.00
<b>Project Type:</b>	Market Development	<b>Match Amount:</b>	\$249,583.00
		<b>Total Project Amount:</b>	\$499,164.00

### ***Factors Influencing Valuation of Hay to Improve Price Discovery and Transparency***

The purpose of this project is to improve price discovery and market transparency in hay markets to improve market efficiency. A hypothetical experiment and survey will be conducted to determine willingness to pay (WTP) for hay based on visual attributes, WTP for information on hay attributes, differences in regional WTP, and to educate buyers and sellers of hay as to what attributes are valued and what value is placed on those attributes. At least two peer-reviewed journal articles and two extension publications detailing the results of this study will be produced while training graduate students. It is expected that this project will result in buyers and sellers using information such as bale weight and nutritive value (i.e. measured characteristics) to determine the value of hay rather than solely relying on visual attributes. The findings of this study should benefit hay buyers and hay sellers. Hay buyers will benefit because they will know the exact quantity of hay and nutritive value of hay they are purchasing, which in turn should assist with managing livestock feed costs and ensuring adequate nutrition to livestock. Sellers will benefit in that this study will indicate the attributes hay buyers value, which will assist sellers in how they package and market their hay. This research will influence operations of all sizes. However, it will greatly influence small and medium size producers who trade relatively small quantities of hay and are less familiar with the market dynamics and market price.

## Washington

<b>Recipient:</b>	Washington State University Pullman, WA	<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$250,000.00
<b>Project Type:</b>	Market Development	<b>Match Amount:</b>	\$262,363.90
		<b>Total Project Amount:</b>	\$512,363.90

### ***Integration And Development of Virtual Reality Marketing Materials for Enhancing Consumers' Sensory Experience of Washington-Based Wine Products***

The project will develop virtual reality (VR) marketing materials for wine products by collaborating with local wine producers, winery owners, and state wine organizations. Faced with the ongoing pandemic challenge and the relatively low brand awareness of Washington State (WA) wines among wine consumers, we have assembled a research team consisting of social scientists with expertise in marketing and VR, and wine specialists, aiming to utilize VR technology as a means to initiate effective e-marketing content. The fundamental purpose of this project is to assist Washington-based small and medium scale wineries which are restricted in resources to find effective e-marketing strategies by utilizing VR technology. The results of this project are expected to significantly increase the recognition of Washington state as an inspiring wine region and Washington-based wines as competitive brands and encourage consumers to experience Washington State wines in an innovative form while supporting the long-term benefits of our stakeholders. This research is designed to use multiple methodologies including focus groups, individual interviews, experimental design, survey methods, and physiology research to create innovative curated VR marketing content. The final e-marketing materials will be disseminated to Washington-based wineries and wine experts. Washington State University (WSU) will also use multiple methodologies including consumer surveys to investigate user experience of an immersive VR-infused wine experience, lab-based and field-based experiments to capture the effective stimulus in three consecutive years, pilot testing of the potential audiences' reactions, and development of appropriate e-marketing content, and collaborative sponsored relationship with local wine venues (Port of Benton and Clore Center) for outcome demonstration. The VR marketing materials are expected to enhance consumers' sensory experience of Washington-based wine products and in turn, generate a larger economic impact. The Washington-based wineries will benefit from efficient e-marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and generate more sales. Local wine-related entities can leverage the outcomes to organize intriguing and educational-driven events, heightening community engagement, and increasing awareness among local and international visitors. Moreover, higher

education entities can utilize the VR-endorsed marketing materials to provide interdisciplinary classes subject to wine business management and marketing, providing a better understanding of Washington wine and amplifying the value of in-person classes. The outcomes will also serve the further research needs of local wine-related research institutions.

## West Virginia

<b>Recipient:</b>	West Virginia Department of Agriculture Charleston, WV	<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$250,000.00
<b>Project Type:</b>	Market Development	<b>Match Amount:</b>	\$250,000.00
		<b>Total Project Amount:</b>	\$500,000.00

### ***Creating Market Opportunities in a Regionally Diverse State through West Virginia Grown***

Given West Virginia's diverse climate, niche products, and the existing gap between consumption and production, there is vast potential for market growth through local food systems. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture's (WVDA) statewide branding program, West Virginia Grown, is vital to tapping into these market opportunities by connecting members with a single access point for technical assistance and marketing resources. The proposed project is centered around the expansion of the WV Grown program by leveraging regional Planning Coordinators to provide brand awareness and education to producers and consumers alike. To determine the economic impact of the program, data will be gathered as part of this project. WVDA Planning Coordinators will provide marketing assistance to current and potential WV Grown members with a focus on how to overcome impediments and capitalize on new market opportunities. Coordinators will help producers develop skills needed to effectively engage in the marketplace and increase sales, as well as explore options for product diversification. Their support will ensure producers are better equipped to upgrade methods for production, marketing, and business relations. A research collaboration with the West Virginia University Bureau of Business and Economic Research will demonstrate the economic impact of the WV Grown program. This data is essential for member recruitment and building consumer awareness. The goal is to create greater resiliency in local food systems given recent crises that have shown food supply vulnerability. Educating consumers, along with preparing WV Grown members to meet local demand is crucial for sustainability in local communities.