

Summer/Fall
2014
Educational
Bulletin
Volume 7,
Issue 2



Sub-awarding to Federal Agencies

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If you've read the new super circular and are confused by some of the regulations, you're not alone. In particular, the section pertaining to subrecipients ([§200.93 Subrecipient](#)) can be confusing since it seemingly indicates that federal entities are ineligible subrecipients under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). This is not necessarily the case.

Federal entities are only eligible to receive federal grant funds under the SCBGP, or other grant programs, provided that there is statutory authority that allows this. Without statutory authority, if a federal agency were to receive federal grant funds, it would be considered a supplemental appropriation and therefore a violation of federal appropriations law. Federal statutes override federal regulations, so the language in 2 CFR 200 is not applicable if the federal agency has the statutory authority to accept federal grant funds. The U.S. Supreme Court has issued a number of decisions regarding the supremacy of federal statutes, and the Government Accountability Office has issued opinions over the years discussing whether or not federal agencies may receive federal grant funds and under what conditions.

It would be wise for you to check with federal entities prior to establishing projects to verify that they have statutory authority to receive grant awards.

Several State departments of agriculture have used SCBGP funds to establish sub-awards with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). ARS is authorized to receive federal grant funds under [7 USC 450a: Cooperative research projects; agreements with and receipt of funds from State and other agencies](#). Since ARS has this authorization, it is allowable for State departments of agriculture to set up sub-award agreements with it. If you have any questions about setting up a sub-award agreement with ARS, you can contact Mr. Bob MacDonald, the Partnerships and Grants Coordinator with ARS, at Robert.macdonald@ars.usda.gov or 301-504-1184 to ensure that your agreement with ARS is binding and appropriate.



Performance Report Guidance



It's that time of year again; performance reports are coming due! The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) requires each state to submit an annual performance report, which consists of a report on each of the projects in the grant. Some states also require interim or quarterly reports from their subgrantees. It's your responsibility to ensure that reporting requirements for the SCBGP are met completely and promptly. In fact, you should stay in close contact with your subgrantees and should time your subgrantee's annual and final reports to be due before your due date to the SCBGP. This helps to ensure on-time reports. You should carefully review the reports, comparing them with the approved State Plan and any subsequent approved amendments. This enables you to identify impending delays or problems at an earlier stage and provide feedback and assistance as appropriate, when there may still be sufficient time and resources available to make any necessary adjustments to the budget or project plan to ensure a successful outcome.

It is also important for you to review financial information. Accounting records must be supported by source documentation such as cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, attendance records, contracts, and subgrant award documents, per your state's policies and procedures.

Performance Report Tips for Success

Below are a few tips you will want to consider and communicate to your subgrantees as both of you develop performance reports.

We have also provided a [Sample Performance Report](#) to assist you with providing the SCBGP with the required report information. The *Sample Performance Report* includes annual performance reports and a final performance report for the projects that are included in the *Sample State Plan*. The report includes helpful comments and tips.

Annual Performance Reports

When developing an Annual Performance Report it is important to review the approved State Plan project proposals and subsequent approved amendments to ensure that the report accounts for all activities (past and future) as well as applicable goals and outcomes. The [Annual Performance Report Checklist](#) should also be used to ensure that you have addressed all required areas and questions. Please note that this checklist is for Fiscal Years 2011-2013 since no performance reports are due for 2014 agreements until next year.

It is also important to remember to use the appropriate tense for each section in the performance report. For example, the Activities Performed section should be written in the past tense because the project activities in this section occurred in the past, while the Future Project Plans section should be written in the future tense because these project activities will occur in the future.

If projects have been completed before you submit your Annual Performance Report, you may submit those projects in Final Performance Report format. This will save time when you eventually submit your Final Performance Report.

Final Performance Reports

When developing a Final Performance Report it is important to review the approved State Plan project proposals, subsequent approved amendments, and previous Annual Performance Reports to ensure that the Final Performance Report accounts for all activities performed and attained goals and outcomes. The [Final Performance Report Checklist](#) should also be used to ensure you have addressed all required areas and questions.

It is important to note that the approved Final Performance Report is published on the SCBGP website and should describe the major successes of your State's grant program and help inform others who might benefit from lessons learned. Since the report is published on the SCBGP website, be sure to review it closely for typographical errors, incomplete sentences, and misspelled words.

Tips for Writing a Request for Proposals

Many of you are preparing to publish your Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) fiscal year 2015 grant cycle. We would like to assist by providing some helpful tips. To help direct applicants in developing strong proposals, it may be a good idea to create an RFP template which can be used annually; the template can be modified for programmatic/policy changes.

A tool that is not required for you as recipients of Federal grant funds in developing a RFP template, but may be helpful, is the standard format for Federal agency announcements of funding opportunities (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_notice_announcement).

In the following sections, you can find some helpful advice on creating your RFP for the SCBGP.

Funding Opportunity Descriptions

Funding Opportunity Descriptions should discuss the grant's purpose and the funding priorities identified during your outreach activities with specialty crop stakeholders. To help applicants create strong proposals, it may be a good idea to provide examples of projects which have been previously funded. This section communicates indicators of successful projects.

Award Information

Relevant information could include the total amount of funding that your department expects to award; the anticipated number of awards; the expected amounts of individual awards (which may be a range); the amount of funding per award, on average, experienced in the previous year; and the anticipated start dates and periods of performance for new awards. This section should also address whether applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards.

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

You should clearly identify the types of entities that are eligible to apply. If there are no restrictions on eligibility, this section may simply indicate that all potential applicants are eligible. If there are restrictions on eligibility, it is important to be clear about the specific types of entities that are eligible, not just the types that are ineligible.

Other Eligibility Information

This section may include a list of eligible and ineligible specialty crops as found in the Specialty Crops Definition at www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp. You should also clearly state that an applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline will result in your department's rejection of award prior to or after the application review. In addition, you might consider the assertion of a limit on the number of applications an applicant may submit under the announcement within this section. If you decide on this control mechanism, make clear whether the limitation is on the submitting organization, individual investigator/program director, or both.

Cost Sharing or Matching

If your department has a cost sharing or matching requirement, it may be stated in this section. Please remember the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program does not have a federal matching requirement.

Application and Submission Information

Submission Dates and Times

Your announcement should also identify due dates and local times for all submissions, and what the deadline means (e.g., whether it is the date and time by which the department must receive the application or something else). This section also indicates the effect of missing a deadline, and how the department determines whether an application or pre-application has been submitted before the deadline. This includes the form of acceptable proof of mailing or system-generated documentation of receipt date and time. This section may also indicate whether, when, and in what form the applicant will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

It is strongly encouraged that the content section includes reference to or incorporation of the content required from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program's most recent Request for Applications.

Requests for Proposals Continued

You should consider displaying the submission, date, and time information in ways that will be easy to understand and use. A tabular format providing a summary of information may give applicants a checklist to verify the completeness of their application package before submission.

Funding Restrictions

You should include information on funding restrictions in order to allow an applicant to develop an application and budget consistent with program requirements. Examples include the requirement that projects must benefit more than one commercial product or individual, capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land are unallowable, and the limit of indirect costs at eight percent.

Address, Content and Form

You should tell potential applicants how and where to get application forms or other materials they need to apply. This section should identify the required content and form or format requirements for:

- Pre-applications, letters of intent, or concept proposals that your department requires, including any limitation on the number of pages or other formatting requirements similar to those for full applications.
- The application as a whole. This includes all content, required sections, and forms or formats that constitute a full application. For example, the format for electronic applications may include the number of pages, font size and typeface, margins, etc.

Other Submission Requirements

This section must indicate where applications (and any pre-applications) must be submitted. For electronic submission, this should include the URL or email address; whether a password is required; whether particular software or other electronic capabilities are required; what to do in the event of system problems and a point of contact that will be available in the event the applicant experiences technical difficulties.

Application Review Information

This section must address the criteria that your department will use to evaluate applications. This includes the merit and other review criteria that evaluators will use to judge applications. The intent is to give applicants a view of the evaluation process so that they can make informed decisions when preparing their applications and so that the process is as fair and equitable as possible. If criteria vary in importance, the announcement should specify the relative percentages, weights, or other means used to distinguish among them.

Review and Selection Process

This section may indicate who is responsible for evaluation against the merit criteria (e.g., peers external to department personnel) and/or who makes the final selections for award. If you have a multi-phase review process (e.g., an external panel advising internal department personnel who make final recommendations to the deciding official), you may describe these phases. You also may include: the number of people on an evaluation panel and how it operates, the way reviewers are selected, general reviewer qualifications, and the way that conflicts of interest are avoided. Remember to protect the confidentiality of reviewers, and do not include any of their personally identifiable information.

Anticipated Award Announcement and Award Dates

This section may include information about the anticipated dates for announcing or notifying successful applicants and for having awards in place. You should also include the process for notifying unsuccessful candidates and providing them feedback on their proposals.

Award Administration Information

Award Notices

This section should explain what a successful applicant should expect after being selected. Make sure to be clear about what the award notice means, e.g., can the sub-recipient begin the project and start incurring costs as soon as they sign and return, or is a second notice required before proceeding? This section should also include information regarding the process for notifying unsuccessful applicants.

Requests for Proposals Continued

Programmatic, Administrative, and National Policy Requirements

It is generally good practice to include in the RFP a list of applicable federal, state, and local requirements that will impact sub-recipients' projects either programmatically or administratively. By notifying applicants upfront about compliance requirements, they are able to determine if the compliance burden may preclude them from successful completion of the project.

For example, federal requirements include that pass-through entities notify potential sub-recipients that all entities must provide a Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number. Placement of this information in your RFP is a way to fulfill this responsibility and also document that applicants have been informed.

Certification and assurance requirements should also be included in the RFP. Federal assurance guidelines should be communicated to the applicant and any additional assurance/certification requirements of your program. It may be helpful to reuse federal forms such as the SF-424, which is the government-wide standard assurances form.

Reporting

This section must include general information about the type (e.g., financial or performance), frequency, and means of submission of post-award reporting requirements.

Payment

Applicants should have information on how payments are processed under your department or program: whether on an advance or reimbursement basis. Including this information on the RFP can help an applicant determine whether their project is financially viable. It may be difficult for some to operate on a reimbursement standard.

Contact

You should indicate a point of contact (name, telephone, email, and/or fax) for potential applicants to send questions or request assistance with problems while the funding opportunity is open.



Highlighting Your Success!

Arkansas - Point of Contact: Zachary Taylor, 501-219-6324, zachary.taylor@aad.ar.gov

Arkansas Gleaning Project

The Arkansas Agriculture Department partnered with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables by underserved populations. This was achieved by recruiting specialty crop producers into the gleaning network and donating gleaned produce to local food banks. The team increased partnerships with farmers by 50 percent and gleaned and donated approximately 1,150,700 pounds of produce. More than 25,000 informational flyers about the program were distributed to Arkansans. One hundred thirty-three families who received the gleaned produce and educational flyers completed surveys about the program. Of these respondents, 96 percent indicated that the program increased their consumption of fruit and vegetables. Sixty-five percent tried new foods thanks to the produce they received, and 88 percent indicated that they have purchased more produce as a result of their participation in the program.

Highlighting Your Success! Continued

Classical Biological Control of the Japanese Beetle in Arkansas

The Arkansas Agriculture Department partnered with the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville to reduce the Japanese beetle population by introducing *Ovavesicula popilliae* Andreadis, a highly specific pathogen of Japanese beetle grubs into Arkansas. The team obtained pathogen infected beetles from Michigan and released them into parks, nurseries, and golf courses in Arkansas. Over the next several months, they sampled Japanese beetles at the test sites to track how widespread the pathogen had become, although the final determination of the spread of the pathogen was not available by the end of the project. However, if its establishment in the region and its spread can be confirmed, it is anticipated that it will permanently lower the maximum beetle population found in this region both by lowering female fecundity by 50 percent as well as by increasing larval mortality. This would mean less damage for turf managers and homeowners dealing with damage caused by larvae feeding on turf root systems. It would also mean a decline in adult populations, translating into less foliar and fruit damage for growers and horticultural damage for homeowners and growers. This reduction in damage could be particularly important to organic growers, who have limited options when dealing with high adult populations.

Massachusetts - Point of Contact: John Rosa, 617-626-1730, john.rosa@state.ma.us

Development and Implementation of Commodity Specific Sustainability Standards for Fruit and Vegetable Growers in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources developed a Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP) to identify and promote specialty crop production practices that protect, enhance, and sustain the environment, as well as our natural resources. Best Management Practices Guides were developed in cooperation with the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and University of Massachusetts (UMass) Amherst. In addition, panels of growers and an Advisory Committee were used to review the guides and standards prior to publication in print and posting on the UMass website. CQP has become part of the food safety training curriculum. A total of 330 growers have been trained in six CQP trainings, which has resulted in 52 farms signing up for CQP. It is estimated that the press and media coverage generated an estimated two million unique media impressions reaching well over 800,000 consumers in the State of Massachusetts.



Establishing Sustainability Standards for Massachusetts Cranberry Production

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources partnered with the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association (CCCGA) to inventory the sustainability practices of the Massachusetts cranberry industry and communicate those results to the general public. A survey was developed to inventory the farming practices, business plans, and community involvement of cranberry growers. The survey results were shared with over 300 growers, sustaining members, and associate members. The results were also used to develop and distribute 1,000 educational brochures to explain sustainable cranberry production. In addition, the CCCGA website was updated, and three videos were added to <http://www.cranberries.org>. CCCGA conducted several workshops for real estate agents and the general public on production practices to improve relations between growers and their urban neighbors. One workshop was filmed and broadcasted on local access cable throughout Cape Cod. The CCCGA worked with Jed Colquhoun of the University of Wisconsin to speak and utilize his tools to further the sustainability efforts by the Massachusetts cranberry growers. Finally, a new survey was created through a joint effort with Ocean Spray Cranberries to continue to monitor the progress of sustainability on cranberry farms in Massachusetts.

Highlighting Your Success! Continued

Montana - Point of Contact: Angie Nelson, 406-444-0134, ANelson@mt.gov

Dry Pea Bean and Crop Research

The Montana Department of Agriculture partnered with Montana State University to evaluate the disease resistance and quality of chickpeas and marrowfat peas in Montana soil and climate to find suitable genotypes with favorable agronomical growth habits. Five chickpea and marrowfat breeding lines were selected from marrowfat breeding materials for further evaluation of yield and quality and potential adaptation to Montana environment and disease. In addition, four commercial varieties and three advanced breeding lines of marrowfat peas were tested for yield potential and seed size in replicated trials in 2011 and 2012. Researchers learned that of the diseases tested, chickpea is most susceptible to *Ascochyta* blight. Additionally, several chickpea cultivars performed well at central Montana were severely damaged by the disease at northeastern Montana. Six field days were held at the testing site and research center, and project results were shared with approximately 480 stakeholders. Finally, project participants spoke at three Montana Pulse Days where approximately 750 attendees from Montana and neighboring states learned about the project.

Moveable Grow Tunnel Vegetable Production

The Montana Department of Agriculture partnered with Montana State University to determine if movable high tunnels, in conjunction with a large-scale commercial vegetable plot, offer long-term feasibility for commercial vegetable production. This project developed two movable, high tunnel systems and researched what vegetable production method may be best adapted to this region of Montana. It became apparent that just about any variety of annual crops can be grown in this region. After the inception of this project, three local producers purchased high tunnels of their own through a National Resource Conservation program. All of these producers were attendees at the first high tunnel workshop in 2010, and all three have been successful at their endeavors and regularly sell at farmers' markets and through Field to Table local stores. Additionally, 31 new specialty crops or new varieties of specialty crop vegetables have been introduced to the region as a result of this project. Finally, 24 presentations were held to disseminate information about movable high tunnels to approximately 1,266 attendees.

Nevada - Point of Contact: Ashley Jeppson, 775-353-3675, ajeppson@agri.nv.gov

Pilot Study of Two New Specialty Crops (Berry & Bean) in Northern Nevada

The Nevada Department of Agriculture partnered with Reno Urban Gardens: Nutrition, Education and Renewal Projects (RUGnerp) to study the feasibility of growing blueberries and fresh dried beans as two specialty crops for northern Nevada using organic methods and high tunnel technology. The first phase of the project involved the construction of hoop houses through collaboration with High Desert Montessori Middle School staff and students, Churchill-Butte Organics, Urban Roots Garden Classrooms and Friends of Nevada Organics. Blueberries and beans were planted and harvested in the hoop houses in the first and subsequent phases of the project with varying levels of success with the plants. The study concluded that it was not feasible to grow blueberries in the climate of northern Nevada inside or outside due to a variety of reasons including: dry climate, extreme temperature fluctuations and alkalinity of irrigation water. The study did conclude that six of the seven heirloom bean varieties tested were feasible for growing in northern Nevada. Due to collaboration, there were 1,134 participant beneficiaries of this project with a total project income of \$44.



Highlighting Your Success! Continued

Fallon Small Farm Collaborative

The Nevada Department of Agriculture partnered with the Churchill Economic development Authority to increase participation from small northern Nevada farmers in Reno area markets and to increase consumer recognition of locally grown Nevada specialty crops. In collaboration with Nevada Grown Farmers Association and small-scale specialty crop producers, branding materials were developed which included logos, banners, flags, business cards and a market Facebook page. To encourage more participation in the market, project staff completed orientations with stakeholders on the collaborative model. Project goals of farmer participation were met with 13 farmers attending over 84 markets, as well as increasing consumer recognition of Fallon and Nevada grown products noted through increased farmer sales.

Vermont - Point of Contact: Chelsea Lewis, 802-522-5573, Chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us

Effectiveness of Triple Washing or Organic Sanitizer Treatment in Reducing E. coli Levels in Leafy Green Wash Water and its Relationship to Incoming E

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Foods and Markets partnered with the University of Vermont (UVM) to improve produce safety by determining the effectiveness of various procedures in reducing E. coli levels in leafy greens. UVM's water wash study determined that produce washes beyond the first wash greatly reduced the amount of E. coli in wash water. On average, E. coli levels decreased 88 percent with double washing and 97 percent with triple washing, demonstrating that large reductions are possible without the addition of sanitizer. The addition of an OMRI-approved sanitizer at concentrations recommended by the manufacturer most successfully and consistently reduced E. coli counts (99.8 percent). The study findings will help leafy greens growers reduce the levels of bacteria in wash water they use to clean their product, thereby reducing food safety risks to consumers.

Local Purchasing Best Practices

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Foods and Markets partnered with the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA) to help schools integrate local purchasing of fresh foods in their school food programs and nutrition education into their curriculum. To do so, NOFA organized and conducted four workshops highlighting seasonal specialty crops through demonstrations and education. Approximately 250 individuals, representing 30 schools and numerous farms, participated in the workshops. Workshop evaluations showed that 60-65 percent of respondents were more aware of how to incorporate local fruit and vegetables into their menus thanks to their participation in the workshops. The workshops also provided a substantial networking opportunity, and participants reported that, on average, they made at least two connections with people within their region that could help them develop or advance their Farm to School programs.



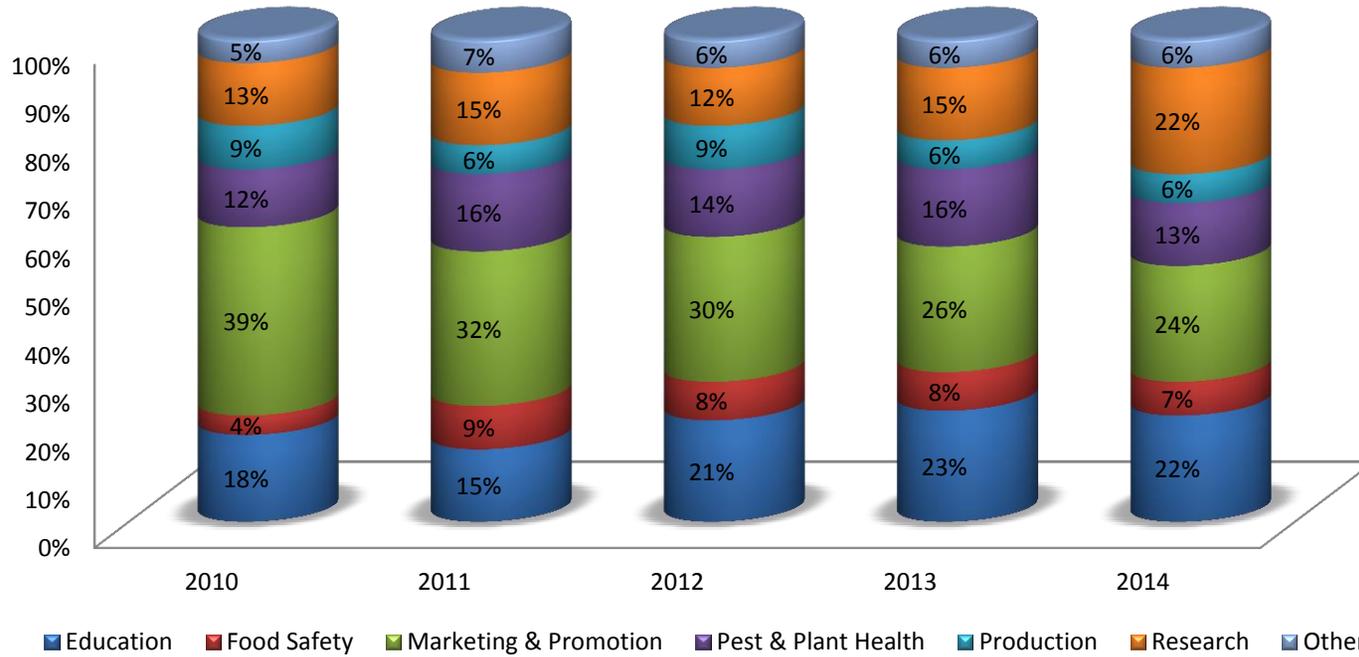
Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB)

Fiscal Year	Grantees	Funding Levels (Annual Funds)	Time to Apply	Projects Awarded
2010	50 states, the District, and three U.S. Territories (American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands chose not to apply)	\$55 million	~6 Months	825
2011	50 states, the District, and four U.S. Territories (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands chose withdraw its application)	\$55 million	~7 Months	740
2012	50 states, the District, and five U.S. Territories	\$55 million	~6 Months	747
2013	50 states, the District, and three U.S. Territories (the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands chose not to apply)	\$52 million	~2 Months	694
2014	50 states, the District, and four U.S. Territories (the U.S. Virgin Islands chose not to apply)	\$66 million	~3 Months	839

2014 Project Delivery Types

Delivery Type	Description	Percentage of Projects
State Programs	The proposal illustrated that the State department of agriculture planned to administer the project and/or a competitive grant program was not conducted.	18%
Competitive Grants	The proposal demonstrated that a fair and open competition was conducted and the project partner(s) are clearly involved.	82%
Other	The proposal illustrated that project partners met with the grantee to determine project priorities, but an open competitive grant program was not conducted.	0%

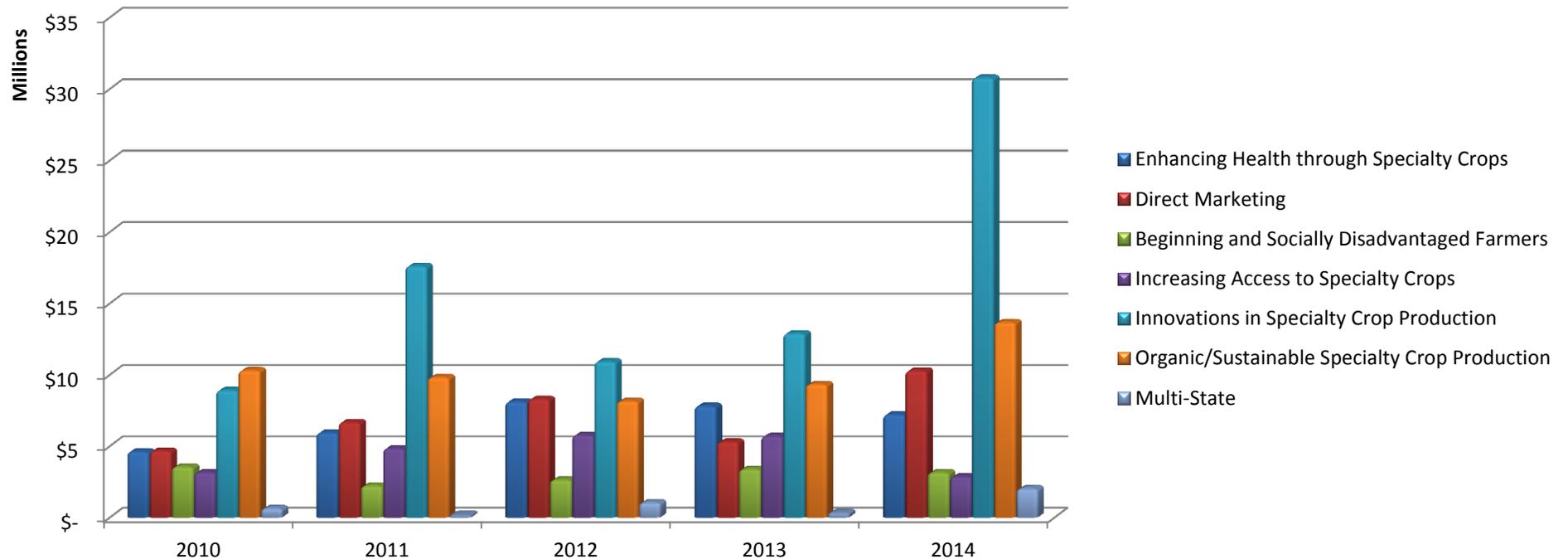
2010 to 2014 Project Types



From 2010 to 2014 the SCBGP-FB percentage of...

- Marketing and promotion projects (Buy-Local, Farmers' Market Promotions) decreased by 15%
- Research projects increased by 9%
- Education projects increased by 14%

SCBGP-FB Project Sub-Types Trends



Enhancing Health through Specialty Crops

Child and Adult Nutrition – These projects include specialty crop related human health studies, improving eating habits/making healthy food choices, and specialty crop nutrition education/consumption.

Youth and Community Gardens – Projects include the development of gardens in urban, suburban, or rural areas in which children and adults actively take part in the production of flowers, fruit, and/or vegetables in the community. These projects are usually located at schools, hospitals, or neighborhoods. They can include one community plot, many individual plots, or a series of plots dedicated to "urban agriculture" where the produce is grown for a market.

Farm to School – These are projects that are intended to connect local specialty crop farmers with schools (K-12) with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

Direct Marketing

Farmers' Markets – Projects within this sub-type promote, develop, and study farmers' markets as it relates to specialty crop production. An example could include the development of a farmers' market directory.

Other Direct Marketing – These projects focus efforts on the development of or promotion of mobile kitchens, farm to restaurant, farm to chef, farm to institution (other than K-12), and community supported agriculture. Direct marketing differs from general marketing in that the result of a promotion is measurable in terms of response from the consumer. These projects are largely dependent upon the use of customer databases and lists. Direct marketing is a more personal type of promotion than advertising. The direct marketer often selects the individuals who will receive the promotion, and is the direct recipient of the response, if any. The response may be a purchase, an inquiry, or a referral that can be traced directly back to the individual.

Agritourism – These projects involve any agriculturally-based operation or activity that attracts visitors and travelers to agricultural areas, generally for educational and recreational purposes. Projects within this sub-type include agritourism conferences, promotions, directories of farms, and culinary tourism.

Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers – These projects benefit beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers through a variety of different mechanisms that are not limited in area of focus.

Increasing Access to Specialty Crops

Local Food Distribution Hub – Local food distribution hubs are defined as a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products. Projects within this sub-type include the development and/or assistance of cooperatives and local or regional e-commerce (buying and selling of local specialty crops), as well as the establishment of local and regional distribution systems.

Underserved Communities/Food Deserts – Projects that benefit communities through the establishment of new specialty crop food systems in areas with little or no access to foods needed to maintain a healthy diet.

Innovations in Specialty Crop Production

New and Improved Specialty Crop Varieties/Uses – New and improved specialty crop variety/use projects include efforts to diversify and strengthen specialty crop production for a variety of reasons. Projects within this sub-type may include variety trials, new product development, development/marketing of ethnic crops, increased pest resistance/disease, improved quality, increased yield, increased nutrition, breeding, and new cultivars.

Technology Advancement – Projects within this sub-type focus efforts to develop new technology, exploitation of future technology, new automated systems or equipment, and new pest control tests to assist in the production of specialty crops.

Growing Season Extension – Season extension projects focus efforts to enable specialty crop producers to cultivate fruits and vegetables beyond their normal outdoor growing season. This could be through a variety of different mechanisms, which include the use of hoop houses, high tunnels, row covers, mulches, and raised beds.

Organic/Sustainable Specialty Crop Production

Organic Practices – Organic practices relies on techniques such as crop rotation, green manure, compost and biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and control pests on a farm. It specifically excludes or limits the use of manufactured fertilizers, pesticides (which include herbicides, insecticides and fungicides), and plant growth regulators. Projects within this sub-type include specialty crop organic production, education, marketing, and research initiatives.

Sustainable Practices – Sustainable practices of specialty crop production are meant to satisfy human specialty crop food needs through the enhancement of environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends. Projects within this sub-type make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls. They also sustain the economic viability of farm operations and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole. (Examples include: integrated pest management; water conservation, new irrigation methods, and plants that use less water.)

Multi-State

Multi-State – Projects that provide solutions to problems that cross state boundaries such as, but not limited to: addressing good agricultural practices, research on crop productivity or quality, enhancing access to federal nutrition programs, pest and disease management, or commodity-specific projects addressing common issues in multi-state regions.