

Agricultural
Marketing
Service
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Evaluation of the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

A study of 2013 projects

INTRODUCTION

The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill funds projects to improve the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crop producers, and increase consumption of specialty crops.

In 2013, AMS invested \$51.5 million of funds authorized for the SCBGP in 50 states and 4 territories to conduct 664 projects.¹ To better understand the successful outcomes and impact of the program, the USDA partnered with Purdue University to analyze qualitative and quantitative data from 2013 grant recipient final performance reports, interviews, and surveys.

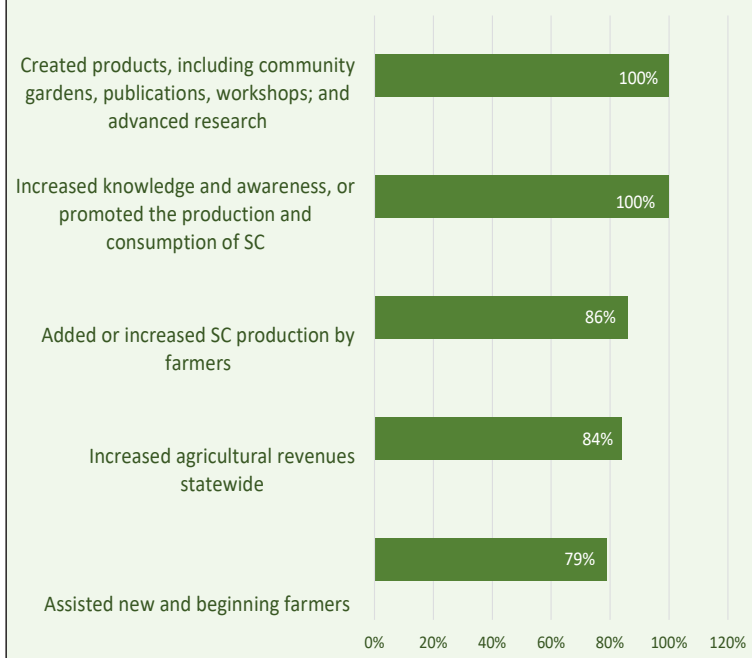
The evaluators determined that SCBGP fulfilled its statutory responsibility. Program outcomes and evidence demonstrate that SCBGP successfully enhanced the competitiveness of the U.S. specialty crop industry, supported local economies, and provided individuals and communities with access to safe and healthy food.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- Completed 821 food safety certifications and audits, and tested more than 2,000 samples to monitor, detect, and mitigate risks to the specialty crop food safety system.
- Reached over 1.66 million individuals and 13,786 industry and consumer groups through activities and information dissemination.

¹ At the time of evaluation in October 2018, the most recently completed grant projects were initiated in Fiscal Year 2013.

Percent of grant project recipients reporting outcomes



KEY SCBGP CHARACTERISTICS THAT HELP STATES ADDRESS SPECIALTY CROP INDUSTRY NEEDS

- SCBGP is an effective mechanism for states to fund wide variety of activities to meet unique state specialty crop industry needs.
- SCBGP provides flexibility for states to additionally combine funding contributions from public and private sectors and/or reinvest income generated through grant activities.
- SCBGP sustains states' abilities to advance long-term research, training, and tool development for the specialty crop industry.



Huerta del Valle (HdV) provides a service for local businesses when HdV employee Nicolas Reza picks up organic waste such as nectarines and cut cabbage from a food distributor for the compost area of the 4-Acre organic Community Supported Garden and Farm.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USDA

- Clearly communicate with states about administrative and reporting requirements.
- Allow for flexibilities in application and state program administrative requirements, particularly in order to fund projects by small or non-academic groups.
- Revise performance measures to align more closely with states' needs. USDA AMS fulfilled this 2018 Farm Bill requirement in fiscal year 2020 by partnering with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Foundation (NASDA Foundation) and Grant Thornton.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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