

Today is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. This is Ken Morgan's Northcoast Ag Report, our lead story is about \_\_\_\_\_ when we return

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## CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE LEADS NATION IN SPECIALTY CROP FUNDING



Release #17-  
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*State receives more than \$19 million in federal grant program*

**SACRAMENTO, October 5, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced funding for the 2017 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP). California received \$19.2 million out of approximately \$60.6 million awarded nationwide.**

The SCBGP provides grants to state departments of agriculture to fund projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

“This is an essential program for California in meeting a state priority - helping our specialty crop growers remain competitive,” said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. “The success of this grant program has generated widespread support for continued robust funding in the Farm Bill.”

**The program will fund 54 projects, awarding grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$450,000 to non-profit and for-profit organizations, government entities, and colleges and universities. Selected through a competitive process, these projects focus on increasing sales of specialty crops by leveraging the California Grown identity; increasing consumption by expanding the specialty crop consumer market, improving product availability, and providing nutritional education for consumers; training growers to equip them for current and future challenges; and conducting research on conservation and environmental outcomes, pest control and disease, and organic and sustainable production practices.**

Additionally, there are fixed-amount awards to fund projects that address workforce concerns throughout the specialty crop supply chain, including conforming to labor regulations, securing skilled and unskilled workers, and training the existing workforce to effectively utilize new technologies.

CDFA is continuing its partnership with the Center for Produce Safety in the evaluation and recommendation of food safety related projects. These projects represent an ongoing effort to address food safety practices and minimize outbreaks of foodborne illness with proactive research.

The 2017 SCBGP project abstracts are available online at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/grants>.

- [Zero Percent Chance of Rain Forecast for California Fire Areas](#)  
Mother Nature is not going lend a hand to help fight wildfires in California. (Stephanie Ho and USDA meteorologist, Brad Rippey)