



STATE OF IDAHO



C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR
CELIA R. GOULD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Laura Johnson
208-332-8533
Lacey Menasco
208-332-8538

MAY 6, 2009

Idaho State Department of Agriculture **Seeking Feedback on Specialty Crop Priorities**

Boise - The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) is seeking feedback from Idaho agriculture stakeholders on priority issues within the specialty crop industries. Idaho will be receiving grant funding through the 2009 Specialty Crop Block Grant program and a portion of these funds will be available as competitive grants. Industry priority will be an important criterion in the selection of these competitive grants.

"Idaho's agriculture is very diverse with specialty crops representing over 20% of the \$5.7 billion dollars in agriculture cash receipts. Our Department is excited that Idaho will receive funding to support the priority issues of these important segments of Idaho agriculture," said Celia Gould, director, ISDA.

If you wish to submit comment, the information submitted should be specific and address the industry issue, overall need, and support of the industry as a whole. Feedback must be submitted in writing by Friday, May 29, 2009 to Laura Johnson either via email at laura.johnson@agri.idaho.gov or via mail to 2270 Old Penitentiary Road, Boise, ID 83712.

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) amended the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004 and authorized the USDA to provide grants to States for each of the Fiscal years 2008 through 2012. It has not yet been announced how much money Idaho will receive, but the ISDA has determined that a portion of the grant funds will be available as competitive grants. To be eligible for a grant, the project(s) must enhance the competitiveness of U.S. grown specialty crops in either domestic or foreign markets and projects must benefit more than one product or organization. Specialty crops include fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture. Additional details including qualifications, guidelines and application process for the competitive grant program will be announced in May. If you have questions about the grant program, please contact Lacey Menasco at lacey.menasco@agri.idaho.gov or 208-332-6538.

###