

| State of Maine | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Master Score Sheet | | | | | | | |
| RFA #: 202301012 | | | | | | | |
| RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) | | | | | | | |
| Bidder Name | Farms for Food Equity | UMaine Annis | UMaine Hao | UMaine Perry | UMaine Moran | MOFGA Food Safety | |
| Proposed Cost: | \$98,524.00 | \$95,084.00 | \$91,618.00 | \$43,674.00 | \$41,312.00 | \$99,228.55 | |
| Scoring Sections | Points Available | | | | | | |
| Section 1: The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers (applications will not move forward if they do not meet this requirement). | Pass/Fail | Pass | Pass | Pass | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| Section 2: The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 10 |
| Section 3: The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Section 4: The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| Section 5: The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 25 |
| Section 6: The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 29 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 99 | 99 | 99 |

| State of Maine | | | | | | | | |
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| Bidder Name | | Meeting House Herb | Maine Flower Collective | UMaine Calderwood | Maine Potato Board | Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District | Starboard Farm | Wheezy Farm |
| Proposed Cost: | | \$98,776.00 | \$118,805.00 | \$86,763.00 | \$99,038.00 | \$42,782.00 | \$30,000.00 | \$15,657.26 |
| Scoring Sections | Points Available | | | | | | | |
| Section 1: The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass/Fail | Pass | Pass | Pass | Pass | Pass | Fail | Fail |
| Section 2: The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. | 10 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 5 | | |
| Section 3: The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 8 | | |
| Section 4: The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 22 | 25 | | |
| Section 5: The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 23 | 23 | | |
| Section 6: The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. | 30 | 29 | 28 | 25 | 28 | 24 | | |
| Total | 100 | 97 | 97 | 95 | 92 | 85 | 0 | 0 |



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Randy Martin
Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation Dist.
735 Maine St Suite 3
Presque Isle ME 04769
centralaroostookswcd@gmail.com

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Martin,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

- Farms for Food Equity
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Annis)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Hao)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Perry)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Moran)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFP, following the announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFP are considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Penelope Jordan
Farms for Food Equity
21 Wells Rd
Cape Elizabeth ME 04107
pennyjordan@jordansfarm.com

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Dear Ms Jordan:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
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the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Sarah Alexander
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
PO Box 170
Unity ME 04988
salexander@mofga.org

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Alexander

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Jeannie M. Tapley, Director of Operations
Maine Potato Board
744 Main Street, Suite 1
Presque Isle, ME 04769

jtapley@mainepotatoes.com

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Tapley,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

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Janet T. Mills
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Amanda Beal
Commissioner



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Dawn Lamoureux-Crocker
1543 Port Rd
Machiasport ME 04655

boldcoastme@gmail.com

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Lamoureux-Crocker:

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Christopher Boynton, Director of Research Administration
The University of Maine
5717 Corbett Hall
Orono ME 04469-5717

umgrants@maine.edu

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Boynton

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- Maine Flower Collective

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

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**STATE OF MAINE
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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Jenny Salim
Weezy's Farm and Flower
123 Fruit St
Bangor ME 04401
weezysfarmandflower@gmail.com

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Salim,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Emily Springer
Meeting House Herb Farm
35 Hunnewell Rd
Scarborough ME 040474

emily@meetinghouse.farm

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Dear Ms. Springer

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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Sincerely,

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Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

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**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Seanna Annis
The University of Maine 5751 Murray Hall
Orono ME 04469

sannis@maine.edu

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms Annis,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

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**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Jianjun Hao
The University of Maine
5735 Hitchner Hall
Orono ME 04469

Jianjun.hao1@maine.edu

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Hao,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

- Farms for Food Equity
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Annis)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Hao)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Perry)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Moran)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFP, following the announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFP are considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Lily Calderwood
The University of Maine
5722 Deering Hall
Orono ME 04469

Lily.calderwood@maine.edu

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Dear Ms. Calderwood,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Perry)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Moran)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Jennifer Perry
The University of Maine
115 Hitchner Hall
Orono ME 04469-5717

jennifer.perry@maine.edu

SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Dear Ms. Perry,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Perry)
- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Moran)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

As stated in the RFP, following the announcement of this award decision, all submissions in response to the RFP are considered public records available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA). 1 M.R.S. §§ 401 et seq.; 5 M.R.S. § 1825-B (6).

This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

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Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Renaë Moran
The University of Maine (Highmoor Farm)
52 US Route 202
Monmouth ME 04259

rmoran@maine.edu

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Moran

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

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Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).



**STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Janet T. Mills
Governor**

**Amanda Beal
Commissioner**

April 18, 2023

Mary Lou Hoskins
Maine Flower Collective
17 Marion St
Portland ME 04101

greenc@zwi.net

**SUBJECT: Notice of Conditional Contract Award(s) under RFP # 202301012
2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

Dear Ms Hoskins,

This letter is in regard to the subject Request for Proposals (RFP), issued by the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The Department has evaluated the proposals received using the evaluation criteria identified in the RFP, and the Department is hereby announcing its conditional contract awards to the following bidders:

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- University of Maine System acting through the University of Maine (PI: Moran)
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
- Meeting House Herb Farm
- Maine Flower Collective

The bidder listed above received the evaluation team's highest ranking. The Department will be contacting the aforementioned bidders soon to negotiate a contract. As provided in the RFP, the Notice of Conditional Contract Award is subject to execution of a written contract and, as a result, this Notice does NOT constitute the formation of a contract between the Department and the apparent successful vendor. The vendor shall not acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to the contract services until a contract containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Department is executed. The Department further reserves the right to cancel this Notice of Conditional Contract Award at any time prior to the execution of a written contract.

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This award decision is conditioned upon final approval by the State Procurement Review Committee and the successful negotiation of a contract. A Statement of Appeal Rights has been provided with this letter; see below.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Webb".

Michelle Webb
Director of Agricultural Resource Development
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
90 Blossom Lane 28 SHS
Augusta, ME 04333
michelle.t.webb@maine.gov

STATEMENT OF APPEAL RIGHTS

Any person aggrieved by an award decision may request an appeal hearing. The request must be made to the Director of the Bureau of General Services, in writing, within 15 days of notification of the contract award as provided in 5 M.R.S. § 1825-E (2) and the Rules of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases, Chapter 120, § (2) (2).

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers. | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates the anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 30 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 100 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

- 1. Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
- 2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
- 3. Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
- 4. Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)
- 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25

Score: 25

1. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 30

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Annis)

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 30 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 100 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Annis)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Annis)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Annis)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

2. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

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Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Annis)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 30

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative.

Note (not applicable to score) grad. student tuition is included in budget (USDA permits advance degree tuition as an allowable expense, SOM will have to request the vendor's tuition remission policy to comply with [eCFR](#) :: 2 CFR 200.466 -- Scholarships and student aid costs.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Hao)

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 30 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 100 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Hao)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

- 1. Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
- 2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
- 3. Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
- 4. Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)
- 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Hao)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Hao)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

3. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Hao)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 30

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative.

Note (not applicable to score) grad. student tuition is included in budget (USDA permits advance degree tuition as an allowable expense, SOM will have to request the vendor's tuition remission policy to comply with [eCFR](#) :: 2 CFR 200.466 -- Scholarships and student aid costs.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Perry)
DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb
NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 9 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 30 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 99 | |
| | | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Perry)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 9

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Did not fully adhere to RFA word count (summary is 307 words, 250 limit).

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Perry)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

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**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Perry)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

4. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Perry)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 30

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative.

Note (not applicable to score) grad. student tuition is included in budget (USDA permits advance degree tuition as an allowable expense, SOM will have to request the vendor's tuition remission policy to comply with [eCFR](#) :: 2 CFR 200.466 -- Scholarships and student aid costs.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Moran)
DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb
NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 24 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 30 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 99 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Moran)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Moran)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

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**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Moran)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 **Score: 25**

5. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Moran)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 24

Evaluation Team Comments: Data collection section is somewhat vague. Reporting narrative isn't all in one place, had to search for data dissemination plan.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 30

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative.

Note (not applicable to score) grad. student tuition is included in budget (USDA permits advance degree tuition as an allowable expense, SOM will have to request the vendor's tuition remission policy to comply with [eCFR](#) :: 2 CFR 200.466 -- Scholarships and student aid costs.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

Pass/Fail Criteria

| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 29 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 100 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

6. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 29

Evaluation Team Comments: Overall positive, fully complete, each budget section reconciles and is fully justified with narrative. Committee could not determine a budget question: Is R.M. a staff member of MOFGA or is he a contractor that should be listed as contractual rather than personnel?

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Meeting House Herb

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 8 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 29 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 97 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Meeting House Herb
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 8

- A. Required Application Template Submission Components
As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:
- 1. Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
 - 2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
 - 3. Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
 - 4. Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)
 - 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.
 - 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less.
 - 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Evaluation Team Comments: Did not fully adhere to RFA instructions, Cover sheet not completed fully, missing signatures. Commissioner priorities out of order. USDA strategy areas were well integrated in the overall application narrative but were not clearly articulated in strategy section.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

Note (not scorable) artemisia vulgaris is banned for growth and sales in Maine, application references "artemisia" verify correct species.

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Meeting House Herb
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Meeting House Herb
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

7. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Meeting House Herb
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 **Score: 25**

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V
Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 **Score: 29**

Evaluation Team Comments: Overall positive, fully complete, most budget sections reconcile and are fully justified with narrative. One budget section does not reconcile- Budget “supplies” do not add up. Request is \$4,800 but math calculation as presented should be \$4,110 (\$690 variance)

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective (MFC)
DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb
NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 9 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 28 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 97 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective (MFC)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 9

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Evaluation Team Comments: Did not fully adhere to RFA instructions, budget must be UP TO \$100,000 applicant requested \$118,805.00 (scored in RFA adherence NOT budget)

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective (MFC)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective (MFC)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 **Score: 25**

8. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective (MFC)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 28

Evaluation Team Comments: Overall positive, fully complete, most budget sections reconcile and are fully justified with narrative.

Budget scoring: One line in the travel section does not add up -2 travelers at 900 gallons each or 1800 gallons each? The math is not correct for 2 travelers each using 1800 gallons as stated. The math would be correct for 2 traveler each using 900 gallons.

There was uncertainty about "remainder" of the personnel sentence, there is a justification narrative, and this is a request for another year of funding for an ongoing SCBGP funded project. However, the application requests 40 hours per week year-round- and so why does the narrative state "applies increased sales revenue to pay the remainder of these salaries in 2024"? The application states: "2021 SCBGP funds designated for MFC employee payroll will be spent by July 2023; the MFC will cover the remainder of [2023] employee payroll using revenue generated from online sales and membership fees. The MFC is requesting further funds to be applied to payroll in 2024, as it rebuilds its reserves and applies increased sales revenue to pay the remainder of these salaries in 2024."

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Calderwood)

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb
NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|--------------|------------------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | <u>Points Awarded:</u> |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 25 | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | | 95 |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Calderwood)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

- 1. Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
- 2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
- 3. Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
- 4. Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)
- 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA measurable outcomes)

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Calderwood)

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Calderwood)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

9. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: University of Maine (PI: Calderwood)
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**EVALUATION OF SECTION V
Budget**

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 25

Evaluation Team Comments:

Overall concerns with budget calculations.

Budget summary total amount is incorrectly calculated and doesn't reconcile with the provided budget sections.

In budget summary, each line sums to \$80,997 but the amount requested is \$86,763.

The "other" section does not match the budget summary (\$6,373 requested in other section, \$577 listed as other in budget summary).

Budget justification isn't complete for supplies section.

Of the four supplies lines, only 2 have budget justification narrative.

Of the four supplies lines, none of the provided cost per unit x no. of units calculate correctly.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

Personnel justification is required for every personnel line in the budget. However, there is no justification narrative provided for grad. or undergrad. students listed in personnel section.

The technician is listed as \$19.61/hour in personnel section (\$40,800 / 2080 hours).

However, in the fringe section, the technicians fringe rate is stated to be \$49.80 (not 49.8%) and the request is for \$20,318 in technician fringe. If the technician fringe was corrected to 49.8% the total would be \$20,313.

Note (not applicable to score) grad. student tuition is included in budget (USDA permits advance degree tuition as an allowable expense, SOM will have to request the vendor's tuition remission policy to comply with [eCFR](#) :: 2 CFR 200.466 -- Scholarships and student aid costs.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Potato Board

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 9 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 10 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 22 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 23 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 28 | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | 92 | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Potato Board

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 9

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Evaluation Team Comments: This application did not fully adhere to RFA instructions. Goals were not articulated in the executive summary. The same paragraph was repeated three times in the application and the overall narrative vaguely addressed application questions.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Potato Board
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 10

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Potato Board
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 22

10. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: The application doesn't clearly identify which USDA strategy(ies) this addresses. There is USDA strategy narrative, but the applicant doesn't indicate which specific USDA strategy the project will address.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Maine Potato Board
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 23

Evaluation Team Comments: Reporting methods are unclear. The application does not articulate the methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. There is a survey but to who, how, when will results be distributed? Applicant states that sample collections "are conducted by the company as a turnkey service and spornado systems out of Toronto, ON, will also be deployed but doesn't not provide enough detail to understand.

**EVALUATION OF SECTION V
Budget**

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 28

Evaluation Team Comments:

The budget doesn't provide enough detail to understand. Two Canadian contractors are listed but narrative doesn't articulate budget details or breakdown of fees to verify contract amounts.

Note: contractors are not U.S. would require further justification (noted but not related to score).

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pa/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | Pass | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | 5 | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | 8 | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | 25 | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | 23 | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | 24 | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | | 85 |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Total Points Available: 10 Score: 5

A. Required Application Template Submission Components

As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. Application Cover Page

a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

a. Must be signed

3. Litigation

a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)

b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named

c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree

d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated

e. Must be signed

4. Commissioner Priorities

a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references a commissioner priority)

5. Project Summary

a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

6. USDA Strategies

a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. (Do not double score this. In this section this is just yes/no that the applicant references USDA strategies)

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Evaluation Team Comments: This application did not fully adhere to RFA instructions. The permissible performance period listed in RFA is September 30, 2023-September 29, 2025. The applicant requested a performance period of: September 9, 2023-September 9, 2026. The cover sheet is incomplete, crooked poorly scanned application, missing signature, other formatting issues.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

Total Points Available: 10

Score: __8__

Evaluation Team Comments: No commissioner priority is labeled/identified, instead “outcome 7” is brought up from the outcomes and indicator section to the commissioner priority area section of application. The commissioner priority isn't expressly stated although there is narrative to make assumptions about which priority area the application may address.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 25

11. USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Evaluation Team Comments: Positive, fully complete.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)
BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District
DATE: March 29, 2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

Total Points Available: 25 Score: 23

Evaluation Team Comments: Reporting methods are unclear. The application does not articulate the methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. Only one, short and vague paragraph explaining data collection. Outcomes are measurable by comparing temperatures of the fields with and without cover, soil tests to measure organic matter will be completed but how/when and testing for what? The application doesn't not provide enough detail to understand.

**EVALUATION OF SECTION V
Budget**

Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Total Points Available: 30 Score: 24

Evaluation Team Comments:

Budget is unclear and has errors.

Is the listed SAD#1 staff a contractor incorrectly listed as personnel?

The fringe budget section is double calculated in budget summary.

The budget summary is incorrect because of double fringe \$7,956.

The budget does not provide enough supporting detail to understand if project can be completed.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Starboard Farm

DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb

NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | | FAIL |
| | | <u>Points Awarded:</u> |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | | n/a |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | | n/a |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | | n/a |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | | n/a |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | | n/a |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | | Fail, sections not scored |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Starboard Farm

DATE: March 29, 2023

Evaluation Team Comments:

This application did not demonstrate that the proposer met the RFP Pass/Fail criteria as presented in the RFP. It appeared that only one farm would benefit, and no letters of support were submitted.

The stated RFA project performance period is September 30, 2023- September 29, 2023. The application requested a performance period that started sooner than permissible: May 1, 2023- November 1, 2023

From RFA: The project proposal must clearly demonstrate benefit to the broader specialty crop industry as a whole, rather than to an individual or organization. If an individual or producer applies, they must have an agricultural organization or commodity group as a partner who has an accepted role in the project; include a Letter of Support from that organization (more than one LOS is encouraged). SCBG will not award grant funds for projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, grant recipients and sub-recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Wheezy Farm
DATE: March 29, 2023

DEPARTMENT NAME: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
NAME OF RFP COORDINATOR: Michelle Webb
NAMES OF EVALUATORS: Patrick Madden, Joy Bonenfant, Gary Fish

SUMMARY PAGE

| <u>Pass/Fail Criteria</u> | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Pass:</u> | <u>Fail:</u> |
| The project proposed will measurably impact multiple Specialty Crop producers | | FAIL |
| | | |
| | <u>Points Awarded:</u> | |
| 1. The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA. (Max 10) | n/a | |
| 2. The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area. (Max 10) | n/a | |
| 3. The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA (Part II section A). (Max 25) | n/a | |
| 4. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (Max 25) | n/a | |
| 5. Budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives. (Max 30) | n/a | |
| | | |
| TOTAL POINTS (Max: 100 Points) | Fail, sections not scored | |

**STATE OF MAINE
TEAM CONSENSUS EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Wheezy Farm

DATE: March 29, 2023

This application did not demonstrate that the proposer met the RFP Pass/Fail criteria as presented in the RFP. It appeared that only one farm would benefit, and no letters of support were submitted.

From RFA: The project proposal must clearly demonstrate benefit to the broader specialty crop industry as a whole, rather than to an individual or organization. If an individual or producer applies, they must have an agricultural organization or commodity group as a partner who has an accepted role in the project; include a Letter of Support from that organization (more than one LOS is encouraged). SCBG will not award grant funds for projects that benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. In addition, grant recipients and sub-recipients cannot use grant funds to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent products or services. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: 3-20-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: MOFGA - Alexander

DATE: 3-20-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority 2: Projects that enhance food safety

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

252 words. Goal of project is to increase # of farms compliance with FSMA by providing educational trainings, workshops, demonstrations about food safety best practices and protocols, one-on-one technical assistance, and grants.

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, first 2 strategies, Enhance food safety and improving capacity to comply with FSMA.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcome # 3 Increase food safety knowledge and processes.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

115 will gain knowledge

10 will establish food safety plans

5 will update/revise their food safety plan

16 will implement new/improved prevention, detection, control and intervention practices, tools or technologies.

50 prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced mitigate food safety risks

5 stakeholders will use grant funds to purchase

10 will use grant funds to upgrade food safety equipment

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process.

They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The goal of this project is to increase the number of farms able to come into compliance with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, and/or a GAP/GHP audit, by providing resources that will satisfy the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement. These resources will be

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: 3-20-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

educational trainings, workshops, demonstrations about food safety best practices and protocols, one-on-one technical assistance, and grants to Maine farmers.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: 3-20-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Providing, to a new group of farmers, needed one-on-one technical assistance to improve on-farm produce safety, help with SOP plans, and recommendations for upgrades, system changes, and facility layouts. We will offer enhanced educational workshops that incorporate FDA-approved content and a certificate that is needed to comply with FSMA, along with trainings, on-farm demonstrations, and assistance with planning systems changes to align with Produce Safety Rule standards. We will support the implementation of resultant plans with direct grants to farmers of up to \$10,000.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Yes, Outcome # 3 Increase food safety knowledge and processes.

- 115 will gain knowledge
- 10 will establish food safety plans
- 5 will update/revise their food safety plan
- 16 will implement new/improved prevention, detection, control and intervention practices, tools or technologies.
- 50 prevention, detection, control, or intervention practices developed or enhanced to mitigate food safety risks
- 5 stakeholders will use grant funds to purchase
- 10 will use grant funds to upgrade food safety equipment

Monitoring, Data Collection and reporting:

- survey participants at the end of each education workshop for increased knowledge and anticipated changes in food safety plans

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- follow up with them in an end-of-program evaluation to determine safety changes made and certifications acquired during the project period.
- assess program participants' increased knowledge of outcome indicators by incorporating relevant survey questions into their final food safety plan template to show the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided to them.

The template requires program participants to articulate how their implementation project increases the safety of inputs such as irrigation and wash water, seeds, fertilizer, etc., on their farm, as well as the safety of their specialty crops entering the food supply chain. We make it a condition of the grant award to require that farms report to us their current food safety certifications and inform us when new safety certifications are obtained. We follow up with all participants and record percentages of food safety improvement measures one year after the start of the project.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Personnel budget seems reasonable and adds up.

\$80k for grants directly to farmers for Food Safety improvements.

\$6k registrations and certification fees for Produce Safety Alliance Grower training.

I really like that \$80k is going to farmers!!

Letters of Support: 7

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: 3-21-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed – It is not completed!
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation “none” must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. No, the referred to # 7, there is no # 7 on the Commissioner's list..

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes.

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Specialty crop research and sustainability.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 7-improve environmental sustainability of specialty crops.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

CAS&WD should have identified Commissioner area # 3, projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health, they did not. They did, however, provide an explanation that supports #3.

Idea to implement a more sustainable cropping system by planting a cover crop to protect the soil and leave a biomass to protect the soil from erosion.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

- 1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.

2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

CAS&WD should have identified Commissioner area # 3, projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health, they did not. They did, however, provide an explanation that supports #3.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Idea is to plant a cover crop that will protect the soil in winter months from erosion and provide a biomass that will, among other things, retain moisture to reduce/eliminate the need for irrigation is my understanding.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Only one, short and vague paragraph explaining data collection.

Outcomes are measurable by comparing temperatures of the fields with and without cover. Soil tests to measure organic matter will be completed but how/when and testing for what?

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Personnel section totals \$34,476/Budget reads \$26,520

Can work be completed on budget submitted?

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity - Adams

DATE: 3-21-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated – Noted "NA"
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, #4
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. – **250 words**
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Sustainability and increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcome 1 & 2

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops - Adults 240 and Children 480.

Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops - Adults 200 and Children 400.

Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops - 10 farms.

Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops 10.

Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems 10. Of those established:

Number of partnerships with underserved organizations 3.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

This project will contract with ethnic organizations to educate, promote, and build awareness for Maine- grown fruits and vegetables and their suitability for traditional cooking methods and

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

recipes. This will increase sales to the charitable food system and grocery stores through an expanded market focused on immigrant consumers in southern Maine.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

This project will increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops in Greater Portland and Lewiston-Auburn immigrant communities. Ethnic organizations will design, develop, and implement three curricula focused on Maine specialty crops. Through six events, 18 classes, 6 online videos, and other outreach methods, up to 240 adults will complete the lessons. On average, these students could impact the eating habits of up to 300 children at home. Pre and post surveys will evaluate the lessons, methods, and buying habits.

The project increases sustainability for our new community members to conserve food dollars with scratch cooking, provide a market for local food producers, expand crop diversity to stabilize farm revenue, reduce the demand for expensive, imported frozen greens by substituting local fresh or frozen products.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

All data will be collected, analyzed, and reported by Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative staff.

- Ethnic organizations will record attendance and counts at all trainings and report them monthly to MFSC.
- Pre-survey will record specialty crop access, purchasing/pantry value habits, number of household members, and the number within their social network.
- Food surveys and preferences will be collected.
- Post-course survey will examine changes in cooking and purchasing habits, pantry value habits, direct farm purchases or farmers market including food bucks.
- Online videos will be tracked for monthly engagement.
- Social media hits by influencers will be tracked.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Travel total is \$3897.40 – rounded up instead of down.

Total Budget \$98,524

Letters of Support: 3

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective
DATE: 3-20-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective - Mongell

DATE: 3-20-2023

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 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority # 4 and #6.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less.

Exactly 250 words! The MFC's primary goals for 2024 focus on two critical components: expanding the MFC hub and aggregation center and supporting an operations manager and delivery team in the deployment of intrastate product transportation routes focused on product care, fuel, and time efficiencies. Funds are needed for 2024 salaries.

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, sustainability and improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 1, 2, and 7.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops

We are projecting 40% growth in the number of MFC transactions between 2023 and 2024. The MFC is projecting 40% growth in total sales between 2023 and 2024.

Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution

The MFC is projecting that 105 annual users—including both cut flower growers and wholesale buyers who join the collective as annual users in 2024—will gain technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops.

The MFC is projecting 105 annual users including both cut flower growers and wholesale buyers who join the collective as annual users in 2024.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

The MFC hub in Brunswick will serve as the central access point for pick-up and distribution routes across the state. MFC leadership anticipates that these routes will expand between 2023 and 2024 to serve the increasing size of its growing annual user base.

The MFC is projecting 105 annual users including both cut flower growers and wholesale buyers who join the collective as annual users in 2024.

The MFC is projecting 45 new annual users between 2023 and 2024, who will adopt the best practices, new technology, and improved distribution provided by the collective.

108 represents the projected annual users participating in the Maine Flower Collective in addition to our partnership with Crystal Spring Farm (the lessor of the building hosting the MFC hub), Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (land trust affiliated with Crystal Spring Farm), and Rooted Farmers (online sales platform). Of these partnerships, MFC leadership estimates that at least 50% are female-owned entities.

The Maine Flower Collective will be running two distribution routes from its hub in Brunswick on a twice per week basis: one northern route and one southern route. MFC leadership anticipates that these routes will expand between 2023 and 2024 in order to better serve our growing annual user base.

The collective will employ one full-time operations manager and two part-time delivery drivers.

The MFC is projecting 40% growth in total sales between 2023 and 2024. Increased efficiencies in MFC systems and fewer start-up related costs will also lead to increased cost-savings in 2024.

Outcome 7: Improve Environmental Sustainability of Specialty Crops

All MFC projected annual users, plus three MFC employees, will gain knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, and technologies.

All MFC projected annual users, plus three MFC employees, will gain knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, and technologies

All collective producers will adopt environmental best practices; MFC anticipates 30 annual user producers in 2024.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to

sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process.

They are any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.

2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priority areas 4 & 6.

The Maine Flower Collective ("MFC") submits this proposal for funding to grow its centralized sales network and product delivery system.

The MFC Board of Directors requests additional funding to expand its operations in 2024. The MFC will deplete its 2021 SCBGP labor funding in July 2023, at which point the MFC will cover payroll using sales revenue and its reserves. This new request for labor resources will help cover 2024 salaries, as the MFC continues to generate revenue, increase membership, and develop financial sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

The MFC's primary goals for 2024 focus on two critical components: expanding the MFC hub and aggregation center and supporting an operations manager and delivery team in the deployment of intrastate product transportation routes focused on product care, fuel, and time efficiencies. The operations manager and MFC leadership will also refine collaborative marketing initiatives and guidelines for online sales and payouts (through the Rooted Farmers platform) to generate revenue and cultivate constituents through diversified communications.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing "Good Agricultural Practices", "Good Handling Practices", "Good Manufacturing Practices", and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective
DATE: 3-20-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Committed to environmental sustainability and growing Maine’s floral trade, the MFC is working collaboratively with farmers and wholesale buyers to increase profitability of local cut flowers and reduce the carbon footprint created by floral industry imports.

Using a centralized, online sales platform (Rooted Farmers), the MFC virtual marketplace will promote high-quality, seasonal products grown by farms across Maine. This type of cooperative marketing will expand product visibility and accessibility beyond existing markets. For example, a farmer located in Lamoine can, through the MFC, network with buyers in southern Maine who may want their flowers. Beyond greater geographic reach, buyers will be able to search available Maine-grown flowers by variety or color and purchase products from multiple farms at a single point of sale. These purchases will be aggregated and delivered as a single order, eliminating the need for MFC buyers to research multiple farms’ flower availability and coordinate receipt of those products.

The MFC Operations Manager will devise strategic product transportation routes originating from the MFC hub. Routes will extend as far south as Kittery and north to Bangor, with the goal of limiting duplicative and environmentally inefficient processes (e.g., eliminate the need for multiple area farms to drive independent delivery routes, or for buyers to collect product from multiple farms). Individual farms and buyers will realize time and cost savings, as well as reduce fuel costs and gas emissions through the MFC’s centralized product transportation and sales promotions.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

To measure progress toward its goals, the MFC will use a variety of data sets to report on the outcome and indicators included in this grant proposal. To ensure that the MFC continues to deliver products and services that will help grow Maine’s floral trade and community, this member-owned cooperative will maintain its practice of surveying buyers and growers about

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-20-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

their experience at both the applicant and user engagement levels with the collective. Guided by the operations manager, and informed by the MFC Board of Directors, these surveys will build on the success of previous constituent surveys and discussions held during convergence that led to key logistics and membership offerings. The Rooted Farmers online sales platform provides extensive reporting capabilities and analytics tools that will allow the collective to report on MFC order transactions (e.g., number of sales, farmer flower availability lists, buyer purchasing trends, product popularity) with ease. To gauge the efficacy and effectiveness of its employees, the MFC Board of Directors will establish systematic employee onboarding efforts, establish measurable performance plans, and conduct regular employee check-ins and performance reviews in order keep the MFC on a growth trajectory.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

What does this statement mean? “the MFC will cover the remainder of employee payroll using revenue generated from online sales and membership fees.”

Does it mean that the employees listed on the budget will earn more than what was submitted and paid by the MFC? Or does it mean there are other personnel that MFC will pick up the costs for??

Assuming that the submitted budget is total for the positions listed, the Operations Manager salary is low. Volunteer worked 3000 hours, \$52k is not enough. Especially if he is:

- organizes ordering
- payment processing
- logistics (e.g., online sales platform orders, inquiries, and distribution routes) for the collective on a weekly basis

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- conduct cross-channel communications
- marketing outreach efforts to engage diverse constituents
- managing the delivery drivers
- responsible for aggregating flower orders
- assessing product quality

Travel Budget shows 2 travelers claiming the expense of 1800 gallons at \$4.25 = \$7,650.00, shouldn't the total be doubled if they are both claiming?

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-21-2023

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 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, 3 & 5.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes, 127 words.

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, 128 words.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 4 & 7.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

5 – Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less

Need: Confirming the presence or absence of fungal pathogens of potato crops prior to infection has the potential to provide growers with significant cost savings related to fungicide product selection and application scheduling.

Purpose: Determining if the pathogen is present is a key piece of information in the disease triangle and for determining if, and what, fungicide applications are warranted.

Goals??? I don't see these defined.

6 - Pest & disease control and enhance food safety

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
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BIDDER: Maine Potato Board

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6. **USDA Strategies**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, 128 words.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 4 & 7.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

5 – Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less

Need: Confirming the presence or absence of fungal pathogens of potato crops prior to infection has the potential to provide growers with significant cost savings related to fungicide product selection and application scheduling.

Purpose: Determining if the pathogen is present is a key piece of information in the disease triangle and for determining if, and what, fungicide applications are warranted.

Goals??? I don't see these defined.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process.

They are:

- 1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.

2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Two spore-trapping systems are currently available in the marketplace. "Air-spore" focuses on Early and Late blight, and "Spornado" focuses only upon Late blight, and would be complimentary and confirmatory of "Air-spore" findings. Air-spore relies upon visual microscopy of collected sample slides to identify and report spore numbers to customers. Spornado relies upon molecular diagnostics using qPCR to estimate presence and quantity of spores in collected samples. Owing to the destructiveness of late blight, and it's associated costs to the industry, it is best to have a two-system process for confirmation of its presence. False positive detection and false negative detection will likely have a multi-million-dollar impact to the industry, with the former owing to increases in fungicide application frequency and shift towards more expensive targeted products, and the latter due to direct disease impacts to the crop.

The above paragraph was repeated 3 times in the proposal, so what???? What about these two systems and how do they relate to this project?

The template gives the opportunity to describe the project at least three times and repeating the same vague paragraph is not a good use of the template. Seems to me that ME Potato Board wants to give \$93,350 to two Canadian companies to tell us if there are spores on the potatoes.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The proposal does not define which strategies or exactly how this will be accomplished.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
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DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

“A survey instrument will be created and distributed to growers and crop consultants as to the perceived value of the spore trapping network, and its benefit to our current decision support system. It will also quantify the number of fungicide application decrease/increase, as well as usage of fungicide type (broad spectrum vs. pathogen- targeted).”

“Sample collections are conducted by the company as a “turnkey” service”
“Spornado systems out of Toronto, ON, will also be deployed”

HOW?? This is not clearly measurable nor is it clearly defined.
The application **does not** articulate methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting!

“Results are returned and disseminated industry-wide for growers to share”
To who? How? When?

“A survey instrument will be created and distributed to growers and crop consultants as to the perceived value of the spore trapping network, and its benefit to our current decision support system. It will also quantify the number of fungicide application decrease/increase, as well as usage of fungicide type (broad spectrum vs. pathogen- targeted).”

Created how? Distributed how???

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates the anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Nearly all of the budget is to pay 2 Canadian contractors to get sample collections 2 and 3 times per week for 12 weeks. Proposal does not explain how or how many. No breakdown of fees to verify the contract amounts.

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Meeting House Herb

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed - No, page 1 not complete, Lead Pt of Contact info/phone/address/email all missing and the \$ amount of the proposal is blank!
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, 3,4, and 5
5. **Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. – Yes, exactly 250 words.
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, sustainability. 249 words!
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes 1 & 2

Individual Evaluator Comments:

1.1 Total number of consumers who gained knowledge about specialty crops _ 2000 _.

1.2 Total number of consumers who consumed more specialty crops _2000 _.

1.3 Number of additional specialty crop customers counted _2000__.

1.4 Number of additional business transactions executed _2000__.

1.5 Increased sales measured in: 1.5a Dollars _\$182,442, 1.5b Percent change _82%_.

1.5c Combination of volume and average price as a result of enhanced marketing activities _
Average price of \$78/lb (small retail as well as wholesale sizes blended) with increased volume of 2,339lbs _.

2.1 Number of stakeholders that gained technical knowledge about producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing specialty crops _35_.

2.2 Number of stakeholders that reported producing, preparing, procuring, and/or accessing more specialty crops_35_.

2.3 Total number of market access points for specialty crops developed or **expanded** _1_. Of those:

2.3a Number of **new** online portals created to sell specialty crops _1_.

2.3b Number with expanded seasonal availability _1_.

2.3c Number of existing market access points that expanded specialty crop offerings _1_.

2.3d Number of new market access points that established specialty crop offerings _N/A_.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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- 2.4 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about more efficient and effective distribution systems 35.
- 2.5 Number of stakeholders that adopted best practices or new technologies to improve distribution systems 35.
- 2.6 Total number of partnerships established between producers, distributors, and/or other relevant intermediaries related to distribution systems 35. Of those established:
 - 2.6a Number formalized with written agreements (i.e. MOU's, signed contracts, etc.) N/A.
 - 2.6b Number of partnerships with underserved organizations 35.
- 2.7 Total number of new/**improved** distribution systems developed 1.
Of those, the number that:
 - 2.7a Stemmed from new partnerships N/A.
 - 2.7b Increased efficiency 1.
 - 2.7c reduced costs 1.
 - 2.7d Increased specialty crop grower participation 1.
 - 2.7e Expanded customer reach 1.
 - 2.7f Increased online presence 1.
- 2.8 Number of specialty crop-related jobs:
 - 2.8a Created 0.
 - 2.8b Maintained 1.
- 2.9 Total number of new individuals who went into specialty crop production as a result of marketing 10. Of those, the number who are:
 - 2.9a Beginning farmers or ranchers 8.
 - 2.9b Socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers 9.
- 2.10 Number of market access points that reported increased:
 - 2.10a Revenue 1.
 - 2.10b Sales 1.
 - 2.10c Cost-savings 1.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
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3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

This project

- seeks to increase the volume of the medicinal herbs grown in Maine
- increase the number of farms growing medicinal herbs in Maine.
- focused on new farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers.
- will supply the rapidly increasing herbal medicine market in the US.

Adding medicinal herbs to a farm's crop plan

- improves the soil
- adds biodiversity
- improves ecosystem health

Increasing the number of farms that grow medicinal herbs will enhance soil and ecosystem health for the farms that grow them.

Medicinal herbs not only

- add diversity to the soil

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- add diversity to a small farm income stream

Diversifying a crop plan between flowers, vegetables and medicinal herbs can help a farm to be more resilient to both economic swings and environmental changes.

Finally, this project

- seeks to market ME grown medicinal herbs to sm businesses and retail users in the US in 2023
- growing to larger markets as our volume grows
- expand supply to the ever-growing market for US grown medicinal herbs
- specifically increase the sales of Maine grown medicinal herbs

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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Individual Evaluator Comments:

Sustainability.

increase the sustainability of small, women owned/operated farms in Maine, through crop diversification with specialty crops which include medicinal herbs.

will accomplish this by increasing the number of farms that grow and sell medicinal herbs.

Medicinal herbs when added to a farms crop plan increase the financial and ecological sustainability of the farm.

will educate new and existing farmers by educating about the ecological and financial value of adding medicinal herbs to the crop plan.

will consult with farmers about sustainable herb choices and once the herbs are grown will provide a way to market for these medicinal herbs.

improve soil health and farm biodiversity by including medicinal herbs in regular crop rotation.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 1: Increasing Consumption and Consumer Purchasing of Specialty Crops

Outcome 2: Increasing Access to Specialty Crops and Expanding Specialty Crop Production and Distribution

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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#1 will counted via figures captured on ecommerce platform meetinghouse.farm (shopify analytics) as of start of program 10/1/2023 – 12/1/2024

#2 total number of farms involved in the collaborative plus survey results and current ecommerce site, meetinghouse.farm data. Expected reduced labor and other costs measurable between start and end of program for the Meeting House Herb Farm Collaborative portion of the work.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Supplies average \$30 lb X 137 pounds = \$4110, why is ask \$4800?

Total ask \$98,776.

Nice that income is expected for this project! This can become self sustaining.

Letter of support: 4

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-21-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed – **No Proposal name**
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation “none” must be indicated – “None” not notated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. **Yes, 3 & 5.**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, increase child/adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 1,2,3, and 4.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Farm camp is a great idea, getting the students out of the private home is an even better idea, a classroom is appropriate.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

- 1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

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EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
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5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

I'm not so sure that this project qualifies for #3 or #4 (maybe identifying crop pests and diseases and offering solutions might) but I would argue that it does qualify for # 4 expanding markets to families who may grow their own gardens after Farm camp week.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing "Good Agricultural Practices", "Good Handling

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
 - Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
 - Pest and disease control;
 - Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
 - Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
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Individual Evaluator Comments:

Farm camp increases child and adult knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Survey/form to be completed at conclusion of Farm Camp week. The outcome(s) and indicator(s) are not clearly defined and are not clearly measurable. The survey does not articulate methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

\$12,000 was listed on the budget for equipment but the equipment section was not completed.

According to the proposal on of the largest goals is to procure a building to workshops yet there is nothing on the budget about a classroom building unless those will be held in the greenhouse??

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Annis
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine - Annis

DATE: 3-21-2023

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3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, 1,3,4, and 5.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Annis

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes.
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, 3 of them.
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 3 of them (4-6-7)

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 4. Indicator 1: Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases: 300.

Outcome 6. Indicator 1: Number of research goals accomplished: 4.

Outcome 6. Indicator 2: For research conclusions, the number that:

6.2a Yielded findings that supported the continued research: 4.

Outcome 6. Indicator 3: Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results: 300.

Outcome 6. Indicator 4: Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals: 2. For each published research output, the:

6.4a Number of views/reads of published research/data 100.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Annis

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Blueberries are very important to Maine's economy, we need to protect to ability to grow them. This proposal does just that. It is very detailed and checks all required boxes.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Annis

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Objective 1. Examine the mitigating effects of fungicide, and foliar-applied, ground-applied or both fertilizers applied in vegetative year and foliar-applied fertilizer in only crop years and both vegetative and crop years on leaf spot diseases and plant performance and yield in the crop year.

Objective 2. Examine the effects of warming on the effectiveness of fungicides, and irrigation on mitigating infections by leaf spot fungi in the crop year.

Objective 3. Determine the differences in fungal communities found in wild blueberry leaves in the crop year under fertilizer, fungicide and warming treatments.

Objective 4. Test the efficacy of new fungicides to control leaf spots.

485 will benefit

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Annis
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Adds up, seems reasonable.

Letters of Support: 3

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Calderwood
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine - Calderwood

DATE: 3-21-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, 1, 3 and 5.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Calderwood

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes.

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, 2 of them.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed.

Yes, 3 measured outcomes, BUT indicators are listed in the Example box, almost missed them.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 3. Indicator 1. Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP): 300.

Outcome 6. Indicator 3. Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results: 300.

Outcome 7, Indicator 1. Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies: 300.

Outcome 7, Indicator 2. Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies: 40.

Outcome 7, Indicator 4. Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/ conservation or other environmental outcomes: 3

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Calderwood

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

We propose the following objectives: 1) evaluate soil amendments for soil moisture retention, cost, crop health, and soil microorganisms presence, 2) determine which crop stage(s) of the season are most critical for wild blueberry to receive one inch of water/week, and 3) disseminate results of this project to the wild blueberry community in Maine and strengthen communication between UMaine research and Extension faculty on drought stress management for wild blueberry.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Calderwood

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Specifically, this project will reduce the number of weeks that growers need to irrigate and improve water holding capacity of the soil which will conserve water, an invaluable natural resource. This project will help small and medium size farmers stay in business (sustainability) by improving water availability through soil amendments and irrigation, thereby making it possible to maintain yield volume and high quality from year to year. Our exploration of soil microorganisms in wild blueberry will contribute to the long term sustainability of this culturally and economically important crop.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total budget adds up to \$80,997 not \$86,763.

Supply budget does not add up, every line is incorrect, why the buffer?

Other is listed as \$557 in Budget section /Other section shows \$6,373.

Letters of Support: 3

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao
DATE: 3-21-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, #5.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. 257 Words
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, pest and disease control and sustainability. 111 words.
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, 4,6, and 7.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 4, Indicator 1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about science-based tools to combat pests and diseases _100_.

Outcome 4, Indicator 2 Number of stakeholders that adopted pest and disease control best practices, technologies, or innovations _50_.

Outcome 4, Indicator 3 Number of stakeholders trained in early detection and rapid response practices to combat pests and diseases _50_. Of those:

Outcome 4, Indicator 3a the number of additional acres managed using integrated pest management _100_.

Outcome 4, Indicator 4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases _100_.

Outcome 4, Indicator 5 Total number of producers/processors that enhanced or maintained pest and disease control practices _10_. Of those, the number that reported:

a Reduction in product lost to pests and diseases

10. b Improved crop quality _3_.

c Reduction in labor costs _0_.

d Reduction in pesticide use _5_.

Outcome 6, Indicator 1 Number of research goals accomplished _2_.

Outcome 6, Indicator 4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals _5_. For each published research output, the:

a Number of views/reads of published research/data _50_.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

b Number of citations counted 30.

Outcome 7, Indicator 1 Number of stakeholders that gained knowledge about environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies 100.

Outcome 7, Indicator 2 Number of stakeholders reported with an intent to adopt environmental sustainability best practices, tools, or technologies 30.

Outcome 7, Indicator 3 Number of producers that adopted environmental best practices or tools 50.

Outcome 7, Indicator 4 Number of new tools/technologies developed or enhanced to improve sustainability/ conservation or other environmental outcomes 2.

Outcome 7, Indicator 5 Number of additional acres managed with sustainable practices, tools, or technologies that focused on:

b Soil health 100.

c Biodiversity 100.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Climate change has resulted in conditions that impact plant diseases, such powdery scab of potato. By developing a tool to detect and quantify the pathogen in soil, we will be able to provide a better support for growers in disease management.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
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Individual Evaluator Comments:

We, the University of Maine propose to conduct laboratory and field studies to develop a tool for the detection and quantification of potato powdery scab. The outcome will be expected to improve soil potato production by avoiding heavily infested soil and applying appropriate soil treatment.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Hao

DATE: 3-21-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Original data will be collected from the project and stored in an electronic way at the University of Maine database. Some results will be contributed to the graduate student's thesis. The results will also be presented at field days, annual conferences for Maine potato growers and allied industry, and online extension articles. Research papers will be combined with other results from the investigator's laboratory and published in peer-reviewed journals, such as Plant Disease.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Budget adds up and seems reasonable.

Letters of support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Moran
DATE: 3-23-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine - Moran

DATE: 3-23-2023

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

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 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority # 5.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Moran

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes – 145 words
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes – investing in specialty crop research and pest and disease control
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes – Outcome 4 & 6.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 4, Indicator 4.4 Number of stakeholders that implemented new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases, Apple producers 15.

Outcome 6, Indicator 6.2.c. Number of research findings that allow for the implementation of new practice, process or technology 3.

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

- 1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Moran

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priority 5. This project will address an emerging disorder of Honeycrisp apples that is caused by calcium deficiency and climate-related crop disturbance in the form of drought and warming temperatures. The results of the project will provide apple growers with new tools to increase farm resilience and improve adaptation to climate change.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Moran

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
 - Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
 - Pest and disease control;
 - Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
 - Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
 - Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes. We will test the effectiveness of three predictive tools and one preventative strategy. Results can be implemented by apple growers during and after the project period.

Pest and disease control. Although bitter pit disorder is technically not a disease, it's impact and management are similar to a disease that would cause substantial losses if not addressed. Traditional management strategies involve foliar calcium sprays, but these are not effective because Honeycrisp is highly susceptible. Diagnostic tools are needed to identify high-risk orchards and to alert growers in years when risk is elevated.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting. (See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Moran
DATE: 3-23-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Individual Evaluator Comments:

“We will survey growers to ask about the number of orchards where they are using the new practices and the number of bins of Honeycrisp apples that are successfully stored for sales in fall and winter.” Was the only paragraph in data collection section. There is more info in the Project Purpose Section.

The USDA outcome and indicator are not clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Budget items seem reasonable.

This project has good likelihood of becoming self-sustaining. The project involves affordable practices that can easily be adopted by apple growers. It can also be provided by consultants as a fee-based service. The University of Maine Analytical Lab. can perform apple peel analysis for a fee, much like they currently do for foliar analysis.

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Perry
DATE: 3-23-2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine - Perry

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**
 - a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, #1, #2 and #4.
5. **Project Summary**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Perry

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Yes 67 words.
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, enhanced food safety and FSMA - 307 words
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, outcome 3 & 6.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 3: Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes

3.1 Number of Stakeholders that gained knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and/or intervention food safety practices, including relevant regulations (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP: **40**.

3.2 Number of stakeholders that:

3.2a Established a food safety plan: **3, expected to exceed project duration**.

3.2b Revised or updated their food safety plan: **10, likely to exceed project duration**.

3.3 Number of specialty crop stakeholders who implemented new/improved prevention, detection, control, and intervention practices, tools, or technologies to mitigate food safety risks (to improve their ability to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and/or meet the standards for aligned third party food safety audits such as Harmonized GAP/GHP: **20**.

Outcome 6: Expand Specialty Crop Research and Development

6.1 Number of research goals accomplished: **3, corresponding with Objectives**.

6.2 For research conclusions, the number that:

6.2a Yielded findings that supported the continued research: **2, resulting from work on Objectives 1 and 2**.

6.2b Yielded findings that led to completion of study: **2, resulting from work on Objectives 1 and 2**.

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INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

6.2c Yielded findings that allow for implementation of new practice, process, or technology: **2, including sanitation and handling outcomes.**

6.3 Number of industry representatives and other stakeholders who engaged with research results: **40.**

6.4 Total number of research outputs published to industry publications and/or academic journals: **3, comprising at least one factsheet and two academic journal papers.** For each published research output, the:

6.4a Number of views/reads of published research/data: **50, of which majority will exceed project duration.**

6.4b Number of citations counted: **2, expected to exceed project duration.**

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage

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RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Perry

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

- emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.
6. ~~Soil health~~

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The University of Maine College of Natural Sciences Forestry and Agriculture and Cooperative Extension will partner with Maine wild blueberry growers to enhance food safety and quality of fresh product by assessing its sanitary quality throughout small scale fresh pack processing environments, developing improved handling techniques to extend fruit shelf life and developing educational materials to be disseminated to industry members through grower meetings, factsheets and webinars.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

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INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Perry

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The project primarily addresses **enhanced food safety** for fresh Maine wild blueberries. Produce and environmental swab samples from processing lines, food contact surfaces, Zone 2 surfaces, etc. will be analyzed **across two growing seasons** to assess areas of concern that may harbor foodborne pathogens (*Salmonella*, STEC, *Listeria* spp., etc.).

Results from this work and other, ongoing research assessing pathogen contamination in the pre-harvest environment will also be used to address the strategy “Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act...”, specifically through the development, in project year two, of recommendations for Good Handling Practices for industry members selling fresh, unprocessed blueberries.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The USDA outcomes and indicators are clearly defined and are clearly measurable. The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

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INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine - Perry

DATE: 3-23-2023

EVALUATOR NAME: Joy Bonenfant

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. The budget is accurate and seems reasonable.

Letters of Support: 0

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: University of Maine - Calderwood
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes, 3 support letters*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – 1, 3 & 5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – Sustainability*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – Yes*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Multiple budget errors*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes*
- II. Application is complete – yes/no project dates unclear*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – 3 & 5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – Not clearly stated*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – Not clear how the data is stored and analyzed*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – AirSpore costs not clear*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Central Aroostook S&WCD
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes*
- II. Application is complete – no – some pieces missing, some unclear*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – Not clearly stated*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – data collection not clear*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Is funding for ED appropriate? Will he need to provide that much time?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – No - Fail*
- II. Application is complete –*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? –*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? –*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? –*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? –*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes – Concerned that most benefit goes to one farm though, but have 3 letters of support from other orgs.*
- II. Application is complete – Yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, 3,4&5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, sustainability but not sure how that is defined for these grants, but concerned one suggested crop plant may be a banned invasive species*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – Yes, well done*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Okay, but pay scales seem to be very high for employees and contractors*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: University of Maine - Annis
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes, 2 letters of support*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, 1,3,4&5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, multiple listed*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – Yes, very detailed*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Should student tuition be covered? What is the research farm fee?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: University of Maine - Hao
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, Priority 5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – Pest and disease control and sustainability, but not covered very deeply*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes, well done*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Should we be paying tuition and are the APS meeting trips necessary?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: University of Maine - Perry
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – priorities 1 & 2*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, enhanced food safety*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes, well done*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Should we be paying tuition?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: University of Maine - Moran
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, priority 5*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, pest & disease control*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes, but lacking in detail*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – yes, very affordable, same farm fee question.*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes, approx. 115, 6 letters of support*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, priority 2*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, enhance food safety*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes, well done*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – Is Dr. Machado and employee or contractor?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. *Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes, but seem to benefit one organization more*
- II. *Application is complete – Applied for too much money, USDA strategies not specifically stated*
- III. *Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes, priorities 4 & 6*
- IV. *USDA strategies covered? – Not specifically stated*
- V. *Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes*
- VI. *Budget is complete, etc.? – Wonder if they need the consultants, Is \$1,500 reasonable for van signage?*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

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RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: March 22, 2023
EVALUATOR NAME: Gary Fish
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: DACF

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Directions: *Follow the sections of your RFP to develop a bulleted outline for notes. Delete the sample below and these directions and replace with your own outline based on your RFP.*

- I. Project impacts multiple SC producers? – yes, 3 letters of support*
- II. Application is complete – yes*
- III. Aligns with Commissioner priority areas? – yes , priority 4*
- IV. USDA strategies covered? – yes, childhood nutrition & sustainability*
- V. Outcomes & indicators clearly defined? – yes*
- VI. Budget is complete, etc.? – ED salary seems quite high. Is \$0.58 okay? Contractor rates seem high.*

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity
DATE: 3-23-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed Completed and Signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed Signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority 4 is indicated.
5. **Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Strategies 6 and 8 are highlighted.
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 1 and 2 are indicated.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This proposal describes how it will impact multiple specialty crop producers.

Farms for Food Equity plans to contract with ethnic organizations to educate, promote, and build awareness for Maine grown fruits and vegetables.

Culinary events and classes will teach people how to cook with non-traditional Maine crops.

The classes are designed to increase child and adult nutrition knowledge in Southern Maine immigrant communities. Students will learn about farming, harvesting, preparing recipes, food safety, and improving health through diet.

Not previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Strong – The application clearly shows how it will align with priority 4.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Farms for Food Equity plans to expand the markets for Maine grown fruits and vegetables into the immigrant communities that may not be as familiar with how to cook with those products.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Farms for Food Equity indicated that their proposal will address project strategies 6 and 8.

The proposal clearly and thoroughly addresses strategy 6, as they describe how they will hold classes and events that will teach students about Maine Specialty crops and how they can be used in various dishes, as well as the nutritional benefits of each crop and safe handling practices.

The project also highlighted sustainability as a strategy that would be addressed. This seems like a bit more of a stretch in my opinion.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 1 and 2 are highlighted in the proposal.

Indicators that were listed were over 700 consumers gaining knowledge about specialty crops and 600 consumers consuming more specialty crops.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective
DATE: 3-22-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

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3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
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 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priorities 4 and 6 are referenced.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Don't mention it explicitly in the project strategy section, but discuss sustainability throughout the application.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 1, 2, and 7 are highlighted.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – Multiple specialty crop producers will be impacted by this project.

“50 Maine cut flower growers and wholesale buyers participated in discussions that informed the cooperative’s strategic plan.”

MFC plans to create a centralized online sales platform for cut flowers, where buyers and sellers have a central hub to find each other.

The plan is to cultivate a more efficient and sustainable cut flower trade in Maine.

80% of cut flower sales in the U.S. are international. MFC plans to cut down on carbon footprint, excess packaging, and promote local Maine flower farmers.

The plan for MFC is to be financially dependent by year 4.

Previously awarded SCBGP funds!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Strong- The MFC application clearly aligns with priorities 4 and 6.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

MFC is trying to expand the cut flower market in Maine and change where buyers purchase their cut flowers from.

They argue by buying more local cut flowers, there will be less carbon emissions, as well as less packaging needed to keep flowers fresh when they come from international markets.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

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Individual Evaluator Comments:

The application doesn't clearly and explicitly address which project strategy will be used.

However, throughout the application the focus seems to be on sustainability.

MFC believes the online sales platform will cut down on emissions and packaging waste, as well as bring cut flower wholesalers and growers closer together.

.....
EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 1, 2, and 7 are indicated on the application.

MFC plans to increase sales by 40%.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

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 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priorities 3 and 5 referenced.
5. **Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Strategy 5 is referenced.
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 4 and 7 are indicated.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass - This proposal describes how it will impact multiple specialty crop producers.

The Potato Board is seeking to improve disease and fungicide management for Maine potato growers.

Improving understanding of whether fungi's are present or not could save potato growers a lot of money by removing the need to spray costly fungicide applications.

These tests would be performed through two "spore trapping systems." (Spornado and Air-Spore)

Spornado and Air-Spore are both Canadian companies.

These tests would test for both early and late blight.

Early blight is becoming more of a problem in Maine due in large part to climate change. Not previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priorities 3 and 5 are referenced on the Maine Potato Board Application.

The Maine Potato Board describes how its project will address both.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The project will inform farmers whether or not they need to apply fungicides to their crops, thus reducing the total fungicides that need to be spread. This will improve ecosystem health.

The project also discusses the effects climate change is having on the potato industry with early blight being the primary focus. Early blight is becoming more of a problem as Maine's climate is warming.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments: is not referenced in the application.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 4 and 7 are referenced in the application.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The Maine Potato Board describes how they will contract AirSpore Inc. and Spornado to test samples from potato fields in Aroostook County.

AirSpore Inc. will collect samples three times per week for 12 weeks starting in June.

There are less details listed with how Spornado will collect samples.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Potato Board

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$99,038

The budget will be split between personnel, travel, and supplies.

Personnel: \$3,120

Travel: \$2,568

Contractual: \$93,350

Most of the cost for the budget comes from the two contracts with AirSpore Inc. and Spornado.

The contractors are both Canadian based.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Data Collection – Surveys will be issued to buyers and sellers for cut flowers.

Online transactions will be tracked through the Rooted Farmers online sales platform.

Employee check ins and performance reviews will be conducted.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Maine Flower Collective

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$118,805

Personnel: \$78,368

Fringe Benefits: \$10,228

Travel: \$8,010

Supplies: \$3,800

Contractual: \$4,000

Other: \$14,399

A large portion of the budget will be used on personnel, including an operations manager and two drivers. The other expenses are tied to deliveries and other business needs. Deliveries seem to be a large part of the expenses for the program.

MFC estimates they will see a total program income of \$118,000.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The data will all be collected and reported by Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative Staff.

Data will be logged through attendance records, surveys, online videos, and social media.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Farms for Food Equity

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$98,524

Funds will be split between personnel, travel, supplies, and contracts.

Personnel: \$20,000

Travel: \$3,898

Supplies: \$3,360

Contractual: \$71,266

The executive director will be paid 1/5 of a full-time salary of \$20,000.

Travel is listed at 58 cents a mile.

Contractual partners are all listed with their hourly rates listed as well.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed Incomplete Cover Page / Signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed Signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priorities 3, 4, and 5 are referenced.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, strategy 8 is indicated.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 1 and 2 are highlighted.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This proposal clearly impacts multiple specialty crop producers.

Meeting House Herb Farm plans to increase the number of farms in Maine growing medical herbs.

The project has partnered with 20 Maine herb farms. The plan is to add an additional 10 farms to this group and provide them all with resources and technical assistance that pertains to growing herbs in Maine.

MHHF described that the barrier to entry for this market is high. However, they claim that adding medical herbs to a farm will help with sustainability by increasing crop diversification, therefore making the farm more financially and ecologically sustainable.

Not previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The application indicates that it addresses priorities 3, 4, and 5.

The strongest priority the application meets is priority 4. The MHHF describes how it plans to diversify and expand the markets for specialty crops through medical herbs.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Priorities 3 and 5 seem to be related at a lesser degree.

.....
EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Individual Evaluator Comments:

MHHF indicated that their proposal addresses project strategy 8, “sustainability.”

They argue that the sustainability of small, women owned farms in Maine will increase through crop diversification.

The revenue stream of the farm will be more diversified and less susceptible to the volatility of the market.

.....
EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 1 and 2 are indicated on the proposal.

The indicators listed are 2000 people gaining knowledge about specialty crops and consuming more specialty crops.

Data Collection – Plan to capture numbers on their shopify e-commerce site for meetinghouse.farm. (Weak)

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Meeting House Herb Farm

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$98,776

The budget is split between personnel, contracts, and other.

Personnel: \$49,898

Contractual: \$44,078

Supplies: \$4,800

The personnel budget will be used to fund two positions at MHHF.

Note: The budget summary shows that the herb purchase will be listed as "other," but it is listed in the supplies section below.

Supplies: Purchase of dried herbs from farms.

Contractual: Contractors are all listed along with their hourly rate.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: 3-22-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

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3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
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 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed (In text)
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority 2 is indicated.
5. **Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Project Strategies 1 and 2 are indicated.
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcome 3 is indicated.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This proposal clearly impacts multiple specialty crop producers.

MOFGA plans to enhance food safety to clients through educational trainings, workshops, demonstrations, grants, etc.

MOFGA plans to increase the number of farms able to come into compliance with FSMA.

MOFGA will utilize FDA approved content to increase food safety.

Previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Strong- MOFGA's proposal clearly aligns with a "project that will enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops."

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: MOFGA
DATE: 3-22-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

They specifically mention their plan to use FDA approved content in order to increase food safety for specialty crops.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Strong – MOFGA indicated project strategies 1 and 2 on their proposal. Both strategies are clearly utilized in the proposal.

MOFGA plans to hold training and workshops that address food safety and agricultural handling and processing strategies for specialty crops.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcome 3 is indicated on the proposal. “Increase Food Safety Knowledge and Processes.”

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Data collection will take place primarily through surveys given out at the end of each workshop.

Letters of support from farmers have been attached.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: MOFGA

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget - \$99,228.55

Budget is split between two categories

1. Personnel - \$13,228.55
2. Other \$86,000

Personnel includes pay for four employees.

The other portion of the budget includes grants that will be awarded to 16 farmers and registration for farmers to attend the University of Maine's Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm
DATE: 3-22-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

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4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Commissioner Priorities 3 and 5 are referenced, however they do not describe how they meet these priorities in this section.
- 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Starboard Farm references “Increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.”
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Outcomes 1,2,3, and 4 are all highlighted on the proposal.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Question! Does this proposal really impact multiple Specialty Crop Producers? My initial thought is that it fails to do so.

Starboard Farm runs a “farm camp” that teaches children and adults growing and preserving skills, composting, regenerative farming, marketing farm products, etc.

The camp plans to increase student knowledge and consumption of specialty crops: teaches students to grow, preserve, and cook with specialty crops.

Not previously funded by SCBGP.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

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3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
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6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priorities 3 and 5 are indicated. To me priority #4 is the strongest throughout the proposal. 3 and 5 don't seem to be as relevant.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- **Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;**
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Strong: The proposal clearly aligns with “Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.”

The goals of the farm camp fit well with this project strategy.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.
(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated. 1-3 are touched on throughout the proposal, but I don't see where 4 is included.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: Starboard Farm

DATE: 3-22-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Question! The cover page shows the ask for the proposal is \$30,000.

However, the budget shows the total is \$32,000. Why this discrepancy?

Personnel- \$15,000

Equipment- \$12,000

Supplies- \$5,000

The farm listed their estimated income at \$25,000. How did they get to this figure?

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012

RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

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3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priorities 1,3,4, and 5 are referenced.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Strategies 3, 4, and 7 were referenced.
- b. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 4, 6, and 7 were highlighted.



Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This project clearly impacts multiple Maine specialty crop producers.

The project is seeking to examine the “effects of leaf spot disease on wild blueberry health and yield.”

Project will test lower risk and organically acceptable materials for their efficacy to control leaf spots.

This may lead to new markets for wild blueberries if lower risk fungicides can be determined to be effective.

Research will be done to determine how leaf spots will be affected with Maine’s warming climate.

Previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

- 1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.*
- 2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.*
- 3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.*
- 4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.*
- 5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.*
- 6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.*

Individual Evaluator Comments:

The project highlighted priorities 1, 3, 4, and 5.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

This project is in its second year of a two-year project that is looking into mitigating the effects of leaf spots on wild blueberries.

The project will analyze how leaf spot disease is effected under warmer conditions due to climate change.

New fungicides will be tested, as some older fungicides have been taken off acceptable fungicides list in some markets, siting environmental and health concerns.

The microbiome found in blueberry plants will also be studied to determine if certain microbiomes are associated with plant health.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Project strategies 3, 4, and 7 are referenced on the proposal.

Effects of leaf spots will be determined by analyzing water relations, photosynthetic capacity, and yield of blueberries.

Fungicides and fertilizers will also be tested to see if they reduce leaf spots on lowbush blueberries.

Strong – This project strongly aligns with priority 3.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.
The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)
DATE: 3-27-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed Completed and Signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed Signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 4, 6, and 7 are referenced on the proposal.

Strong – Data collection was thoroughly broken down in this section.

Tests will be taken to determine the effects of different fertilizers, fungicides, and water application on leaf spot infections.

Experiments will also be conducted to test the effect of warmer weather on low bush blueberries and how the leaf spot disease will react. They will control the heat around the plants by increasing them approximately 5 degrees.

Random leaf samples will be taken from various test sites.

Results from these tests will be disseminated at the Agricultural Trade Show, growers conferences, research days, and meetings.

Data will also be published in various articles and publications to inform the public.

A survey will also be collected from blueberry growers.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Annis)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$95,054

Personnel: \$56,079

Fringe Benefits: \$14,232

Supplies: \$5,225

Other: \$19,518

Two employees will receive funding in the budget along with fringe benefits.

There is a long list of supplies that will be purchased to complete the tests.

The "other" category includes tuition, health insurance, farm labor, lab analysis etc.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, priorities 1, 3, and 5 are referenced.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, strategies 3 and 8 are referenced.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 3, 6, and 7 are indicated.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This project clearly impacts multiple specialty crop producers.

Project title: *Drought Stress Management for Wild Blueberry Growers.*

Drought has had a large impact on Maine blueberry production in recent years. 43% crop loss in 2020 and 24% in 2022.

3 objectives are identified by Calderwood: “1. evaluate soil amendments for soil moisture retention, cost, crop health, and soil microorganism presence. 2. Determine which crop stages of the season are most critical for wild blueberry to receive one inch of water/week. 3. Disseminate results of this project to the wild blueberry community in Maine.

Small and medium size blueberry farms are at a higher risk, as they don't have the irrigation set up that larger farms do.

Previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
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4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Commissioner priorities 1,3, and 5 are indicated on the application.

Strong – The proposal clearly indicates how it meets each of these priorities.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The proposal is a continuation from a previously funded SCBGP funded project.

The plan is to research how soil amendments and irrigation can create a consistent and sustainable blueberry yield every year, as Maine is becoming more susceptible to drought conditions.

The proposal also highlights the plan to have better communications among growers, processors, and researchers in the field.

.....
EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

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Individual Evaluator Comments:

Project strategies 3 and 8 are indicated on the proposal.

The project will research how to fight the drought problems that have come up in recent years. This has had an effect on blueberry production.

The project hopes to improve the water holding capacity of the soil, therefore helping to conserve water, making blueberry production more sustainable.

Sustainability of small and medium blueberry growers will also increase as their crop production will be consistently high quality and high volume.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Outcomes 3, 6, and 7 have been checked off on the proposal.

The indicators describe the goal of informing 300 stakeholders about environmental sustainability practices, food safety practices, and research developments made by the project.

The 3 objectives identified by the project will all be tested.

Samples will be taken to test for soil amendments and irrigation. Different soil amendment treatments will be tested including sawdust, shavings, and wood chips of various sizes.

Blueberry plant health will also be tracked. They will assess stem heights, density, and bud counts in the prune year. Leaf traits will also be assessed.

The results of these tests will be disseminated to the Maine blueberry community. This will happen during the Wild Blueberry Advisory Board meeting, the UMaine Wild Blueberry Conference, Summer field meetings, Organic Wild Blueberry Farm Day, and the Annual Wild Blueberry Field Day.

The goal is to strengthen communication between growers in the wild blueberry community and researchers at UMaine as they attempt to manage the wild blueberry industry under drought stress conditions.

Strong – The application goes into great depth how it will collect and assess data related to the project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Calderwood)

DATE: 3-27-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$86,763

Personnel: \$54,091

Fringe Benefits: \$20,318

Travel: \$764

Supplies: \$647

Contractual: \$4,620

Other: \$557 (Should be \$6,373)

Most of the budget will be used for UMaine Personnel.

Travel Rate: 46 cents a mile

Contractor listed. (MR DNA Sequencing Lab)

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)
DATE: 3-23-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

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4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority 5 is referenced.

5. Project Summary

- a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed

6. USDA Strategies

- a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, Strategies 5 and 8 are referenced.

7. Expected Measurable Outcomes

- a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 4,6, and 7 are referenced.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This proposal clearly impacts multiple specialty crop producers.

Disease management for “powdery scab of potato.”

There is no current cure for this disease that effects Maine potato farmers.

The focus of the project is to detect and quantify the pathogen and effectively control the disease.

Information will be shared with stakeholders through field days, potato conferences, extension meetings, etc.

Powdery scab of potato can survive in soil for up to 20 years.

Previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

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6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priority #5 is highlighted.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Climate change has been a major factor effecting potato diseases, including powdery scab of potato.

The goal of the project is to detect the pathogen in the soil, and provide potato farmers with support of disease management.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

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- Enhanced food safety;
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- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- **Pest and disease control;**
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- **Sustainability.**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

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Individual Evaluator Comments:

Project strategies 5 and 8 are referenced in the proposal.

The research is being done in an attempt to detect when powdery scab of potato may be present.

Soil amendments will also be tested, which will increase the diversity of soil microbiome.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 4, 6, and 7 are highlighted on the proposal.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Outcome measures will be based on “1. Citations of published results. 2. Invitations for presenting at out-state extension conferences, 3. In-person communications with stakeholders.

Data will be stored in a UMaine database.

Results may also be published in the thesis of the graduate student working on the project.

Results will also be disseminated through field days, potato conferences, extension meetings, articles, etc.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Hao)

DATE: 3-23-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$91,618

Personnel: \$62,841

Fringe Benefits: \$5,261

Travel: \$5,000

Supplies: \$6,000

Other: \$12,516

Three University employees and students will receive funding through this program.

Travel rate is 46 cents a mile.

There is a long list of supplies that will be used for testing.

Tuition and health insurance comprise the other category of the budget.

There will be no program income as this is research based.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)
DATE: 3-28-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

Instructions: *The purpose of this form is to record proposal review notes written by **individual** evaluators for this Request for Proposals (RFP) process. It is **required** that each individual evaluator make notes for each proposal that he or she reviews. No numerical scoring should take place on these notes, as that is performed only during team consensus evaluation meetings. A separate form is available for team consensus evaluation notes and scoring. Once complete, please submit a copy of this document to your Department's RFP Coordinator or Lead Evaluator for this RFP.*

EVALUATION OF SECTION I

The Application is complete and adheres to the format outlined in the RFA.

Required Application Template Submission Components- As outlined above, the Application Summary Template must be fully completed and include:

1. **Application Cover Page**
 - a. Must be completed in its entirety and signed Completed and Signed
2. **Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification**
 - a. Must be signed Signed
3. **Litigation**
 - a. Must complete and submit the State of Maine Department of Judicial Branch Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification (Appendix B)
 - b. Must list all current litigation where the Applicant is named
 - c. Must include a list of all closed cases within the past five (5) years in which the Applicant paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree
 - d. If there is no relevant litigation "none" must be indicated
 - e. Must be signed Signed
4. **Commissioner Priorities**

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priority 5 is highlighted.
5. **Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
6. **USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yest, Strategy 3 is identified.
7. **Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 4 and 6 are referenced.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass – This proposal clearly impacts multiple specialty crop producers.

This project plans to analyze a postharvest disorder in Honeycrisp apples called “bitter pit.”

Apples with a high-risk for calcium deficiency can spoil when put in cold storage for more than three months.

The project plans to use low-cost tests to analyze which apples are most susceptible to this disorder. High-risk apples could then be identified and sold first, leaving more resistant apples to be stored.

The project also mentions a new sprayable product that could potentially prevent the “bitter pit” disorder if it is applied at the right time.

This project has not been previously funded through SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

1. Any application from the previous year which was for a multiple year term and was only funded for the first year of the project. For those projects that fit under this category, they must submit a new proposal (with a new and distinct project name) and show progress from the first year's funding in the work plan section of the proposal.
2. Projects that enhance food safety education, primarily in relation to FDA rules regarding improved handling and processing of specialty crops.
3. Projects to enhance soil and ecosystem health.
4. Projects that market Maine specialty crops to diversified and expanded markets, or that research potential market expansion efforts and strategies. Examples include but are not limited to increasing sales to institutions, and other target markets that are new or have potential for growth in sales of Maine agricultural products.
5. Projects that improve adaptation and increase resilience to climate-related crop disturbances in support of long-term farm business vitality and productivity, such as through projects that address specialty crop's ability to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change, conserve agricultural land and water, detect and manage emerging pests and diseases, or implementation of practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases, and/or improve soil health.
6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Commissioner priority #5 was referenced in the proposal.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The proposal addresses the fact that drought and warming temperatures increases the likelihood that honeycrisp apples will develop a calcium deficiency.

The proposal describes this as an “emerging disorder” for Maine apple growers.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
- Investing in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes;
- Developing new and improved seed varieties for specialty crops;
- Pest and disease control;
- Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops;
- Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems; and
- Sustainability.

Contracts will not be awarded to projects that benefit a particular commercial product, organization, institute, or individual. Applications must demonstrate how the overall specialty crop industry, or the public will benefit from the project.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Only one project may be proposed per application. Applications for multiple projects will not be considered for award and will be rejected without exception. However, an entity may submit more than one application as long as each Application represents a distinct project.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Project Strategies 3 and 5 were identified on the proposal.

The project plans to “test the effectiveness of three predictive tools and one preventative strategy.”

Research will be done on honeycrisp orchards to determine which orchard are “high-risk.”

Bitter pit disorder is not technically a disease, but poses a serious risk to honeycrisp apple farmers through the loss of product as it is stored for a long period of time.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Outcomes 4 and 6 are checked on the proposal.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The proposal chose indicator 4.4, stating that 15 apple producers will implement new diagnostic systems, methods, or technologies for analyzing specialty crop pests and diseases.

They also identify 3 research findings that allow for the implementation of new practice, process, or technology.

Weak – Data collection summed up in one sentence.

Data collection will use surveys for growers and number of bins of apples that are successfully stored.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Moran)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$41,312

Personnel: \$23,977

Fringe Benefits: \$11,941

Travel: \$984

Supplies: \$120

Other: \$4,290

Personnel and fringe benefits will be paid out to one employee.

Travel includes trips across Maine. 46 cents a mile.

Other includes the cost for testing needed to be done to test for bitter pit disorder.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant
BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)
DATE: 3-28-23
EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden
EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFA #: 202301012
RFA Title: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

BIDDER: UMaine (Perry)

DATE: 3-28-23

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EVALUATION OF SECTION I

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**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

- a. List and explain which, if any, of the Commissioner Priority areas the project incorporates. Yes, Priorities 1, 2, and 4 are referenced.
- 5. Project Summary**
 - a. Explain the project need, purpose, and primary goals of the project in 250 words or less. Completed
- 6. USDA Strategies**
 - a. Explain which of the USDA Strategies the application addresses and which specific strategies will be utilized, in 250 words or less. Yes, strategy 1 is referenced.
- 7. Expected Measurable Outcomes**
 - a. All projects must choose at least one of the seven measurable outcomes listed below, which were approved by the OMB and are required by the USDA AMS in order to evaluate the performance of SCBG at the national level. Please select the outcome measure(s) that are applicable to the project and select at least one of the related quantifiable indicators prescribed. Yes, Outcomes 3 and 6 are mentioned.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Pass - This proposal clearly describes how it will impact multiple specialty crop producers.

The UMaine College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture Co-op Extension plans to partner with Maine wild blueberry growers and enhance food safety and quality of the product.

This will include packing processes, handling techniques.

The goal is to increase food safety among the blueberry industry and extend shelf life of the product.

The information will be disseminated through meetings, factsheets, and webinars.

This project will focus on fresh blueberries only. In the past the majority of Maine blueberries have been frozen, leaving handling processes for fresh blueberries less utilized.

3 Objectives have been identified. Summary: 1. Determine the sanitary quality of fruit and processing environments. 2. Assess the impact of processor-identified practices of

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)

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EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

interest, 3. Develop and deliver educational materials outlining Good Handling Practices.

Previously funded by SCBGP!

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION II

The Application clearly aligns the project deliverables to address a Commissioner priority area.

The Commissioner of the DACF has established priorities for the coming year. It is expected that any proposal involving crop production will utilize best practices related to sustainability and climate change mitigation. Applications that incorporate one or more of the priorities below will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. They are:

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6. Projects that alleviate supply chain disruptions for specialty crop inputs, processing, or distribution.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Priorities 1, 2, and 4 have been identified on the proposal.

Strong – The proposal fits priorities 1 and 2 strongly. Priority 4 to a lesser degree.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

The project clearly indicates how it will enhance food safety education in the wild blueberry community. They will focus on the processing and packaging of fresh wild blueberries.

This project builds off previous SCBGP funding.

EVALUATION OF SECTION III

The project utilizes designated USDA Project Strategies as stated in the RFA

USDA PROJECT STRATEGIES

The USDA encourages States to develop projects to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops with emphasis on the following strategies to enhance the Specialty Crop industry:

- Enhanced food safety;
- Improving the capacity of all entities in the specialty crop distribution chain to comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act, for example, by developing “Good Agricultural Practices”, “Good Handling Practices”, “Good Manufacturing Practices”, and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems (including USDA GroupGAP) for small farmers, packers, and processors;
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**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)

DATE: 3-28-23

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EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

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Individual Evaluator Comments:

The USDA Project Strategy identified in the proposal is strategy 1, “enhanced food safety.”

Strong - The entire focus of the project is increasing the food safety of stored fresh blueberries.

Samples will be taken across two growing seasons.

EVALUATION OF SECTION IV

The USDA outcome(s) and indicator(s) are clearly defined and are clearly measurable.

The application articulates methods of monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

(See RFA for list of 7 USDA outcomes and indicators).

Individual Evaluator Comments:

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

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DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

Outcomes 3 and 6 are checked off on the proposal.

40 stakeholders expected to gain knowledge about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices.

Data Collection: Data will be collected through attendance records, direct calls, surveys, samples, etc.

Measurements will be taken during and after processing, including drop height during processing, humidity levels during storage, and temperature of fruit before processing.

**STATE OF MAINE
INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION NOTES**

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: Specialty Crop Block Grant

BIDDER NAME: UMaine (Perry)

DATE: 3-28-23

EVALUATOR NAME: Patrick Madden

EVALUATOR DEPARTMENT: Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

EVALUATION OF SECTION V

Budget

The budget is complete and clearly indicates anticipated benefit in relation to the proposed cost. Regarding the grant funds requested and the proposed work, the review team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time, etc.) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks and budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes and objectives.

Individual Evaluator Comments:

Total Budget: \$43,674

Personnel: \$23,340

Travel: \$5,146

Supplies: \$6,900

Other: \$8,288

Personnel funds will be paid out to one graduate student.

Travel will take place to farms and various conferences.

Question: Why is there prices for travel to conferences if they are "TBD"?

Other funds will be used for tuition and health insurance. Is this allowable?



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture, Conservation and
Forestry

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Amanda Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

I, Joy Bonenfant, accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the bidders whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the bidder's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the bidder; current or former personal contractual relationship with the bidder (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to a bidder's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Proposals presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.

3-17-2023

Signature

Date



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture, Conservation and
Forestry

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Amanda Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

RFP #: 202301012

RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

I, (print name at right) Patrick Madden

accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

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Patrick Madden

3-22-23

Signature

Date



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture, Conservation and
Forestry

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Amanda Beal
Commissioner

AGREEMENT AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
RFP #: 202301012
RFP TITLE: 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)

I, Gary Fish accept the offer to become a member of the Request for Proposals (RFP) Evaluation Team for the State of Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I do hereby accept the terms set forth in this agreement AND hereby disclose any affiliation or relationship I may have in connection with a bidder who has submitted a proposal to this RFP.

Neither I nor any member of my immediate family have a personal or financial interest, direct or indirect, in the bidders whose proposals I will be reviewing. "Interest" may include, but is not limited to: current or former ownership in the bidder's company; current or former Board membership; current or former employment with the bidder; current or former personal contractual relationship with the bidder (example: paid consultant); and/or current or former relationship to a bidder's official which could reasonably be construed to constitute a conflict of interest (personal relationships may be perceived by the public as a potential conflict of interest).

I have not advised, consulted with or assisted any bidder in the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP nor have I submitted a letter of support or similar endorsement.

I understand and agree that the evaluation process is to be conducted in an impartial manner without bias or prejudice. In this regard, I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there are no circumstances that would reasonably support a good faith charge of bias. I further understand that in the event a good faith charge of bias is made, it will rest with me to decide whether I should be disqualified from participation in the evaluation process.

I agree to hold confidential all information related to the contents of Requests for Proposals presented during the review process until such time as the Department formally releases the award decision notices for public distribution.

Gary Fish

03/17/2023

Signature

Date