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Specialty Crops Secure \$650 Million in Additional Funding for USDA Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 6, 2025) – The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance (SCFBA) issued the following statement today in response to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s updates to the [Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops \(MASC\) initiative](#), which include an additional \$650 million investment.

“Specialty crop growers across the U.S. are facing severe and unique challenges. As we [wrote in December](#), the USDA’s MASC program is an important step in helping growers recover from this economic battering, and with today’s announcement, we are grateful to the USDA for recognizing that even more was needed.

This additional funding will play a critical role in stabilizing farms, ensuring the strength of our industry, and safeguarding the availability of domestically grown specialty crops, including nutrient-dense fruits, vegetables and tree nuts, which should make up more than half an American’s diet. By also increasing payment limitations and extending the application window, the USDA is providing growers with the much-needed resources and flexibility to navigate these difficult times.”

Updates to the MASC program include:

- An additional \$650 million in funding has been added, bringing the total funds available for specialty crop growers to \$2.65 billion.
- The payment limitation has been increased from \$125,000 to \$900,000, acknowledging the higher value of specialty crops when compared to other agricultural commodities.
- The deadline for applications has been extended by two days. Applications will now be accepted through Friday, Jan. 10, 2025.

The USDA announcement follows the [SCFBA’s request in December](#) for an additional investment in the MASC program and a modified structure for payment limitations after specialty crop production – which represents nearly half the farm gate value of American agriculture – was left out of the final year-end economic assistance package negotiated by Congressional leaders.

SCFBA is a national coalition of more than 200 specialty crop organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, nursery plants and other products. In early 2023, the alliance released a set of key policy priorities as part of its [Farm Bill recommendations](#). Specialty crop production, including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery and greenhouse commodities, contributes significantly to the U.S economy, [accounting for \\$64.7 billion in farm gate value and 30 percent of farm cash receipts for crops](#).

The SCFBA is co-chaired by **Cathy Burns, CEO of the International Fresh Produce Association; Mike Joyner, President of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association; Dave Puglia, President and CEO of Western Growers; and Kam Quarles, CEO of the National Potato Council.**

SCFBA

The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance is a national coalition of more than 200 organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, nursery plants and other products. The Alliance was established to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop agriculture and improve the health of Americans by broadening the scope of U.S. agricultural public policy. For more information, visit [farmbillalliance.com](#).