



Project Overview

USDA Rural Business Development Grant Winery Supply Chain

The Reap Investment Board (RIB) secured a 2016 USDA Rural Business Development Grant that will bring resources to southwest North Dakota producer interested in growing cold climate grapes, fruits and vegetables.

A market has emerged for producers to plant cold climate grape vines, seasonal fruits and vegetables. Cold climate grapes have a demonstrated history of success in the region as evidenced by Fluffy Fields Vineyard and 39 other existing small vineyards in North Dakota. Cold climate grapes can be grown on land that may not be suitable for other traditional crops and as such, offer an income generating opportunity for previously unusable land. Specialty crops of grapes, seasonal fruits and vegetables enhance the sustainability of rural farms by providing supplemental income. Native fruits such as chokecherries can also generate income when harvested and sold. Of particular interest is the ability of producers to expand crop production to areas where unusable land may limit production of traditional crops; and for these same producers to start production on small acreage crops with identified markets.

The project will provide training, technical assistance and resources to increase the number of producers growing, harvesting and processing specialty crops of grapes, seasonal fruits and vegetables. Anticipated outcomes are more commercially available seasonal fruits, vegetables; increased production of grapes, seasonal fruits and vegetables to support the supply chain needs of the increasing wine industry.

The project is collaborating with the North Dakota Grape and Wine Association on a membership survey to identify current and anticipated annual purchased produce demands by the 15 wineries currently operating in North Dakota and to identify current and anticipated grape production at 42 North Dakota vineyards.

An outreach event is scheduled for March 10, 2017 at Fluffy Fields Vineyard & Winery located at 2708 21st Street East, Dickinson, ND. The event can accommodate attendance of 50-70 producers who will be provided resource information in topic areas by crop type (grapes, seasonal fruits, vegetables); current market demand for production needs at Fluffy Fields Vineyard & Winery, other North Dakota wineries and other commercial buyers. Attendees will be provided, by crop type, average crop yield per acre; typical per acre investment; modeled return on investment; field

conditions; planting, growing and harvesting; estimated labor requirements; equipment; processing, storage and transportation; pricing history and strategies; selling to other commercial buyers and commercial buyer requirements. Information will be available for producers interested in expanding into the organic market. Attendees will also be introduced to resources to assist with financing, networking, research and production.

Post event, attendees will have access to technical assistance to develop their individualized vision statement, project.

For more information on the project, the event or to refer a producer to the invitation list contact Ray Ann Kilen (R Kilen Consulting) at 701-290-8036 or rkilen@ndsupernet.com or Shirley Brentrup (Reap Investment Board) at 701-483-1447 or Brentrup@ndupernet.com.