

## MDARD Announces Value Added and Regional Food Systems Grant Project Awardees

Agency: Agriculture and Rural Development

**For immediate release:** February 14, 2017

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LANSING, Mich. – Today, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Director Jamie Clover Adams announced nine projects awarded funds under the competitive Value Added and Regional Food System Grant Program.

"Michigan continues to assert itself as a leader in food and agriculture both nationally and globally, and these grants clearly reflect that," said Clover Adams. "Not only do these projects offer opportunity for additional growth in revenue and jobs, but they also demonstrate the vision, ambition, and leadership of our state's incredible food and agriculture companies."

The department received 62 proposals with requests totaling more than \$6.6 million. Of those, MDARD awarded the following nine projects leveraging more than \$1 million in matching funds:

- **Campbell Milarch Vines LLC of Copemish** - \$140,400. Produce and market the first locally sourced and cold-hardy vinifera "Truly Michigan Vines" for Michigan vineyard owners and grape growers.
- **Chestnut Growers Inc. of Clarksville** - \$43,500. Improve production capacity in processing and preparing Michigan chestnuts for market.
- **Food Lab Detroit of Detroit** - \$54,000. Develop a "Detroit Grown & Made" campaign to strengthen the relationship between farmers, added-value processors and the broader community.
- **Growing Hope of Ypsilanti** - \$79,800. Develop the food hub components of the Ypsilanti Farmers MarketPlace, including creating an incubator kitchen for value-added product development.
- **Indian Brook Trout Farm Inc. of Jackson** - \$150,000. Expand aquaculture processing facility and refrigerated transportation to grow marketing channels.
- **Kitz Koop of Sault Ste. Marie** - \$19,400. Expand egg farm production for the Eastern Upper Peninsula.
- **Michigan Sugar Company of Bay City** - \$100,000. Construct a liquid feed plant in Carrollton in partnership with Westway Feed Products, adding value to beet molasses.
- **Rainbow Packing Inc. of Escanaba** - \$100,000. Expand facility to keep pace with meat processing needs in the Upper Peninsula.
- **Sprout Urban Farms Inc. of Battle Creek** - \$65,000. Increase food hub producers and double sales of regional produce through wholesale markets.

MDARD promotes and manages several competitive grant programs through the Agriculture Development Division. More about these programs can be found at [www.michigan.gov/mdardgrants](http://www.michigan.gov/mdardgrants).

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**Editor's Note: Below are quotes from each of the grant recipients.**

"This grant gives us an opportunity to enter into a market that is currently unsupplied. This new market will add value to molasses and enhance returns for our grower owners."

Mark Flegenheimer  
President & CEO, Michigan Sugar Company

"An expanded facility and the additional equipment will allow us to serve more farmers in the region, as well as the space needed to expand into other marketing channels."

Sue Sicotte  
Owner, Rainbow Packing Inc.

"Kitz's Koop Family Egg Farm supplies farm fresh eggs to the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The value-added grant is going to allow us to expand operations and provide a safe, wholesome, healthy product to a broader network of consumers."

Ryan Kitzmiller  
Owner, Kitz's Koop

"Growing Hope feels fortunate that MDARD's investment will support significant expansion of the infrastructure and resources for both small business growth, and an increase in healthy food access in Ypsilanti and our region. The grant will allow us to leverage further funds and get the development of the MarketPlace past the finish line."

Amanda Edmonds  
Executive Director, Growing Hope

"Out-state vines require a full year to adjust to soil and weather before they set roots and prepare to produce fruit (up to 3 years after planting). This project impacts the industry by providing a quicker ROI (producing fruit one year sooner) for growers and wineries by providing healthy live-vines which mitigates health risks and the long wait, while also allowing for custom grafting."

Amanda Milarch  
Owner, Campbell Milarch Vines

"Our goal is to design, fabricate, and install unique equipment for cleaning chestnuts. With this capability, Chestnut Growers Inc. can keep up with Michigan's growing chestnut production."

Carl DeKleine  
Treasurer, Michigan Chestnut Growers Inc.

"This grant will allow Indian Brook Trout Farm to modernize our processing facility, improve food safety measures, and help meet the growing demand for locally grown/processed fish. Our centrally located facility provides Michigan based aquaculture facilities easy access to large metropolitan markets in the Midwest. We believe this project will encourage others to develop fish farms in close proximity to capitalize on the synergies of our processing, distribution, biological and technical expertise, and fish hatcheries."

Owen Ballow  
Owner, Indian Brook Trout Farm Inc.

"Sprout is excited to be partnering with MDARD to help promote farmers and their families in the Battle Creek area. These funds will not only directly influence household wealth of area farmers, but will also add new equipment for a community retail and wholesale grocery."

Jeremy Andrews  
Executive Director, Sprout Urban Farms Inc.

"While FoodLab is primarily an organization focused on growing good food businesses in Detroit, we recognize that we are a part of a network of people and organizations contributing to the shared vision of a flourishing, equitable local food economy. We are inspired by the history and legacy of Detroit's urban farmers who saw the relationship between land, food and freedom and who fought for their right to grow food in their community. Towards these ends, The Detroit Grown & Made campaign is a partnership between FoodLab Detroit and Keep Growing Detroit, and it is designed to support local food systems and trigger economic opportunities on a community level. The campaign is focused on growing the percentage of locally-sourced ingredients, driving inclusive growth and developing innovative experiences to help farmers and emerging food businesses better promote/market their food to customers, retailers and large institutions."

Devita Davison  
Interim Executive Director, FoodLab Detroit

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