

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Joe Courtney today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded the Connecticut Department of Agriculture \$429,936 in Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG) to help Connecticut farmers strengthen the market for specialty crops. In all, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture secured nine grants, including: partnering with Wholesome Wave to double the amount of SNAP benefits low income residents are able to use at farmer’s markets; and funding to partner with the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Inc. to enhance the competitiveness of Connecticut fruit and vegetable producers by identifying barriers to in-state distribution.

“This investment in Connecticut’s specialty crop industry will not only help our state’s farmers, but the residents who rely on farmers markets and other programs that support local agriculture,” **said Congressman Courtney**. “With this funding, our agriculture industry has renewed potential for growth that will sustain Connecticut’s agricultural heritage for years to come.”

Congressman Courtney has been a strong supporter of the SCBG program. Earlier this year, he introduced legislation to expand eligibility for such funding to Connecticut’s shellfish industry – an effort that is supported by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

Congressman Courtney is the founding co-chairman of the Congressional Dairy Farmers Caucus, and is the first member of the Connecticut House delegation to serve on the Agriculture Committee since Henry Stevens in the 59th Congress more than 100 years ago.

A full description of the nine USDA grants for Connecticut is available [here](#) .

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