



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

2024 WSDA Legislative Priorities

Derek Sandison, Director

WSDA is committed to the vitality and viability of Washington's agriculture. As an agency primarily funded by fee-paying stakeholders, our proposed state investments target the topics most beneficial to Washington citizens. A majority of our packages fall into three broad categories – **equity, collaborations, and invasive species response** – with some proposals aligning with more than one category because they include stakeholder and/or multiple agency engagement.



AGRICULTURAL PEST AND DISEASE RESPONSE FUND

(\$2 million, GFS)

Washington agriculture faces serious economic, biosecurity, and food security risks associated with the introduction of disease and pests, which have increased in frequency and severity due to global trade and shifting climate patterns. WSDA monitors and responds to reports of new, emerging, and transboundary diseases and pests. The Department requests funding to establish a permanent fund that supports efforts to detect, contain, and eradicate disease and pest outbreaks.

AG SUICIDE PREVENTION

(\$245,742, ongoing – GF)

Financial risk creates unnecessary stress for farmers and ranchers. WSDA requests funding to support the Farm Stress and Suicide Prevention (FSSP) Farm Financial Literacy project. Funds will be used for one FTE as an Agricultural Economist to provide financial literacy workshops and voluntary one-on-one farm management consultations.

CLIMATE LEAD

*(\$262,000, ongoing beginning FY25 –
CCA fund 26C)*

WSDA plays a critical role in protecting natural resources and agricultural livelihoods. However, the urgency of climate change requires that the agency elevate its current work under a unified and cohesive climate strategy. The Department requests ongoing funding for one FTE at a higher management level who will provide leadership and strategic direction for WSDA's current and future climate work and support the adaptation and resilience of Washington's agriculture industry.

**GROWING DIVERSE LEADERS AND
CREATING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
IN AGRICULTURE** (\$795,000, one-time – GFS)

Today’s agriculture leaders – and the agriculture leaders of tomorrow – require ongoing adaptation, resiliency, and leadership skill-building opportunities for career success. WSDA requests funding to sustain and build a more robust network of partnerships with Future Farmers of America (FFA); Washington State University (WSU), Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS); Washington State Tree Fruit Association (WSTFA), and the Washington Ag Forestry Leadership Program.

**HEMP FOR BUILDING MATERIALS AND
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS STUDY** (\$220,000, ongoing – GFS)

There is an emerging community of farmers interested in producing hemp to create building materials, including flooring, insulation, “hempcrete” and drywall material. WSDA would like to work with the Department of Commerce on a study to better understand the opportunities and challenges, as well as identify solutions to existing barriers to create a healthy marketplace for hemp that would support other industries in Washington and assist them in meeting their sustainability goals.

**INVASIVE MOTH SURVEY AND
ERADICATION** (\$306,000 – GFS; \$358,000 – GFF, – FY24)

The Department of Agriculture requests funding to conduct spongy moth, formerly known as gypsy moth, eradication efforts at identified locations in the current 2023 trapping season in the spring of 2024, along with continued trapping and monitoring in 2024. Final data will determine the locations of any 2024 eradication activities.

JAPANESE BEETLE ERADICATION (\$1.294 million, one-time – GFS)

Japanese beetle, *Popillia japonica* Newman, is a regulated plant pest that attacks more than 300 plant species. It also damages a variety of important crops including apples, grapes, sweet cherries, hops, pears, caneberries, and cannabis. A large infestation of Japanese beetle was detected in the Grandview area in June 2021 and in the Wapato area in 2022. This proposal seeks to increase trapping and eradication efforts for spring 2024.

LAB EQUIPMENT EFFICIENCY FIX (\$2.06 million, ongoing – GFS)

WSDA requests ongoing funding to support remediation efforts for the Food Safety & Consumer Services (FS&CS) division as they transition to their new facility on Linderson Way. It was recently revealed that certain FS&CS-specific technical requirements and business needs are either not included or partially included in the design and construction. These specific modifications are necessary for FS&CS to perform critical work that ensures products are safe to consume by the public.

TRIBAL LIAISON (\$257,000, ongoing beginning FY25 – GFS)

WSDA requests funding to support one FTE at a higher management level. This position would facilitate government-to-government relationships with the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State and create opportunities to promote communication between WSDA and all involved parties.

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