

# Minnesota Department of Agriculture

## News Release

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### **Scholarships available to specialty crop and organic growers**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Specialty crop and organic producers in Minnesota can apply for scholarships to offset the cost of farm business management classes through a program offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and several partners. Applications are now being accepted for 2009.

MDA Agricultural Specialist Meg Moynihan says the scholarship program has been very successful since it began several years ago.

“In 2009, we’re expanding the scholarship program to more producers,” said Moynihan. “We especially want to reach all types of specialty crop growers as well as organic producers of alternative crops like amaranth, buckwheat, flax, and other less common field crops.”

The scholarships defray farmers’ cost to enroll in farm business management education programs, offered by schools in the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system. Farmers in the program work one-on-one with management instructors, learning to keep and use quality records to make sound business management decisions. They receive comprehensive year-end analyses that can be used for tax preparation, discussions with lenders and enterprise planning. Strict confidentiality measures protect the privacy of both participants and their information.

Minnesota farmers eligible for the scholarships include all organic producers as well as non-organic specialty crop growers - including nurseries, greenhouses and fruit, vegetable, and floriculture producers. To learn more about this opportunity, see the brochure at [www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/bizmgmt.htm) or call Meg Moynihan at 651-201-6616. The number of scholarships is limited, so it’s best to apply early.

Scholarship funds are provided by United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency and the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program. In addition to MnSCU, other partners include the University of Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota, and Organic Crop Improvement Association Minnesota Chapter #1.