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News Release

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Table Grape Commission Awarded Two Additional Years of TASC Research Grant

Fresno, CA – The California Table Grape Commission has been awarded two additional years of a USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) funding in the amount of \$288,000 for continuing research to develop phytosanitary treatments that eliminate pests of concern for export markets.

“Invasive species can pose a serious threat to crops,” said Kathleen Nave, president of the commission. “Treatments developed through this research will help ensure that if there is a pest problem, the export of California table grapes will continue uninterrupted.”

California accounts for 99 percent of the commercially grown table grapes in the U.S., representing an annual total crop value well over \$1 billion with volume of over 110 million boxes. Approximately 40 percent of the California table grape crop is exported to more than 60 countries worldwide.

Dr. Franka Gabler, viticulture research director for the commission, says the goal of the research is to identify effective postharvest treatments that do not compromise table grape quality, that are compatible with standard industry practices, and that do not require significant investment to adapt existing infrastructure for their implementation.

“Evaluating the impact of each postharvest technique on table grape quality and shelf life is an integral component of the project,” said Gabler. “Affordability and compatibility with current infrastructure is a crucial component for the table grape industry for the implementation of any new technology.”

The USDA FAS TASC program is intended to benefit an entire industry or commodity rather than a specific company or brand. “This program has been invaluable for the table grape industry since it provides funding for projects that address trade barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops,” said Gabler.

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