



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: District Receives Funding for Hops and Malt Grains Project

Indiana County Conservation District

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On January 25, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture announced \$460,000 in funding for eight projects across the state that will increase market opportunities and competitiveness for Pennsylvania Specialty Crops. Of the awarded projects, the Indiana County Conservation District received \$37,951 to collaborate with local farmers and brewers to create an educational program for hops and malt grains production.

District Manager Doug Beri stated “this is a unique opportunity for the District to work with our agricultural community on a non-traditional project that will help our local farmers learn how to diversify their operations to create additional financial sustainability.”

This project will fund the installation of a Hop Garden at the Indiana County Conservation District’s new office and education center as well as demonstration plots for malt grains with a participating local farmer. The produced grains and hops will be sent to a processing company to then be provided back to a local brewery for the creation of a Conservation District beer. Educational workshops will be held throughout the duration of the project to teach farmers about growing malt grains and hops.

Beri added “This project will also help to create new market opportunities for area farmers to supply grains and hops that are in high demand by local craft breweries.”

Representative Jim Struzzi, who was an early supporter of the District’s grant application, stated “I am pleased that the Department of Agriculture saw the value in this application for funding and commend the Conservation District for its creative vision and collaboration. I was happy to support the application and the District’s efforts. The educational aspect will provide business development prospects for our rural agricultural community, while the partnership with a local brewery acts as a model for the industry to locally source the natural materials it needs, in turn making its products more marketable. With momentum increasing in recent years to buy locally grown products, I hope local farmers take advantage of this opportunity to learn about crops that will fill the area’s needs while generating a profit.”

This project is expected to start this year and be completed by July of 2023.

