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PSU Ref. No: 199723

Title: Hard Cider Business & Production Education & Training

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Proposed Project Period: 4/1/2018 - 12/31/2018

Total Project Request: \$4,000

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Please reference PSU Ref. Number in all correspondence.

Grant Proposal Submitted to SHAP Extension Committee
January, 2018

Title **Hard Cider Business & Production Education & Training**

Personnel Carla Snyder, Penn State Cooperative Extension,
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Duration of Project – The Hard Cider Program is an ongoing yet new initiative started in December 2014 to educate aspiring and expanding hard cider producers and growers of hard cider and common variety apples. This education and hands on training will work to bolster the burgeoning hard cider industry and allow for expansion of value-added apple product sales through this new outlet. Extension efforts provided for through this grant provide educational products and hands-on learning experiences from one of only 6 land grant universities working on cider throughout the country. The continuation of this work directly enables the growth of this new industry.

In 2016, producers indicated that knowledge gained at Extension Hard Cider Programming enabled them to create 47 new jobs resulting in \$25.1M in economic impact throughout the Commonwealth. This education is applicable to growers of common variety fresh market apples, new and expanding hard cider producers and support industry members.

Justification

Hard cider production is increasingly becoming an economically attractive value-added product in the apple industry. In order for growers to cash in on this product they must be educated on business planning and set-up, research based niche hard cider marketing, growing techniques for unique cider varieties and keep up-to-date on changing regulations that affect the health of their business and costly missteps in business development.

Data collected at hard cider educational events from 239 new and established hard cider producers and cider apple growers indicate the industry's clear need for additional education and their preference for hands-on learning events:

Educational priorities:

- On-farm and in cidery production tours
- Equipment tours and demos
- Marketing

Current Challenges:

- Fermentation Techniques & Equipment
- Steps to increase production

Preferred learning method:

- Cidery Production and Orchard Tours
- Hands-on workshops

Currently there are only 6 land-grant universities conducting research and education on hard cider, most of which are on the west coast and many of which opt to fly experts in from the UK to teach technical courses at a high cost to growers. However, Pennsylvania and the east coast region possess many assets, including growers who have been producing award winning hard cider with established cider orchards for over 30 years. This grant will work to pair the availability of these experts as well as those from afar with growers in our cider industry through workshops and hands-on tours of established cider orchards and production facilities.

Procedures

Continuation of the hard cider program will provide growers and producers with opportunities to attend on-site cider orchard and production facility tours, led by peer experts with a track record of successful cider variety and hard cider production.

Through this grant, the program will be able to provide and partially subsidize the cost for cider makers to attend high-level educational tours which provide them the rare opportunity to learn directly from seasoned professionals. In addition to the peer to peer learning experience, tours provide a rolling classroom portion where research and extension experts are able to provide workshop materials to participants in addition to the peer to peer learning environment. This combined structure has a track record of educational success in the farm market field and has been requested by cider makers at our classroom based workshops.

2017 hard cider tours provided for through this grant have resulted in 62% of participants indicating they were able to increase their profitability as a result of information gained at our workshop. Additionally 30% of participants at 2017 tours indicated they would be able to create one new job based on adjustments made to their business as a result of our workshop.

Our team's track record indicates the successful outcome of our program, of which can directly translate to the growth of our apple and cider industries. This is exemplified by our 2016 results in which producers indicated that knowledge gained at Extension Hard Cider Programming enabled them to create new jobs resulting in \$25.1M in economic impact throughout the Commonwealth.

Presentation of Results

In addition to the required reports, the results of this study will be shared with the Pennsylvania horticultural industry through presentations at extension workshops, field days, and grower conventions, and through extension newsletters, and trade publications.

Budget

April 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018	
Travel	\$1000
<u>Tour Costs</u>	<u>\$3000</u>
TOTAL	\$4000

Your support will provide funding to cover a portion of tour costs and travel necessary to set-up and provide a hard cider production and orchard educational tour with seasoned expert growers and producers as well as research and extension professionals within the cider industry. With limited research in this field, especially in the east coast growing climate, tours of longstanding cideries have become an imperative way for new cider growers and producers to learn about production and business techniques. Your support of this initiative will provide for the creation of this high-level tour to further the hard cider industry and expand the options for those searching for high-return value-added process apple products.

Other Support

Penn State Extension

Part-time employee wages