

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009**

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**SENATE BILL 609\***

Short Title: Funds for Specialty Crops Program. (Public)

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Sponsors: Senator Atwater.

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Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

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March 17, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA SPECIALTY CROPS  
2 PROGRAM.

3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4       Whereas, the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program is a statewide partnership of  
5 the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and the  
6 Marketing Division of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and

7       Whereas, the Program began in the early 1990s as a local effort in the Kinston area  
8 and then expanded statewide through funding from Golden L.E.A.F. and the Tobacco Trust  
9 Fund; and

10       Whereas, the Program is now in need of long-term sustainable funding to ensure the  
11 Program's future; and

12       Whereas, the Program is an entrepreneurial catalyst for rural development, reducing  
13 risk to growers who want to diversify their crop base by eliminating less feasible alternatives,  
14 and providing a systematic way of evaluating niche crops that otherwise would have limited  
15 funding possibilities; and

16       Whereas, the Program is designed to spur economic development by identifying  
17 potential new crops for North Carolina growers, determining whether these crops are suitable  
18 for growing conditions in the State, screening for the best varieties and refining production  
19 practices, developing markets for these new crops, developing new value-added products and  
20 businesses, and educating both Cooperative Extension agents and growers about new crop  
21 opportunities; and

22       Whereas, the successes of the Program include the development of the Sprite melon,  
23 which grossed \$3,000,000 in annual sales, the Athena cantaloupe, which grossed \$16,000,000  
24 in annual sales, the Red-fleshed seedless watermelon, which grossed \$10,000,000 in annual  
25 sales, and others; and

26       Whereas, potential areas of exploration and expansion for the Program include  
27 developing new markets for underutilized crops, developing high value nutraceuticals,  
28 medicinals and natural dyes from plants, developing high value branded and organic crops,  
29 breeding crops with greater nutritional value, developing season extending technologies to  
30 expand the production and marketing window for crops, and other activities; Now, therefore,  
31 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

32       **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated to the Board of Governors of The University of  
33 North Carolina the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2009-2010  
34 fiscal year and the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2010-2011  
35 fiscal year to be allocated to North Carolina State University for the support of the North  
36 Carolina Specialty Crops Program.  
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**SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.