

KLEW-TV - Lewiston, Idaho

[Print this article](#)

WSU nabs \$15 million grant for agricultural research

by Matt Loveless

Originally printed at <http://www.klewtv.com/news/local/62989557.html>

PULLMAN - It's a lot of money and they said it says a lot about their research.

Nine grants, totaling more than \$15 million, are going to Washington State University for continued agricultural research of specialty crops, which are things like berries, tree fruit, and wine grapes.

"WSU is one of the leading producers of specialty crops in the United States, and for that matter the world," said WSU College of Agriculture Dean Dan Bernardo. "In Washington state alone, we produce over 200 specialty crops at a commercial scale."

WSU President Elson Floyd spoke at a ceremony at the Vogel Plant BioSciences building on campus Wednesday. He said the award is a reflection of the university's commitment to agriculture.

"What makes this award so impressive is that of all of three allocations that were made across the country, roughly 1/3 of those funds came to the University," said Floyd. "The message is very clear. Our faculty was judged on their merits. WSU researchers are among the best in the nation."

Among projects tabbed to share the money: almost \$4 million for developing a sustainable stem-free sweet cherry, \$3 million to study pest management, and \$2 million to study the genetics of tree fruit.

State Tree Fruit Commission Manager Jim McFerson said it's big money, and it's money they needed.

"It takes us four or five years to get a return on our investment," said McFerson. "We're used to waiting, but now we want to accelerate the rate of progress. And this kind of money is enough money so that we can get the best teams in the world put together. We're going to solve some short term, some medium, and some long term

problems, and set the stage for better research and extension down the road."

McFerson said next year's goal for grant writers is to get half of the nation's research money.