



## **U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee**

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*A subcommittee of:  
Washington Hop Commission • Oregon Hop Commission  
Idaho Hop Commission • Hop Growers of America*

February 14, 2019

Curt Alt  
Director, Programs Division  
Foreign Agricultural Service  
USDA  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Alt:

I am writing in response to the USDA request for comments on the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program that appeared in the Federal Register on December 27, 2018 (Docket 83 FR 66673).

The United States Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee (USHIPPC) addresses plant protection issues on behalf of the US hop industry. The US hop industry exported a record amount of hops in 2018 - over \$325 million. This is a 29 percent increase over the previous year. USHIPPC is tasked with ensuring that those hop exports are not jeopardized due to differing international regulatory standards, especially regarding pesticide residue standards.

USHIPPC has frequently used TASC Grants to support this effort. Over the last decade, the hop industry has funded research for critical hop crop protection products through TASC. This research has provided the needed data to secure pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs) in key export markets, especially Japan and the European Union. The EU is particularly important as it is the largest export market with over a third all US exports destined for the market, and given the EU's conservative approach to pesticides.

US hop merchants maintain a "do not use" list on chemicals if they do not have key MRLs. Growers are told that approved and critical crop protection material cannot be used because of a missing MRL. USHIPPC is responsible for seeking these MRLs. More often than not, additional data must be generated to obtain these tolerances. TASC has come through on multiple occasions when the hop industry has needed funding to keep critical compound available for use due to a missing MRL.

USHIPPC is pleased that the TASC program will continue. We plan to continue to apply for grants when needed. We look forward to the streamlining of future TASC applications and evaluations as

well. TASC is an import program that allows US hop farmers to address technical issues abroad and keep our export markets open.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann E. George". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ann" and last name "George" being clearly legible.

Ann E. George  
Administrator  
U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee