



For Immediate Release:
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NCAT Receives Grant to Improve Insurance for Farmers

Kathleen Hadley, Executive Director for the National Center for Appropriate Technology, announced today the award of a \$360,000 grant from the Risk Management Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. The grant will fund a three-year NCAT project to develop a risk management insurance tool to help farmers and ranchers nationwide to take advantage of a special whole farm insurance product called Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite).

“What is also exciting about this project is that we are partnering with the Computer Science and Professional and Technical Communications (PTC) Departments of Montana Tech of the University of Montana to assist in the project development,” said Jeff Schahczenski, the NCAT project leader. The unique educational programs in Software Engineering along with the PTC department’s emphasis on software usability testing offered at Montana Tech provides a perfect match for the project.

NCAT and Montana Tech will work together to develop a user-friendly software tool to simplify access to this relatively new kind of insurance that protects the revenue of the farm or ranch rather than the specific commodities produced. The software tool will be built on the model of the popular software product for tax filing such as “Turbo-Tax.”

“One of the difficulties that prevent more farmers from using AGR-Lite is that it is more complicated than standard crop insurance products and many of the farmers and ranchers who could use the farm insurance product are often those with smaller and highly diversified farms who can not easily get all the records together to purchase the coverage,” Schahczenski said.. He continued, “This new whole farm revenue insurance will especially serve the needs of beginning, socially-disadvantaged, specialty, organic and direct market farmers and ranchers. These are the famers and ranchers NCAT has served for over 30 years.” Further information on the project can be obtained by calling Jeff at 406-494-4572.

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