

Application for the Alachua County Small Farmer Grant

Grant Due 5 PM June 28, 2024

Name of Applicant:	Ducky's Farm, LLC (Alix Freck and Alexander Venable)
Email:	duckysfarmfl@gmail.com ; alixfreck@gmail.com
Phone Number:	941-223-3807 ; 337-550-5503
Address of Farm/Small Producer Operation. Please include the parcel number.	24115 NW 94 Ave Alachua Fl 32615 01748-002-000
Total Funding Requested (request may not exceed \$5,000):	\$4,978
My operation's total Gross Cash Income per year is between \$1,000 and \$250,000 (yes / no) YES AND (Please select one below) Between \$1,000 and \$75,000. Between \$75,001 and \$150,000. Between \$150,001 and \$250,000.	
The owner and operator of the farm has not received the Small Farmer Grant in the past two years (yes / no) YES - \$500	
The owner and operator of the farm/small producer operation is a black, women, indigenous, and or persons-of-color. (yes / no) YES - founded and co-owned by woman	
The owner and operator of the farm is a first-time applicant OR has not received a Small Farmer Grant award in the past two years. (yes/no) YES - applied, was not selected, additional funds allocated and was awarded \$500.	
If awarded the funding will only be used to purchase equipment or other capital investments that enhance the economic productivity of my operation. (yes / no) YES	

Explain what equipment is needed, its cost, how it will be utilized, and economic return to your operations.

If you have taken the Extension Office's Agricultural Entrepreneurial Series, please attach your Farm Plan. (5 bonus points)

Ducky's Farm is seeking \$4,978 to improve and expand our exterior infrastructure in the form of our irrigation and sprinkler system.

Background: in 2023, Ducky's Farm purchased a new location in Alachua. The 8.5 acres was a licensed nursery and pecan and chestnut orchard. As the previous owner's health declined, the property fell into disrepair and upon his death became largely overgrown. The irrigation system in place had many issues - many cracked and broken pipes scattered throughout the property, continuing decline of old materials, and drip lines pulled up from mowing equipment through overgrown areas. Upon arrival at the farm the only working water line was to the residence on site, and we put in several thousand dollars to fix and repair leaks, failing equipment, and modernize the system with Hydrowise, a bluetooth watering system that automates zones from the well for optimal energy and water consumption conservation.

Current Need:

We have approximately 60 Chinese Honey Mandarin trees that need to be planted underneath our oak canopy on the west side of our farm. In order for this to be successful, we need to expand our irrigation line to this zone of the property. Additionally, we seek to add an herb and flower garden to the center of our property to supply our partner restaurants with herb garnishes and flower decor for their spaces. We seek to expand our fruit tree operation with additional citrus (lime, lemon, grapefruit) and fig trees, which cannot be done without proper irrigation. We have restaurant partners willing and ready to buy these items, but we cannot do so until the irrigation is ready and in place.

Possible Financial Returns:

This capital investment in the infrastructure of our farm will be

long lasting. A mature mandarin tree (5 years) can yield up to 175 lbs of fruit. If we estimate just \$1 per lb of fruit, that amounts to \$10,500 in additional funds the farm could produce per year. Over an average productive lifespan of 25 years, a potential \$262,500!

We seek to add an additional \$200 per month in herb and flower sales. This amounts to \$2,400 per year and these plants will be mature in a much shorter amount of time than the mandarin trees.

To a small farm, this is a monumental impact and a long term investment in what we consider a local, family farm in which we have invested all of our own savings and earnings into making a functional farm again. We are a newer, small farm established in 2021 and we are still in the building stage. Our attached farm plan gives you a brief insight into our tentative plans for the coming years.

Purchase Details:

Action Irrigation company will install a new main water pipe to west property line. They will add in new irrigation zones to delineate the new areas we will be watering. This is the company that we used to do repairs to date and they have given us a project consultation for this specific job.

Sprinklers| Sprinkler Install

- > Install fully automated irrigation zones.
- > Heavy duty professional grade irrigation material.
- > Flex Pipe used for all turf heads to prevent run over damage.
- > 2 year parts and labor warranty
- > Includes all applicable taxes and permit fees.
- > Installing new irrigation To cover all areas as discussed with farm owners.

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I certify that I am an Alachua County resident, have an agricultural exemption, and that all information in this grant application is true and correct. I understand that any errors, misrepresentations, or omissions in this application may result in the application not being considered, points reduced, or if discovered after the award, that the grant funds may be reimbursed to Alachua County.

Forest Grove Tree Farm and Nursery Marketing Plan

Introduction: The Forest Grove Tree Farm and Nursery was in operation for over 25 years, until 2020 when its founder passed away. The farm's main crop was pecans, chestnuts, Carolina Sapphire cypress and native cedar trees but it also produces a small crop of muscadine grapes, Meyer lemons, grapefruit, and Chinese Honey mandarins. Ducky's Farm, LLC (purchasing entity) historically has raised heritage Kune Kune pigs before switching to a larger scale heritage hog, the Red Wattle, Katahdin meat sheep, and has a limited poultry permit to sell farm fresh eggs. Our main customers were our own food truck business, Cajun Knights Fusion Cuisine, and employees of the Top Restaurant in Gainesville. With the merger of these two entities, Forest Grove Tree Farm and Nursery will be able to offer plants for sale, such as fruit and nut trees produced on site, peppers and cacti (new additions), citrus, nuts, premium heritage pork, and grass fed lamb.

As the farm has not been maintained in over six years, the main part of 2024 will be major rejuvenation of the plants. Despite the lack of care, the pecan trees produced fairly well in 2022. As an alternate bearing tree - 2023 has sparse pecan production. Due to the neglect of the trees, it is possible that 2024 could also be an off year. Chestnut production remains steady. Muscadine grape vines are alive and present but due to not being pruned will need to be completely cut back, which will result in a loss of production for 2025, but increased production thereafter.

Timeline for 2024:

January - March : Pruning and Rebuilding.

Raise canopy on pecan and chestnut trees, prune existing citrus, remove dead trees overshadowing grapefruit row, rebuild greenhouses. Start pepper seedlings in greenhouses.

Assess hog growth and determine slaughter date (February through April anticipated), lambing season.

April - May: Continue Clean Property Clean Up

Remove brush piles and fallen trees, mowing, weed eating, pruning. Pepper plant care.

June - October:

Continue farm maintenance and upkeep.

Acquire additional 9 ducks.

Fill in holes left from well power line repair. Remove brush pile from front.

Muscadine harvest

Expand Irrigation to support planting of 60 Chinese Honey Mandarin Trees

Sales of pork meat (wholesale to restaurant OR farmer's market OR pork shares)

Sales of peppers and plants (roadside stand AND plant shows/markets AND restaurant sales)

October - December:

Pecan Harvest, Begin Chestnut Harvest (sales via roadside stand, wholesale to restaurant, OR farmers market)

Build Herb and Flower Gardens

Marketing Plan in 2024:

Pork sale to the Top restaurant in Gainesville. Direct marketing to additional consumers.

Pepper sales will be sold to Kin Bar and Restaurant. Pepper plant sales will be on site, online, and at plant markets. Peppers will be sold fresh and dehydrated. Crops should be harvested June through November.

Pecan sales (if producing in 2024) will be direct to consumer from the farm via U-Pick, Farm Stand, and at local farmer's markets and online. Any sales occur November - December. Historically, the farm sold pecans at \$12 per lb for cracked and shelled. In the past, I took a small amount (200lbs) to the Haile Farmer's market from my previously owned farm. I was able to sell for \$16 per lb. I also sold cottage baked goods with pecans, but the biggest demand at the market was for raw pecans. The Top Restaurant in Gainesville uses 15lbs of pecans per week and may be an outlet for wholesale pecans. Additional direct restaurant sales to Kin Bar and Restaurant.

Chestnuts will be marketed via wholesale to Kin Bar and Restaurant, the Top, and other restaurants and other food CSA's , potentially through Jenny Franklin at High Springs Orchard and Market. Sales occur September to October.

Growing Season 2025:

In 2025 we will assess the demand for our premium pork. If there was a high demand in 2024, we will obtain a new breeding pair or trio and feeder piglets to continue pork program. If sales were lukewarm, we will cease pig production to focus solely on the plant aspect of the farm (retaining poultry for egg sales at the farm stand, etc.) and our grass fed lamb, which contributes to the upkeep of our farm pastures by keeping grass levels low.

January - March: Tree Pruning and Farm Maintenance, 2023 lambs sent to processor, lambing season. Grape Vine major prune and cutback. Trellis rebuild.

April - May: Assess pest levels and pest control options.

June - October:

Continue to monitor trees for pests and treat as needed

Continue farm maintenance and upkeep.

Sales of peppers and plants (roadside stand AND plant shows/markets AND restaurant sales)

Acquire additional citrus trees (lime, lemon, pomelo, grapefruit)

October - December:

Pecan Harvest, Chestnut Harvest (sales via roadside stand, wholesale to restaurant, OR farmers market)



RECIPIENT:

Alix Freck

24115 Northwest 94th Avenue
Alachua, Florida 32615

Quote #100275	
Sent on	Jun 24, 2024
Branch	Gville: 352.505.1675 www.actionirrigation.biz
Rep	Select (gville@actionirrigation.com)
Exp	This quote is valid for 30 days
Total	\$4,978.00

Product/Service	Description	Qty.	Unit Price	Total
Sprinklers Sprinkler Install	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Install fully automated irrigation zones. > Heavy duty professional grade irrigation material. > Flex Pipe used for all turf heads to prevent run over damage. > 2 year parts and labor warranty > Includes all applicable taxes and permit fees. > Installing new irrigation To cover all areas as discussed with farm owners. 	1	\$4,978.00	\$4,978.00*

Total **\$4,978.00**

* Non-taxable

This quote is valid for the next 30 days, after which values may be subject to change.