

# Application for the Alachua County Small Farmer Grant

Grant Due 5 PM June 28, 2024

Name of Applicant:	Natalia Derevianko	
Email:	<a href="mailto:eggsotics@gmail.com">eggsotics@gmail.com</a>	
Phone Number:	352-359-4472	
Address of Farm/Small Producer Operation. <b>Please include the parcel number.</b>	10411 SW 138 <sup>th</sup> St and 9508 SW 138 <sup>th</sup> St Archer, FL 32618 <a href="#">04626-002-087</a> <a href="#">04628-005-000</a>	
Total Funding Requested (request may not exceed \$5,000):	\$3860	
My operation's total Gross Cash Income per year is between \$1,000 and \$250,000 (yes)		
<b>AND (Please select one below)</b>		
Between \$1,000 and \$75,000.		
The owner and operator of the farm has not received the Small Farmer Grant in the past two years (yes)		
The owner and operator of the farm/small producer operation is a black, women, indigenous, and or persons-of-color. (yes)		
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. (no)		
If awarded the funding will only be used to purchase equipment or other capital investments that enhance the economic productivity of my operation. (yes)		
Explain what equipment is needed, its cost, how it will be utilized, and economic return to your operations.	Please see the attached.	
<p><b>YES!</b> 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 x, points reduced, or if discovered after the award, that the grant funds may be reimbursed to Alachua County.</p>		

**1. How will the grant maximize or contribute to the farm's overall business plan and grow the farms profitability or avoid costs?**

For over six years Eggotics has produced seasonal specialty fruits and vegetables for local sale, through our farmstand and at area farmers markets, along with pasture raised meat and eggs. Production takes place on two properties, 5 and 13 acres. Starting in 2022, the 5 acre space at 10411 SW 138<sup>th</sup> Street in Archer, FL was discovered by deer that ravaged muscadine grapes and mulberries, damaged productive loquat and peach trees, and completely decimated our 2023-2024 strawberry crop. This was not only a loss of thousands of dollars in potential sales, it also destroyed over 1600 expensive strawberry plants.

**Deer damage to young mulberry trees. Left- Damage to bark on a 2-year tree. Right- A newly planted tree was eaten down to the graft and had to be re-grafted.**



When we first discovered the occasional visits in 2002, we installed a hard fence with top wires that eliminated entry from our west and south sides. The deer then started to enter from the east side over a 4-foot fence. We then installed a 7 foot rubber mesh fence down the east side. This eliminated the problem for some time, but eventually the deer found new access across a neighbor's fence to the north. The rubber fence is also not a permanent solution.

**Left- 4 foot fencing was installed with a 3 foot extension of tight wire on the south and west sides of the property. This solution worked well until deer began to enter from adjacent properties.**



We installed cellular game cameras that would notify us of deer in the space. While we'd promptly drive to the property in the middle of the night, we could scare the deer out, but they'd only return soon after.

The problem is that deer access our property by coming over 4-foot fences on the north and east sides. The requested funds would be used exclusively to erect a hard deer-proof fence that would eliminate their access to the farm, and complement our existing deer mitigation strategies.



**Above: Deer visit the garden on occasional nights fall-spring. Images above were taken from cellular game cameras on 5/30/24 and 3/8/24. Upon notification we drive to the farm and chase them out, but it is not an efficient means to remove them.**

## **2. What are the estimated financial returns?**

There would be financial returns on two levels. First, our operation relies on profits from a variety of high value fruit crops, including peaches, nectarines, pears, apples, jujube, figs, guava, blackberries, persimmons, and many others. These all have significant value to the business, but more importantly, provide access to just-harvested fresh fruit to local consumers. The fruits and trees are prime targets for deer.

In 2023-2024 we lost over \$460 worth of strawberry plants, and estimated loss of over \$5000 in retail fruit product. To make matters worse, deer damaged trees. They ate young branches and bark on apple and loquat trees, and antler scraping on pears and mulberries damaged trees (first figure). While not lethal damage, the loss of trained branches and damaged bark slowed eventual production. The losses in 2024 probably range in the \$5000 to \$8000 range.

Deer have the potential to lead to other losses not easily quantified. Our farm is recognized for growing diverse crops, but also crops that are considered unsuitable, rare or lost. We have gone to great lengths to obtain Southern pear, apple and mulberry material that exists in few other places, but may be well suited for small farmers in northern Florida. We also have trialed cultivars thought not to be

productive here, and have identified varieties that should be useful to other small farms. We need to preserve these materials for future distribution to others.

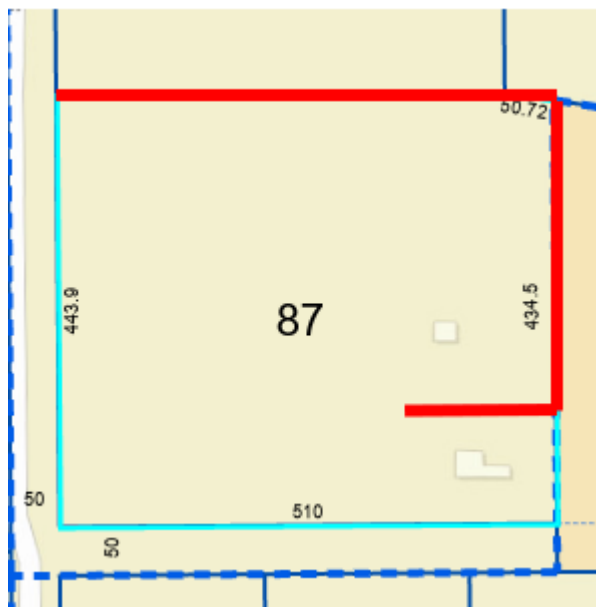
It is also important to note that this is a permanent installation and will enhance farm profits for decades to come. A one-time investment will have long-term returns.

### 3. What specifically will be purchased with the grant funds?

**Materials** We would purchase the posts and 8-foot 2x4 galvanized welded wire fencing to cover approximately 950 feet of the garden's perimeter, blocking access from the north and east sides of the property.

**Materials Cost.** A typical cost is \$520 for 330 feet x 8 foot fixed-knot fence, with a coating to have long life in extreme conditions. We would require 3 rolls. A 61 pack of 8 foot posts with ground sleeves is approximately \$2000. The corner brace and end brace kits are a total of \$300. **The grand total of the project is \$3860.**

**Value Added.** The added value to this proposition is that we will do the installation. We have access to the necessary tree trimming equipment, a tractor-driven auger and all necessary tools. We request only the materials for the fence itself.



The map to the left illustrates the property lines at 10411 SW 138<sup>th</sup> Street in Archer, FL. The light blue line shows existing fencing. The red line is the proposed additional deer fence.

**Conclusion.** This hard, durable investment will have immediate impacts in farm production. While no solution is perfect, the hard deer fence requested is an outstanding step forward in eliminating deer pressure from our agricultural property. In 2024 we lost a huge number of strawberry plants, damage to trees, and loss of tree fruit. Erecting this fence before winter of 2024 will allow us to realize greater profits from winter fruit crops like strawberry, as well as seasonal tree fruits in 2025.