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## **Arkansas Assists in Leading Agricultural Trade Mission to Vietnam**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward assisted in leading a National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Emerging Markets Trade Mission to Vietnam from April 5-13, 2024.

Secretary Ward is currently serving as the Vice President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Secretary Ward was joined by Rick Pate, Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture; Christy Clark, Montana Director of Agriculture; Sherry Vinton, Nebraska Director of Agriculture; Derek Sandison, Washington Director of Agriculture; Amanda Brondy, Global Cold Chain Alliance; and members of the NASDA staff.

The trade mission follows Governor Sanders' successful trade mission to South Korea and Japan from March 6-14, 2024, and highlights the potential for significant increases in agricultural trade in Asia as we seek to continue to diversify our state's agricultural trading markets away from China.

Vietnam is currently Arkansas's fourth largest agricultural export market with a value of over \$61 million which includes cotton, feeds and fodders, poultry, and forest products. Vietnam ranks as the 10th largest agricultural export market for the United States with a value of \$3.46 billion. Vietnamese consumers view products from the United States as high quality and safe with an increasing demand for high-value consumer-oriented products and growing modern food retail, food service, and food processing sectors. Further, Vietnam has a population of 100 million with half of the population expected to enter the global middle class by 2035.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture hosted delegations from Thailand and Vietnam in Arkansas on October 15-17, 2023, as the first NASDA inbound trade mission through the Emerging Market Programs. During the inbound trade mission, delegates traveled throughout the state to learn about Arkansas's largest industry to include visits at McGehee Producers Gin, the Port of Little Rock, Ben E. Keith, the University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center, Isbell Farms and Origami Sake, Bruce Oakley, as well as numerous discussions with Arkansas agriculture industry leaders and associations.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources conservation to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while sustaining natural resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit [agriculture.arkansas.gov/](https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/). The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.