



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

1 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205
agriculture.arkansas.gov
(501) 225-1598

Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8/1/2024

Contact: Shealyn Sowers, 501.355.6667
shealyn.sowers@agriculture.arkansas.gov

August Proclaimed as Catfish Month in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, AR — The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce that Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders has officially proclaimed August as Catfish Month in Arkansas. This proclamation celebrates the significant contributions of Arkansas's catfish industry to the state's economy and highlights the importance of catfish farming within our agricultural sector.

Today, Secretary Wes Ward celebrated by presenting [the proclamation](#) to Travis and Jessica Hester, the owners of Eat My Catfish, one of Arkansas's seven restaurants featured on the U.S. Catfish Trail. Secretary Ward was joined in the celebration by fellow Arkansas Cabinet Secretaries, members of the catfish industry and Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board.



Arkansas is recognized as the birthplace of warm water aquaculture, with its pioneering commercial fish farms dating back to the 1940s. By the late 1950s, Arkansas had established itself as the birthplace of the commercial catfish industry, a legacy that continues to thrive today.

Arkansas is a leader in catfish production, ranking third nationally with 16.6 million pounds of foodsize fish sold. In 2023 alone, Arkansas catfish farmers contributed \$20.6 million to the agricultural economy through foodsize fish sales. As of July 1, 2024, Arkansas [catfish producers had more than 8 million foodsize fish](#) in inventory, showcasing the industry's robust growth and sustainability.

Arkansas's catfish industry benefits from exceptional aquaculture research and support programs, including the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, the Aquaculture/Fisheries Center for Excellence at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, and the USDA Agriculture Research Service's Harry K. Dupree National Aquaculture Research Center in Stuttgart.

The [catfish labeling law](#) enacted in 2015 helps consumers easily identify where their catfish comes from when purchasing from Arkansas retail establishments. This law shows the state's dedication to both the industry and consumers by labeling catfish as "farm-raised," "river or lake," "imported," or "ocean." This legislation helps to provide quality control for consumers and protects domestic catfish farmers from substitutes that are imported and sold often under the label of being catfish.

In celebration of Catfish Month, we encourage everyone to support local catfish producers and enjoy catfish dishes at our many fine restaurants. [Click here](#) for a list of restaurants in Arkansas featured on the U.S. Catfish Trail.

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. 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. For more information, visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/.