Arkansas Grown Program to host “Local Conversations” Event January 17 to Connect Specialty Crop Growers with Local Food Buyers

HERMITAGE, Ark. – To help farmers learn more about business opportunities in the locally grown food category, the Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD) will host an Arkansas Grown local conversation event on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 9:30 a.m. at the Community Center in Hermitage. This event will facilitate a discussion among institutional food buyers, food distributors and growers.

“A 2017 study conducted by the Food Marketing Institute found that consumers are willing to spend 20 percent more for locally produced fruits and vegetables,” said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward. “This type of collaborative event brings together representatives from the entire supply chain to identify ways to provide consumers more access to locally produced foods and products.”

The following panel discussions will cover different parts of the food marketing channel:

1) Food distributor panel with AWG, Ben E. Keith and Sysco.
2) Farm to School panel, featuring nutrition directors and the Arkansas Farm to School Director.
3) Growers already producing and selling locally grown food products.

The event is free, and lunch will be provided by Farm Credit. Seating is limited, so please make your reservation by contacting Brooke Clanton at brooke.clanton@agriculture.arkansas.gov, or calling (501) 410-4616.

The Arkansas Grown program promotes food and products grown by Arkansas producers and helps connect growers and food buyers. Go to arkansasgrown.com to learn more about Arkansas Grown and this event.

The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit www.agriculture.arkansas.gov

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