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Arkansas Agriculture Department Attends White House Conference on Rural Prosperity

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Agriculture leaders from across the U.S., including Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward, Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, and Director of State-Federal Relations Katie Beck, gathered today in Washington, D.C. for the White House Conference on Rural Prosperity, held in conjunction with the [National Association of State Departments of Agriculture](#) (NASDA) Winter Policy Conference.

The White House Conference agenda included remarks from Vice President of the United States Mike Pence, as well as discussion with federal leadership including U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb. The conference focused on the Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Task Force, which was chaired by Secretary Perdue. The Task Force was tasked with identifying legislative, regulatory, and policy changes to achieve rural prosperity in seven areas: rural American agriculture, economic development, job growth, infrastructure improvements, technological innovation, energy security, and quality of life in rural America. Learn more about the Agriculture and Rural Prosperity Task Force Report, [here](#).

As part of the NASDA Winter Policy Conference, state agriculture officials set the following top policy priorities for the coming year: passing a unified Farm Bill, successfully modernizing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) – all through the lens of advancing cooperative federalism. The Washington, D.C. conference of more than 250 state, federal, and industry agriculture leaders underscores the importance of effective partnerships between states and the federal government.

“Governor Hutchinson continues to be our state’s top advocate for our agriculture industry at the state, national, and international level,” says Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward. “Agriculture is our state’s largest industry and under the Governor’s leadership we look forward to continuing to build upon our relationships with federal partners in order to provide the best possible services to our industry and our state’s farmers and ranchers.”

NASDA represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances agriculture by forging partnerships and creating consensus to achieve sound policy outcomes between state departments of agriculture, the federal government, and stakeholders. The 2018 Winter Policy Conference is one of two annual meetings for NASDA.

The Arkansas Agriculture Department 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. Learn more: www.aad.arkansas.gov.

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