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Arkansas Agriculture Department Law Enforcement Division Helps Resolve Recent Property Theft and Arson Cases

Little Rock, AR. – The Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD) Law Enforcement Division has successfully partnered with local and state officials this summer to complete investigations and bring charges for crimes involving property theft and arson. AAD Law Enforcement officers investigate crimes that affect any part of Arkansas’s diverse agricultural industry, and enforce the regulations of the boards and commissions within the AAD.

Most recently, AAD investigators partnered with the Ashley County Sheriff’s Office and Louisiana authorities including the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Morehouse Parish Sheriff’s Office, and City of Bastrop Fire Prevention Office, to stop an arsonist responsible for setting fires in Arkansas and Louisiana. Arson fires are those intentionally set to threaten life or property, and remain one of the primary causes of wildfires in Arkansas. A suspect has been arrested in Louisiana and charged with seven counts of arson there. Three additional counts of arson and four counts of reckless burning are pending in Arkansas. In all, arson fires set by the suspect burned 70 acres in Arkansas and more than 27 in Louisiana.

“Partnerships are an integral part of stopping agricultural crimes. With the help of local Sheriff’s Offices, the Arkansas State Police, and other law enforcement agencies, we are able to better protect Arkansas residents and our largest industry,” says AAD Law Enforcement Chief Billy Black. “While arson and property theft are more publicly recognized crimes, we also assist with timber and livestock theft, vandalism of forestry and agricultural equipment, and illegal dumping. We encourage the public and law enforcement to contact us anytime we can assist.”

In July, AAD Law Enforcement partnered with the Searcy County Sheriff’s Office and Arkansas State Police to locate property stolen from the AAD’s Arkansas Forestry Commission work center in Marshall. Property including a truck, ATV, and various maintenance equipment items was recovered using video surveillance footage and quick response by investigators from respective agencies.

“The action taken by AAD Law Enforcement helped us to quickly stop a thief that could have caused more damage or property loss in the area. Our primary concern is the safety of our residents, and we appreciate all agency partners in helping to accomplish that mission in Searcy County and across the state,” said Searcy County Sheriff Joey Pruitt.

Learn more about AAD Law Enforcement staff and capabilities, [here](#). Submit an online complaint form or request AAD Law Enforcement assistance, [here](#).

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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