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Twelve Days of Arkansas Agriculture: Bureau of Standards Protects Arkansas Buyers and Sellers

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Bureau of Standards, a division of the Arkansas Agriculture Department’s State Plant Board, helps protect buyers and sellers throughout the state by inspecting all commercial weighing or measuring as well as ensuring compliance with other Arkansas consumer protection laws.

Thirteen field inspectors, with assigned regions across the state, inspect packages and conduct price verifications at retail and wholesale outlets to assure the accuracy of advertised commodities, test motor-fuel dispensers and small capacity commercial scales, and respond to consumer complaints. 7,334 Arkansas retail businesses were inspected during the previous fiscal year which included 580 catfish labeling inspections, 1,451 motor-fuel dispenser tests, inspection of 1,765 scales, and responding to 67 consumer complaints.

“Our staff works diligently to ensure a fair marketplace by guaranteeing that Arkansas consumers are paying for products as they are advertised, and that businesses are receiving fair profits for the products that they sell,” says Agriculture Specialist Roger Frazier. “During the holidays, we focus on high volume seasonal items like turkeys, sweet potatoes, cranberries, and bows and wrapping.”

Investigators follow guidelines established by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) handbooks, which are published annually and create uniformity across the United States. States may also enact legislation to address state specific issues like the Arkansas Catfish Labeling Law. During a catfish labeling inspection, inspectors check billboards and restaurant menus to determine whether fish served at the establishment is labeled as “farm-raised” or “imported.” Then, inspectors work with managers to check invoices and verify that the label for the fish is actually the location of origin listed on the invoice. Finally, inspectors request to look at any excess fish in stock to check labeling of the excess product. Of the 580 catfish labeling inspections completed in fiscal year 2017, 94% were in compliance.

Learn more about the Bureau of Standards at www.aad.arkansas.gov/bureau-of-standards or submit a consumer complaint by calling 501-570-1159 or emailing bureau@aspb.ar.gov.

This release is the eighth edition to the Twelve Days of Arkansas Agriculture campaign, which highlights some of the programs and services provided by the AAD that support our state’s agriculture industry. Follow each of the 12 stories by searching the #12DaysofARAgriculture hashtag, or visit aad.arkansas.gov. 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.

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The Arkansas Agriculture Department offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

