



Asa Hutchinson
Governor

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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



Wes Ward
Secretary of Agriculture

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Contact: Amy Lyman, (501) 219-6323, amy.lyman@agriculture.arkansas.gov

J.P. Fairhead To Serve as Arkansas Agriculture Feral Hog Eradication Coordinator

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture (Department) has hired John Paul (J.P.) Fairhead as the Department’s first Feral Hog Eradication Program Coordinator. The newly created position is part of a \$3.4 million grant recently awarded to the Department through the USDA Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program.

“J.P. brings extensive knowledge of statewide feral hog control activities to the Department,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward. “We look forward to putting J.P.’s expertise to work as we implement the new feral hog eradication program in project areas across the state,” said Ward.

Fairhead, employed with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission since 2008 as a Natural Resource Program Technician and Field Biologist, has served as the Feral Hog Eradication Program Coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission since February of 2013. He has been involved in the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force since it was formed in 2017, serving on the Management and Control Subcommittee.

“The damages associated with feral hogs negatively impact all Arkansans at some level, whether it’s direct damages to agriculture or reduced native wildlife populations,” said Fairhead. “I look forward to addressing the unique challenges associated with controlling this prolific, destructive, invasive species by partnering with multiple agencies to implement effective control measures. Addressing the feral hog issue will not be a quick-fix; however, I do believe that we can make positive strides to reduce damages if we focus on working together to remove these invasive pests.”

Arkansas was one of 10 states to receive funding through the USDA Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program. The program will be a collaborative effort between the NRCS, APHIS, Arkansas Conservation Districts, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, and other Feral Hog Task Force members to reduce feral hog populations, address resource concerns, and provide public education about effective control methods in four project areas across the state. More information about the Feral Hog Task Force can be found at aad.arkansas.gov/feral-hog-eradication-task-force.

Feral hogs, and the damages associated with them, are an issue in Arkansas and the entire southeastern United States. Damage estimates approach \$1.5 billion annually to the U.S. and approximately \$19 million in Arkansas. Feral hogs are a threat to agriculture, forestlands, waterways, wildlife, and human health.

To learn more about the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, visit agriculture.arkansas.gov.