



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: Brett Dawson, (501) 219-6324, brett.dawson@agriculture.arkansas.gov

October Proclaimed as Arkansas Farm to School Month 2019 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Winners Announced

Little Rock, AR – Governor Asa Hutchinson proclaimed October as Arkansas Farm to School Month during the Farm to School Celebration held at the Arkansas State Capitol on October 15. The event was part of nationwide efforts to connect schools, early childhood educational sites, and other organizations with farms to bring local, healthy food to children. Find the full Arkansas Farm to School proclamation [here](#).

Governor Hutchinson, Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward, Brandon Haberer of Farm Credit of Western Arkansas, and Lana Stovall of AgHeritage Farm Credit Services also presented awards to the following 2019 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest winners:

- Overall School Garden Winner: Pike View Early Childhood Center, \$1,000 Award
- Best Community Collaboration School Garden: Marshall Elementary, \$500 Award
- Best Environmental Based Education School Garden: Forest Park Elementary, \$500 Award
- Best Nutrition Education Based School Garden: Sheridan Intermediate, \$500 Award
- Best School Garden Start-up Proposal: Springdale High School, \$500 Award

The Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest was initiated by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas in 2014. The program provides the opportunity to promote the importance of involving young people in the process of fresh food production and cultivation. Farm Credit generously provides monetary awards for the program.

“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we believe it’s important to support local food system initiatives such as the Arkansas Grown School Garden Program,” said Farm Credit of Western Arkansas President and CEO, Brandon Haberer, on behalf of the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. “Local food projects like this are a great way to educate the next generation and the public about food production and agriculture.”

The Farm to School Celebration culminated with an informational showcase where schools, farmers, non-profits, and agencies shared their participation efforts in farm to school. Approximately 100 students, teachers, agencies, and other partners were in attendance for the morning’s events.

“The growth of farm to school, both in Arkansas and across the nation, has been tremendous. We celebrate its support from Arkansas school partners, legislators, and our Governor, and we applaud the commitment of those who work at it every day.” says Emily English, Arkansas Farm to School Core Partner for the National Farm to School Network in the Access to Healthy Foods Research Group at Arkansas Children’s Research Institute.

Sarah Lane is the state's first Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, a position created by the Arkansas General Assembly in 2019. For more information about the Arkansas Farm to School program, contact Ms. Lane at sarah.lane@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

With more than \$3.6 billion in assets, AgHeritage Farm Credit Services, Farm Credit Midsouth, and Farm Credit of Western Arkansas support rural communities and agriculture across Arkansas with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow. In Arkansas, Farm Credit associations are owned by more than 11,000 customer-owners they serve. Through the cooperative structure, customer-owners have a voice and vote in the associations' governance. Members also share in the cooperatives' financial success through cooperative returns which total more than \$220 million since 1997.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture 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.

The Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI) is a not-for-profit corporation owned by Arkansas Children's, Inc., and established in 1989 to provide an on-site research environment for UAMS faculty and scientists working on Arkansas Children's campuses. In fiscal year 2019, ACHRI researchers received \$23.7 million in grants and contracts from federal, state, and private agencies, industry sponsors, and philanthropic donations. Arkansas Farm to School is funded through the generous support of the Kohl's Cares Foundation.

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