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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 9/18/2018

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Over \$729,000 Provided to Arkansas Fairs and Youth Activities to Support Agriculture in 2018

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Agriculture Department’s Livestock and Poultry Commission provided \$729,272 in premium funding to support the operations of Arkansas fairs and to offset expenses of Arkansas youth representing the State in agriculture-related activities in 2018. More than \$669,000 was provided to Arkansas county and district fairs, the Four States Fair, and the Arkansas State Fair. A total of \$59,738 was paid to the State 4H Arkansas Association, Arkansas FFA Association, the Arkansas High School Rodeo Association, and Miss Arkansas Rodeo.

The statewide premium funds to fairs are paid annually to help cover costs of fair operations including awards to exhibitors and maintenance expenses. In 2018, more than 29,700 youth participated in Arkansas fairs as junior exhibitors. The funding provided to the State 4H Association, Arkansas FFA Association, the Arkansas High School Rodeo Association and to Miss Arkansas Rodeo reimburses the expenses incurred by student members representing the State at national conferences and events outside of Arkansas.

“Fairs and programs such as 4H, FFA, and youth rodeo events provide opportunities to showcase Arkansas’s agriculture industry and encourage the involvement of Arkansas youth who are our future farmers and ranchers. The funding provided through these programs plays an important role in sustaining fairs and youth programs across the State”, says Director of the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission Patrick Fisk.

Fair premiums are awarded to fairs that host an annual fair for a minimum of three days and that maintain a stable pattern of income and/or growth. Fair premium amounts are calculated on a points system based on criteria developed by the Arkansas Fair Association which includes the total number of fair attendees, admission prices, and total exhibitors. The 4H Association, FFA Association, Arkansas High School Rodeo Association, and Miss Arkansas Rodeo are required to submit an itemized listing and documentation of all expenditures.

Arkansas Agriculture Department personnel routinely audit fair records to ensure that applications appropriately match completed premium paperwork. Each year Arkansas Agriculture Department inspectors provide 2,100 man hours at 80 fairs across the state to complete health inspections of exhibition animals and to ensure that the applicable animal health regulatory requirements are satisfied.

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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 at aad.arkansas.gov.

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.

