



ASA HUTCHINSON  
GOVERNOR

# ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

ARKANSAS FORESTRY COMMISSION  
ARKANSAS LIVESTOCK & POULTRY COMMISSION  
ARKANSAS STATE PLANT BOARD

1 NATURAL RESOURCES DRIVE, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72205 | (501) 225-1598 | AAD.ARKANSAS.GOV



WES WARD  
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 11/17/2017**

**CONTACT: Adriane Barnes, (501) 516-6255, [adriane.barnes@arkansas.gov](mailto:adriane.barnes@arkansas.gov)**

## Planting of Non-Commercial Cotton Requires Waiver from State Plant Board

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** – The boll weevil, an invasive pest that causes devastating damage to cotton crops, was successfully eradicated from Arkansas in 2006 after years of collaborative efforts between cotton producers and the Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation. To help the state retain its boll weevil-free status, the Boll Weevil Eradication Act requires that non-commercial cotton may not be planted without a waiver from the State Plant Board. Non-commercial cotton is defined as cotton intended for any purposes other than sale.

When individuals plant non-commercial cotton outside of monitored areas, they are creating the risk of re-introducing a boll weevil population in Arkansas. “Cotton seed should not be distributed or planted outside of commercial areas if we want the monitoring system in place for boll weevil prevention to continue working,” says State Plant Board Director Terry Walker. “Our cotton producers have invested millions of dollars in a successful boll weevil eradication program, and we remain committed to preventing the pest from threatening our crop again,” he said.

Teachers, civic groups, travel center managers and others should consider alternatives to planting small gardens and demonstration areas of cotton, or should go through the process of having the seed registered and monitored by the State Plant Board. Contact State Plant Board officials to request waivers by calling 501-225-1598 or emailing [Scott.Bray@aspb.ar.gov](mailto:Scott.Bray@aspb.ar.gov) or [Mark.Stoll@aspb.ar.gov](mailto:Mark.Stoll@aspb.ar.gov).

The boll weevil is an invasive beetle that feeds on the squares (flower buds), blooms, and boll of cotton plants. It is transported most commonly by the movement of farming equipment and vehicles, or weather events such as hurricanes. Quick identification of the weevil is the best way to prevent it from re-establishing a population in Arkansas, which is accomplished through actively monitored traps.

According to the Arkansas Crop Production Annual Summary released on January 12, 2017 by the USDA-NASS, 375,000 acres of cotton were harvested last year by Arkansas farmers. Learn more about the Boll Weevil Eradication Program, [here](#). Find rules and regulations administered by the Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Act, [here](#).

The Arkansas State Plant Board is an agency of the Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD). 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. Learn more: [www.aad.arkansas.gov](http://www.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.*

