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Arkansas Grown Program Unveils New Way to Identify Locally Grown Products in Walmart Stores Supplying Walmart on American Jobs Initiative

Little Rock, AR - June 12, 2017 - The Arkansas Agriculture Department hosted a celebration today at the Little Rock Walmart on Baseline Road to support a new partnership between the Arkansas Grown program and Walmart stores. The Arkansas Grown program is a branding program for locally grown and made products, which helps increase local produce sales and supports local farm jobs and operations.

Now new Arkansas Grown signage in Walmart stores make identifying foods grown and produced in Arkansas easier to identify. Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward recognized Walmart's work in these efforts along with two local farmers who supply many Walmart stores across the country with their locally grown produce.



Arkansas consistently ranks in the top 25 states in the production of 21 agricultural commodities including sweet potatoes and tomatoes. Agriculture means jobs and more and more, the "local food" movement means more jobs for Arkansas.

"Growing up on a farm in Northwest Arkansas gave me a deep understanding and appreciation for agriculture," said Governor Asa Hutchinson. "The partnership between our state's largest company, Walmart, and our Arkansas Agriculture Department's Arkansas Grown Program represents our state's continued commitment to the success of our state's largest industry and our many hardworking farmers and ranchers."

"When consumers buy products featuring the Arkansas Grown logo they know that they are supporting farmers and ranchers from right here in Arkansas," said Wes Ward, Agriculture Secretary, Arkansas Department of Agriculture. "The Arkansas Agriculture Department is proud of our Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made programs, and we are proud to partner with Walmart stores located in Arkansas to help promote local foods and jobs."

"Our customers have told us that second to price, where products are made influences their purchase decisions," said Cindi Marsiglio, Vice President, U. S. Manufacturing at Walmart. "We are focused on buying great quality products that create jobs in communities across the U.S. It makes sense for our customers, our communities and our company."

According to a 2015 U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends Survey*, over 80% of surveyed grocery store shoppers reported purchasing local foods occasionally, while 9% reported purchasing local foods whenever possible.

“Matthews Ridgeview Farms is a growing, sustainable company with an exciting future,” said Autumn Campbell, Sales Manager, Matthews Ridgeview Farms. “The produce industry is ever changing and the sweet potato market is growing every year. We are excited that our healthy product can be purchased by our friends and neighbors in their neighborhood store.”

Based on data from the Farm to School research study, Arkansas consumers spend \$7 billion annually on food, and \$6.3 billion of that amount is spent on purchasing food from other states. It is the goal of the Arkansas Agriculture Department and Arkansas Grown to keep more of that \$7 billion within the state.

About The Arkansas Agriculture Department

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.

[*Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems: A Report to Congress, January 2015](#)

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