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2021 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Winners Announced

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are pleased to announce the winners of the 2021 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest:

- **Best Start-up School Garden Proposal:**
Blevins High School, Blevins (Hempstead County), \$500 Award
Quitman Elementary School, Quitman (Cleburne County), \$500 Award
- **Best Education Based School Garden:**
Ouachita Elementary School, Donaldson (Hot Spring County), \$500 Award
Sheridan Elementary School, Sheridan (Grant County), \$500 Award
- **Best Harvest Partnership School Garden:**
The Delta School, Wilson (Mississippi County), \$500 Award
First Friends Preschool, Rogers (Benton County), \$500 Award
- **Best Community Collaboration School Garden:**
Ozark Junior High School, Cedarville (Franklin County), \$500 Award
Retta Brown ABC, El Dorado (Union County), \$500 Award
- **Best Overall School Garden:**
Cedarville Elementary School, Cedarville (Crawford County), \$1,000 Award
- **Champion of School Garden Sustainability:**
Forest Park Elementary School, Little Rock (Pulaski County), \$1,000 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 the funding for the program. This year funding for the contest was increased, which allowed the number of winning schools to increase from six to ten.

“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 Midsouth CEO James McJunkins 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 contest was available to public and private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments. Awardees were schools that had a school garden open during the 2020-2021 school year or planned to start a garden in the 2021-2022 school year.

“School gardens provide a hands-on opportunity for children to learn about Arkansas agriculture and where their food comes from. The lessons learned through school gardens have a lasting impact on children, their families, and entire communities,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward.

Farm Credit supports rural communities and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services, today and tomorrow. It has been fulfilling its mission of helping rural America grow and thrive for more than a century with the capital necessary to make businesses successful and by financing vital infrastructure and communication services.

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. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. 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.

