



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

[Arkansas Department of Agriculture](https://www.arkansas.gov/agriculture)

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Contact: Sarah Cato, (501) 529-2689

sarah.cato@agriculture.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Department of Agriculture Reminds Agriculture Partners about Safe Prescribed Burning and Smoke Management

LITTLE ROCK, AR – With harvest underway, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture reminds our partners in agriculture and conservation of the importance of safe prescribed burning techniques as a valuable tool in crop management plans.

Row crop farmers use prescribed fire in the fall as part of crop management plans to remove stubble following the harvest of rice, soybeans, corn, and cotton. Prescribed burning is an efficient and economical control method for preparing fields for the next growing season and eliminating pests and diseases. Burning crop residue also allows for no-till or reduced-till planting during the next growing season. Smoke management planning prior to the application of prescribed fires helps to reduce smoke impact on roadways, nearby towns, and sensitive areas like schools, nursing homes, churches, and other facilities.

“We want to remind all farmers who are using prescribed burns to make a safe smoke management plan, so we can continue to be good neighbors to all Arkansans,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture, Wes Ward.

There is a Safe Burning Checklist which farmers complete before applying prescribed fire:

- Take extra precautions for smoke sensitive areas (highways, residents, communities, etc.)
- Report prescribed burns to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Dispatch Center (1-800-830-8015)
- Check to make sure relative humidity is above 20%
- Check to make sure wind speed is less than 15 mph
- Be sure to follow appropriate Smoke Category Day guidelines

Reporting the burn to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Dispatch Center provides a full understanding to the farmer of weather conditions, information about other burns in the area, and proximity of nearby smoke sensitive areas like schools, nursing homes, and highways. A smart phone app to help report row crop burns is in final stages of development.

“It is important for farmers to practice responsible stewardship and avoid future regulations and red tape. Prescribed fire is a valuable tool and calling the hotline before burning takes only seconds. Taking these proactive measures today will help us ensure a quality air shed for our families and communities for generations to come,” said David Gairhan, Arkansas Rice Federation Chairman.

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/](https://www.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.