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2022 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Winners Announced at Arkansas Farm to School Month Proclamation Ceremony

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce that Governor Asa Hutchinson has proclaimed October as Arkansas Farm to School month. The proclamation was celebrated today at Pinnacle View Middle School in Little Rock as part of nationwide efforts to connect schools, early childhood educational sites, and other organizations with farms to bring local, healthy food to children. Find the full proclamation at governor.arkansas.gov/our-office/proclamation.

At the Arkansas Farm to School Month celebration, the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas presented awards to winners of the 2022 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest. The winners are as follows:

- **Best Start-up School Garden Proposal:**
Lee Senior High School, Marianna (Lee County), \$500 Award
Wonderview Elementary School, Hattiesville (Conway County), \$500 Award
- **Best Education Based School Garden:**
Nettleton STEAM, Jonesboro (Craighead County), \$500 Award
Conway High School, Conway (Faulkner County), \$500 Award
- **Best Harvest Partnership School Garden:**
Crestwood Elementary, North Little Rock (Pulaski County), \$500 Award
Chicot Elementary & Early Childhood Center, Mabelvale (Pulaski County), \$500 Award
- **Best Community Collaboration School Garden:**
Arch Ford/Synergy ALE, Hot Springs Village (Garland and Saline Counties), \$500 Award
Ward Central Elementary, Ward (Lonoke County), \$500 Award
- **Best Overall School Garden:**
Pinnacle View Middle School, Little Rock (Pulaski County), \$1,000 Award
- **Champion of School Garden Sustainability:**
Sheridan Elementary School, Sheridan (Grant 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 Associations of Arkansas generously provides the funding for the program.

“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 of Western Arkansas CEO Brandon Haberer 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 2021-2022 school year or planned to start a garden in the 2022-2023 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.

Find photos from the event at [flic.kr/s/aHBqjAaQax](https://www.flic.kr/s/aHBqjAaQax).

With more than \$3.7 billion in assets, the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas support rural communities and agriculture across Arkansas with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow. In Arkansas, the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are owned by the more than 22,000 customer-owners they serve. Through the cooperative structure, customer-owners have a voice and vote in the associations’ governance. Members also share in the cooperatives’ financial success through cooperative returns which total more than \$293 million since 1997.

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.

