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Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest Entries Accepted Through June 11

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Entries are being accepted for the tenth annual Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest, sponsored by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas. Applicants may be any school, early childhood education facility, or alternative learning environment that had a school garden during the 2022-2023 school year or is planning to start a garden in the 2023-2024 school year.

“School gardens are valuable educational tools that help students develop healthy eating habits, learn about Arkansas agriculture, and participate in hands-on learning,” said Wes Ward, Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture. “We are grateful for the generosity of Farm Credit and their continued support of this program.”

Entries for the contest will be accepted through June 11, 2023, and the application can be found at cognitofirms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/arkansasgrowschoolgardenoftheyearcontest2023. Winners will be announced in the fall of 2023.

“As a farmer-owned cooperative, we are excited to continue our support of teachers and projects that engage Arkansas students in food production and agricultural sustainability. Through these partnerships, we can ensure that the valuable role of Arkansas agriculture remains top-of-mind for the next generation,” said Farm Credit of Western Arkansas President and CEO, Brandon Haberer, on behalf of the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.

Applicants are eligible to apply for the following categories:

- Best Start-up School Garden Proposal - \$500 Award
- Best Education Based School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Harvest Partnership School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Community Collaboration School Garden - \$500 Award
- Best Overall School Garden - \$1000 Award
- Champion of School Garden Sustainability - \$1000 Award

More information about the Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest can be found at agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-programs/farm-to-school/school-gardens/arkansas-grown-school-garden-of-the-year-contest/ or by contacting Jessica Chapman, Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, at jessica.chapman@agriculture.arkansas.gov.

With more than \$5 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 21,000 customer-owners they serve. Through the cooperative structure, members have a voice and vote in the associations' governance. Members also share in the cooperatives' financial success through cooperative returns which total more than \$317 million since 1997.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while conserving natural resources and 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.

