

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Annual Report 2024
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

FRESH!

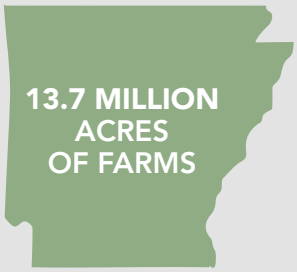
Arkansas Agriculture

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

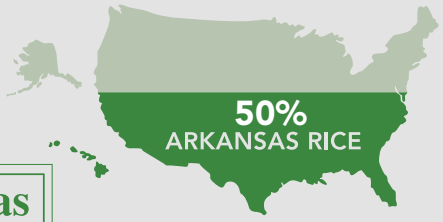
established in 2005
to unify the Forestry Commission, Livestock and Poultry Commission, and State Plant Board, and in 2019, the Natural Resources Commission, creating five main Divisions to serve Arkansans:

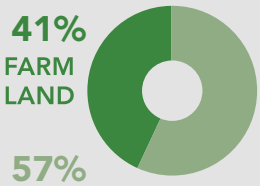
- **Forestry**
- **Livestock and Poultry**
- **Plant Industries**
- **Natural Resources**
- **Shared Services**

Arkansas is home to **37,400** farms on **13.7 million acres**



Arkansas rice accounts for nearly **50%** of total U.S. rice production and over **50%** of long grain production





242,487 JOBS
in Arkansas created by the agriculture industry

Arkansas GROWN

AR TOP COMMODITIES RANKED NATIONALLY

- #1 in Rice
- #3 in Broilers
- #3 in Cotton
- #3 in Cottonseed
- #4 in Turkeys Raised
- #4 in Catfish
- #7 in Peanuts
- #10 in Soybeans
- #10 in Eggs
- #11 in Beef Cattle

Ranked **#1** in rice production, valued at **$1.7 billion** annually

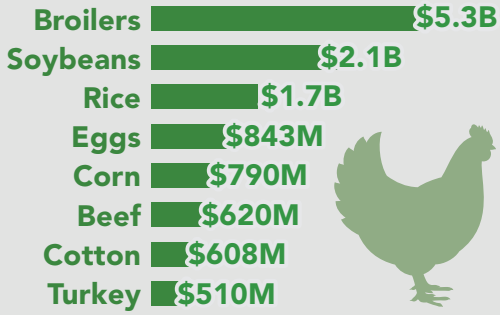
AND

Ranked in top **25** nationally in more than **15** different agricultural commodities

Arkansas is a major producer of

Chicken	Beef
Rice	Pork
Soybeans	Catfish
Corn	Rabbit
Cotton	Timber
Cottonseed	Hay
Catfish	Wheat
Peanuts	Oats
Turkey	Honey

(by value of production)



Agriculture is our largest industry, contributing more than **$24.3 billion** annually to Arkansas's economy.

Source: University of Arkansas System, Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service, Arkansas Agriculture Profile 2023, USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.

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MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY WES WARD



We are pleased to provide you with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report. In this report, you will find information about the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's divisions, programs, and how we served Arkansas agriculture, our state's largest industry, from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

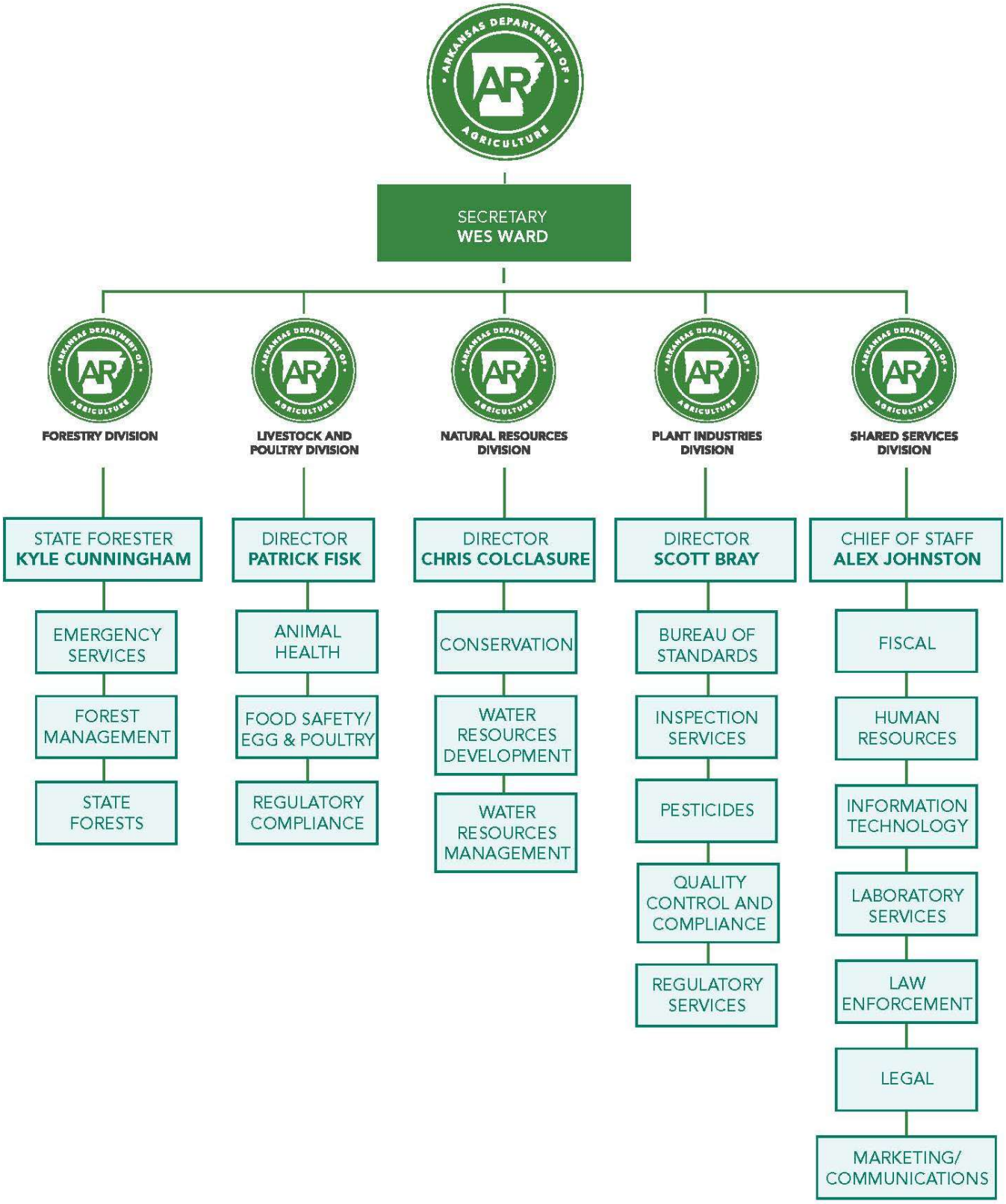
The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Agriculture contributes more than $24.3 billion to Arkansas's economy annually and provides one out of every seven jobs in the state. Arkansas continues to lead the nation in rice production, and the state ranks in the top 25 in 15 different agricultural commodities.

Arkansas is a national leader in agriculture. Over the past year, we were proud to represent our state by serving on the executive committee of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture as the vice president and bringing our agricultural perspective to all 50 states and the four U.S. territories.

During this fiscal year, we were honored to continue our work with Governor Sanders, the Arkansas General Assembly, and our state's many agricultural organizations. Arkansas is blessed to have many leaders who understand the importance of agriculture and continue to support and strengthen our state's largest industry.

I am incredibly proud of the professionalism and dedication of our Arkansas Department of Agriculture employees, and I am grateful for their service. Our goal for the Arkansas Department of Agriculture is to be the strong and effective resource and partner that Arkansas's 37,400 farm families, many agribusinesses, and rural communities deserve and expect. It is an honor to serve our state's largest industry.

Respectfully,
Wesley W. Ward
Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture


SECRETARY
WES WARD
FORESTRY DIVISION
STATE FORESTER
KYLE CUNNINGHAM
EMERGENCY SERVICES
FOREST MANAGEMENT
STATE FORESTS
LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY DIVISION
DIRECTOR
PATRICK FISK
ANIMAL HEALTH
FOOD SAFETY/ EGG & POULTRY
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION
DIRECTOR
CHRIS COLCLASURE
CONSERVATION
WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
PLANT INDUSTRIES DIVISION
DIRECTOR
SCOTT BRAY
BUREAU OF STANDARDS
INSPECTION SERVICES
PESTICIDES
QUALITY CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE
REGULATORY SERVICES
SHARED SERVICES DIVISION
CHIEF OF STAFF
ALEX JOHNSTON
FISCAL
HUMAN RESOURCES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LABORATORY SERVICES
LAW ENFORCEMENT
LEGAL
MARKETING/ COMMUNICATIONS

Forestry

835 WILDFIRES
Suppressed more than 835 wildfires on 17,440 acres

1,801
volunteer firefighters trained

13,791
total volunteer firefighters statewide

77
Firewise communities in Arkansas

Arkansas GROWN

SEEDLINGS
7.1 million seedlings grown and sold by Baucum Nursery (Hardwood and Pine)

719 Flight Hours
Recorded 719 flight hours detecting wildfires, timber damage, and other forestry-related issues

$6.1 BILLION EACH YEAR
Arkansas forest industries state economic contributions total **$6.1 BILLION**

$ 4.9 MILLION
in trucks and equipment distributed to rural fire departments

ARKANSAS TIMBER

TIMBER!

54 MILLION TONS annual timber growth - **28 MILLION TONS** annual harvest = **26 MILLION TONS** surplus annual growth

3,664 ASSISTS
provided to Arkansas landowners for management plans and forestry needs

18.8 MILLION ACRES
Arkansas has over 18.8 million acres of forests with over 11.5 billion trees

51 TREE CITIES
impacting more than 1,100,000 Arkansas residents

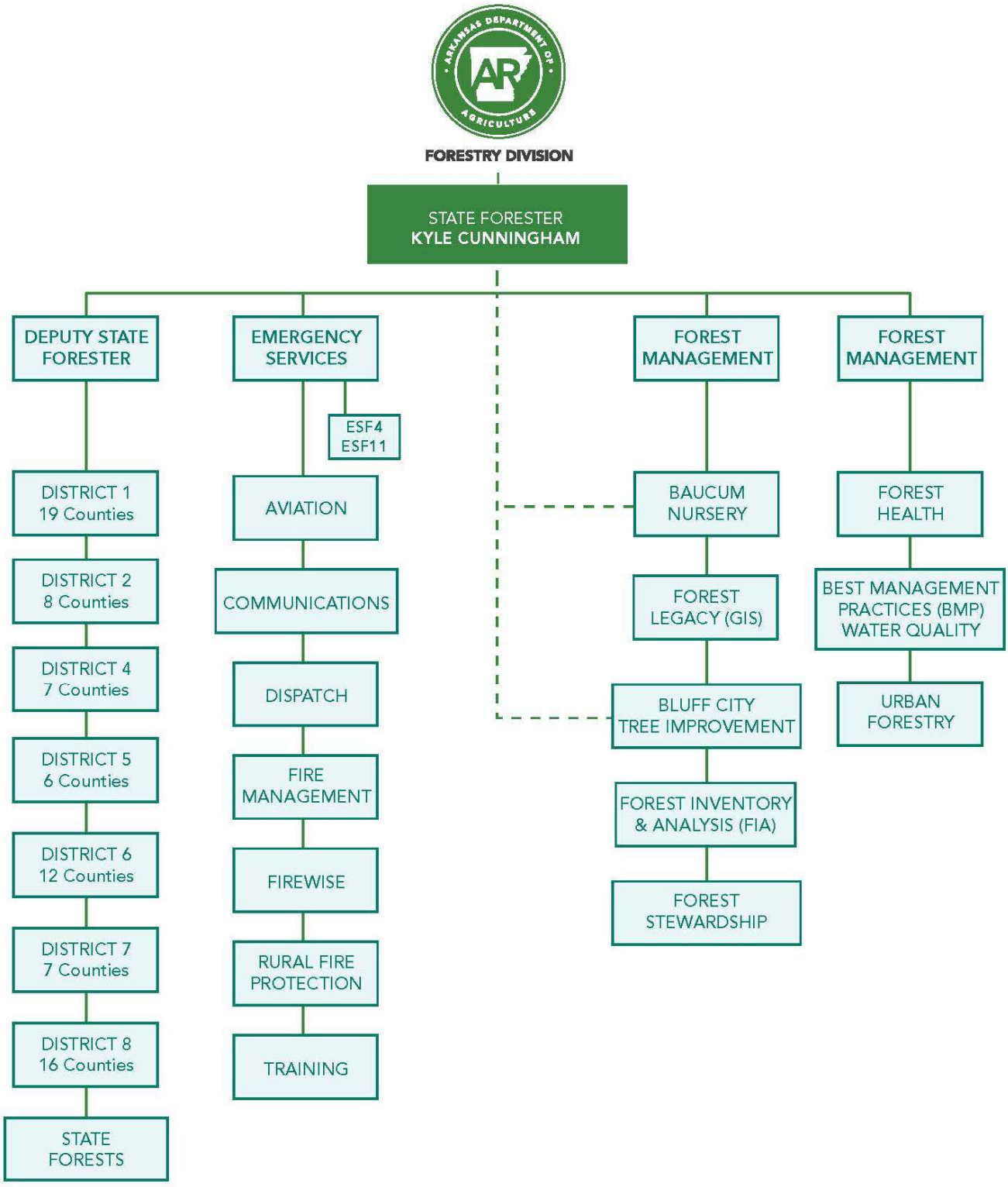
Arkansas's economy is the most forestry dependent of all the southern states.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FORESTRY DIVISION

Data provided by the Forestry Division 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.


FORESTRY DIVISION
STATE FORESTER
KYLE CUNNINGHAM
DEPUTY STATE FORESTER
EMERGENCY SERVICES
FOREST MANAGEMENT
FOREST MANAGEMENT
ESF4
ESF11
DISTRICT 1
19 Counties
DISTRICT 2
8 Counties
DISTRICT 4
7 Counties
DISTRICT 5
6 Counties
DISTRICT 6
12 Counties
DISTRICT 7
7 Counties
DISTRICT 8
16 Counties
STATE FORESTS
AVIATION
COMMUNICATIONS
DISPATCH
FIRE MANAGEMENT
FIREWISE
RURAL FIRE PROTECTION
TRAINING
BAUCUM NURSERY
FOREST LEGACY (GIS)
BLUFF CITY TREE IMPROVEMENT
FOREST INVENTORY & ANALYSIS (FIA)
FOREST STEWARDSHIP
FOREST HEALTH
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP) WATER QUALITY
URBAN FORESTRY

FORESTRY DIVISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Forestry Division is to protect Arkansas's forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. Through forest management and forest protection, the Forestry Division is vital for the health and safety of Arkansas residents and natural resources.



Forestry Division
State Forester
Kyle Cunningham

The Forestry Division has 63 offices and work centers located in timbered counties that cover all 75 counties of the state. With a field staff of approximately 200 foresters and forest rangers, citizens of the state receive valuable technical assistance through many different programs. The Forestry Division's responsibilities are arranged in three general areas: (1) Emergency Services; (2) Forest Management; and (3) State Forests.

The Forestry Division assists the Arkansas Forestry Commission in accomplishing its mission to promote forest resources, health, conservation, protection, and stewardship. The Forestry Commission is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Forestry Commission members must be Arkansas residents with a long-standing interest in the state's forest resources. Each congressional district must be represented, and three of the nine members must be tree farmers owning 250 acres or less of timber. Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session added a new requirement that three members be registered foresters. Act 691 also abolished the Board of Registration for Foresters, required the Forestry Commission to assume responsibilities for the former board's duties, and created a committee to make recommendations to the Forestry Commission on matters formerly under the jurisdiction of the Board of Registration for Foresters.

Governor Sanders appointed Kyle Cunningham as State Forester in 2023. Over the last year, Cunningham has worked to solidify Forestry Division programs and partnerships, building on foundations set forth by previous State Forester, Joe Fox.

Throughout FY 2024, the Forestry Division worked with its many longstanding partners and collaborators at the federal, state, and local levels, including the United States Forest Service (USFS), United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), volunteer fire departments, Central Arkansas Water, University of Arkansas at Monticello, Southern Group of State Foresters, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Arkansas Forestry Association, Arkansas Urban Forestry Council, Arkansas Timber Producers Association, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts, American Tree Farm System, and many more. The Forestry Division's mission is accomplished more completely when all partners work together.

Examples of collaborations and accomplishments in FY 2024 include:

- Completed construction of a new District 6 office in Clarksville
- Responded to tornado disasters in Garland, Baxter, Benton, Marion, Madison, and Carroll counties in FY 2024, with over 24,000 acres impacted
- Collaborated with the 2024 Arkansas Fire Boat School on Lake DeGray
- Continued development of demonstration opportunities on state forests
- Contracted to conduct improvement and reforestation harvests totaling over $1,000,000 in value from state forests
- Worked to secure resources for 30-acre nursery capacity expansion over the next three years
- Selected Jackson Boles as the third recipient of the "Foresters for the Future" scholarship
- Worked toward acquiring a new county work center location for Baxter County
- Promulgated rules for qualified prescribed burners and posted paint legislation in Arkansas
- Worked with the AGFC to establish new qualified prescribed burner training
- Developed collaborative efforts with USFS national forests leadership in Arkansas
- Provided service to national forestry organizations in support of the Forestry Division mission

A summary of the Forestry Division's accomplishments by area of responsibility includes:

Emergency Services Section

The Forestry Division is responsible for protecting more than 15 million acres of non-federal forestland in Arkansas. Foresters and rangers in the seven districts are involved daily in one or more of the four key activities of wildfire protection: prevention, pre-suppression, detection, and suppression.

In FY 2024, 835 wildfires burned 17,440 acres in Arkansas. Overall, wildfires were larger in 2024, with an average size of 20.8 acres compared to a ten-year average of 15.7 acres. The highest wildfire frequency months were February, when 225 fires burned 7,390 acres, and March, when 120 fires burned 3,178 acres.

The Division had a total of 107 firefighting units, each comprised of a bulldozer and transport truck. Bulldozers are used to create firebreaks that stop an ongoing fire. Of those units, 103 were equipped with environmental cabs that provide added protection for the operator.

Training is an integral part of the Forestry Division. Each year, the Division provides numerous training opportunities for new and veteran employees, including the Arkansas River Valley Wildland Fire Academy, and training on dozer operations, basic fire suppression, chainsaw safety, and leadership.

Accomplishments

The Emergency Services Section's major accomplishments include:

- Suppressed 835 wildfires on 17,440 acres in Arkansas
- Maintained 53 very high frequency (VHF) repeaters to facilitate communication across the state
- Recorded 719 flight hours while detecting wildfires, timber damage, and other forestry concerns
- Made available 4,522 items of firefighting equipment, valued at $4,959,528, to Arkansas fire

departments through the Federal Excess Property Program and Firefighter Property Program
- Worked with 77 nationally recognized Firewise communities across the state
- Hosted 92 participants at the Arkansas River Valley Wildland Fire Academy, 28 participants at bulldozer operations training, 15 participants at basic fire training, and 12 students attended the leadership staff ride at Pea Ridge

Forest Management Section

The Forestry Division works with a diverse group of partners and professionals to conserve, protect, and enhance Arkansas's forests. Over half of Arkansas's timberlands are owned by private non-industrial forest landowners, and the Forestry Division works with these landowners to encourage sound forest management practices on their lands. These practices enhance economic, recreational, wildlife, soil, and water conservation and aesthetic values. The Forestry Division also works with forest industries, universities, private forestry consultants, and other governmental natural resource agencies in the forest management and sustainability of Arkansas's forests.

The Forest Management Section administers multiple programs benefiting the citizens of Arkansas. These programs include the Reforestation Program, which produces millions of tree seedlings each year, and the Forest Stewardship Program, which provides an opportunity for landowners to receive direct land management recommendations from natural resource professionals. The Division actively serves as the primary forestry Technical Service Provider for landowners who are accepted into NRCS programs.

The Forest Management Section also administers the voluntary Arkansas Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection Program (BMP Program), Forest Health Program, Urban and Community Forestry Program, Forest Legacy Program, and Forest Inventory and Analysis Program. The BMP Program promotes and monitors silviculture best management practices to reduce soil erosion and water degradation. The Forest Health Program continually monitors the economic and aesthetic losses caused by forest insects/diseases and informs landowners about how to control these pest problems. Arkansas communities can receive technical assistance and grants through the Urban and Community Forestry Program for urban planning and tree-planting projects. The Forest Legacy Program protects private forests from conversion to non-forest uses through fee simple or conservation easement acquisitions from willing sellers. The Forest Inventory and Analysis Program provides statewide annual surveys about the growth, mortality, and health of Arkansas's timberlands.

Accomplishments

The Forest Management Section's major accomplishments include:

- Provided technical assistance to 3,664 landowners impacting 269,593 acres across the state:
    - Wrote 90 Forest Stewardship and Tree Farm Management Plans
    - Developed 236 practice plans for landowners enrolled in NRCS programs
- Sold 5,192,217 hardwood seedlings and 1,897,775 pine seedlings to Arkansas landowners through Baucum Nursery
- Collaborated with The Nature Conservancy to automate nursery irrigation systems
- Distributed 13,000 hardwood seedlings to 3,100 attendees at 27 events between Arkansas Arbor Day in March and National Arbor Day in April during the third annual "Free Tree Friday" events

- Established, in collaboration with a broad range of partners throughout the eastern U.S., a white oak progeny test at Baucum Nursery to study and promote sustainability
- Harvested 1,582 bushels of loblolly and shortleaf pinecones from Bluff City Tree Improvement orchards to provide genetically advanced seed for partners and Baucum Nursery
- Collected data from 811 (20 percent) of the total Forest Inventory and Analysis research plots
- Supported 51 official Tree City USA communities, four Tree Campus Higher Education campuses, and one Tree Line USA Utility Company through the Arkansas Urban and Community Forestry Program
- Delivered eight training sessions for 242 attendees, conducted nine courtesy examinations at timber harvest sites, and responded to six water quality logging complaints through the BMP Program
- Coordinated a multi-state Urban Forest Strike Team deployment to Bentonville, provided comprehensive tree damage and risk assessments to Bentonville's Parks & Recreation Department, helping them create a post-storm hazard mitigation plan for storm-damaged trees, and recorded geospatial information on an estimated 767 trees that needed hazard mitigation in response to tornado damages in Northwest Arkansas
- Through the Forest Legacy Program, the Division assisted the Arkansas Department of Agriculture in purchasing 259 acres of the Hot Springs Recharge Area (HSRA) in Garland County, and Central Arkansas Water in purchasing 2,237 acres in Perry/Pulaski counties for the Maumelle Water Excellence Phase 2- Forest Legacy Project

State Forests

Poison Springs State Forest

Poison Springs State Forest (PSSF) is a demonstration forest located in western Ouachita and eastern Nevada counties. PSSF provides the Forestry Division with yearly revenue while demonstrating different forest management techniques to private non-industrial landowners and loggers.

When PSSF was purchased in 1957, the 17,512-acre forest had 145,728 tons of pine sawtimber and 87,576 tons of hardwood sawtimber. Today, PSSF comprises an area of 24,090 acres with 980,361 tons of pine sawtimber and 157,464 tons of hardwood sawtimber.

Accomplishments

PSSF's major accomplishments include:

- Collected data from 108 fixed location plots to update the forest's overall inventory record
- Collected growth data to predict sustainable harvest levels in the forest
- Performed hazard reduction burns on 96 acres and site-prepped 134 acres for tree planting
- Hauled and spread 604 loads of gravel to increase levee height by four feet on Buster Green Road
- Installed two arch culverts for road improvements in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Repaired and maintained over 90 primitive campsites for public recreation
- Seeded and/or maintained 20 pollinator habitat plots, totaling 32 acres
- Assisted in conducting three field days for elementary students at the Little Grand Canyon
- Continued collaborative efforts with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural

Heritage Commission, Arkansas State Parks, and TNC to provide a variety of recreational opportunities within the forest
- Contracted over $1 million in total timber revenue sales
- Produced a harvest of 14,501 tons for a total revenue collection of $507,539
- Planning for a 700-acre demonstration area with access to loblolly and shortleaf pine natural and artificial regeneration methods, Red-Cockaded Woodpecker habitat management (in collaboration with TNC), and additional vegetative management operations

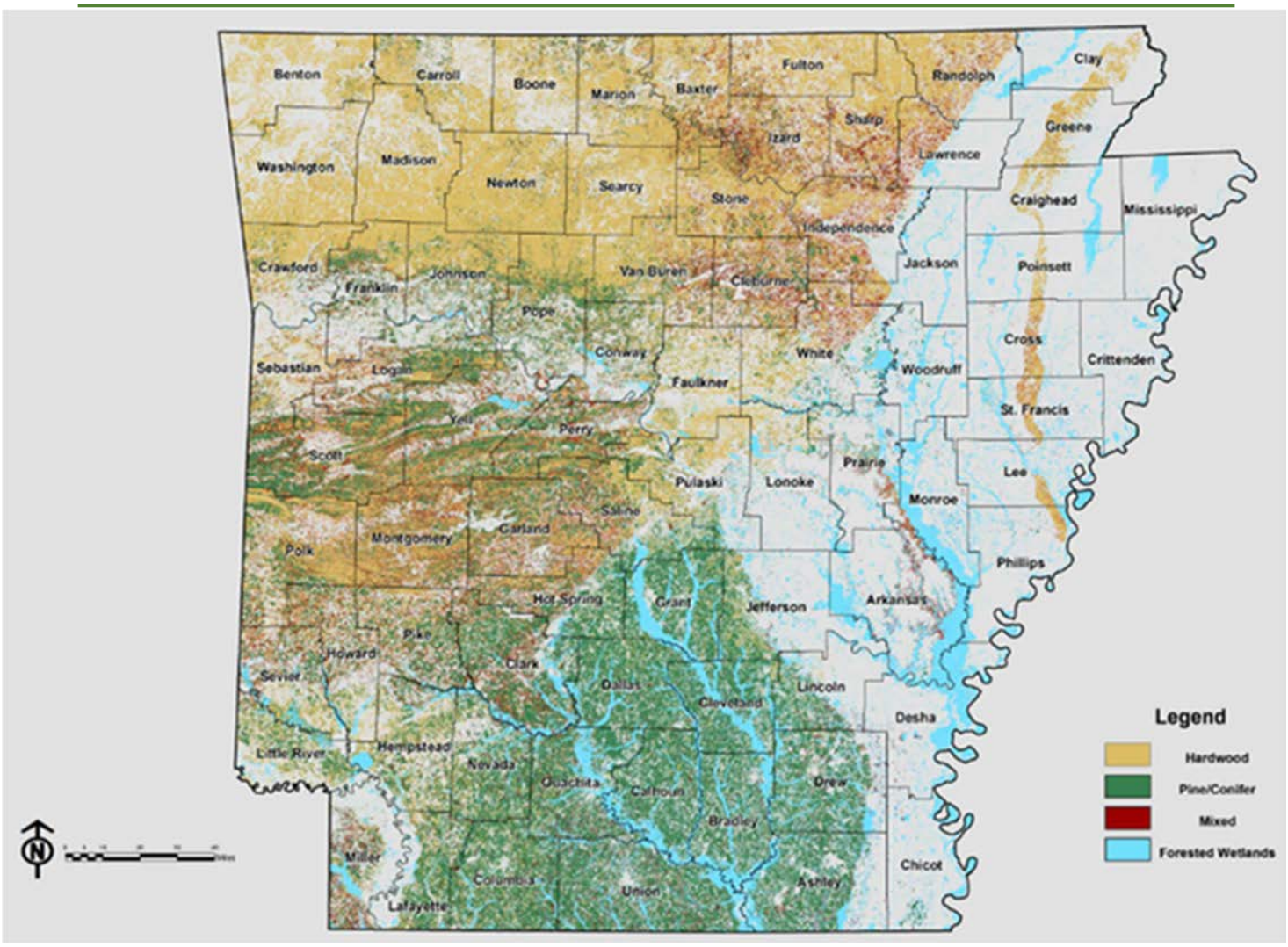
Hot Springs State Forest

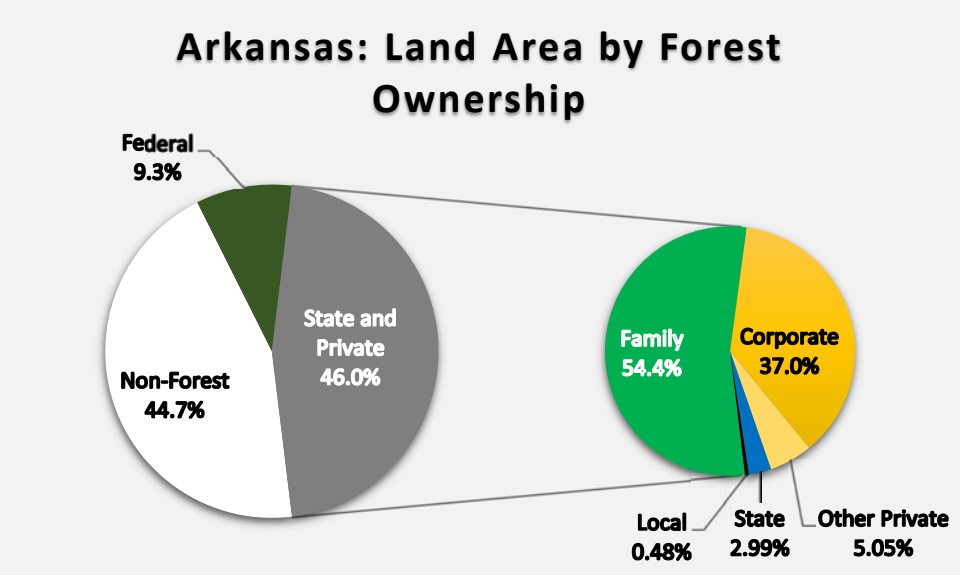
Hot Springs State Forest (HSSF) is a 3,300-acre forest located near Hot Springs, Arkansas. The forest is in the establishment phase with the purpose of conserving critical forested areas for the Hot Springs's hot water recharge. The forest also provides sustainable timber and habitat management opportunities in shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, and upland hardwood forest types. Unique resources are being developed to provide multiple outdoor recreational opportunities to the area for hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, and hunting.

HSSF's major accomplishments include:

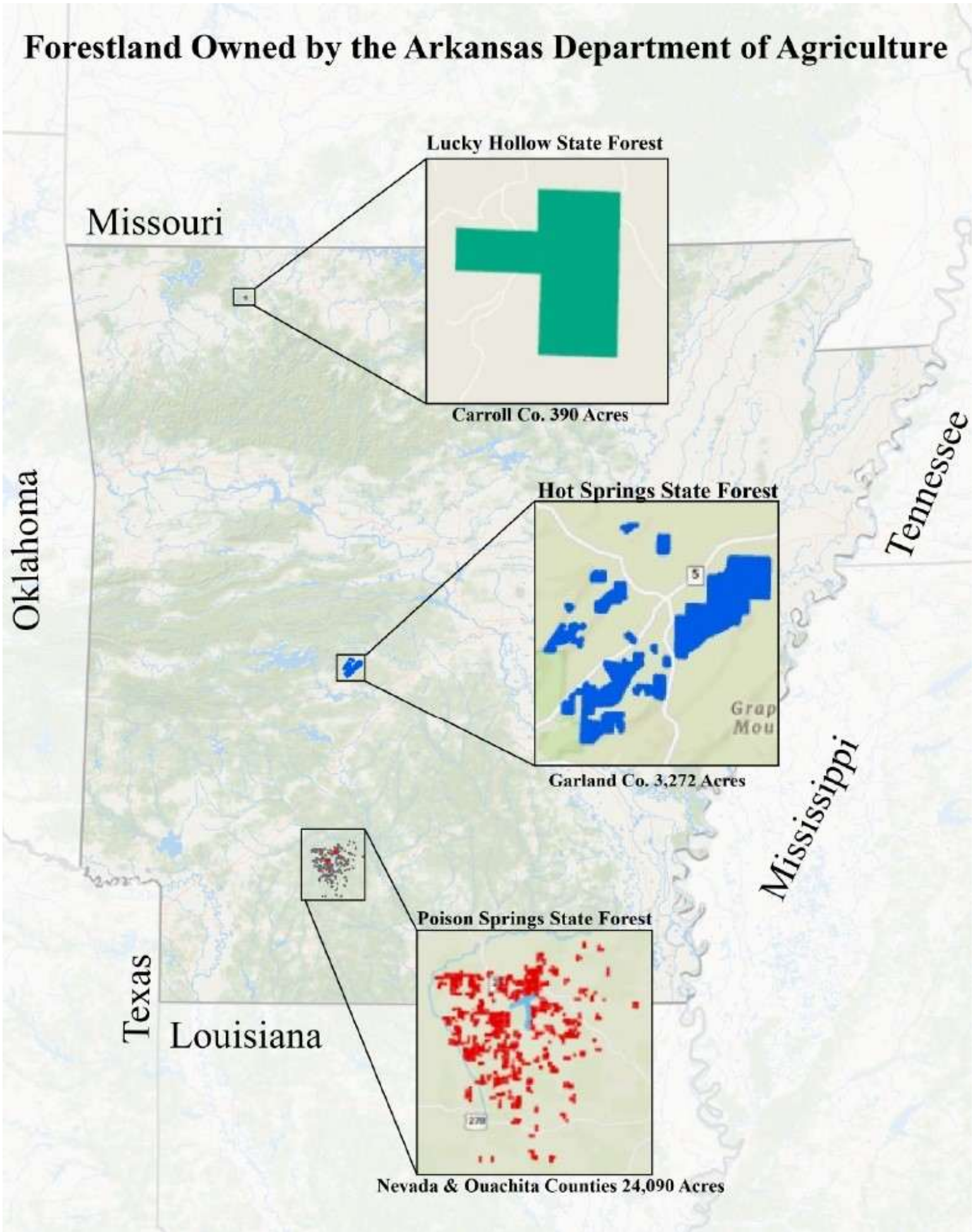
- Cleared hiking trails in the 1,100-acre public-use designated unit near Hot Springs National Park
- Identified 240-acre harvest demonstration area
- Planned road work and development of public parking and access to the forest
- Worked to identify unique forest areas such as cedar glades
- Working to secure resources for wildland fire risk reduction demonstration for vegetation management alternatives
- Establishing marked boundaries for the forest

Arkansas's Forests





Forestland Owned by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture



Livestock and Poultry

BROILERS
#3 IN NATION

TURKEY (raised)
#4 IN NATION

BEEF CATTLE
#11 IN NATION

CATFISH
#4 IN NATION

ARKANSAS MEATS

1.36 Billion
pounds of chicken meat inspected

1.02 Billion
pounds of turkey meat inspected

8,000
pounds of rabbit meat inspected



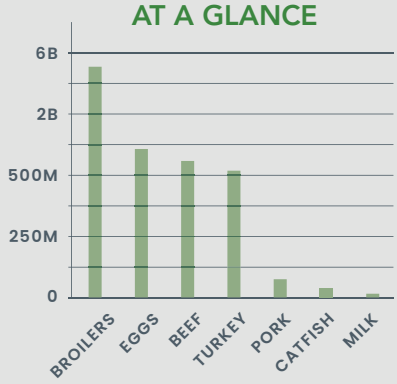
35,749
health certificates processed

1,628
hours worked at livestock events

18,500
calfhood vaccinations

106,551
cattle tagged for disease traceability

TOP PRODUCERS AT A GLANCE



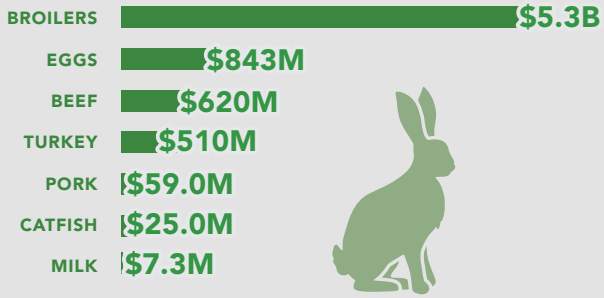


1.81 Billion Eggs
graded annually

$ 8.3 BILLION EACH YEAR

Poultry, livestock, and catfish related agricultural products combined provide more than **$8.3 billion** in revenue each year

(by value of production)



HEALTHY!

Arkansas GROWN

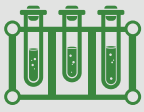
AR TOP COMMODITIES RANKED NATIONALLY

- #3 in Broilers
- #4 in Turkeys Raised
- #4 in Catfish
- #11 in Eggs
- #11 in Beef Cattle
- #17 in Cattle/Calves
- #24 in Hogs and Pigs



1,417
animal entry permits issued

30,294
Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) tests performed





8,710
Certified flocks in the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)

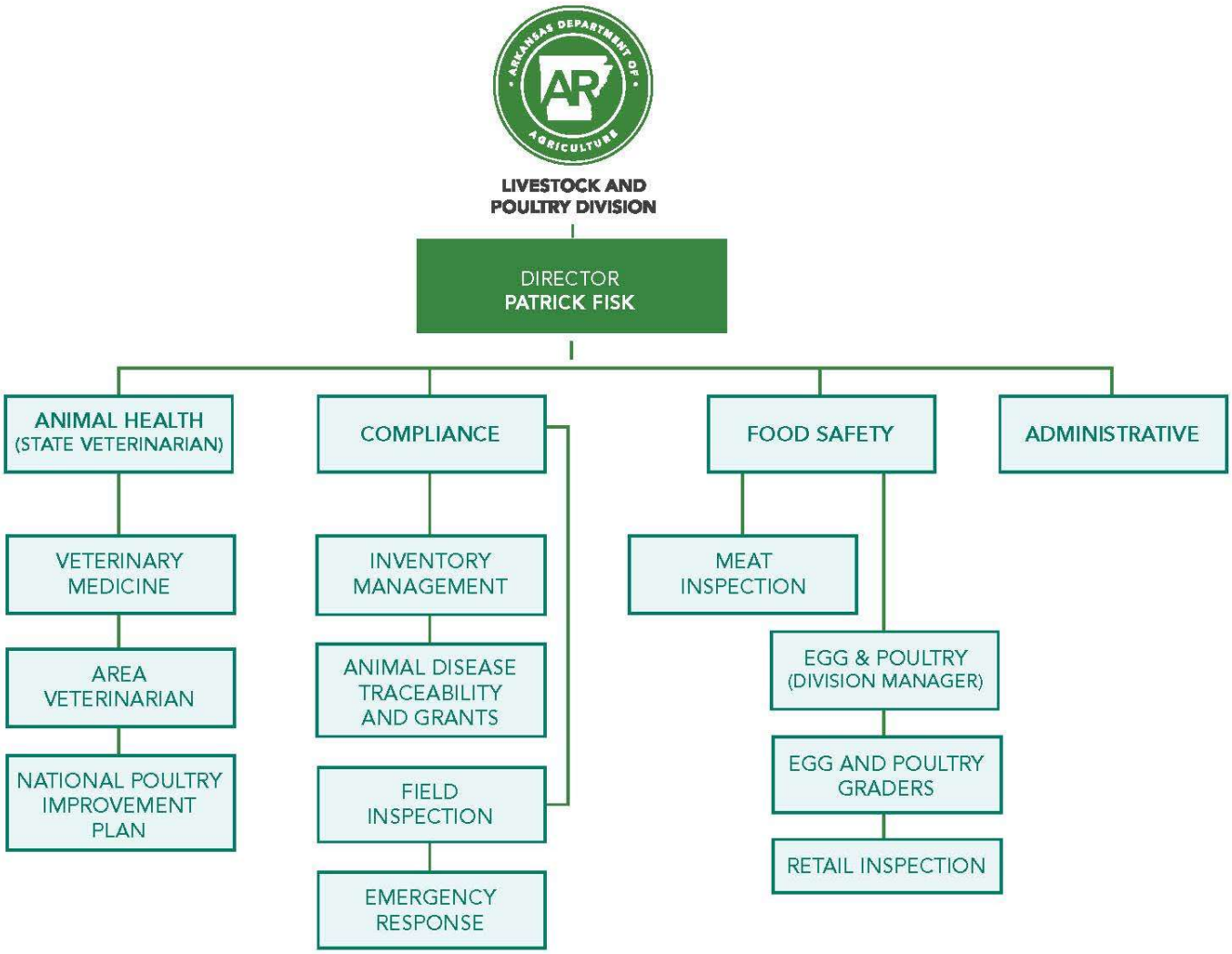
Arkansas is a national leader in the production of poultry, livestock, and catfish.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY DIVISION

Data provided by the Livestock and Poultry Division 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.


LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY DIVISION
DIRECTOR
PATRICK FISK
ANIMAL HEALTH
(STATE VETERINARIAN)
VETERINARY MEDICINE
AREA VETERINARIAN
NATIONAL POULTRY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
COMPLIANCE
INVENTORY MANAGEMENT
ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY AND GRANTS
FIELD INSPECTION
EMERGENCY RESPONSE
FOOD SAFETY
MEAT INSPECTION
EGG & POULTRY
(DIVISION MANAGER)
EGG AND POULTRY GRADERS
RETAIL INSPECTION
ADMINISTRATIVE

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY DIVISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Livestock and Poultry Division's primary goal is to protect animal and human health from zoonotic and other communicable animal diseases. The Livestock and Poultry Division comprises three key components that monitor, evaluate, and regulate foreign animal diseases that threaten Arkansas animal industries: Animal Health, Food Safety (Meat Inspection and Egg and Poultry), and Regulatory Compliance. Each component comprises several sections that work together to fulfill our mission and goals as an animal health division.



Livestock and Poultry Division Director
Patrick Fisk

Livestock and Poultry Division personnel administer and implement the rules promulgated by the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission. The Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission has statutory authority for providing control, suppression, and eradication of livestock and poultry diseases and pests, and supervision of livestock and poultry enforcement actions.

Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session expanded the commission's membership from seven to nine members to reflect the addition of duties previously under the jurisdiction of the Milk Stabilization Board and Veterinary Medical Examining Board, both of which were abolished. At least two members are to be veterinarians, with at least one engaged primarily in large animal or food supply veterinary medicine. The remaining members must be actively engaged in the Arkansas livestock, dairy, or poultry industries. The Governor appoints members with the advice and consent of the Senate for seven-year terms. In FY 2024, the Governor appointed three new members, two of whom were veterinarians, and the commission conducted four quarterly meetings, and two special called meetings. The commission approved three new rules and updated one rule based on laws passed in the 2023 general session.

The Division partners with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through cooperative agreements for livestock and poultry disease control, animal identification for disease traceback, food safety programs, and livestock market news reporting. These programs promote and enhance the marketability of livestock and poultry both nationally and internationally.

The Division also supports and promotes our local and state fairs across the state by distributing funding to help cover the costs of fair operations and other fair-related expenses. Fairs and livestock events provide great opportunities for Arkansas youth to learn important life lessons and be involved in our state's largest industry. Division inspectors provide thousands of hours at fairs and livestock events across the state each year to complete health inspections of exhibition animals and to ensure a safe environment free of any potential animal disease.

- 81 funding recipients, including 68 county fairs, six district fairs, four junior livestock shows, the Arkansas Youth Expo, and the Arkansas State Fair
- Total funding of $898,205.48 in FY 2024
- Increase in yearly funding of $173,933.48 from FY 2023

In October 2023, testing confirmed a case of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in a poultry operation in Arkansas. The Division worked closely with USDA, industry veterinarians, stakeholders, and other state agencies to control and manage the outbreak by establishing testing protocols, providing emergency response, and working closely with the Arkansas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to monitor and screen potential HPAI-positive cases. In addition, the Division enacted the emergency HPAI rule that prohibits poultry exhibits, requires birds exposed or poetically exposed to wild birds to be undercover, and restricts the movement of poultry in a designated area.

Throughout FY 2024, the Livestock and Poultry Division worked with industry partners to update and streamline the rules on veterinary medicine and the Arkansas Egg Marketing Rule. The Division also started implementing new programs and responsibilities authorized during the 2023 legislative session. These include the transfer of the administration of the Liquid Animal Waste Management Systems from the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, administration of the Poultry Feeding Operation Registration Program, a new Animal at Large reporting process, administration of the Arkansas Beef Council, and others.

A summary of the Livestock and Poultry Division's major accomplishments include:

- The Poultry Feeding Operation Program was moved online, allowing growers to register their operations from home or by phone
- Added six state meat-inspected plants across Arkansas
- Conducted several investigations on equine welfare
- Approved three rules on veterinary medicine
- Updated the Poultry Feeding Registration rule; and repealed the old rule
- Updated the Arkansas Egg Marketing rule; and repealed the old rule
- Convened a working group with industry and other partners to work on new programs like the Liquid Animal Waste Management Systems
- Contributed to research and recruitment of large animal veterinarians in Arkansas's shortage areas
- Conducted inspections for sanitation and employee safety on Arkansas's livestock markets
- Collaborated with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) on African Swine Fever surveillance cases reported in Puerto Rico and developed a plan of action for Arkansas
- Expanded the African Swine Fever program by securing a grant to build a large depopulation unit
- Formed the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Examination Committee
- Assisted the Arkansas State Fair with implementing the tagging program using radio frequency identification (RFID) tags
- Held the first Arkansas Beef Council meeting under the umbrella of the Department
- Worked with Lyon College and Arkansas State University-Jonesboro's veterinary medicine programs to establish collaboration between the universities and our lab
- Met with a trade group to re-establish poultry trade relations after HPAI event
- Revised policy and procedures for quarantining and inspections of equines during a localized outbreak of Eastern Equine Encephalitis

- Continued to work with the Arkansas Department of Health by maintaining a database for its Food Freedom Act
- The advisory group, consisting of poultry veterinarians, met to address poultry disease issues like infectious laryngotracheitis, Metapneumovirus Virus, and Enterococcus

A summary of the Livestock and Poultry Division's accomplishments by area of responsibility include:

Animal Health Section

The Arkansas State Veterinarian oversees animal health in Arkansas by working with licensed veterinarians, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and stakeholders. The Arkansas State Veterinarian watches the trends of reportable diseases, monitors animal movement, responds to emergency events, works towards controlling and eradicating diseases in poultry and production animals, and responds to veterinarians and citizens about animal health issues.

Arkansas's National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) is a voluntary state-federal cooperative testing and certification program for poultry breeding flocks, baby chicks, poults, hatching eggs, hatcheries, and dealers. The objective of the NPIP is to provide a cooperative state-federal program through which new technology can effectively be applied to the improvement of poultry and poultry products by establishing standards for the evaluation (testing) of poultry breeding stock, baby chicks, poults, and hatching eggs with respect to freedom from certain diseases.

Accomplishments

The Animal Health Section's major accomplishments include:

- Obtained an additional veterinarian to assist with the many disease issues and investigations conducted each year
- Participated in OneHealth programs in cooperation with the Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Participated in weekly conferences with USDA, state animal health officials, and industry partners on regular HPAI updates and monitoring
- Served on several committees of the United States Animal Health Association and Southern Animal Health Association
- Served as a participating member of the National Alliance of State Animal Health Officials
- Served as a voting member on the National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs
- Participated in Arkansas Department of Agriculture and commodity advisory group reviews of Arkansas regulations
- Conducted presentations for continuing education and on-boarding of newly licensed Arkansas veterinarians
- Conducted foreign animal disease response planning for African Swine Fever and Foot-and-Mouth Disease
- Implemented a $138,000 USDA grant to expand the Division's response capability for large animal disease outbreaks
- Promoted rural veterinary service availability through the USDA Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment Program and Veterinary Services Grant Program
- Provided management and reporting for USDA APHIS Veterinary Service Cooperative

Agreement grants
- Communicated regularly with Arkansas's veterinary practitioners
- Participated in and provided section leadership for the Poultry Health Advisory Committee and the Arkansas Poultry Veterinarian Association
- Maintained surveillance testing during the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza incursion
- Submitted grants for increased field-testing capabilities and pet-sheltering equipment
- Successfully managed an equine neurological disease outbreak
- Expanded state emergency response network to include the Arkansas Highway Patrol in foreign animal disease responses requiring a livestock standstill
- Approved 6,320 shipping forms for eggs, chicks, and poults
- Inspected 37 poultry companies for NPIP/Lab approvals
- Inspected 23 commercial hatcheries
- Conducted 20 Commercial Poultry Biosecurity Audits for compliance with NPIP Biosecurity Principles
- Audited three NPIP laboratories for compliance with NPIP standards
- Screened 125 poultry flocks for Salmonella status determination
- Certified 8,710 poultry flocks as NPIP program disease-free for trade certification partners
- Recorded 187,587 tests for avian influenza conducted by NPIP laboratories in Arkansas
- Conducted six in-person Pullorum-Typhoid (P/T) schools for commercial and private testers
- Attended the Live Bird Marketing System Working Group meeting

Food Safety Section

The Food Safety Section's primary goal is protecting our citizens and assuring the success of our food industries. This area is divided into two sections: Egg and Poultry and the State Meat Inspection Program.

The Egg and Poultry Section provides commodity grading, inspection, and certification of poultry, turkey, eggs, and rabbits under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service. It enforces the provisions of the Arkansas Egg Marketing Act, which authorizes employees or agents to enter any store, vehicle, market, or any other business or location where eggs are bought, stored, sold, offered for sale, or processed to make inspections as needed to determine if the grades of the eggs conform to grades as labeled on the exterior of the container. The Egg and Poultry Section has 32 employees, including graders and inspectors, licensed by USDA.

The State Meat Inspection Program was established under Act 418 during the 2021 general session. The Division has worked to support the beef and swine industries by promoting more plants and developing ways for locally owned businesses to supply high quality protein to surrounding areas. Locally grown and sourced meat products are a key source of proteins for many rural areas in Arkansas. The program has doubled the locations for locally processed meat in Arkansas.

Under federal law, the State Meat Inspection Program must operate under a cooperative agreement with the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). It also must enforce requirements "at least equal to" those imposed under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and Poultry Products Inspection Act.

Inspectors, certified through USDA, conduct in-plant inspections, allowing products to enter intrastate commerce, and conduct regulatory compliance inspections at custom exempt facilities, retail, and meat food handlers. Compliance inspectors carry out investigations into complaints concerning red meat products to ensure the safety and wholesomeness of Arkansans meat supply.

Food safety is part of our mission statement; and we strive to protect consumers and the agricultural industry by ensuring that poultry, eggs, rabbit, beef, and swine products offered to the public are safe, wholesome, and properly inspected and labeled. Graders and inspectors provide services at processing plants to assure food safety and food quality of meat and poultry products across Arkansas according to state and federal guidelines.

Accomplishments

The Food Safety Section's major accomplishments include:

- Graded and certified 1.36 billion pounds of chicken and chicken products, 1.02 billion pounds of turkey and turkey products, and 8,000 pounds of rabbit and rabbit products
- Performed 10 audits on manufacturers producing Child Nutrition Program labeled products and graded 1,345,065 pounds of Child Nutrition Program labeled products
- Conducted 44 Food Defense Program audits on manufacturers and off-site storage facilities
- Graded and certified 5,041,305 cases (30 dozen per case) of shell eggs; 1.81 billion total eggs graded
- Inspected 67 processing locations and hatcheries and inspected 2,889,598 dozen (34,675,176 total) shell eggs
- Issued 211 egg handler permits and inspected 376,350 dozen (4.5 million total) shell eggs at retail locations with 198 dozen shell eggs (2,376 total) placed on stop sale and returned to the processor for rework or destruction
- Developed and implemented an E. coli sampling program
- Conducted 45 custom exempt reviews
- Completed 11 investigations into complaints concerning red meat
- State-inspected meat plants grew from two plants to eight active facilities
- In the third and fourth quarter of FY 2024, 273,704 pounds of meat product entered intrastate commerce

Regulatory Compliance Section

The Regulatory Compliance Section is made up of 25 inspectors who are responsible for various statewide animal health activities. Livestock inspectors provide testing of swine for Brucellosis and Pseudorabies, and of poultry for a variety of diseases and for compliance with National Poultry Improvement Plan certification.

Staff is present at livestock markets and special cattle sales, tagging cattle for disease traceability, and at equine events to ensure all animals are current on applicable tests. Inspectors are trained to respond to animal disease outbreaks, including diseases such as avian influenza, that could be devastating to the state's poultry industry, the largest sector of Arkansas's agriculture industry. Inspectors are present

at any location where animals are comingled, inspecting poultry and livestock for signs of diseases or pests.

Inspectors spend a substantial amount of time at county fairs, district fairs, the Arkansas State Fair, and jackpot shows conducting inspections to ensure that all livestock, poultry, and exotic animals entering the fairground have the proper health certificates and permits.

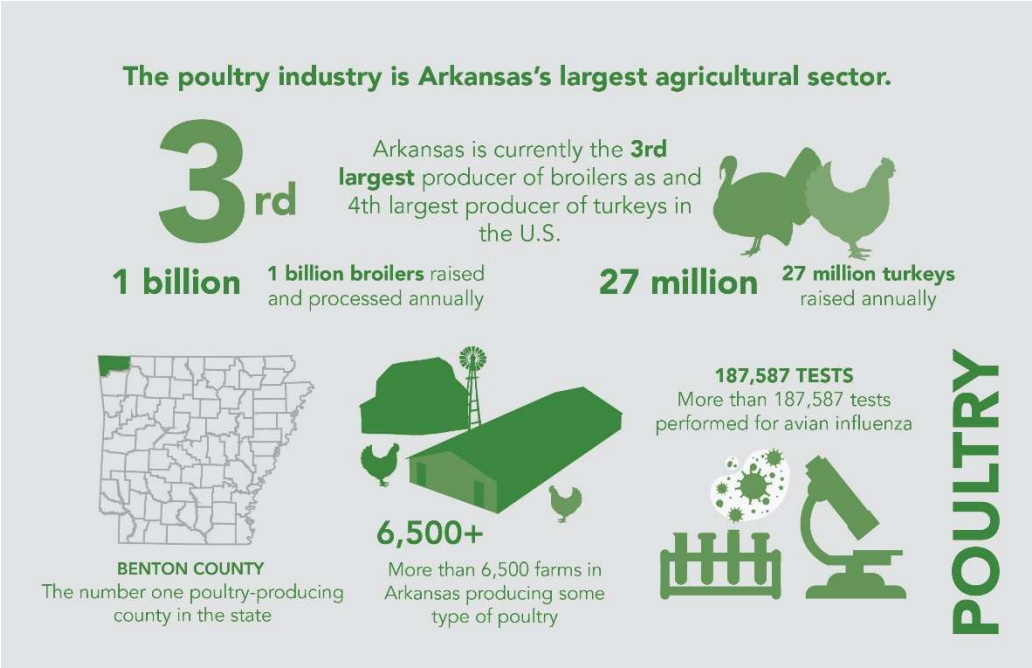
Inspectors respond to complaints regarding non-compliance with any laws or rules that the Division oversees, including carcass disposal and the state-to-state movement of animals. They provide educational support to producers and partner agencies. Three of the Livestock and Poultry Division inspectors, along with four part-time employees, also provide livestock marketing reporting services at 12 livestock markets across the state.

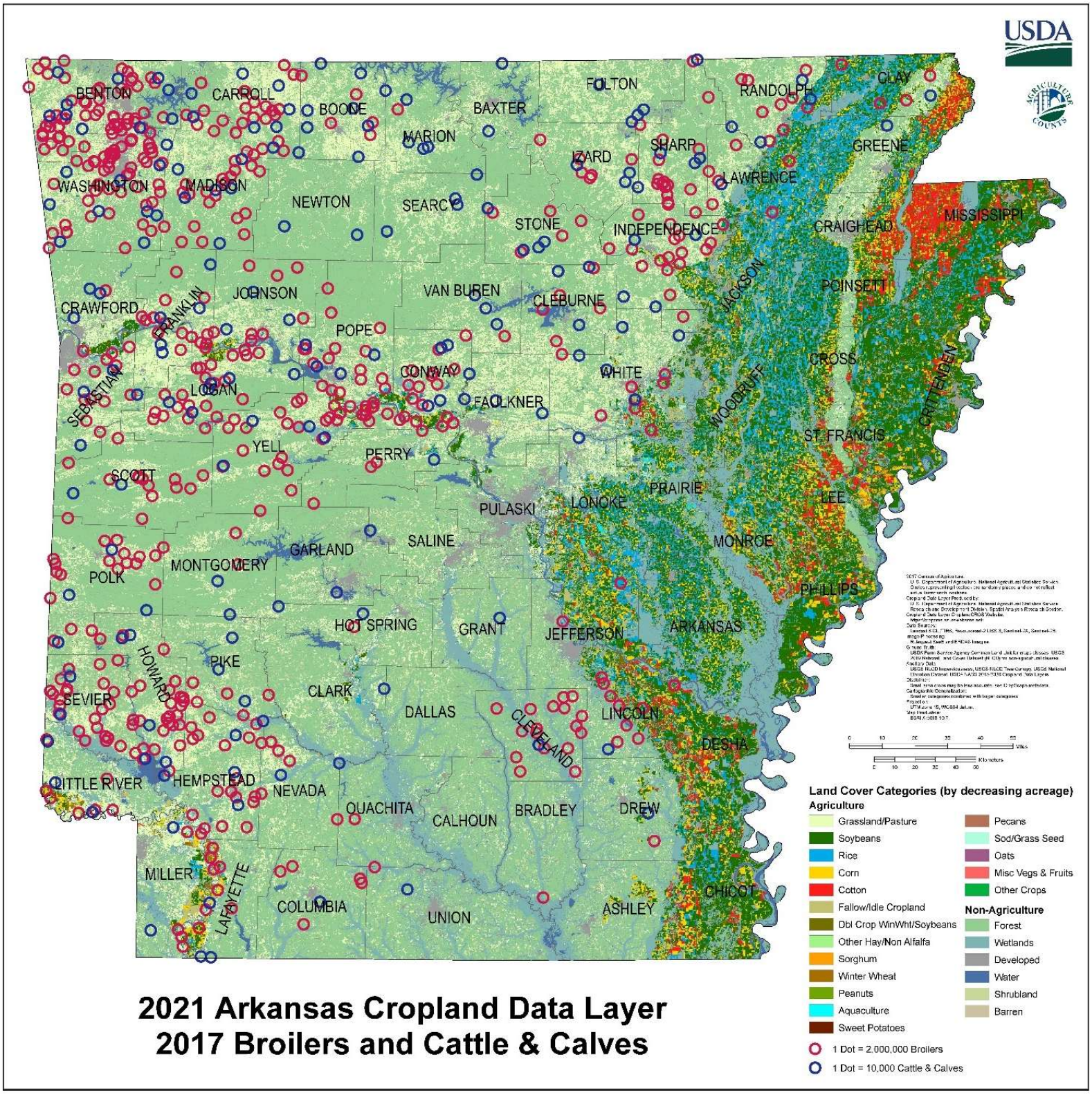
Accomplishments

The Regulatory Compliance Section's major accomplishments include:

- Issued 350 new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Premise IDs for a total of 14,706 in the Premise Identification Number (PIN) program
- Conducted surveillance for disease and inspection for 547,739 cattle, 2,937 horses, 50,834 sheep, 51,232 goats, 194 swine, and 15,913 head of poultry sold at Arkansas livestock markets
- Conducted surveillance for disease and checked for compliance on 19,463 eggs, 27,798 head of poultry and fowl, 186 hogs, 590 goats, 170 sheep, and 1,093 rabbits at Arkansas flea markets and swap meets
- Identified and entered 106,551 head of cattle in the animal disease traceability (ADT) database at Arkansas livestock markets
- Provided Livestock Market News reporting services at 12 Arkansas livestock markets, including 10 markets for cattle and two markets for sheep and goats
- Certified 49 new Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) verifiers for a total of 3,382 lifetime verifiers
    - 176 attended classes put on by livestock inspectors this past fiscal year
- Processed 30,294 Coggins test charts for Equine Infectious Anemia
- Issued 1,417 animal entry permits
- Registered 69 new cattle brands and renewed 189 brands
- Processed 35,749 certificates of veterinary inspection
- Contributed 1,628 hours of service at Arkansas fairs
- Performed health inspections on 1,884 cattle, 1,465 hogs, 2,298 goats, 1,084 sheep, 7,074 poultry, 1,771 rabbits, and 473 equines at Arkansas county fairs
- Livestock inspectors also performed health checks at district fairs, state fair, the Arkansas Youth Expo, rodeos, jackpots, and many other exhibitions
- Worked several large equine events this past fiscal year, including the National Chuckwagon Races in Clinton, Arkansas, where livestock inspectors checked Coggins and health papers for about 5,000 horses and other equidae
- Vaccinated 18,500 calves for Brucellosis
- Conducted a Beef Quality Assurance certification class for livestock inspectors, with Maggie Justice with cooperative extension service teaching the course
- Completed Certified Swine Sample Collector training in preparation for African Swine Fever (15 livestock inspectors), with Dr. Kayla Blake from JBS teaching the course, which also included a swine necropsy class

- Completed a CO2 depopulation unit through a grant with USDA, providing the ability to respond to large outbreak in several species, and partnered with USDA and JBS to hold an exercise and training
- Held four training sections for inspectors at three markets on bleeding cattle and tick collection, which is critical due to the threat of Theleria and other diseases that may occur
- Performed two foaming exercises in preparation for disease outbreaks
- Conducted an exercise and demonstrated our large animal depopulation equipment for Kansas State University engineers
- Utilized electronic identification (EID) tag reading and weighing equipment to assist fairs with validation and projects
- Presented to several FFA chapters and 4-H groups on animal disease traceability, EID technology, and exhibition regulations
- Presented to eight county Cattlemen Association's meetings regarding tags, equipment, animal disease traceability, and livestock market reporting
- Presented to Girls Learning and Applying Math and Science program at El Dorado about careers in agriculture and animal disease traceability
- Distributed 17,693 free radio frequency identification tags to producers for replacement cattle, working with several producers to bring them online with EID technology, assist in tying their farm data to the electronic tags, utilizing pre-existing equipment like scales, and securing EIDs for vaccinating heifers
- Participated in all nine Arkansas Cattlemen's Association's area spring conferences, providing outreach and education on EID tags, programs, and disease information
- Hosted a booth and conducted outreach at the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association annual convention and tradeshow, providing educational materials and a full demonstration of EID tags and scanning equipment
- Participated in the Arkansas Farm Bureau annual meeting
- Hosted a booth and provided outreach on EID tags and equipment at the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association annual meeting
- Participated in the Livestock Marketing Association's annual conference
- Participated in the Arkansas Women in Ag conference
- Participated in the Poultry Symposium in Springdale
- Assisted with hosting a department booth and outreach at the FFA State Convention
- As an emergency support function (ESF) 11, we were tasked with coordinating with the state emergency operation center the past fiscal year to provide assistance, which was needed twice due to severe weather and the solar eclipse
- For the first time in Arkansas history, we had five cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in one year, requiring inspectors and administrative staff to spend many hours working the event, with inspectors filling roles typically held by USDA personnel while also managing collection sites to keep the industry moving and prevent disruptions to business or international trade
- Four inspectors attended USDA captive bolt training in Stillwater, Oklahoma


The poultry industry is Arkansas's largest agricultural sector.
3rd
Arkansas is currently the 3rd largest producer of broilers as and 4th largest producer of turkeys in the U.S.
1 billion
1 billion broilers raised and processed annually
27 million
27 million turkeys raised annually
BENTON COUNTY
The number one poultry-producing county in the state
6,500+
More than 6,500 farms in Arkansas producing some type of poultry
187,587 TESTS
More than 187,587 tests performed for avian influenza
POULTRY



2021 Arkansas Cropland Data Layer
2017 Broilers and Cattle & Calves

NATURAL!

Natural Resources

WATER
+
WASTEWATER
+
SOLID WASTE

COMMUNITY PROJECTS: $681 MILLION

Worked with **138** communities on water, wastewater, and solid waste projects totaling more than **$681 million**



Documented the removal of **12,647** feral swine in Arkansas by members of the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force during FY 2024

State Conservation Tax Credits

Approved 96 new projects and completed 39 finished projects



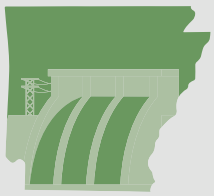
Provided federal funds and technical assistance to **51** projects associated with the abatement/ reduction or control of **nonpoint source pollution**

Unpaved Roads Grant Program

Funded 9 county unpaved roads projects totaling **$558,776**

ARKANSAS DAMS

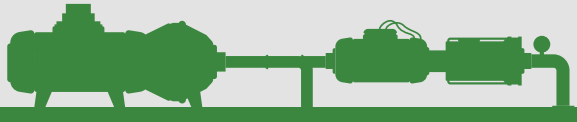
Identified and inspected **20** low-performing high hazard and significant hazard dams



FLOOD TRAINING

Provided in-person and virtual technical training and support on flood risk reduction and mitigation to **369** community officials - representing **260** towns, cities, and counties

Collected water level measurements in Mississippi River Valley Alluvial, Sparta, Cockfield, and Wilcox aquifers



Processed and approved **8** new riparian tax credit projects for **$385,000** in eligible project cost

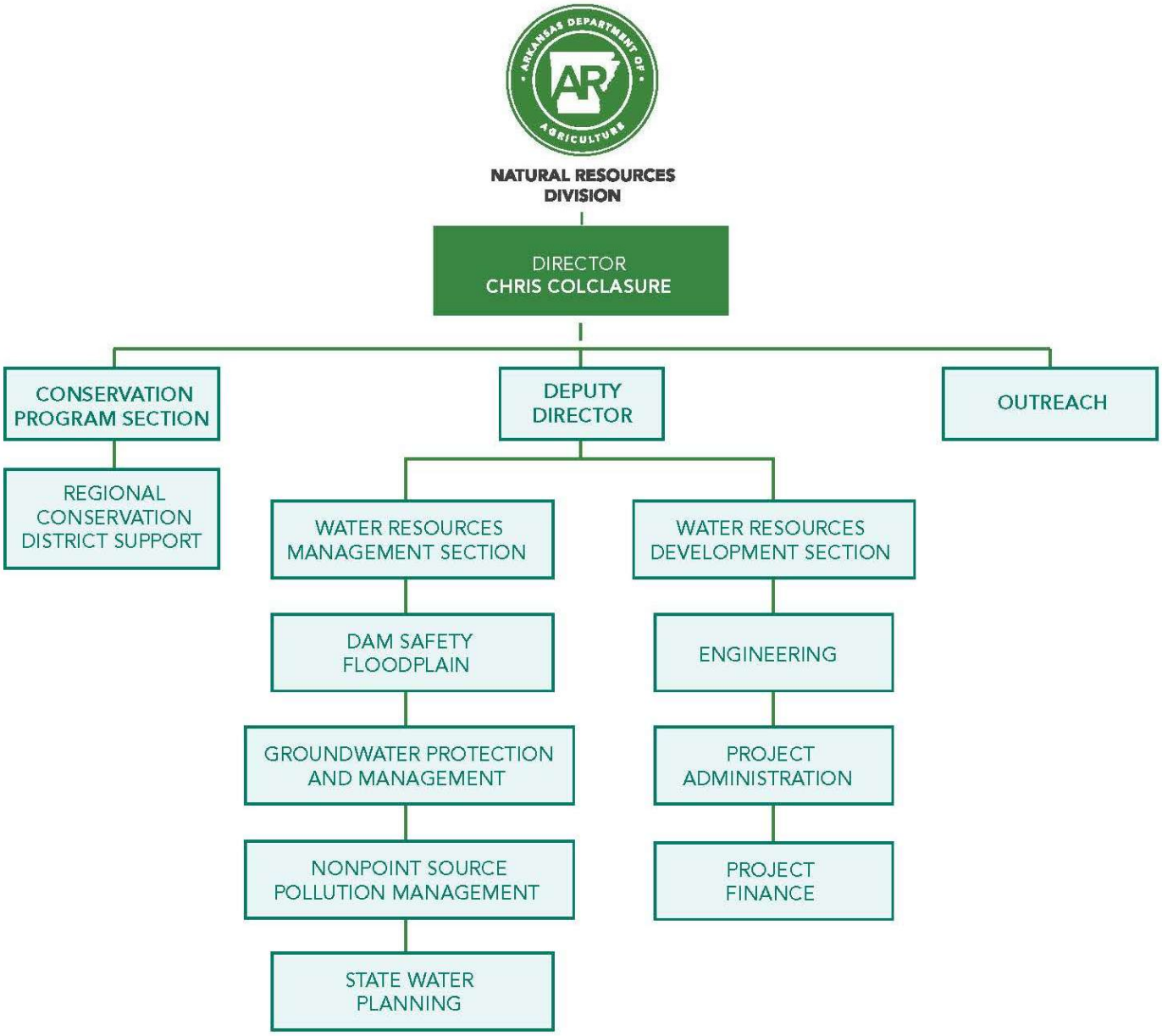
The Natural Resources Division manages and conserves Arkansas's land and water resources.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Data provided by the Natural Resources Division 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.


NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION
DIRECTOR
CHRIS COLCLASURE
CONSERVATION PROGRAM SECTION
REGIONAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPPORT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SECTION
DAM SAFETY FLOODPLAIN
GROUNDWATER PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT
NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION MANAGEMENT
STATE WATER PLANNING
WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT SECTION
ENGINEERING
PROJECT ADMINISTRATION
PROJECT FINANCE
OUTREACH

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Natural Resources Division serves as the lead agency for conserving Arkansas's land and water resources. The Division accomplishes its responsibilities by administering rules and programs focused on the sustainable conservation, development, and management of Arkansas's natural resources. The Nonpoint Source Management Plan, Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Priority Project Lists, and the Arkansas Water Plan guide the Natural Resources Division. The Arkansas Water Plan is a long-term strategy to guide the conservation, development, management, and use of water for all citizens. It brings data, science, and public input together to define water demands, water supplies, water issues, and potential solutions to meet future needs.

The Natural Resources Division is composed of three sections: (1) Conservation, (2) Water Resources Development, and (3) Water Resources Management. The Natural Resources Division works closely with a diverse group of stakeholders, including community water and wastewater systems, city and county governments, conservation districts, improvement districts, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies. These collaborations and partnerships are essential to properly managing the state's land and water resources.



Natural Resources Division Director
Chris Colclasure

The Natural Resources Division administers rules promulgated by the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. The commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session abolished the Commission on Water Well Construction (CWWC). It revised the membership of the Natural Resources Commission to ensure that at least two of the nine members will be licensed water well contractors. A committee was created to make recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission on matters formerly under the CWWC.

An update to the 2014 State Water Plan was initiated in FY 2024. Governor Sanders issued Executive Order 23-27 on August 21, 2023, directing the Arkansas Department of Agriculture and its Natural Resources Division to update the Arkansas Water Plan. A partnership agreement was executed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under their Planning Assistance to States Program. As a result, Michael Baker International and Olsson FTN were selected as contractors to complete a programmatic work plan, schedule, and cost estimate to complete the water plan update. Seven public meetings and an online survey were used to gather stakeholder input as part of this process. Deliverables from this phase of the process will be delivered to the Governor in August of 2024 and provide a roadmap to completing future phases of the project.

The Natural Resources Division is administering $67 million in additional American Rescue Plan Act funding received from the Arkansas General Assembly for water, wastewater, and irrigation projects in FY 2024. Forty-two water and wastewater projects were awarded funding. In addition, the Arkansas Rural Water Association was awarded $5 million in grant funds to purchase equipment to assist communities during water and wastewater system failures.

Two successful bond sales secured $150 million in funds through the General Obligation Bond Program and the State Revolving Loan Fund. Funds secured through the sales will provide important loan funds to address improvements in irrigation, groundwater sustainability, and water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Over FY 2024, continuous emphasis was placed on a growing awareness of natural resource issues and the Natural Resources Division's programs designed to address them. Staff were visible across the state to promote division programs, share success, and educate the public and partners about natural resources concerns and approaches. Efforts included presentations, articles, advertisements, media interviews, and agency-led trainings. Specific education and outreach activities are included throughout this report.

Examples of collaborations and additional accomplishments in FY 2024 include:

- Awarded nine county unpaved roads projects totaling $558,776 through the Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program, with total project costs reaching $1,215,436, including county match
- Provided six presentations about the state water plan update at meetings, events, and conferences across the state
- Participated in meetings of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission, Red River Commission, Mississippi River Commission, Red River Compact Commission, and Arkansas Water Well Construction Committee
- Updated rules for conservation districts and the oversight of retail water providers
- Secured a partnership with the Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start a state-wide levee inventory
- Secured a partnership with Ducks Unlimited to create a conservation tax credit promotion video

A summary of the Natural Resource Division's accomplishments by area of responsibility includes:

Conservation Section

The Conservation Section provides leadership and support for Arkansas's conservation districts in developing, managing, and conserving the state's land and water resources. Three land resource specialists are assigned to a separate region of the state (northeast, northwest, and south) to provide education and information and communicate district concerns. Section staff present information to district directors at area meetings, district field days, and youth workshops. The Conservation Section also oversees the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Program and coordinates activities with the Bayou Meto and Grand Prairie irrigation projects.

Accomplishments

The Conservation Section's major accomplishments include:

- Provided $250,000 to conservation districts for district-priority projects, including pollinator projects, irrigation studies, urban garden projects, personnel, equipment, outdoor classrooms, and conservation field days
- Provided $130,284 to 51 conservation districts to serve as technical service providers that supply free planning and design services to agricultural producers participating in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs
- Conservation district water quality technicians wrote 874 plans
- Provided $750,000 to conservation districts for water quality technicians to prepare nutrient management plans
- Provided $129,442 in funding to 56 conservation districts for beaver bounties, resulting in the removal of 15,241 beavers
- Allocated $922,339 to fund conservation district operations
- Held a strategic planning session with the Arkansas Conservation Partnership to develop a plan to improve the implementation of federal, state, and local programs through conservation districts, prioritize local resource concerns, and increase the productivity of the members of the Arkansas Conservation Partnership
- Contracted with an accounting firm to conduct conservation district agreed-upon accounting procedures audit for FY 2023
- Secured agreements with six conservation districts to implement the Alliance Project to encourage landowners to implement select conservation practices

Feral Hog Eradication Program

The Feral Hog Eradication Program provides coordination, leadership, and support on issues related to feral swine. Additionally, the program provides co-chair leadership and expertise to the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force in conjunction with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) and 22 member organizations. The Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force was established to develop and implement statewide feral hog control plans to reduce populations through the development and implementation of effective legislative, policy, management, control, and communication efforts. Furthermore, the Feral Hog Eradication Program was also established to assist with developing and implementing USDA NRCS Farm Bill grants related to feral swine control projects.

Accomplishments

Feral Hog Eradication Program's major accomplishments include:

- Continued coordination and implementation of USDA NRCS Feral Swine Eradication and Control Project (FSCP) to 12 county conservation districts
- Assisted the Livestock and Poultry Division with the issuance of three aerial eradication permits for private landowners in five counties (Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Sevier, and White) to remove 761 feral swine comprising approximately 28,000 acres
- Documented the removal of 12,647 feral swine in Arkansas by members of the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force during FY 2024
- Served as co-chair of the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force to conduct quarterly meetings and address topics related to feral hogs within Arkansas

- Coordinated with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to respond to landowners needing assistance with feral swine issues
- Continued to collaborate with USDA APHIS and other task force partners with the development of a draft statewide feral hog elimination plan
- Continued a feral swine removal project in cooperation with USDA APHIS in Northeast Arkansas (Craighead, Clay, Greene, Mississippi, and Poinsett counties), focused on the elimination of feral swine within individual watershed hydrologic units
- Created a feral hog dashboard in conjunction with USDA APHIS and AGFC

Bayou Meto and Grand Prairie Irrigation Projects

The Bayou Meto Water Management Project and Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project are irrigation projects that divert water from the Arkansas River and White River to provide an alternative agricultural water supply other than groundwater. Once constructed, river water will be delivered through newly constructed pumping stations, pipelines, canals, and existing channels to reduce the demand from the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial and Sparta aquifers. When operational, the projects will provide surface water for irrigation to approximately 15 percent of the farmed acreage in east Arkansas in areas with groundwater declines.

Accomplishments

- Bayou Meto Water Management District has constructed Canal 1000 Phase 3.1 (3.3 miles), completed in fall 2023
    - The next phase of canal construction, Canal 1000 Phase 3.2 (3 miles), is 95 percent designed and the contract should be awarded by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2024
- Bridge construction has started on State Highways 161 and 165 and both bridges should be yhconstructed by the end of 2024
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded the Grand Prairie Pump Station re-procurement contract on June 21, 2024, to CJ Mahan Constructions for $18 million and construction is expected to take approximately 19 months
- Phase 1 of the Grand Prairie Project is fully funded and consists of 15 miles of canal (canals 1,000, 2,000, and smaller secondary canals), siphons, pipelines, two state highway bridges, and four county road crossings
    - Once complete, it will provide irrigated water to 50,000 acres (approximately 20 percent of the total project) in the vicinity of DeValls Bluff, Tollville, Hazen, and about halfway to Carlisle; this phase is scheduled to be completed in 2026

Water Resources Development Section

The Water Resources Development Section administers three federal and three state programs that provide financial assistance primarily for water and wastewater projects through loans and grants. In addition to traditional funding sources, the section also administers special funding for water-related projects. Over fiscal years 2023 and 2024, $347 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding was approved by the Governor's Office and Arkansas General Assembly for water-related projects. Additional funds supplied through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act have increased funding for water and wastewater projects and special projects to replace lead service lines and emerging contaminants.

Each program administered by the section has different criteria for funding. The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission considers the Division's funding recommendations and approves funding at its bimonthly meetings. These recommendations are based on financial and managerial review of the applicant and technical review of the project by staff.

The primary types of projects funded include:

- Public water supply source development, water treatment systems (water plants), and distribution systems (water lines and water storage tanks)
- Wastewater treatment systems (sewer plants) and sewer collection systems (sewer lines and sewer pump stations)
- Solid waste collection systems and disposal facilities (landfills and recycling facilities)
- Storm water control and treatment
- Drainage projects and flood control systems (levee systems)
- Irrigation projects

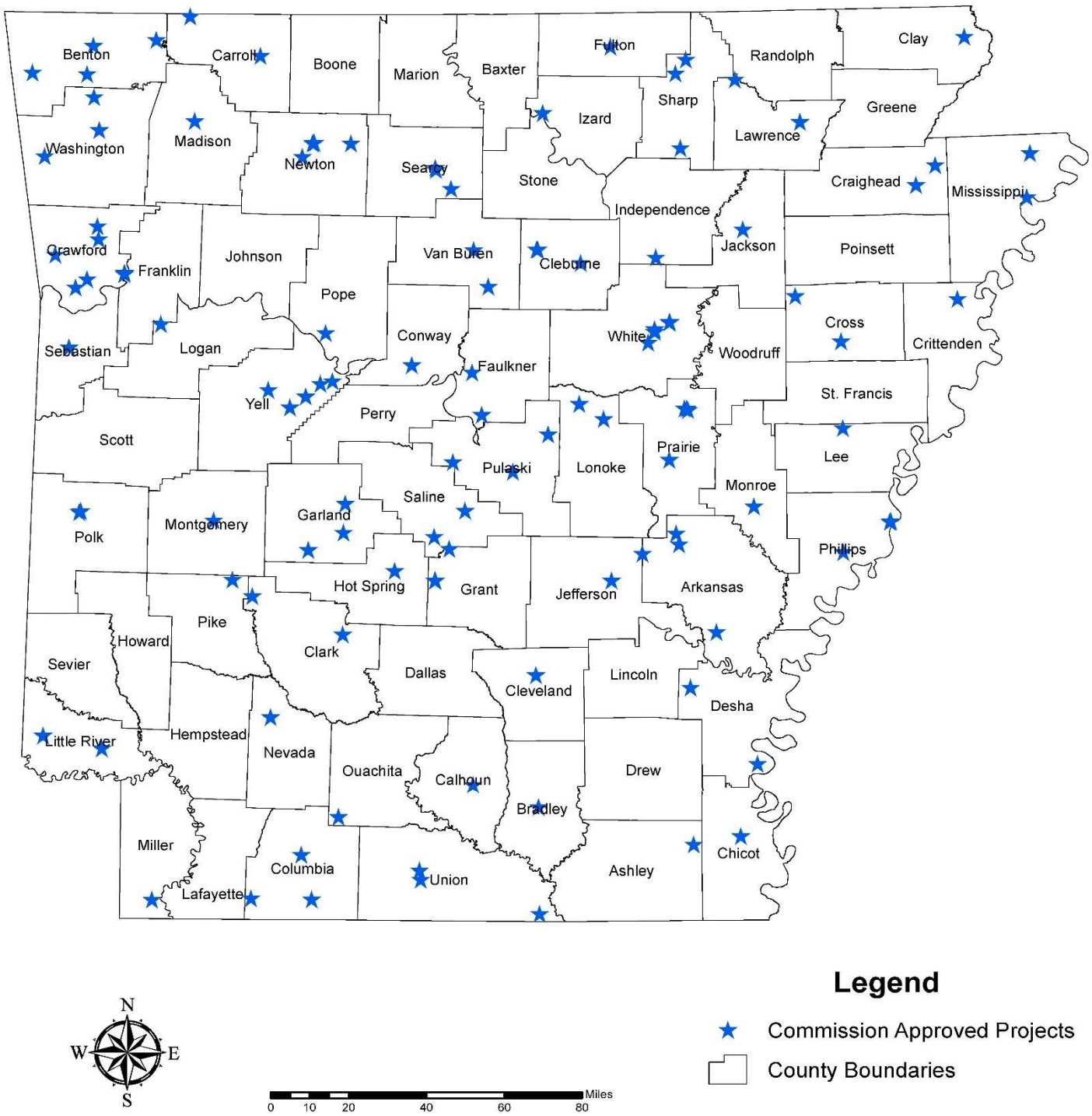
Eligible applicants include cities, towns, counties, rural development authorities, public facility boards, water associations, water authorities, improvement districts, regional water distribution districts, levee and drainage districts, conservation districts, regional solid waste authorities, and regional wastewater treatment districts. Borrowers pledge water or wastewater system revenue, sales tax revenue, or property tax revenues as collateral for these loans.

Accomplishments

The Water Resources Development Section's major accomplishments include:

- In SFY 2023, a record $1.1 billion in funding was approved for 302 projects across the state, and this trend continued in SFY 2024 with $681 million in approved funding for 138 projects
- Disbursed $133 million to projects, including $98.9 million from the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds, $1.7 million from state programs, $31.1 million from American Rescue Plan Act funding, and $802,000 from the funding authorized by Executive Order 19-09 for the repair of levees damaged in the May 2019 flood
- Provided $1,600,927 in low-interest funding for 14 projects implementing conservation best management practices for nonpoint source agricultural water quality impacts on croplands in partnership with local financial institutions in FY 2024
- Started construction on 16 projects and completed construction on ten commission-funded projects
- Delivered 38 presentations to over 1,000 citizens across the state
- Produced two articles and three advertisements
- Procured an engineering firm to provide lead service line inventories at no cost to communities of 50,000 or less; at this time, 585 systems have requested this assistance

Approved Water Development Projects (FY-2024)



Water Resources Management Section

The Water Resources Management Section performs state-level planning for managing, conserving, and developing Arkansas's water resources. It also provides a safe and effective water supply and protection from flooding for present and future generations. Due to the diverse responsibilities of the Water Resources Management Section, it is divided into five subsections: Dam Safety, Floodplain Management, Groundwater Protection and Management, Water Quality Management, and State Water Planning.

Dam Safety

The Dam Safety Section provides regulation and supervision of dams for the health, safety, welfare, and economic well-being of the citizens of Arkansas. To meet regulatory status, a dam must have a height of 25 feet or greater and contain a volume of at least 50 acre-feet of water at a normal pool. Downstream owners can petition the Natural Resources Division to regulate smaller dams believed to pose a threat to life or property. Regulations ensure dams are properly designed, constructed, monitored, and maintained.

Accomplishments

The Dam Safety Section's major accomplishments include:

- Implemented the Priority Action Plan, identifying and inspecting 20 low-performing High Hazard and Significant Hazard dams, readying these structures for the development of rehabilitative action plans
    - Eight Low Hazard dams were also inspected
- Secured $200,000 in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding via the National Dam Safety Program for support of the Priority Action Plan initiative and upgrading of the Probable Maximum Precipitation portal
- Initiated the 2024 Dam Safety training program, which included a presentation of an online High Hazard Potential Grant Program training seminar, implementation of three workshops for dam owners and operators, and focused on liability and owner responsibilities
- State elected to National Dam Safety Review Board, serving as one of five state representatives on the national committee and providing subject matter expertise with respect to implementation of dam safety programs in rural and agricultural communities
- Deployed the National Dam Safety Awareness Day social media campaign, promoting community responsibility and awareness

Floodplain Management

Floods have been, and continue to be, a destructive natural hazard in terms of economic loss to the citizens of Arkansas. The Furman Center (floodzonedata.us) estimates that more than 130,000 single and multi-family housing units in the state are in flood-prone areas. Since 1980, 9,967 National Flood Insurance Policy claims have been paid, totaling approximately $204 million, according to FEMA (pivot.fema.gov). The real economic cost is much more, as this number does not include private flood insurance claims nor the cost to repair flood prone properties unprotected by either the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) or private insurance. To help Arkansas communities reduce the risk of flooding and assist when floods occur, the Natural Resources Division's Floodplain Management Program administers the NFIP for Arkansas.

Accomplishments

The Floodplain Management Section's major accomplishments include:

- Provided in-person and virtual technical training and support on flood risk reduction and mitigation to 369 community officials representing 260 towns, cities, and counties
- Responded to 650 requests for technical assistance from residents, mayors, county judges, and other government officials
- Provided outreach and education to a variety of local, state, and national organizations through 14 local community presentations, two virtual seminars, one regional conference, and two statewide conferences
- Continued efforts to provide state-of-the-art flood risk analysis and mapping to towns and cities for a total of 71 of the 75 counties in the state
- Continued overseeing the ongoing deployment of $3 million to local communities to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures
- Sponsored a series of trainings and social media messages to bring awareness to the value of flood insurance for Arkansans to protect personal property and their businesses from flood damage, including joint efforts with the National Weather Service and Arkansas Insurance Division through a Governor proclamation emphasizing flood awareness and flood insurance awareness
- Resumed community assistance visits with NFIP participating communities; a total of 27 communities received guidance through an audit of the community floodplain program for the year
- Opened Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants to Arkansas communities through a requested $15.9 million for new projects to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures
- Opened new Flood Mitigation Assistance opportunities through Project Swift Current in the amount of $20 million to reduce or mitigate repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss damage to structures
- Assisted 16 communities in the adoption of the new or updated regulatory products along with updating community flood damage prevention ordinance and code
- Developed state-of-the-art model floodplain ordinances that have been adopted and promoted nationally by FEMA and the Association of State Floodplain Managers

Groundwater Protection and Management

The Groundwater Protection and Management Section is focused on managing and protecting Arkansas's groundwater resources for human, environmental, and economic benefit. This work is accomplished through monitoring aquifer water levels and water quality, implementing best management practices (BMPs), conservation, enforcement of the proper construction of water wells, and education. The Groundwater Protection and Management Section staff works in partnership with the public and other agencies to accomplish these objectives.

Accomplishments

The Groundwater Protection and Management Section's major accomplishments include:

- Produced the annual 2023 Arkansas Groundwater Protection and Management Report pursuant to the Arkansas Groundwater Protection and Management Act 154 of 1991

    - New to the report this year were water level data from the Nacatoch and Tokio aquifers, as well as water quality data collected in 2023
- Developed a "story map" interactive web-based version of the Groundwater Protection and Management Report for 2023 data
- Collected water level measurements in the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial, Sparta, Cockfield, and Wilcox aquifers in cooperation with partners at the U.S. Geological Survey and the USDA NRCS
- Managed the state's Conservation Tax Credit Program, which included approving 96 new projects totaling $2,143,658.55 in credit dollars and impacting 13,046.55 acres, and issuing 39 certificates of completion to finished projects
- Managed Arkansas's Water-Use Registration Program, which includes 20,000 surface water sites and 60,000 groundwater sites
- Collected water quality data from five wells in five different aquifers as a part of the Arkansas Masterwell Program
- Monitored 25 wells in the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial and Sparta aquifers for chloride, bromide, and other basic water quality parameters as a part of the Groundwater Salinity Program
- Licensed 149 water wells, 285 drillers, 285 pump installers, and permitted 424 rigs
- Developed a new database for water well licensing

Water Quality Section

The Water Quality Section encompasses four statewide programs, including the Nonpoint Source Pollution Program, Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program, Wetland and Riparian Tax Credit Program, and Arkansas Nutrient Reduction Strategy. All programs work to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution results from various sources over a large area, in direct contrast to point source pollution, which results from a single source. Nonpoint source pollution generally results from land runoff, precipitation, atmospheric deposition, drainage, or hydrologic modification. It is often deposited into lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and even our underground drinking water sources.

Potential sources of nonpoint source pollution include:

- Excess fertilizers and chemicals from agricultural lands, residential, and urban areas
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites, crop and forest lands, dirt and gravel roads, and eroding streambanks
- Bacteria and nutrients from livestock and animal waste
- Hydromodification

The Natural Resources Division is responsible for developing and implementing the state's Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program. This program cooperates with many local, state, and federal agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Accomplishments

The Water Quality Section's major accomplishments include:

- Completed and submitted the 2023 Nonpoint Source Pollution Annual Report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6
- Completed and submitted the 2024-2029 Arkansas Nonpoint Source Management Plan to EPA

Region 6

- Disbursed $2,264,405.70 in federal funding and provided technical assistance to 51 projects associated with the abatement/reduction or control of nonpoint source pollutants, including the implementation of BMPs, demonstrations of effective abatement/reduction techniques, technical assistance, education, and monitoring
- Completed stakeholder processes submitted to EPA, and received acceptance for watershed management plans for the Lake Conway-Point Remove, White Oak Bayou, Bayou Meto, and the Little Red River watersheds
- Continued ongoing efforts to develop or update watershed management plans for the Illinois River, Beaver Reservoir, Lower Arkansas-Maumelle, Lower Ouachita-Smackover, and Upper Saline River
- Approved 14 Agriculture Water Quality Loans to improve water quality through implementing nonpoint source conservation practices with loans totaling $1,600,927
- Completed ten inspections for best management practices at Title X Cost Share Program projects across four conservation districts
- Reimbursed 35 landowners a total of $106,113 through participation in Title X Cost Share Program for implementing on-farm conservation practices
- Wetland and Riparian Zone Tax Credit Program staff processed and approved eight new riparian zone tax credit projects totaling $385,000 in eligible project costs, conducted 15 final project inspections, monitored 42 projects, and conducted eight project inspections
- Conducted over 20 presentations and had 25 social media releases or mentions

Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant Program

The Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant Program was established in 2015 to fund projects to protect the state's streams, lakes, and rivers from erosion and sediment delivery caused by unpaved roads. The Nonpoint Source Management Section is responsible for working with local entities to implement projects.

The Arkansas Unpaved Roads Grant Program receives $300,000 annually from the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment's solid waste collection fees. In FY 2024, 15 individual project applications were received, totaling $1,645,200 of combined county and state funding. The total state funding request equaled $896,701, of which only $300,000 is available annually.

Accomplishments

The Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program's major accomplishments include:

- Completed two Environmental Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) trainings for state, county, and interested parties with 17 counties, one municipality, and three private sector organizations with 46 individuals participating
- Funded nine projects (listed below), utilizing $258,756 from the federal Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program as additional funding for projects meeting eligibility requirements

County	Amount Requested	Match Required	State	Federal 319(h)
Independence	$59,153	$59,153	$59,153	
Pope	$27,901	$64,919	$27,901	
Lincoln	$69,588	$73,090	$69,588	
Sevier	$75,000	$90,492	$75,000	
Yell	$75,000	$100,318	$36,078	$38,922
Sharp	$75,000	$82,000	$32,280	$42,720
Arkansas	$65,196	$65,196		$65,196
Van Buren	$70,000	$626,963		$70,000
Scott	$41,918	$53,305		$41,918
Total	**$558,756**	**$1,215,436**	**$300,000**	**$258,756**

State Water Planning

The Natural Resources Division is guided by the Arkansas Water Plan (AWP), a long-term strategy for the conservation, development, management, and use of water for all citizens. The AWP includes all previous updates to the plan and is a dynamic framework, bringing data, science, and public input together to define water demands, water supplies, issues, and potential solutions to meet our future needs.

Accomplishments

State Water Planning's major accomplishments include:

- Initiated an update to the 2014 State Water Plan in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and held seven public meetings to gather input
- Issued 16 water plan compliance determinations and determined that 72 projects were exempt from water plan compliance
- Processed and conducted technical reviews on 59 projects

Act 605 of 2021 – Oversight of Retail Water Providers

Act 605 of 2021 tasked retail water providers with additional responsibilities in managing and operating their water systems. These responsibilities include the preparation of a rate study every five years.

Accomplishments

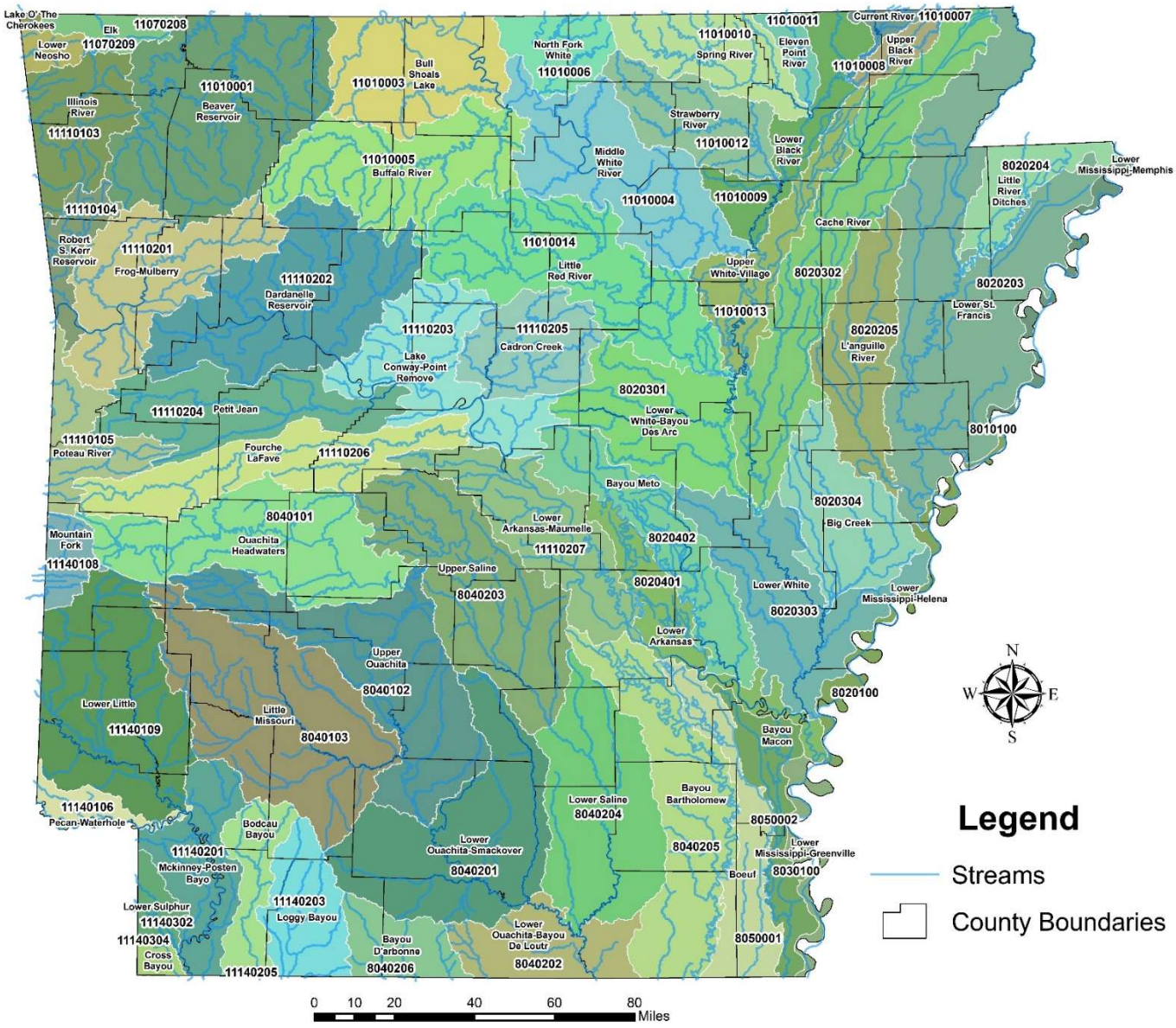
Major accomplishments regarding oversight of retail water providers include:

- Approved 34 rate study providers to perform the required rate studies for water service providers
- Scheduled trainings for retail service provider boards and posted information on trainings to the website and social media platforms; there have been 1,714 individuals trained since July 2022
    - Currently, three approved training providers offer the required training for water service provider boards
- Mailed letters on Act 605 requirements to 675 retail service providers; provider rate studies are due by population, and water systems having 500 customers or less must submit a rate study by July 1, 2024

Red River Navigation Study

A study was initiated to determine the feasibility of increasing navigation on the Red River in Arkansas. A committee comprised of Louisiana and Arkansas stakeholders contributed $3 million to conduct the study. The cost was split between the states at $1.5 million each. Freese and Nichols, an engineering company, was hired to do the study, and the agreeement was signed in late 2022. A memorandum of agreement was signed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in early February 2024, which authorized the feasibility study. This study is expected to take up to three years and will be handed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for approval.

Arkansas Watersheds



Arkansas Watersheds

Listed Alphabetically and Largest to Smallest

Arkansas Watersheds HUC8 Listed Alphabetically	Acres
Bayou Bartholomew	982,089
Bayou D'Arbonne	279,409
Bayou Macon	365,300
Bayou Meto	641,115
Beaver Reservoir	1,389,297
Big	606,271
Bodcau Bayou	299,428
Boeuf	494,351
Buffalo	856,963
Bull Shoals Lake	703,335
Cache	1,251,642
Cadron	484,309
Cross Bayou	54,340
Current	67,589
Dardanelle Reservoir	1,192,772
Eleven Point	113,439
Elk	141,459
Fourche La Fave	712,912
Frog-Mulberry	822,578
Illinois	484,548

Arkansas Watersheds HUC8 Listed Alphabetically	Acres
Lake Conway-Point Remove	728,758
Lake O' The Cherokees	14,151
L'Anguille	611,537
Little Missouri	1,342,695
Little Red	1,152,281
Little River Ditches	311,094
Loggy Bayou	406,407
Lower Arkansas	441,454
Lower Arkansas-Maumelle	702,540
Lower Black	450,829
Lower Little Arkansas, Oklahoma	1,147,191
Lower Mississippi-Greenville	121,509
Lower Mississippi-Helena	173,630
Lower Mississippi-Memphis	95,821
Lower Neosho	91,980
Lower Ouachita-Bayou De Loutre	442,135
Lower Ouachita-Smackover	1,153,694
Lower Saline	971,689
Lower St. Francis	1,936,408
Lower Sulpher	119,908

Arkansas Watersheds HUC8 Listed Alphabetically	Acres
Lower White	870,807
Lower White-Bayou Des Arc	726,668
McKinney-Posten Bayous	513,395
Middle White	943,985
Mountain Fork	157,615
North Fork White	282,504
Ouachita Headwaters	990,183
Pecan-Waterhole	143,071
Petit Jean	702,924
Poteau	356,235
Robert S. Kerr Reservoir	211,235
Spring	470,590
Strawberry	486,616
Upper Black	116,830
Upper Ouachita	1,121,157
Upper Saline	1,097,047
Upper White-Village	473,908
Grand Total	34,023,623

Arkansas Watersheds HUC8 Largest to Smallest	Acres
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Current	67,589
Cross Bayou	54,340
Lake O' The Cherokees	14,151
Grand Total	34,023,623

Plant Industries

RICE
#1 IN NATION

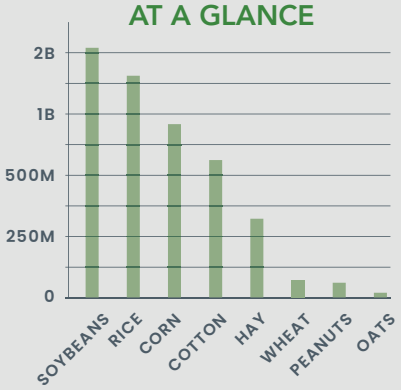
COTTON
#3 IN NATION

PEANUTS
#7 IN NATION

142,109 TONS
of Arkansas peanuts graded annually

6.4 MILLION
Disposed of 6.4 million pounds of unwanted pesticides since 2005

TOP PRODUCERS AT A GLANCE



14,758
pesticides registered and monitored

1,474
exports certified free of pests, weeds, and disease

1,065
N.P.K. tests performed on 12,393 tons of fertilizer

BUREAU OF STANDARDS

5,842
petroleum pumps tested

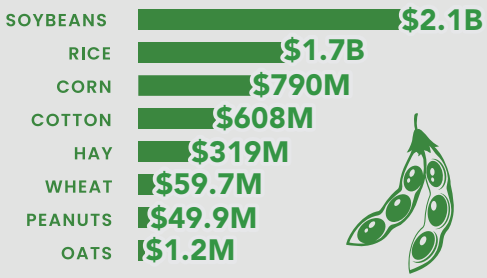
3,535
retail station inspected

4,931
scale inspections

3,152 TESTS

More than 3,152 quality assurance tests on seeds for more than 100 different crop varieties

(by value of production)



AR TOP COMMODITIES RANKED NATIONALLY

#1 in Rice
#3 in Cotton
#3 in Cottonseed
#7 in Peanuts
#10 in Soybeans
#16 in Corn
#23 in Oats
#25 in Wheat
#25 in Hay

1,515
bee colonies inspected

4,263
beekeepers registered

INVASIVE PEST QUARANTINE

FIRE ANT: 50 counties
EMERALD: 75 counties
ASH BORER

ESSENTIAL!

Ensuring quality products and services through education and regulatory enforcement.

PLANT INDUSTRIES DIVISION

Data provided by the Plant Industries Division 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.



PLANT INDUSTRIES DIVISION

DIRECTOR
SCOTT BRAY

- PESTICIDE SECTION
  - FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS ENFORCEMENT
  - PESTICIDE REGISTRATION
  - WORKER PESTICIDE PROTECTION STANDARD
  - PESTICIDE CONTAINER /CONTAINMENT
  - PESTICIDES GROUND WATER SAMPLING
  - ABANDONED PESTICIDE PROGRAM
  - PESTICIDE EXPERIMENTAL USE PROGRAM
- REGULATORY SERVICES SECTION
  - COMMERCIAL PEST CONTROL LICENSING
  - PRODUCE SAFETY PROGRAM
  - AQUACULTURE PROGRAM
  - NURSERY LICENSING
  - PINK BOLLWORM (COTTON PEST) SURVEY
  - PEANUT GRADING SERVICES
  - FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWER AUDITING
  - SWEET POTATO WEEVIL CERTIFICATION
  - PHYTOSANITARY AG COMMODITY EXPORT CERTIFICATES
  - GINSENG PROGRAM
  - COOPERATIVE USDA AGRICULTURAL PEST SURVEYS
  - H2A MIGRANT WORKER HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM
- QUALITY CONTROL & COMPLIANCE SECTION
  - REGULATORY SEED PROGRAM
  - CERTIFIED SEED PROGRAM
  - INDUSTRIAL HEMP LICENSING
  - COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER REGISTRATION
  - FERTILIZER FACILITY LICENSING
  - SOIL AMENDMENT REGISTRATION
  - FEED FACILITY LICENSING
  - AGRICULTURAL CONSULTANT LICENSING
  - LIME PRODUCT REGISTRATION
- INSPECTION SERVICES SECTION
  - INSPECTIONS AND SURVEYS
- BUREAU OF STANDARDS
  - PETROLEUM PROGRAM
  - WEIGHTS & MEASURES PROGRAM

PLANT INDUSTRIES DIVISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Plant Industries Division's mission is to protect and serve the citizens of Arkansas and the agricultural and business sectors by providing information and unbiased enforcement of laws and regulations, with the objective of ensuring quality products and services. Our vision is to maintain a competent, friendly, cooperative, and efficient Division able to promptly serve the agricultural and business communities and the public in a highly credible, professional manner.



Plant Industries Division Director
Scott Bray

The Plant Industries Division is organized into five sections: (1) Pesticide; (2) Regulatory Services; (3) Quality Control and Compliance; (4) Bureau of Standards; and (5) Inspection Services.

The Plant Industries Division conducts work activities associated with 58 diverse programs, with approximately 120 full-time employees and 75 seasonal employees. The Plant Industries Division Director provides general oversight of the Division. A section manager provides oversight of each of the five sections.

The Plant Industries Division administers the meetings and rules promulgated by the State Plant Board. The State Plant Board promulgates rules pursuant to more than 20 different Arkansas laws regarding a wide range of agricultural products, practices, and pests. The State Plant Board also establishes administrative penalties for rule violations. The Plant Industries Division staff administered the following meetings for the State Plant Board and the State Plant Board's sub-committees:

- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee - July 13, 2023
- State Plant Board - August 24, 2023
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee - November 14, 2023
- Pesticide Sub-Committee - November 14, 2023
- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee - November 16, 2023
- Pest Control Sub-Committee - November 16, 2023
- State Plant Board - December 23, 2023
- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee - February 9, 2024
- Pest Control Sub-Committee - February 12, 2024
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee - March 5, 2024
- State Plant Board - March 5, 2024
- Pest Control Sub-Committee - May 28, 2024
- Pesticide Sub-Committee - May 22, 2024
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee - June 5, 2024
- State Plant Board - June 6, 2024

The Plant Industries Division continues to expand and experience new challenges. Its peanut grading program grew to accommodate the industry's significant and rapid growth over the past several years. The peanut grading program provides grading services to four buying points and one of the highest-capacity shelling facilities in the nation.

In early 2021, the Plant Industries Division partnered with the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Department of Labor and Licensing to assist with the H2A migrant and seasonal farmworker program. The partnership led to a memorandum of agreement, which was signed by all three parties in June 2022. The Plant Industries Division's role in the program is to provide onsite inspection of migrant worker housing. The Plant Industries Division utilizes the Inspector Services Section to conduct the inspections and the Regulatory Services Section to manage the records and data related to the farmer applications for labor. In FY 24, the Plant Industries Division inspected 763 farms, which involved 1,271 houses.

Act 712 transferred the following agriculture promotion boards to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture:

- Arkansas Beef Council
- Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board
- Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Board
- Arkansas Rice Research Promotion Board
- Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
- Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

The Plant Industries Division, with support from the Shared Services Division's IT, marketing, fiscal, and legal staff, administers the Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board, Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board, and Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board.

The team administered the following meetings for the Soybean Promotion Board:

- August 9, 2023
- November 3, 2023
- January 10, 2024
- January 25, 2024
- March 7-8, 2024 (funding approved)
    - Promotion - $458,285
    - Research - $3,384,611
    - Total - $3,842,896
- April 17, 2024

The team administered the following meetings for the Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board:

- January 30, 2024
- February 21-22, 2024 (funding approved)
    - Promotion $182,666
    - Research $1,053,801
    - Total $1,236,467

- April 4, 2024

The team administered the following meetings for the Catfish Promotion Board:

- September 19, 2023
- January 25, 2024
- March 14, 2024

Two invasive species were identified in Arkansas in FY 24. The Plant Industries Division worked to raise awareness about the presence and potential threat posed by the following invasive species.

The discovery of cogongrass, one of the world's worst invasive species, in eastern Arkansas presented a new challenge for the Plant Industries Division in 2021. Division staff quickly formed and led a multi-agency response team that successfully treated the site and conducted surveys to identify additional locations. Staff continued to inspect the location and surrounding areas with no reemergence or new locations detected until May 2024, when several plants re-emerging at the original (only known) location were detected. This was unexpected because no reemergence of the plants was detected during last year's inspections. The area was retreated, and monitoring will continue.

Manchurian wild rice is another invasive species that has been found in Arkansas. This invasive species is native to Asia. It is a large perennial aquatic grass growing up to 12 feet tall. Manchurian wild rice is primarily eaten as a vegetable in Asia from cooking the swollen base of the stems. The stems become swollen due to being infected with a smut fungus. The main concern is the impact the invasive species could have on rice production. Also, any new introduction of an invasive exotic plant could impact native wetland areas in the state and region. In June 2024, staff received information that a stand of Manchurian wild rice was suspected in Stuttgart. In cooperation with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture staff, investigations confirmed the fungus associated with Manchurian wild rice. Division staff conducted eradication efforts by removing and incinerating the plant material. The growth area was treated with herbicides and will be monitored for regrowth.

A summary of the Plant Industries Division's accomplishments by area of responsibility include:

Bureau of Standards Section

The Bureau of Standard Section's mission is to ensure equity and fairness in the commercial transactions of the marketplace by establishing accuracy and uniformity in the state's commerce through enforcement of laws and regulations which benefit and protect both buyers and sellers of products and services. The section's regulatory goals are to provide consumers and businesses a fair-trade environment, encourage business development, and instill consumer confidence. To achieve these goals, the Plant Industries Division routinely performs unannounced inspections, complaint investigations, and other regulatory activities that involve suppliers, retailers, and distributors.

The Bureau of Standards Section is the only weights and measures regulatory agency in the state to provide consumers and the industry with oversight and protection in commercial transactions. It is estimated that weights and measures programs and regulations affect approximately 50 percent of the gross domestic product in Arkansas.

Petroleum Program

The State Petroleum Products Program is responsible for testing motor fuels such as gasoline, kerosene, diesel, and illuminating and heating oils used in Arkansas commerce. The program provides consumer protection, technical assistance to the petroleum industry, and assurance to consumers and the petroleum industry that they receive quality petroleum products. Unannounced inspections and collection of samples from retail fuel stations, terminal storage tanks, pipeline terminals, refineries, and wholesale bulk plants are conducted regularly.

Accomplishments

The State Petroleum Products Program's accomplishments include:

- Collected 6,623 fuel samples
- Inspected 3,535 retail stations
- Inspected 4,807 storage tanks
- Performed 16,839 laboratory tests
- Issued 80 notices of violations
- Issued 59 stop sales
- Increased compliance by assisting weights and measures staff in checking annual inspection decal requirements

Weights and Measures Program

The Weights and Measures Program is responsible for ensuring "equity may prevail" in commercial transactions involving weighing and measuring in the marketplace. Every transaction encompassing exchange of goods, property, and services is affected by some form of weighing or measuring. This program enforces the regulations prescribed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology Handbooks 44, 130, 133, and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards.

The program consists of 14 field inspectors located strategically throughout the state. They carry out large scale testing and inspections of the standard and random pack products at the wholesale and retail outlets, test gasoline pumps and storage tanks, small and large capacity scales, pawn scales, and airport baggage scales. Inspectors also conduct inspections for catfish and egg labeling compliance and for misleading advertising violations in the news media.

Accomplishments

The Weights and Measures Program's accomplishments include:

- Tested 271 vehicle scales
- Tested 151 platform scales
- Tested 2,412 high-volume fuel meters
- Inspected 8,578 meat packages
- Inspected 2,341 packaged commodities
- Inspected 5,842 petroleum pumps
- Inspected 4,509 small scales
- Conducted 93 fish identification inspections
- Conducted 687 egg labeling inspections
- Conducted 21 U.S. Department of Agriculture country of origin labeling inspections

- Conducted 82 complaints investigations
- Issued 231 notices of violations

Inspector Services Section

The Inspector Services Section consists of one section manager, four district supervisors, and 25 inspectors located throughout the state. The inspectors provide services for three Plant Industries Division sections. They are trained to conduct various types of inspections, sampling procedures, trapping/surveying, and pesticide misuse investigations. These activities include plant symptomology identification from herbicide exposure. The inspectors have participated in invasive pest surveys and eradication efforts and assisted with an assortment of duties on an as needed basis. This a critical component of the work activities conducted by the entire Plant Industries Division.

Activities such as sampling, investigations, inspections, and H2A housing inspections conducted by this group are reflected in the reports from all other sections. Programs for which inspections services are provided include:

Pesticide Section

- Enforcement
- Worker protection standard
- Container/containment
- Endangered species
- Pesticides in water
- Abandoned Pesticide Program
- Experimental use permits

Regulatory Services Section

- Produce safety (Food Safety Modernization Act)
- Aquaculture (Bait and Ornamental Certification Program)
- Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) inspections
- Nursery/landscape (licensing)
- Pink bollworm
- Peanut grading
- Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (fruit and vegetables, federal audits)
- Sweet potato certification
- Phytosanitary certificates
- Quarantines
- Ginseng
- Pest survey
- Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- H2A housing inspections

Quality Control & Compliance Section

- Regulatory seed label compliance
- Certified seed program compliance
- Genetically modified organism (GMO) rice testing

- Commercial fertilizer product registration
- Fertilizer facility licensing
- Soil amendment product registration
- Lime product registration
- Feed facility licensing
- Collection of tonnage fees for feed, fertilizer, lime, and seed
- Public grain warehouse licensing
- Grain dealer licensing
- Grain grader certification
- Arkansas agricultural consultant licensing
- Industrial hemp

Pesticide Complaints

In addition to the inspectors' normal duties, their workload increased significantly with the introduction of dicamba tolerant seed and in-crop use technology. Pesticide complaints increased dramatically in 2017 and remained high through 2022. Complaints have trended back toward pre-2017 numbers for years 2023 and 2024.

- 2010 = 189
- 2011 = 195
- 2012 = 179
- 2013 = 176
- 2014 = 181
- 2015 = 237
- 2016 = 274
- 2017 = 1,312
- 2018 = 456
- 2019 = 462
- 2020 = 514
- 2021 = 565
- 2022 = 418
- 2023 = 227
- 2024 = 234

Pesticide Section

The responsibilities of the Pesticide Section include the administration and enforcement of the following:

- Pesticide Control Act and regulations
- Pesticide Use and Application Act and regulations
- Regulations on pesticide classification
- Cooperative agreements with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding worker protection, endangered species, ground water protection, and container and containment

The Pesticide Section's major activities involve product registration approval and the issuance of permits and licenses to manufacturers, dealers, and several categories of applicators. The staff works closely with field inspection staff on pesticide complaint cases and develops civil penalty assessments to effect compliance when violations are found. The section also compiles statistical data for use by industry and educational agencies, provides compliance assistance and enforcement of worker protection standards, and implements a state groundwater protection plan.

Accomplishments

The Pesticide Section's accomplishments include:

- Registered 1,485 pesticide manufacturers
- Registered 14,758 pesticide products
- Licensed 472 pesticide dealers
- Certified 111 commercial applicators and re-certified 395
- Certified seven commercial applicator technicians and re-certified 65
- Certified 298 non-commercial applicators and re-certified 372
- Certified 1,161 private applicators and re-certified 3,250
- Administered 716 in-person tests
- Administered 350 online tests
- Licensed 104 aerial commercial firms; licensed 106 ground commercial firms
- Licensed 217 aerial individual commercial applicators; licensed 331 ground individual commercial applicators
- Licensed 31 commercial applicator technicians
- Licensed one individual RUP seed treatment
- Licensed 444 non-commercial applicators
- Licensed 3,226 five-year private applicators; licensed 239 one-year private applicators
- Licensed two private applicators with pilot authorization
- Issued 104 custom applicator permits
- Issued three tree injection permits
- Authorized 131 custom pilots
- Inspected 35 pieces of application equipment
- Inspected nine agriculture use dilution samples
- Conducted 34 agriculture use inspections
- Conducted 66 certified applicator inspections
- Conducted 21 EPA producer establishment inspections
- Inspected 24 EPA producer establishment samples
- Conducted 122 marketplace inspections
- Inspected 30 marketplace samples
- Conducted 140 RUP dealer inspections
- Conducted 47 worker protection inspections
- Conducted 16 worker protections label compliance inspections
- Conducted 14 container containment inspections
- Collected 539,639 pounds of abandoned pesticides in four counties
- Received 234 requests for investigations
- Issued 38 warning letters
- Issued 26 civil complaints

- Conducted 134 administrative hearings
- Issued 45 civil penalties
- Staff closed 338 case files
- Conducted five trainings for the Arkansas Department of Transportation
- Attended an EPA Region 6 inspector training in August 2023
- Attended a symptomology field training in August 2023
- Attended the EPA Region 6 meeting in October 2023
- Attended the Arkansas Aerial Applicator Association meeting in January 2024
- Attended an inspector training event in February 2024
- Attended the American Association of Pesticide Control Officials meeting in March 2024
- Attended the EPA Region 6 mid-year meeting in May 2024

Quality Control and Compliance Section

The Quality Control and Compliance (QCC) Section works to ensure public safety and a fair marketplace through the enforcement of 15 agricultural laws and oversight of licensing, certifications, and product registrations for 12 programs involving the feed, fertilizer, limestone, seed, industrial hemp, and grain warehouse programs. In coordination with the Laboratory Services Section, the QCC Section conducts quality assurance programs for feed, fertilizer, lime, and seed. The QCC Section also collects and reports tonnage fees for several programs and provides a portion of the collected fees to the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Soil Testing and Research Fund.

Regulatory Seed Program

The Seed Section's responsibilities are both service oriented and regulatory in three core areas: (1) enforcement of seed laws and regulations, (2) management of the seed certification program, and (3) management of the rice genetically modified organism (GMO) testing program.

The seed laboratory tests regulatory samples for both certified seed and non-certified seed, and service samples, which are submitted by seedsmen or farmers for the purpose of obtaining information as to the quality of the seed for planting purposes. If the seedsman is going to sell seed for planting, an official seed laboratory test is needed to support the labeling information. The seed laboratory currently tests more than 60 different crops.

Accomplishments

- Issued 314 seed labeler licenses
- Issued 90 seed treater licenses
- Reviewed 1,068 seed labels
- Inspected and certified 15,014 acres
- Issued 36 stop sales
- Sampled and tested 761 GMO rice lots
- Printed 69,534 seed labels

Feed Program

The Feed Program works to ensure public safety and a fair marketplace by providing oversight of feed products sold in the state. The program administers and enforces the Feed Laws and Regulations, and

the Aflatoxin Act. The program conducts random sampling from retail and distribution points for laboratory testing against label claims. The program assists with product recalls and investigates claims of product contamination and adulteration, inferior quality, and unlicensed activity brought to its attention. The program is responsible for the licensing of feed facilities, tracking the distribution of products in the state for statistical purposes, and ensuring the collection of required fees and tonnage payments.

Accomplishments

- Issued 1,206 feed facility licenses
- Received 1,359 sample reports
- Issued 172 penalties

Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Amendment Programs

The Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Amendment programs work to ensure public safety and a fair marketplace by providing oversight of fertilizer, lime, and soil amendment products sold in the state. The programs enforce the Fertilizer Law, Agricultural Liming Materials Act, Arkansas Soil Amendment Act of 1977, and Natural Organic Fertilizers Act. These programs review product labels and information before approval of registration, conduct random sampling from retail and distribution sites for laboratory testing against label claims, and investigate consumer complaints of product inferiority, contamination, and unlicensed activity.

Accomplishments

Fertilizer:

- Registered 499 fertilizer companies
- Registered 5,312 fertilizer products
- Licensed 154 Arkansas fertilizer facilities
- Received 527 fertilizer sample reports
- Issued 35 penalties

Soil Amendments:

- Registered 164 soil companies
- Registered 663 soil amendment products

Lime:

- Registered 83 lime companies
- Registered 127 liming products
- Received 50 lime sample reports
- Issued four lime penalties

Industrial Hemp Program

The Industrial Hemp Program staff administers the Arkansas Industrial Hemp Production Act licensing hemp producers and hemp processor/handlers in Arkansas. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture Industrial Hemp Production Plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on December 9, 2021, creating the Arkansas Hemp Program effective January 1, 2022. The original Arkansas Hemp Research Program began in 2018. The research program was created under the Arkansas Industrial Hemp Act which allowed Arkansas farmers to research the feasibility of growing industrial hemp in

Arkansas. Rules for the Arkansas Industrial Hemp Research Program became effective August 2018. The Industrial Hemp Program staff began accepting industrial hemp applications in October 2018; and the first industrial hemp license was issued in November 2018. Currently, research program rules are still in effect until updated rules are promulgated.

Accomplishments

- Approved a total of 20 licenses:
  - 15 licensed growers
  - Five licensed processors
- 11 fields totaling 32.4 acres approved
- 21 greenhouses totaling 46,079 square feet approved

Agricultural Consultants Licensing Program

Each person performing the functions of a licensed agricultural consultant, before advertising as such, must meet specific licensing requirements and obtain a license. Functions include providing advice or prescriptions for the control or eradication of any insect or mite, pest, plant, pathogen (including nematodes), or any weed, and the use of fertilizer, lime, and/or micro-nutrients based on soil classification, cropping systems, and soil or plant tests. Staff reviews license applications and administers a test to each qualified applicant. Licensed agricultural consultants must complete 20 continuing education hours every two years; 10 of those hours must be completed in Arkansas. Staff verifies continuing education requirements are met using an online application developed by the Department. The application allows staff and consultants to view license status, payment history, and accumulated continuing education hours. Hours can be submitted by consultants using a smart phone as classes are completed.

Accomplishments

- Issued 191 consultant licenses

Grain Warehouse and Catfish Processor Program

The Public Grain Warehouse and Catfish Processor Section oversees three regulatory laws: the Public Grain Warehouse Law, Grain Dealer Law, and Catfish Processor Fair Practices Act. Each law is designed to give producers a measure of protection against bad business practices of facilities that fall under the jurisdiction of these laws.

Public Grain Warehouse Law

Staff auditors are required to audit each licensed grain warehouse at least once annually. Audits include measuring the grain in the facility and examining scale tickets, settlements, contracts, warehouse receipts, and any other documents that are needed to ensure compliance.

Office staff reviews all documents for new applications, renewal applications, and amended applications. Staff reviews financial statements and ensures proper fees are paid, correct bonding amount is received and on file, and the proper amount of grain insurance is kept by the licensee.

Accomplishments

- Issued 33 licenses

- Conducted 26 audits

Arkansas Grain Dealer Law

Staff licenses and audits grain dealers as defined in the Arkansas Grain Dealer Law enacted in 2015. Audits are conducted annually with documents reviewed to ensure that all producers are being paid timely and correctly. Program staff issue warning letters to grain dealers out of compliance; and auditors conduct follow-up audits to ensure compliance has been achieved. The Division also administers a "Slow Pay Hotline" for producers to report grain sale payment concerns.

Accomplishments

- Issued 23 licenses
- Conducted 22 audits

Arkansas Grain Grading Act

The Arkansas Grain Grading Act was enacted in 2019**.** The act prompted the Arkansas Department of Agriculture to adopt rules to develop a course of instruction for sampling and grading of grain consistent with those developed by the USDA. The Department issues and maintains a two-year certificate for individuals who have completed this course of instruction.

Accomplishments

- Issued 35 certificates for 68 locations

Arkansas Catfish Processors Fair Practices Act

The Arkansas Catfish Processors Fair Practices Act was enacted in 1987 to protect catfish producers from bad business practices of catfish processors in the state of Arkansas. The law requires processors whose average annual purchases exceed $50,000 worth of catfish to be registered with the state as a Class A registrant. Arkansas had no registrants under the Arkansas Catfish Processors Fair Practices Act for FY 24.

Regulatory Services Section

The Regulatory Services Section provides diverse program services for Arkansas agriculture-related industries and individuals. The mission is to provide an avenue for proper regulations of plant disease, plant pests, food safety, and pest control which perpetuates quality products and services to the public and regulated industries.

The Regulatory Services Section had two staff members trained in shipping point inspections for sweet potatoes. This will allow the Department to better serve the marketing needs of our state and growers.

In addition to full-time staff, the Regulatory Services Section also hires seasonal employees as needed for survey work, fruit and vegetable inspecting, and peanut grading.

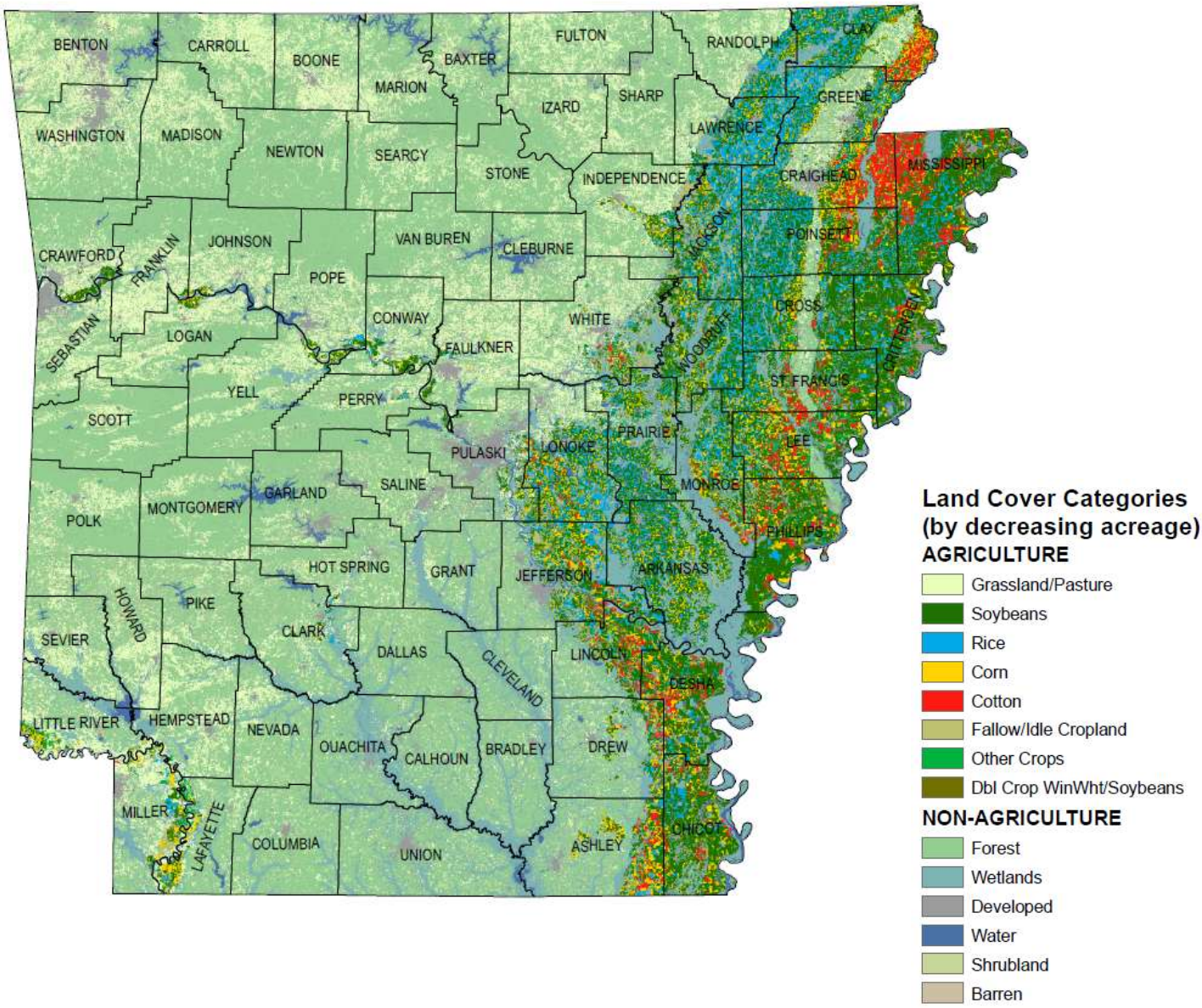
The Regulatory Services Section hosted the 97th National Plant Board meeting from July 30 to August 4, 2023. This meeting included attendees from the National Plant Board and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Protection and Quarantine, Customs and Border Protection.

Accomplishments

- Reviewed 263 bio-regulatory permits
- Issued 1,474 phytosanitary certificates
- Inspected 555 entities as part of the Imported Fire Ant Survey
- Placed approximately 5,000 traps for the Gypsy Moth Survey
- Issued 850 nursery licenses
- Issued certificates for harvested ginseng, 658 pounds dry and 92 pounds green
- Registered 4,263 beekeepers
- Inspected 1,515 apiary colonies
- Collected $1,451,955.30 on 485,500 acres from 628 producers in the Boll Weevil Eradication Program
- Surveyed/trapped and certified 5,259.73 acres in the Sweet Potato Weevil Program
- Surveyed/trapped 29 gins in the Pink Bollworm Program
- Certified 13,455.5 aquaculture acres in the Arkansas Bait and Ornamental Fish Certification Program
- Commercial Pest Control
    - 798 license holders (pest control company licenses)
    - 1,194 licensed operators
    - 2,740 technicians registered
    - 63 applicants certified
    - 188 inspections performed
- Trained 13 growers and inspected seven large farms, three small farms, and six very small farms through the Produce Safety Program
- Conducted fruit and vegetable inspections under USDA Cooperative Agreement:
    - Fresh Tomatoes – 8,000 lbs. inspected, which is one percent of the total lot
    - Cucumbers – 3,200 lbs. inspected, which is one percent of the total lot
    - Sweet Peppers – 1,500 lbs. inspected of the total lot
- Conducted 27 audits under USDA Cooperative Agreement:
    - Eight Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)/Good Handling Practices Audits
    - Two GAP Harmonized Post Operations Audits
    - Three GAP Harmonized Field Operations Audits
    - Six USDA Harmonized GAP Plus + Field Harvest Audits
    - Six USDA Harmonized GAP Plus + Post Harvest Audits
    - Two Unannounced Audits- GAP, Harmonized, Harmonized Plus+
- Peanut Grading
    - Provided peanut grading services to two companies: Birdsong and Delta Peanut
    - Producers grew 64,500 acres
    - Department staff graded 142,109 tons
- Completed seven Biotechnology Regulatory Services inspections
- Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey:
    - Eight surveys conducted in the Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey Program
- Performed over 1,271 H2A agri labor housing inspections

Arkansas Land Cover Categories

Source: USDA National and Delta Regional Agricultural Statistics Service



Shared Services

FISCAL

HUMAN RESOURCES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

LAW ENFORCEMENT

LEGAL

LABORATORY SERVICES

TEAMS!

$233 MILLION
Fiscal managed a combined operating budget of more than $233 million

21,000
vendor invoices processed

$87,000,000
in federal grant aid payments processed

$104,000,000
federal grant aid reimbursement requested

$1,161,474
in restituion returned to land owners

LAW ENFORCEMENT

$2,330
received in fines

171
law enforcement cases resolved

185
assists performed

166 Positions
Human Resources processed **166** hires and promotions across all division

Marketing issued **62** press releases, and promoted **20** state proclamations

NEW RULES
Assisted Department's boards and commissions in promulgating **9** new rules

LOAN MEDIATIONS
Coordinated **15** farm loan mediations, with **7** resulting in successful resolutions

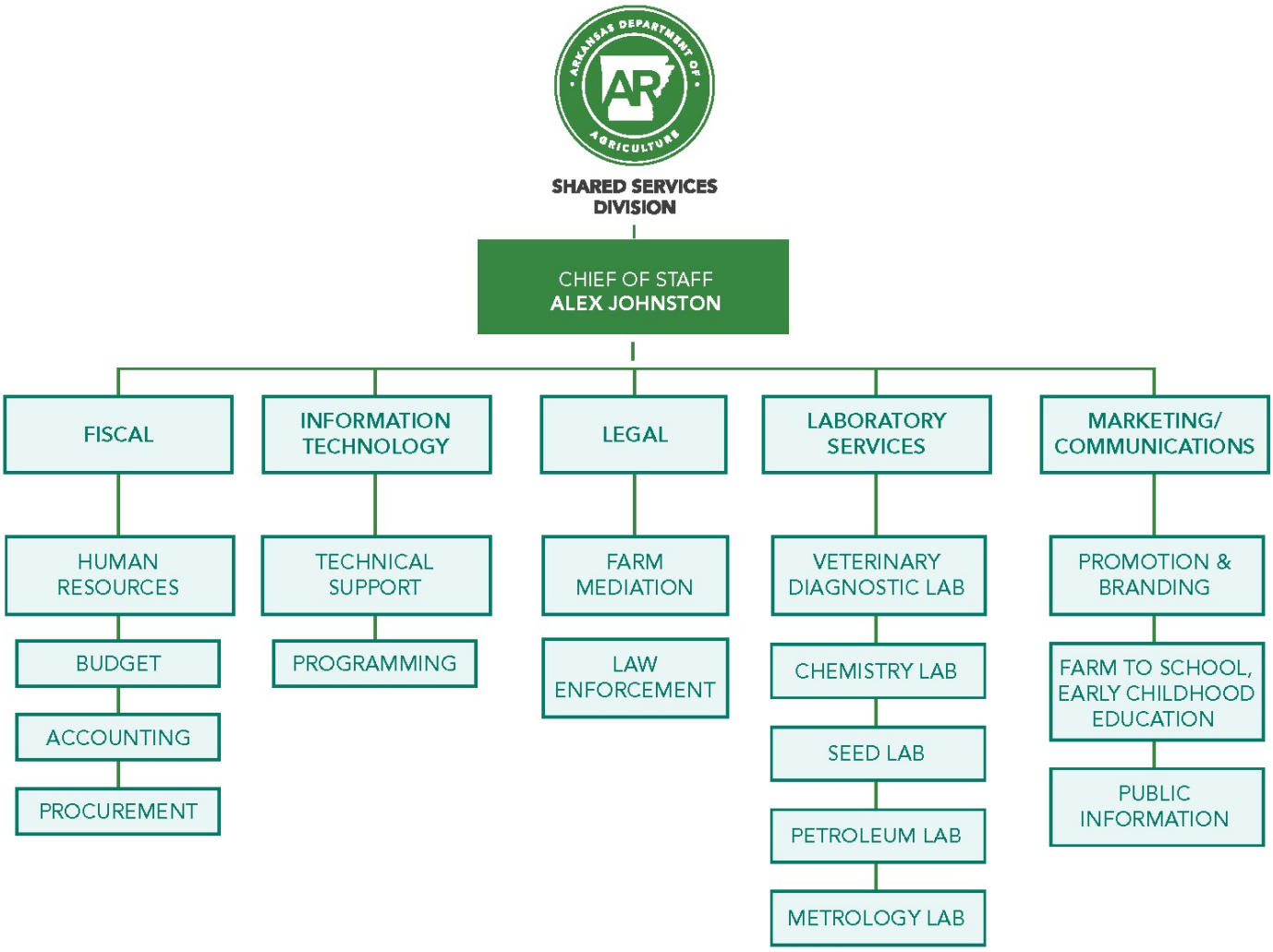
Shared Services assists all Divisions as well as public and industry stakeholders.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SHARED SERVICES DIVISION

Data provided by the Shared Services Division 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.


SHARED SERVICES DIVISION
CHIEF OF STAFF
ALEX JOHNSTON
FISCAL
HUMAN RESOURCES
BUDGET
ACCOUNTING
PROCUREMENT
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
TECHNICAL SUPPORT
PROGRAMMING
LEGAL
FARM MEDIATION
LAW ENFORCEMENT
LABORATORY SERVICES
VETERINARY DIAGNOSTIC LAB
CHEMISTRY LAB
SEED LAB
PETROLEUM LAB
METROLOGY LAB
MARKETING/ COMMUNICATIONS
PROMOTION & BRANDING
FARM TO SCHOOL, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PUBLIC INFORMATION

SHARED SERVICES DIVISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shared Services Division of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture administers the centralized, shared services that are available and utilized by all divisions and employees within the Department. The Shared Services Division also provides external-facing services that benefit the Department's diverse network of clients, partners, and stakeholders.



Chief of Staff
Alex Johnston

The Shared Services Division encompasses the following five sections: (1) Fiscal and Human Resources; (2) Information Technology; (3) Legal and Law Enforcement; (4) Laboratory Services; (5) Marketing and Communications.

The Shared Services Division led the Department's efforts under Governor Sanders' Arkansas Forward initiative, a comprehensive plan to improve efficiency and effectiveness across state government. All divisions collaborated extensively throughout fiscal year 2024 to update and streamline programs and processes to improve workflows and increase efficiencies throughout the department. These improvements help the Department achieve its goal of providing excellent service to the public and supporting Department staff through a well-trained and equipped workforce.

The Shared Services Division continued working with industry partners and stakeholders in fiscal year 2024 to meet the needs of Arkansas's agriculture industry. The Division made progress in upgrading technology, networks, and software across the Department which improves service to the public. The Division's Laboratory Services added a branch lab under the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab's National Animal Health Laboratory Network in 2022. In 2024, the lab received accreditation to test for diseases of concern to the poultry industry under a participation agreement. The Law Enforcement team aided all sectors of the agricultural industry which resulted in more than $1.1 million in restitution to landowners.

The outreach efforts of the Shared Services Division's Marketing and Communications team helped provide critical educational and promotional benefits for agricultural producers, agribusinesses, agricultural partners, and consumers. The team collaborated with eight state associations to host the Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo, a statewide gathering of producers in the local food system. The event had more than 600 registrations and 120 vendors. The Marketing and Communications team also supported the Department's various agricultural research and promotion boards to ensure successful continuation of promotion and outreach activities.

The Shared Services Division's accomplishments include:

- Processed 166 employee hires/promotions and 18 employee retirements
- Processed over $87 million in federal grant aid payments to subrecipients, including American Rescue Plan Act money
- Developed several new applications including those for the Livestock and Poultry Division's inspection, quarantine, and egg grading activities
- Developed a new application utilizing the Department's weather stations to assist in pesticide program activities
- Leveraged current information technology applications to cover more departments, including the expansion of the document management system to house more information from all sections
- Assisted Department boards/commissions with the adoption or amendment of nine administrative rules
- Conducted training for Department staff on a variety of topics, including Freedom of Information laws, 4th Amendment issues, civil rights, and employment law
- Presented before the Arkansas Fire School regarding prescribed burn liability, the Association of Arkansas Counties on employment law and the Freedom of Information Act, and to Arkansas Farm Bureau on various agricultural issues
- Served on the Red River Compact Commission's legal committee
- Assisted in securing $1,161,474 in restitution to landowners in agriculture-related theft cases
- Received approval from the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's Tollett Veterinary Laboratory as an official NAHLN branch lab of the Department's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) in 2022
    - In 2024, the lab received accreditation according to international standards (ISO 17025) to test for diseases of concern to the poultry industry
- Hosted eight tours of the VDL for agriculture industry partner organizations
- Continued to provide extensive laboratory testing services, including conducting a combined total of 594,881 tests in the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Chemistry Lab, Petroleum Lab, and Seed Lab
- Provided laboratory testing support to other state entities, including Chronic Wasting Disease testing for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Upgraded the navigability and functionality of the weekly market report that includes relevant market information for all sectors of Arkansas agriculture
- Hosted the second Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo with over 600 registrants and 120 vendors
- Increased membership in the Arkansas Grown, Homegrown by Heroes, and Arkansas Made programs by 138 new members
- Maintained 16 digital media channels, distributed 62 press releases, facilitated 108 media requests, and produced 52 online newsletters
- Managed and awarded $54,250 Farm to School grants to schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments.
- Strengthened farm to school efforts across Arkansas by reaching 1,377 participants through 42 events, visiting 34 schools and farms, participating in 31 regional and national meetings, and partnering with 22 state agencies and organizations.

Fiscal Section

The Fiscal Section provides a full range of fiscal support to all divisions within the Department, including budgeting, procurement, receivables, and federal grant reimbursement and reporting. In FY 2024, the Fiscal Section continued cross-training employees to maximize efficiency and resilience.

Budget staff analyzes and prepares financial information concerning personnel, operations, grants, capital projects, and other expenses to determine budgetary requirements. They also analyze and prepare biennial budget requests and present budgetary requirements to the Governor for executive recommendations.

The Fiscal Section's accounting staff establishes agency accounting policy, procedures, and business processes necessary to conform to the State of Arkansas's policy and procedures manual. They prepare agency financial statements, and all required supplemental reporting information to be used in the production of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the State of Arkansas. The accounting staff also coordinates and monitors the implementation of grants, contracts, and other programs by developing goals and objectives, administering funding procedures, and monitoring implementation to ensure compliance with policies, laws, and regulations.

The accounts payable staff assists in reconciliations, which include matching purchase orders to invoices, requesting new vendor(s), maintaining vendor files, and responding to billing inquiries.
Staff assigned to purchasing and contract duties assist departments and vendors with current purchasing procedures and review purchase requests and contract awards for compliance with state and federal purchasing laws and regulations.

Accomplishments

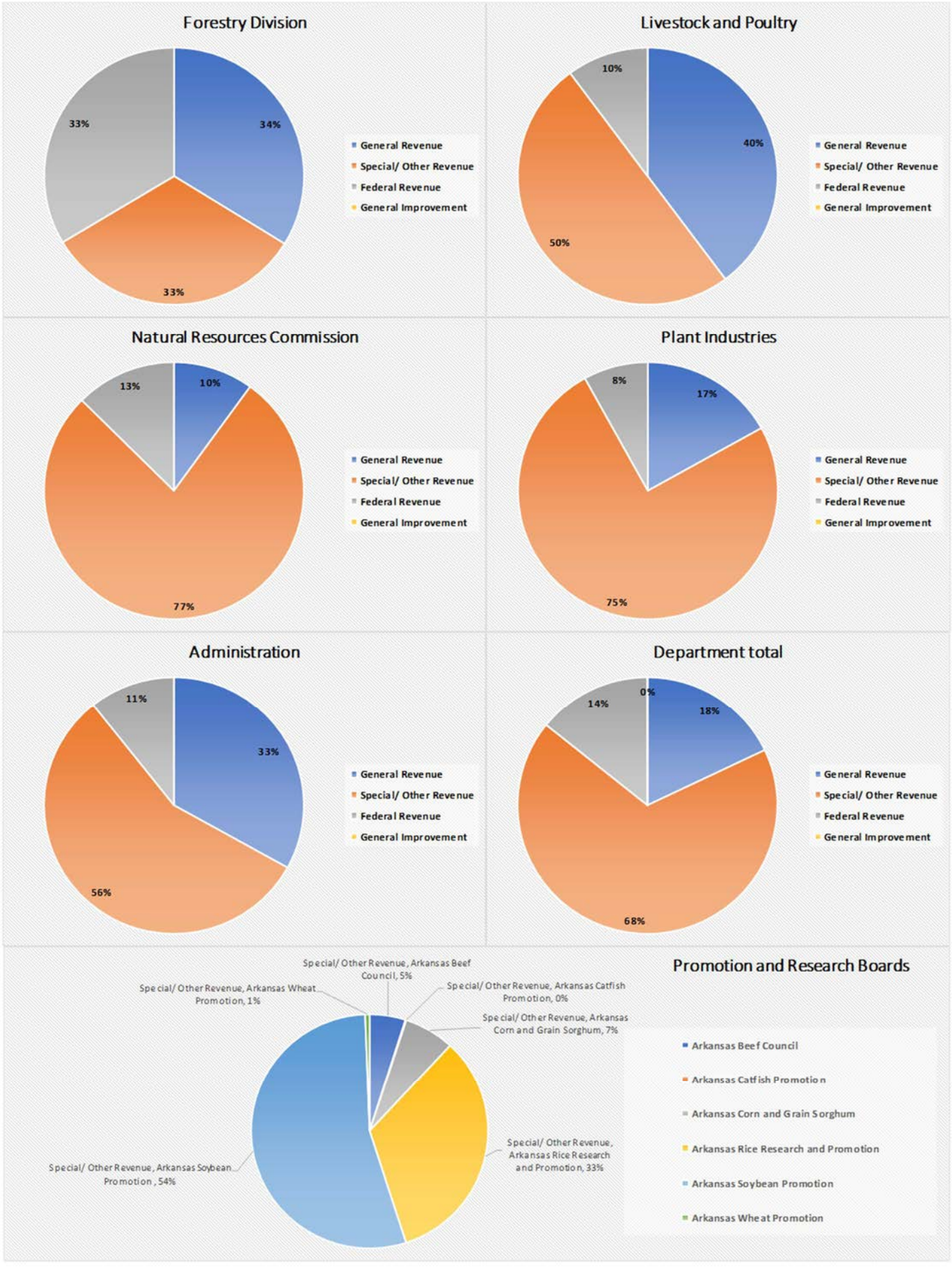
Fiscal Section staff's major accomplishments include:

- Processed over 21,000 vendor invoices in FY 2024
- Processed over $87 million in federal grant aid payments to subrecipients
- Requested over $104 million in federal grant reimbursements

Department and Division FY 2024
Adjusted Budget and Expenditures

Department and Division	Adjusted Budget	Capital Improvement Budget	American Rescue Plan Act Budget	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Budget	Expenditures
Forestry Division	$33,475,805				$24,978,078
Livestock & Poultry Division	$13,683,289				$10,589,814
Natural Resources Division	$128,707,400				$41,360,050
Plant Industries Division	$20,324,078				$11,552,974
Administration	$11,721,790				$10,006,534
Soil Classifiers	$1,296				$50
Registration for Foresters	$46,168				$3,797
Veterinary Examiners	$180,188				$81,025
Promotion and Research Boards	$25,697,436				$17,827,350
Department		$131,044,964	$288,168,767	$149,263,490	$84,675,848
TOTALS	$233,837,449	$131,044,964	$288,168,767	$149,263,490	$201,075,522

FY 2024 Revenue Sources



Human Resources Section

The Human Resources Section is responsible for all employment procedures, recruitment, employee benefits, time data entry, payroll processing, worker compensation claims, training, and safety. The three members of the Human Resources Section work with Department employees daily on a myriad of personnel needs and processes to facilitate a productive work environment.

Accomplishments

The Human Resources Section's major accomplishments include:

- Continued use of ARCareers system for personnel hiring and onboarding
- Processed 166 employee hires and promotions
- Processed 18 retirements
- Processed 85 resignations/terminations
- Processed 18 transfers
- Continued scanning of personnel files for storage savings
- Created and issued 209 employee ID badges
- Continued tracking of required training throughout the Department

Information Technology Section

The Information Technology Section provides critical data, development, networking infrastructure, and desktop support that enables all Arkansas Department of Agriculture divisions to deliver services directly to its employees and the citizens of Arkansas. The extensive digital infrastructure supports a wide range of agency operations, including tracking license payments, providing a pathway for superior data analysis in the Department's labs, and providing access to many laws and regulations surrounding the agricultural industry in the state.

Accomplishments

Information Technology Section staff's major accomplishments include:

- Expanded the application to manage sale barn inspection activity and animal quarantines, which is being further developed to capture more data to assist the Livestock and Poultry Division
- Updated the poultry egg application, adding several new features
- Introduced and rebuilt numerous small applications to assist with employees' daily activities
- Continued site reviews for external locations to upgrade and enhance the facility with better equipment and tools
- Developed an Animal at Large application to assist citizens in reporting and claiming misplaced animals
- Developed a Poultry Feeding Operation application for registration and payment
- Increased security practices and software to align with the new cybersecurity policy for Act 504
- Saved more than $35,000 for the Department through the removal of hardline phones/faxes, low use software, and contract review

Legal Section

The Legal Section furnishes advice on all legal issues arising during the Department's work, including providing support and assistance to the Secretary of Agriculture, agency staff, and management regarding enforcement of Departmental laws and administrative rules. This includes assisting the Department in formulating and implementing policies and interpreting law. The Legal Section's attorneys respond to inquiries from the Governor, Attorney General, legislators, Bureau of Legislative Research, and other officials and citizens. They also review and draft Department administrative rules and ensure that proper procedures are followed in adopting rules under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, coordinate the approval of those rules by the Governor and Legislative Council, and ensure that the rules are properly filed with the Secretary of State and State Library.

During each legislative session, the Legal Section develops and drafts bills to be presented to the legislature, and monitors bills filed during the session. At the end of the legislative session, the attorneys interpret new or amended laws to aid the Department in implementing those laws and assist the Department and all its entities in issuing rules or policies regarding them.

The Legal Section also conducts administrative hearings before the Department boards and commissions, aids Department inspectors and management in enforcement actions, and reviews inspection reports, photographs, and case files. The section ensures compliance with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by reviewing each request for information received by the Department and assisting the Department's boards and commissions with the open meeting provisions of FOIA. Other functions include collaborating with the Attorney General's office when litigation needs arise and reviewing and drafting contracts and other agreements.

In addition, the Department's Law Enforcement Section was reorganized and transferred to the Legal Section during FY 2024. The Department's six law enforcement officers investigate agricultural crimes that affect any part of Arkansas's diverse agricultural industry and help enforce the laws and rules promulgated by the boards and commissions within the Department. Investigators work with state and local law enforcement to investigate crimes. Common investigations include wildfire arson, timber theft, livestock theft, and agricultural and forestry equipment theft or vandalism. Also included within the Law Enforcement Section is the Office of Agricultural Intelligence, charged with the responsibility of collecting and analyzing information concerning the unlawful sale or possession of Arkansas's agricultural land by prohibited foreign parties.

During FY 2024, the Legal Section provided representation for the following:

- Arkansas Beef Council Promotion Board
- Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Committee
- Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board
- Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
- Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Arkansas Farm Mediation Office
- Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force
- Arkansas Forestry Commission
- Arkansas Forestry Commission's Registered Forester Committee
- Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission
- Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission's Veterinary Medical Examining Committee

- Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
- Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
- Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
- Arkansas State Plant Board
- Arkansas Unpaved Roads Program
- Arkansas Water Well Construction Committee
- Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board
- Red River Commission

In addition, while not specifically counsel for these entities, the Legal Section provides advice and counsel to the Department regarding:

- Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission
- Buffalo River Conservation Committee
- Illinois Watershed Improvement Plan
- Natural Resources Committee
- Occupational Licensing Advisory Group
- Red River Compact Commission

Personnel:

- General Counsel
- Managing Attorney (2)
- Accountant
- Program Manager
- Administrative Analyst
- Legal Services Specialist
- Law Enforcement Chief
- Law Enforcement Assistant Chief
- Law Enforcement Deputy Chief/ Office of Agricultural Intelligence Investigator
- Law Enforcement Special Agent (3)

Major Accomplishments

- Assisted Department boards/commissions with adoption or amendment of nine administrative rules
- Conducted training for Department staff on a variety of topics, including Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 4th Amendment issues, and civil rights
- Participated as a strategic partner in matters related to the Illinois River Watershed, Bayou Meto Irrigation Project, White River Irrigation Project, and the Red River Compact Commission, including acting as chair of the legal committee for that commission
- Represented the Department before multiple legislative committees on issues ranging from rulemaking to occupational licensure
- Reorganized the section to include the Department's Law Enforcement Section and the Office of Agricultural Intelligence

Law Enforcement Accomplishments

The Law Enforcement Section's major accomplishments include:

- Opened 265 law enforcement cases in FY 2024
    - Timber – 68
    - Fire – 18
    - Equipment – 9
    - Dumping – 12
    - Department property – 3
    - Agency assistance – 33
    - Livestock and poultry – 96
- Closed 171 law enforcement cases in FY 2024
    - Timber – 43
    - Fire – 13
    - Equipment – 6
    - Dumping – 13
    - Department property – 8
    - Agency assistance – 9
    - Livestock and poultry – 77
- Restitution to landowners: $1,161,474.39
- Fines and suppression fees: $2,330.00
- Law enforcement agency assists: 185
- Minority assists: 69

Farm Mediation Program

The Arkansas Farmer/Creditor Mediation Program provides an opportunity for farmers who are experiencing difficulties to come together with their creditors in a confidential setting with a neutral third party to discuss mutually beneficial options that may be available to assist in developing a resolution to their problems. The farmers' difficulties may be financial or non-monetary, such as the loss of a contract with an integrator, thereby creating a technical default with the lender.

While it is mandatory that a creditor offers mediation to a farmer to settle credit issues prior to taking any type of legal action, participation in the Farmer/Creditor Mediation Program is completely voluntary. This means that no one is forced to accept mediation, and if mediated, no one is required to accept a negotiated agreement. The program is open to farmers with secured indebtedness totaling $20,000 or more.

Accomplishments

The Farm Mediation Program's accomplishments include:

- From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, 261 case files were established, impacting $89,339,750 in loans and collateral with an average loan size of $342,300, representing a 46 percent increase in case files and a 16 percent increase in loan value compared to FY 2023; 28 mediations were requested, but the door is still open for more mediation requests to come in, and nine farmers worked out their issues with the lenders before mediation could occur
- 15 mediations have been held, seven agreements have been reached, and additional requested mediations are pending

Laboratory Services Section

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture supports the state's largest industry through a broad range of services, one of which focuses on laboratory sciences. The Laboratory Services Section is comprised of the following:

- Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
    - Main laboratory in Little Rock
    - Branch laboratory in Fayetteville
- Chemistry Laboratory
- Seed Laboratory
- Petroleum Laboratory
- Metrology Laboratory

Laboratories house employees that receive samples and generate results using consumables, utilities, and instrumentation according to rigorously defined procedures. Formal approaches to safety and quality management enable the laboratory to satisfy external requirements by regulatory and accrediting agencies. Laboratory employees are typically selected and assigned based on subject matter expertise acquired in a narrow field of study, coupled with significant laboratory experience in their chosen field.

Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

The Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL) in Little Rock facilitates the diagnosis of animal diseases to support the livestock, poultry, equine, and aquaculture industries, as well as practicing veterinarians in the achievement of their disease control programs. The VDL strives to provide high quality and legally defensible diagnostic results in a timely, efficient, and professional manner. The VDL services include post-mortem examinations and bacteriological, chemical, serological, and virological tests. Laboratory findings help a broad array of constituents to ensure the wellness of their animals.

Timely and accurate test results provided by the VDL have tremendous economic effects on the state's livestock, poultry, and aquatic farm animal industries by reducing death losses and increasing production. The VDL is a member of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Veterinary Laboratory Information and Response Network (Vet-LIRN), and the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP). It is accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) for a defined scope of testing.

The VDL works together with the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Livestock and Poultry Division for validation and determining next steps if an animal disease outbreak has occurred or if there is a disease issue of concern. The VDL is our first line of defense in monitoring and identifying potential animal disease outbreaks in the field.

Last year, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture's Tollett Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Fayetteville was identified as VDL's branch laboratory under the VDL's NAHLN participation agreement. This year, the branch laboratory was accredited by the A2LA under ISO 17025 guidelines. It is now part of VDL's accredited scope of testing. Having a NAHLN branch lab in Northwest Arkansas has greatly enhanced the Department's ability to respond to animal disease emergencies using official testing capabilities. The branch laboratory assisted in testing 5,065 samples for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in birds.

Accomplishments

The Arkansas Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory's major accomplishments include:

- Continued recognition of the VDL as a Level II laboratory by USDA NAHLN
- Introduction of a more sensitive and faster diagnostic test for *Tritrichomonas foetus*, a pathogenic microorganism of concern in cattle
- Completed a total of 578,335 tests, which includes:
    - Performing 4,908 Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) screening tests in collaboration with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
    - Processing 30 rabies cases (13 dogs, six cats, one goat, one squirrel, one grey fox, three cows, two raccoons, one bat, one donkey, and one horse) in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Health (all were negative for rabies)
    - Screening for drugs in 98 samples from the Arkansas State Fair livestock show
    - Conducting 147,695 tests for mycoplasma bacteria
    - Conducting 8,954 tests on specimens related to pets seen at veterinary clinics across Arkansas
    - Conducting 8,023 tests in the bacteriology section
    - Assisting veterinarians by performing histopathology evaluations on surgical tissue biopsies from 1,783 cases
    - Performing about 2,000 salmonella screens (environmental salmonella testing is done primarily for NPIP)
    - Performing 387,000 serology tests comprising of regulatory screening, vaccine monitoring, and disease diagnostics
        - Tested 15,293 samples for Equine Infectious Anemia, 1,136 samples for brucellosis, and 2,253 samples for pseudorabies in pigs shown at various fair exhibitions
    - Performing 522 necropsies, of which 20 percent were large/food animal necropsies including 16 Oaklawn racehorses, 30 percent were commercial and backyard poultry, and remaining cases comprised of small/companion animals
- A total of 56,211 pounds of material were incinerated, including animal remains, tissue samples, CWD lab waste, hemp samples from the Plant Industries Division, and contraband food and invasive plants seized by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
- Introduction of a more efficient Trichomonas test, which allowed the VDL to test 3,029 Trichomonas samples, a 102 percent increase from the 1,499 samples tested during the previous year
- Introduction of new testing methods to serve the poultry industry
    - Two new subtypes of avian metapneumovirus subtypes A, B, and C were found to severely affect poultry health, therefore the VDL acquired the permit to import supplies and test kits and validated several new methods to test hundreds of samples for all subtypes

In addition to the above listed technical accomplishments, the VDL also:

- Received over $2 million in federal grants to support collaboration with USDA in enhancing the nation's early detection of response to, and recovery from, animal health emergencies
- Offered educational lab tours to members of the National Women in Agriculture; Arkansas Cattlemen's Association Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course; Arkansas FFA; Farm Bureau Ag Youth Leadership Seminar, MyARInternship program; Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS); and students from Arkansas State University-Beebe's veterinary technician program and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's AgDiscovery program
- Assisted veterinarians, industry representatives, and individual animal owners through offering guidance on sample and test selection, and interpretation of animal health diagnostics
- Participated in proficiency testing in 55 areas covering all aspects of laboratory services, with successful completion of these tests demonstrating the highest quality of services
- Participated in preliminary discussions with representatives from both Arkansas State University and Lyon College to discuss the potential for collaboration between the VDL and their new colleges of veterinary medicine

Aquaculture Laboratory

The aquaculture laboratory offers fish health certification and diagnostic services for freshwater fish, including aquaculture and ornamental species. It is the only USDA APHIS and NAHLN approved, and ISO-17025 accredited laboratory in Arkansas.

The fish health certification program assists both in-state and out-of-state fish farmers with their needs to meet health regulations for national and international trade. To meet the certification standards of the Commercial Bait and Ornamental Fish Act (A.C.A. 2-5-201 et seq.), the laboratory conducts semi-annual farm-level fish health inspections for specific pathogens. These inspections are conducted using NAHLN and APHIS-approved protocols and target specific pathogens according to World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) standards.

Accomplishments

Major accomplishments of the aquaculture laboratory over the past year include:

- Pathogen screening in 24,445 fish specimens submitted by 64 aquaculture producers (37 Arkansas and 27 out-of-state)
- Received ISO-17025 accreditation from the A2LA
- Hosted the 2024 Annual Meeting and Aquaculture Workshop of the Arkansas Bait & Ornamental Fish Growers Association in Lonoke, Arkansas
- Used NAHLN infrastructure resources to expand safe and efficient workspace for fish health inspections
- Offered additional skill-improvement opportunities to technicians by working with the Aquaculture Research Center at Mississippi State University

Petroleum Laboratory

The petroleum laboratory administers the fuel quality law through inspection, analysis, and enforcement to help ensure that consumers are purchasing quality motor fuels. Fuel samples are collected by field chemists and submitted for testing. Screening motor fuels for quality and consistency not only protects the motoring public but also supports transportation infrastructure and agricultural production.

The petroleum laboratory analyzes gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuels, and alternative fuels, including biodiesel and E85 (Flex Fuel), for compliance with the applicable state quality and safety standards.

Annual samples are collected from gas pumps across the state during routine inspections for analysis. The laboratory conducts between 18,000 and 29,000 analyses per year. Samples are also collected when consumers file a complaint.

Accomplishments

The petroleum laboratory's major accomplishments over the past year include:

- Initiated field testing of fuel transport trucks at point of retail delivery to corroborate results obtained from samples collected at the pump
- Sampled over 4,000 fuel stations, including retail, wholesale, and distribution points
- Collected 5,999 gasoline samples, 2,051 diesel samples, and seven biodiesel samples
- Performed 18,683 tests on fuel samples to ensure product reliability
- Responded to 76 complaints, re-sampled 78 stations, and completed 22 requested compliance checks

Seed Laboratory

The seed laboratory provides consumer protection by characterizing regulatory seed samples collected by the Plant Industries Division's field inspectors. Testing seed purity and fitness for use plays an essential role in supporting Arkansas's leadership in row crop production.

Certified samples are produced from crops that are in the certification program. These samples must pass the strict standards of laboratory testing before being allowed to bear the official "Arkansas Certified" label. Non-certified samples are not grown under an application for seed certification or do not meet the requirements under the certification program.

Accomplishments

The seed laboratory's major accomplishments include:

- Replaced 30-year-old database with a modern, user-friendly database
- Became one of the first public seed labs in the U.S. to go paperless
- Analyzed 3,164 seed samples
- Completed 2,174 purity tests
- Completed 2,931 germination tests
- Completed 250 accelerated aging tests
- Completed 206 herbicide tolerance tests
- Completed 637 red rice tests for a total of 2,053 pounds of rice hulled

Metrology Laboratory

The Arkansas State Standards Laboratory (Metrology Laboratory) is responsible for performing mass and volume calibrations that are traceable to the International System of Units (SI) through the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The purpose of performing legal metrology activities within the state is to provide the state economy with a mutually compatible and internationally recognized infrastructure of measurement that facilitates trade and establishes mutual confidence in the level of consumer protection.

The metrology laboratory is committed to the protection of trade and equipping our industry users with the most precise tools and measurement capabilities. The results provided by this laboratory serve as the basis for ensuring equity in the marketplace and as reference standards for calibration services throughout state industry.

The staff also runs the Grain Moisture Meter Program. Accurate measurement of grain moisture is vital to the fair market value of Arkansas crops. This is accomplished by preparing field samples in the laboratory with known moisture contents using the USDA air-oven method. These samples are then used in the field to certify the accuracy of all commercial grain moisture measuring devices.

Accomplishments

The metrology laboratory's major accomplishments include:

- Upgraded mass calibration laboratories with state-of-the-art mass comparators
- Certified 1,543 large mass standards (25 lb. – 1000 lb.)
- Certified 1,964 small mass standards (0.001 lb. – 10 lbs.)
- Certified 191 volume provers (5 gallon)
- Certified 181 grain moisture meters
- Received full recognition from the NIST Office of Weights and Measures for Mass Echelon 3 and Volume Echelon 2 - Volume Transfer

Chemistry Laboratory

The chemistry laboratory ensures the quality of agricultural products sold in Arkansas. The laboratory receives representative samples of feed, fertilizer, pesticide, and limestone submitted by inspectors stationed throughout Arkansas. These products are analyzed by the laboratory and results are reported back to the regulatory sections for comparison to label guarantees. The laboratory assists the Department's regulatory sections during investigations of product contamination by providing analysis and sampling guidance. Arkansas farmers and consumers benefit greatly from having agriculture products that are held to a high standard of label compliance. In addition, the laboratory also tests hemp grown in the state for compliance with the state and federal laws.

Laboratory accuracy is validated through membership in the following proficiency testing programs: Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO), Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), Magruder Check Sample, Wisconsin Pesticide Residue Check Sample Program, and the Kentucky Hemp Proficiency Testing Program. Regulatory analyses are performed in accordance with Association of Official Agricultural Chemists (AOAC) guidelines.

The residue chemistry laboratory, a unit of the chemistry laboratory, primarily assists the pesticide and pest control sections of the Plant Industries Division in cases of misuse and off-target applications of pesticides to include plant, soil, animal, and human exposure cases. It also provides chemical testing services to other Arkansas Department of Agriculture divisions, whenever requested.

The laboratory usually receives requests for pesticide residue testing in the following matrices: vegetation, soil, water, swabs, clothing, and bees. Vegetation samples are predominantly submitted for case files involving off-target pesticide applications. Soil samples submitted by the commercial pest control section are analyzed to ensure compliance of termiticides applications. The laboratory also aids the Plant Industries Division in monitoring groundwater throughout the state. Continued successful participation in the Wisconsin Pesticide Residue Check Sample Program is indicative of the integrity throughout the residue laboratory.

Accomplishments

The chemistry laboratory's major accomplishments include:

- Completed 10,174 total tests on varieties of samples
- Completed 8,203 tests on 1,353 feed samples
- Completed 1,734 tests on 522 fertilizer samples
- Completed 155 tests on 70 limestone samples
- Completed 82 tests on 36 industrial hemp samples
- Renewed Drug Enforcement Administration Schedule I permit for the industrial hemp program

The Residue Laboratory staff's major accomplishments include:

- Analyzed 104 vegetation samples for various types of pesticides
- Analyzed 99 water samples towards groundwater program and other pesticide residue inquiries
- Analyzed 14 soil samples to aid in pest control and other inspections
- Analyzed 17 swabs and five clothing samples in pesticide human exposure inquiries
- Analyzed multiple honeybee samples to aid the Plant Industries Division apiary program
- Completed 117 tests on 111 toxicology samples

Marketing and Communications Section

The Marketing and Communications Section is committed to promoting and supporting the many accomplishments and successes of Arkansas's diverse agricultural industry. The Marketing and Communications Section distributes information and updates on news, program opportunities, and laws and rules that affect the agricultural industry through various outreach efforts. The section participates in trade shows and conferences, connects with and makes presentations to other agricultural organizations, and provides updates through various other outlets.

The Marketing and Communications Section distributes information via the following:

- Website and social media channels
- Press releases and newsletters

The Marketing and Communications Section administers several services and programs that provide agricultural stakeholders with opportunities to apply for marketing funds, special projects, scholarships, and increased visibility in the marketplace. These programs include but are not limited to the following:

- Agricultural proclamation events
- Arkansas Farmers Market Promotion Grant
- Arkansas Farmers Market Shopping Bag Program
- Arkansas Century Farm Program
- Arkansas Department of Agriculture Scholarship Program
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant
- USDA National Organic Certification Cost Share Program
- Market Access Programs through the Southern United States Trade Association and National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- Certificates of Free Sale
- Farmer Veteran Coalition Partnership
- Arkansas Grown, Arkansas Made, and Arkansas Grown Homegrown by Heroes branding programs
- Arkansas Grown Homegrown by Heroes Scholarship Program
- Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo
- Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act
- Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest
- Arkansas School Garden Grant Program
- Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program
- Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program
- Minority landowner programs and resources

The Marketing and Communications Section also provides layout, design, and editorial support for educational, outreach, and promotional materials for the Department's divisions and various programs and services.

Accomplishments

The Marketing and Communications Section's accomplishments include:

- Distributed 62 press releases to media partners and partner agencies
- Facilitated 108 media requests
- Facilitated 54 interviews to include those provided by the branding programs, Farm to School Program, and minority outreach
- Developed and distributed 43 e-newsletters to stakeholders to include the Department newsletter, Farm to School newsletter, Fire Wire newsletter, and Conservation Corner newsletter
- Provided photo coverage at 20 events
- Submitted 20 proclamation requests
- Distributed $336,779 in USDA Specialty Crop grants
- Provided support and resources to Arkansas stakeholder industries via the USDA Farm and

Ranch Stress Network Assistance Grants
- Administered the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program
- Partnered with Southern U.S. Trade Association, who administers the Market Access Program and Agricultural Trade Promotion Program, to aid Arkansas companies in meeting qualified foreign buyers and promoting products internationally
- Awarded $22,000 in scholarships to four students with funding from civil penalties collected by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Provided 8,289 Certificates of Free Sale
- Inducted 36 families into the Arkansas Century Farm Program
- Distributed $9,000 in promotional funds to 25 Arkansas farmers markets through a partnership with Farm Credit
- Provided more than 30,000 shopping bags to Arkansas farmers markets at a greatly reduced rate that results in significant cost savings for the markets through a partnership with Farm Credit
- Represented the Department at career fairs and recruitment events
- Delivered creative assets to include booklets, brochures, banners, print ads, publications, signs, and other assets
- Served as the liaison for the MyARInternship interns
- Hosted members of the University of Arkansas Fayetteville, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, and Arkansas Tech MANRRS chapters, and members of the Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School Junior MANRRS chapter
- Maintained 16 digital media outlets to include seven Facebook pages, two Twitter accounts, two Instagram accounts, one YouTube account, one LinkedIn account, one Flickr account, the Department website, and the Arkansas Grown/Farm to School website
- Maintained the Department clothing website
- Manned booths at trade shows and/or career expos
- Provided daily media tracking for the Department
- Provided coverage of Department board and commission meetings
- Facilitated the Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest
- Facilitated the Arkansas School Garden Grant Program
- Facilitated the Arkansas Taste Test Grant Program
- Participated on the Southern Group of State Foresters Communications Committee, attending quarterly calls and two annual meetings
- Received $5,613,423 in state funding for implementation of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant
- With the transfer of the Agricultural Research and Promotion Boards to the Department, the Marketing and Communications Section worked with other Department staff to support functions of these boards

Arkansas Grown/Arkansas Made/Homegrown by Heroes

The Arkansas Grown branding program promotes the many agricultural products that are grown in the state and supports the farmers, ranchers, and producers who grow them. The Arkansas Made branding program promotes goods and products made in our state by local producers, craftsmen, and artisans. In 2015, the Department adopted the national Homegrown by Heroes branding program that enables farmer veterans to market their local agricultural products by labeling them as veteran-produced. Homegrown By Heroes is administered by the Farmer Veteran Coalition and is offered as a free program to farmers who have veteran, active duty, National Guard, or Reserve member of the

United States Armed Forces status. These three programs help make the critical connection between producers and buyers.

Accomplishments

- Increased membership in Arkansas Grown, Homegrown by Heroes, and Arkansas Made programs by 138 new members
- Increased Arkansas Grown social media followers to:
    - Facebook followers: 10,877 (an increase of 674 over FY 2023)
    - Instagram followers: 2,578 (an increase of 163 over FY 2023)
- Utilized USDA Specialty Crop Block 2021- HR133 Grant Program funding for statewide "We sell Specialty Crops" signage campaign
- Collaborated with eight state associations to host the second statewide gathering of producers in the local food system, the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo, with over 600 attendees and 120 vendors
- Continued the Arkansas Grown Advertising Campaign, promoting local food and local food producers with advertising: print, television, and radio
- Managed Round One and Round Two of the Arkansas Grown Grant for Northwest Arkansas Farmers Pilot Program, funded by the Walton Personal Philanthropy Group, which awarded grants of up to $15,000 to farmers in Northwest Arkansas to increase their capacity to sell wholesale, with a total number of grantees in the pilot program of 31 farmers
- Continued assisting in connecting Arkansas Grown farmers with the Arkansas Department of Human Services for the $3.7 million Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative grant program funded to the state through USDA
- Worked with the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act team to update the reporting form, conduct a webinar, develop the annual report, and analyze data to be used in support projects and grants
- Attended bi-monthly Farm to School Collaborative meetings
- Coordinated and promoted the Arkansas Farmers Market Week proclamation presentation, estimated 45 total attendees
- Managed USDA National Organic Cost Certification Reimbursement Program, providing a total of $4,797.28 to six organic farms around the state
- Managed the Farmers Market Promotion Program providing 30,000 bags to 21 farmers markets and $9,000 in promotional funds to 25 farmers markets around the state
- Hosted a Homegrown by Heroes event at the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo
- Awarded Homegrown by Heroes scholarships to veteran farmers to attend the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo, and arranged a meet and greet session with a Farmer Veteran Coalition board member
- Manned booths at conferences and events
- Conducted three media interviews
- Coordinated with USDA to bring stakeholders together with Under Secretary Jennifer Moffitt for discussion of the Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) Grant and subsequent press conference
- Coordinated with USDA and the Arkansas Department of Human Services to bring stakeholders together with Under Secretary Jennifer Moffitt for discussion of the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA and LFPA Plus) and Local Foods for Schools Cooperative Agreement Grant (LFSA)
- Received $5,613,423 in state funding for implementation of the RSFI grant and launched the

subgrant award process

Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program connects schools, local growers, and the community to food and farm education experiences paired with healthy, locally grown food. The program provides programming, resources, funding, and technical assistance to schools, farmers, and partners in the local food system.

Farm to school activities include a combination of school gardening, local food procurement, and traditional or garden-based education on the topics of food, nutrition, and agriculture. Farm to school activities improve public health, strengthen the local economy and communities, improve food access and food abundance for all, and protect the environment.

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Education Program was created within the Department by the passage of Act 506 in 2019. The Department hired the state's first program coordinator in August 2019. The program also expanded in 2021 to include a part-time state local procurement manager and full-time state school garden manager.

The Department is recognized as a partner by the National Farm to School Network and joins the USDA Southwest Region in regional farm to school development and growth events. The Department is also the facilitator of the Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative.

Accomplishments

- Participated in 31 regional and national farm to school meetings
- Hosted and spoke at 42 farm to school educational trainings, webinars, and events with 1,377 attendees
- Visited 34 schools, farms, and organizations to outreach about farm to school
- Facilitated six Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative bi-monthly meetings that engaged 22 state agencies and non-profit partners
- Distributed seven farm to school press releases
- Participated in two farm to school interviews
- Distributed 12 farm to school newsletters
- Created eight webinar recordings
- Continued to provide updates to the Department website to include pages on local procurement, school gardens, and the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act
- Wrote one letter of support for farm to school projects
- Wrote two farm to school reports, including the Arkansas Farm to School Annual Report
- Created 32 farm to school handouts and infographics
- Managed and awarded $5,500 total to nine winning schools and early childhood education facilities of the 2023 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest
- Managed and awarded $7,500 total to five schools as part of the Arkansas Farm to School Institute Program
- Managed and awarded $41,250 total to 11 schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments as part of the Arkansas Kitchen Equipment Grant Program
- Worked with the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act team to develop annual report

Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act

The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act was enacted in 2017 and amended in 2019 to create, strengthen, and expand local farm and food economies throughout the state. The act requires an agency that receives at least $25,000 a year from the state and offers a food service program to set a goal of at least 20 percent of their purchase of food products to be spent on local food. It also requires the agency complete a reporting form, created by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, on their local food procurement budget on a yearly basis.

Accomplishments

- Updated and distributed reporting form
- Gathered contact information for reporting entities
- Updated the act FAQ handout
- Updated the act instructional infographic
- Provided an instructional reporting form webinar
- Developed and distributed the 2023 Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act Annual Report

Minority Landowner Programs and Resources

As an organization receiving federal funds, the Department created the Minority Outreach Program pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure nondiscrimination in its programs and services. Efforts seek to introduce minority agriculture and forest (woodlands, woods, trees) landowners and their children to the various forestry and agriculture programs and services available to them. The program provides educational opportunities and encourages them to become good stewards of their land and to explore forestry and/or agriculture related fields as a career.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture has an outreach coordinator that leads the agency's outreach efforts. The outreach coordinator also assists with scheduling landowner workshops, providing speakers for outreach meetings, local forestry contacts, and more.

Accomplishments

- Outreach coordinator served as president of Arkansas Women in Agriculture Board
- The Sustainable Forestry & African American Land Retention (SFLR) Network in its entirety celebrated its 10th year of serving heir property landowners across the south with a conference in Brunswick, Georgia, where U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack announced $150 million from the U.S. Forest Service to specifically help underserved and small acreage forest landowners connect to emerging voluntary climate markets
- Outreach assistance and referrals to internal and external programs and services
- Provided informational updates for the Department's Minority Landowner Resources website page
- Provided assistance and support to 31 landowners (mostly residing out-of-state)

Keeping it in the Family Field Staff Highlights	Number of Assists	Acres
Field Demonstrations Attendees	35	
Landowner Assists	83	3,738
Management Plans Prepared	5	405
Meetings Attended	5	
Presentations to Civic Groups	80	
	208	4,143

- Participated in meetings and conferences of the following organizations:
    - Arkansas Land & Farm Development Corporation (ALFDC) Board, virtual meetings
    - Arkansas Land & Community Development Corporation (ALCDC) Board, virtual meetings
    - Sustainable Forestry & African American Retention Program (SFLR) Network, virtual meetings:
        - Conference planning committee
        - Regional Joint State (AR/TX) Conference
        - Policy committee meetings
        - Forester caucus committee meetings
    - 65th Annual Rural Life Conference:
        - Facilitated breakout session about Keeping it in the Family (KIITF) and the Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division services
    - Arkansas Forestry Association Annual Meeting:
        - Conference planning committee
    - KIITF:
        - Potential partnership meetings
        - Landowner family meetings
        - Workshops (88 total participants)
        - Admin team meetings
        - Facilitated the Champion Landowner Retreat
    - Attended the Natural Resources Conservation Service's:
        - Outreach, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittee meeting
        - State Technical Forestry subcommittee meeting
    - Attended Women's Forest Congress Steering Committee meetings

2025 NASDA Conference

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all 50 states and four U.S. territories. Former vice president, Secretary Ward was elected to serve as president and will host the 2025 NASDA Conference in Rogers, Arkansas. In coordination with NASDA, planning for the 2025 conference has begun, with the Marketing and Communication Section providing support and resources for the conference.

National/International Exporting – SUSTA/NASDA – Inbound Trade Mission

NASDA's cooperative agreement with the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is designed to help U.S. food product companies source export opportunities. As a result of the FAS partnership, NASDA produces trade show events and Inbound Trade Missions in the U.S.

In September 2024, the Marketing and Communication Section represented and hosted Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made members at the Americas Food and Beverage Show as a part of the NASDA A Taste of the States Miami pavilion.

Arkansas Century Farm Program

In 2012, the Department launched the Arkansas Century Farm Program to highlight the contributions of farm families to the state's agriculture industry as well as their overall contributions to their local communities.

In 2023, there were 36 farms inducted into the Arkansas Century Farm Program. In November 2024, there were an additional 41 farms inducted into the Arkansas Century Farm Program. Since 2012, 645 farms have been inducted into the program.

Grant Management

The Department administers grants for various agricultural industries and audiences to strengthen and grow the agriculture industry in Arkansas. The Marketing and Communications Section manages numerous grants.

Grants

- Farm Credit Partnership Funding
- Farm and Ranch Stress Grant
- USDA Farm to School Grant
- NWA Arkansas Grown Grant
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2020
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2021
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2021 HR 133
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2022
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2023
- Specialty Crop Block Grant 2024
- Farm to School Formula Grant
- Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI)

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

In May 2023, USDA announced funding of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI), a component of USDA's framework to transform the food system to benefit consumers, producers, and rural communities by providing more options, increasing access, and creating new, more, and better markets for small and mid-size producers. Through RFSI, Agriculture Marketing Service entered into cooperative agreements with state agencies, commissions, or departments that are responsible for agriculture in states or U.S. territories. This program is funded through the American Rescue Plan and is intended to provide similar support to that provided in other USDA funding for meat and poultry processing, but for the non-meat and poultry sectors. USDA will work with recipients to competitively subaward funding to projects.

The Department received $5,613,423 in state funding for implementation of the RSFI grant. The Marketing and Communications Section, after surveying state stakeholders, compiling results, and determining state priorities, launched the subgrant award process.

Promotion and Research Board Transition

During the 2023 legislative session, Act 712 transferred six agricultural promotion and research boards to the Department with an effective date of August 1, 2023.

Marketing and Communications staff provided services for the Arkansas Beef Council, and the Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board; and supported the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board.

Farmers markets play key roles in local food systems across Arkansas.



111 111 active farmers markets in operation in Arkansas

In Arkansas, there are more than **1,400 farmers** selling to consumers through farmers markets and other direct marketing channels

$8.5 Million in sales generated by direct sales annually



98% of all Arkansas counties have farmer direct-to-consumer sales

Look for the Arkansas Grown™ or Arkansas Made™ logo to ensure products are locally grown or made

Arkansas GROWN

Arkansas MADE

Learn more and find locally grown and made goods near you online at

arkansasgrown.org

FARMERS MARKETS

Department Participation in Professional Organizations

Secretary Ward and Department staff are actively involved with their counterparts across the country through various industry organizations. These organizations include the following:

- American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
- Arkansas Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
- Arkansas Feral Hog Task Force
- Association of American Feed Control Officials
- Association of American Plant Food Control Officials
- Association of American Seed Control Officials
- Association of Grain Regulatory Officials
- Association of Official Seed Analysts
- Association of Official Seed Certification Agencies
- Association of State Dam Safety Officials
- Association of State Floodplain Managers
- Association of State Wetland Managers
- Association of Structural Pest Control Officials
- Communications Officers of State Departments of Agriculture
- Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities
- National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
- National Association of State Conservation Agencies
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- National Association of State Foresters
- National Conference of Standards Laboratories International
- National Conference on Weights and Measures
- National Plant Board
- North American Agricultural Marketing Officials
- Prescribed Fire Council
- Southeast Arson Task Force
- Southern Agriculture & Animal Disaster Response Alliance
- Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- Southern Weights and Measures Association
- Southern Group of State Foresters
- Southern Plant Board
- The Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities
- United States Swine Health Improvement Plan - member, AR voting delegate

Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Ten boards and commissions were under the administration of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture in fiscal year 2024. A total of 100 Arkansans serve as members on these boards and commissions.

The Department administers the following four boards, commissions and committees: Arkansas Forestry Commission, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, and the State Plant Board.

Act 712, signed on April 11, 2023, and effective on August 1, 2023, transferred the following six agricultural promotion boards to the Department:

- Arkansas Beef Council
- Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board
- Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
- Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
- Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
- Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

The Department also serves as a member of the following boards and commissions:

- Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission
- Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission
- Red River Compact Commission
- Buffalo River Conservation Committee
- Natural Resources Committee
- Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group

A summary of each board and commission's responsibilities and accomplishments, along with a list of current members are provided in the following sections.

Arkansas Forestry Commission

The Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) provides oversight guidance to the Forestry Division in pursuing its mission to protect Arkansas's forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans.

The nine-member board is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Three members must be tree farmers owning 250 acres or less of timber acreage. As a result of Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session, three members of the Commission must be registered foresters. Act 691 also abolished the Board of Registration for Foresters, required the Commission to assume responsibilities for the former board's duties, and created a committee to make recommendations to the Commission on matters formerly under the jurisdiction of the Board of Registration for Foresters.

Each congressional district must be represented on the AFC. Board members are appointed for five-year terms.

Board Member	Location	Representing Congressional District	Term
John McAlpine	Monticello	Congressional District 4	2025
Ray Dillon	Little Rock	Congressional District 2	2026
David Cawein	Bella Vista	Congressional District 3	2027
Mary Clapp	El Dorado	Congressional District 3	2028
Peter Prutzman	Arkadelphia	Congressional District 4	2028
Ken Bragg	Grant	Congressional District 4	2029
Frank Wilson	Rison	Congressional District 4	2029
George Dunklin	Stuttgart	Congressional District 1	2030
Miles Goggans	Star City	Congressional District 4	2031

Accomplishments

The Arkansas Forestry Commission's major accomplishments include:

- Held four Commission meetings that included quarterly reports from all programs
- Approved 17 interest-free loans to Arkansas volunteer fire departments totaling $196,576 through the Rural Fire Protection Program's volunteer fire department loan program

Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission

The mission of the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission is to control, suppress, and eradicate livestock and poultry diseases and pests, and to supervise livestock and poultry sanitary work in the state.

Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session expanded the membership of the Commission from seven to nine members to reflect the addition of duties that formerly fell to the Milk Stabilization Board and the Veterinary Medical Examining Board, both of which were abolished. At least two members are to be veterinarians, with at least one engaged primarily in large animal or food supply veterinary medicine. The remaining members must be actively engaged in the Arkansas livestock, dairy, or poultry industries. The Commission members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for five-year terms.

Board Member	Location	Representing	Term
Dr. William Hewat	Goshen	Poultry Industry	2024
Marcus Creasy	Heber Springs	Cattle Industry	2025
Tyler Davis	Ashdown	Cattle Industry	2026
Danny Wright	Waldron	Cattle & Swine Industry	2027
Chad Chester	Pocahontas	Poultry Industry	2028
Dr. Mike Pallone	Rose Bud	Large Animal Practice	2028
Dr. Sara Throne	Bentonville	Food Supply Practice	2028
Tommy Wren	Melbourn	Cattle Industry	2028
Bruce Maloch	Magnolia	Poultry Industry	2029

Accomplishments

The Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission's major accomplishments include:

- Held four scheduled meetings and two special-called meetings
- Promulgated three new or amended rules
- Promulgated one emergency rule

Arkansas Natural Resources Commission

The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission adopts, modifies, and enforces rules related to water conservation, development, management, and planning.

Act 691 of the 2023 legislative session required the Natural Resources Commission to assume responsibilities that formerly fell to the Commission on Water Well Construction (CWWC), which was abolished, and created a committee to make recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission on matters formerly under the CWWC. Act 691 also revised the membership of the Natural Resources Commission to ensure that at least two of the nine members will be licensed water well contractors. Members are appointed by the Governor and serve five-year terms.

Act 691 also directed the Natural Resources Commission to assume the power and duties of the Board of Registration for Professional Soil Classifiers, which was abolished. The legislation also mandated that the Red River Commission will be a committee of the Natural Resources Commission until July 1, 2026, at which time it will be abolished.

Board Member	Location	Representing	Term
Roy Reaves	Russellville	Congressional District 3	2024
James Anderson	Scott	Congressional District 2	2025
Will Brewer	Paragould	Congressional District 1	2025
Jamie Burr	Farmington	Congressional District 3	2026
Eddie Glover	Conway	Congressional District 2	2026
William Anderson	DeValls Bluff	Congressional District 1	2027
JoAnne Bush	Lake Village	Congressional District 4	2028
Mike McDermott	Weiner	Congressional District 1	2029
Bruce Leggitt	Greenbrier	Congressional District 2	2030

Accomplishments

The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission's major accomplishments include:

- Approved water, wastewater, and solid waste project loans and grants for 125 communities totaling $681,006,756
- Promulgated two amended rules

Arkansas State Plant Board

The mission of the Arkansas State Plant Board is to protect and serve the citizens of Arkansas and the agricultural and business communities by providing information and unbiased enforcement of laws and regulations thus ensuring quality products and services.

Act 135 of the 2023 legislative session revised the membership categories of the State Plant Board's 19 members as outlined below. Seventeen members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and two non-voting members are designated by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Vice President. Members serve five-year terms.

The 17 members appointed by the Governor are to include:

- One cotton grower representative
- One agricultural fertilizer industry representative
- One rice grower representative
- One horticulturist, nurseryman, ornamental production, or lawn care industries representative
- One corn, peanut, sorghum, turf, or wheat grower representative
- One soybean grower representative
- One licensed pest control operator
- One seed dealer representative
- One seed grower representative
- One retail or wholesale fuel industry representative
- One agricultural pesticide industry representative
- One agricultural aviation industry representative
- One timber and forest products sector representative
- Two corn, cotton, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, turf, or wheat producer representatives
- One livestock producer representative
- One forage grower representative

Member	Representing	Term
David Gammill	Corn, Peanut, Sorghum, Turf, or Wheat Grower	2023
Matthew Marsh	Rice Grower	2023
Reynold Meyer	Livestock Industry	2023
Matthew Miles	Soybean Grower	2023
Travis Senter	Farmer	2023
Sam Stuckey	Cotton Growers	2024
Bruce Alford	Forage Industry	2028
Sammy Angel	Seed Grower	2028
Kyle Baltz	Fertilizer	2028
Jon Bierbaum	Timber and Forest Products	2028
George Dunklin	Pesticide Industry	2028
Garrett Frost	Agricultural Aviation	2028
Robin Ralston	Retail or Wholesale Fuel	2028
Nathan Reed	Farmer	2028
Nathan Slaton	University of Arkansas, Agriculture Experiment Station	N/A
Robert Thorne	Horticulture	2028

Davis Wallace	Seed Dealer	2028
Ken Korth	University of Arkansas, Entomology and Plant Pathology	N/A
Vacant		N/A

Accomplishments

The Arkansas State Plant Board's meetings and accomplishments include:

- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee July 13, 2023
- State Plant Board August 24, 2023
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee November 14, 2023
- Pesticide Sub-Committee November 14, 2023
- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee November 16, 2023
- Pest Control Sub-Committee November 16, 2023
- State Plant Board December 23, 2023
- Boll Weevil Sub-Committee February 9, 2024
- Pest Control Sub-Committee February 12, 2024
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee March 5, 2024
- State Plant Board March 5, 2024
- Pest Control Sub-Committee May 28, 2024
- Pesticide Sub-Committee May 22, 2024
- Bureau of Standards Sub-Committee June 5, 2024
- State Plant Board June 6, 2024
- Promulgated one rule
- Approved 217 enforcement actions

Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation Board

The Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation Board is certified by the State Plant Board to carry out Arkansas's Boll Weevil Eradication Program.

Act 691 of the 2023 session designated the Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation Board as a subcommittee of the Plant Board and modified the membership to include at least five but no more than seven practical cotton growers to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Each of the five boll weevil eradication zones must be represented by one member residing in that zone. The Governor may appoint up to two additional members if it is in the best interest of the State of Arkansas. Members serve five-year terms.

Board Member	Location	Term
Pace Hindsley	Marvell	2023
Travis Senter	Osceola	2024
Earl Stiles	Marianna	2024
Donald Felts	Joiner	2025
Gregg Garner	Lake City	2025
Joe Mencer	Lake Village	2027

Sam Stuckey	Clarkedale	2027

Accomplishments

- Operated the program with seven personnel which includes one executive director, one administrative assistant, and five field staff conducting the trapping
- Received a clean annual financial audit report with no internal control weaknesses found (report was conducted by Hogan Taylor LLP)
- Monitored or trapped 32 cotton producing counties
- Recorded 485,653 acres
- Deployed 2,000 traps
- Collected $1,456,906 total assessments
- Permitted eight non-commercial cotton plots to museums, nature centers, and research

Arkansas Research and Promotion Boards

Act 712 of the 2023 Regular Session of the Arkansas General Assembly transferred the following six agriculture commodity boards to the Department:

- Arkansas Beef Council
- Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board
- Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board
- Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board
- Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board
- Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

Act 712 also revised the membership categories for the boards and directed the Department to provide administrative support to the boards. A summary of the entities' responsibilities and members is provided below.

Arkansas Beef Council

The Arkansas Beef Council was created to promote the growth and development of the beef cattle industry in Arkansas by research, promotion, and market development. The board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate as follows:

- Four cattle producers actively and principally engaged in the cattle industry from each of the four congressional districts
- Two cattle producers actively and principally engaged in the cattle industry from the state at large
- One active Arkansas livestock market operator representing the state at large

The members are appointed for three-year terms.

Board activities are funded by an assessment of $1.00 per head on all cattle sold in the state, with 50 cents remitted to the federal Cattlemen's Beef Board and the remainder retained by the state.

Name	Location	Term
Jerry Christie	Nashville	2023
Sam Cecil	Russellville	2024
Chase Groves	Garland	2024
Robert Campbell	Witt Springs	2025
Sharon Kay Casey	Malvern	2025
Caleb Plyer, Chairman	Hope	2025
Michael McMillan	Hot Springs Village	2026

Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board

The Arkansas Catfish Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research, extension, market development, and advertising designed to promote the Arkansas catfish industry.

The board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. They must be members of the catfish industry and residents of Arkansas. Each member is appointed for a two-year term.

Activities of the Board are funded by an assessment on the sale of catfish feed within Arkansas to commercial catfish producers at a rate not to exceed $5.00 per ton of catfish feed sold.

Name	Location	Term
Larry Dorman	Montrose	2025
Andrew Mitchell	North Little Rock	2025
Greg Moyers, Secretary/Treasurer	Portland	2025
Dick Baxter, Vice Chairman	Cabot	2026
Robert Glennon	Lonoke	2026
Brad Graham	Portland	2026
Steve Kueter, Chairman	Paragould	2026

FY2024 Catfish Promotion Board meetings and accomplishments:

- September 19, 2023
- January 25, 2024
- March 14, 2024

Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board

The Arkansas Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research and extension designed to promote the corn and grain sorghum industry in Arkansas. The board consists of seven members who are practical producers of corn or grain sorghum in Arkansas. Each board member is appointed for a two-year term by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Activities of the board are funded through the assessment of one cent per bushel on all corn and grain sorghum grown within Arkansas. The assessment is deducted from the amount paid to the producer at the first point of sale or at the point where the corn or grain sorghum enters the United States Department of Agriculture loan program.

Name	Location	Term
Trent Dabbs, Secretary/Treasurer	Stuttgart	2023
Jason Felton, Vice Chairman	Marianna	2024
Matt Gammill	Tyronza	2024
Matt Smith	Blytheville	2025
Tommy Young, Chairman	Tuckerman	2025
Kenny Falwell (Lendol)	Newport	2026
William Galloway	Augusta	2026

FY2024 Corn and Grain Sorghum Promotion Board meetings and accomplishments:

- January 30, 2024
- February 21-22, 2024 (funding approved):
  - Promotion - $182,666
  - Research - $1,053,801
  - Total - $1,236,467
- April 4, 2024

Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board

The Rice Research and Promotion Board was created to plan and conduct a program of research, extension, market development, and advertising designed to promote the rice industry in Arkansas. The board consists of nine Arkansas rice producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Four members must be designated representatives of the Arkansas rice merchant and milling industry. Members serve two-year terms.

Board activities are funded through an assessment of 1.35 cents per bushel paid by the buyer at the first point of sale on rice grown within the state or at the point the rice enters the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan program. Producers also pay an assessment of 1.35 cents per bushel of rice grown. The assessments paid by buyers must be used for market development and promotion. The assessments paid by producers must be used for rice extension and research.
In Fiscal Year 2024, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) collected $6,351,503 in assessments on Arkansas grown rice sold or entering the USDA loan program. DFA retained $196,897 in Treasury Charges and remitted $6,154,607 to the Arkansas Rice Research and Promotion Board.

Two new board members, Charles Williams and Scott Matthews, were appointed in Fiscal Year 2024. Three members, Jim Whitaker, Jeff Rutledge, and David Gairhan were reappointed. Below is the current list of board members:

Board Member	Location	Term
David Gairhan	Jonesboro	2025
Scott Matthews	Weiner	2025
Jeff Rutledge	Newport	2025

Jim Whitaker	McGehee	2025
Charles Williams	Crawfordsville	2025
Becton Bell	Wilson	2026
Jay Coker	Stuttgart	2026
Carl Phillips	Walnut Ridge	2026
Paul Schwarz	Jonesboro	2026

The board held six meetings in Fiscal Year 2024 as follows:

- August 2, 2023
  - Elected new officers
- Participated in the Rice Field Day at the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture on August 3, 2024.
- November 2, 2023
  - Approved $2.8 million as the research funding target for 2024.
  - Received research project status reports
- January 17, 2024
  - Ethics and Freedom of Information Act training provided by the Arkansas Attorney General's Office
  - Approved Funding Guidelines for research and promotion projects
- February 1, 2024
  - Approved three promotion proposals totally $40,000
  - Received a report on COL-RICE activities
  - Received an update from member Jay Coker on the review of the University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension Center's rice breeding program he attended on behalf of the Board
- February 8, 2024
  - Approved 29 research funding proposals
- June 26, 2024
  - Several members toured the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center
  - Discussed the hybrid rice breeding program at the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (UADA) and voted to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with UADA regarding the program
  - Discussed topics the board would like included in future research projects

Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board

The Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board was established to conduct plans, projects, or activities to strengthen the soybean industry's position in the marketplace. The board consists of nine soybean producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Members serve two-year terms.

The board's activities are paid from an assessment of .25 percent of the market price of all soybeans grown within Arkansas. Assessments are collected by the first purchaser at the point of sale.

Name	**Location**	**Term**
John Freeman, Chairman	Dumas	2023
West Higginbothom	Marianna	2024
Josh Cureton	Cash	2025

Brad Doyle	Weiner	2025
Donald Morton, Jr.	Des Arc	2025
BJ Rogers	Ward	2025
Boyce Johnson	Maumelle	2026
Matthew Roberson	Wynne	2026
Matt Smith	Blytheville	2026

FY2024 Soybean Promotion Board meetings and accomplishments:

- August 9, 2023
- November 3, 2023
- January 10, 2024
- January 25, 2024
- March 7-8, 2024 (funding approved):
  - Promotion - $458,285
  - Research - $3,384,611
  - Total - $3,842,896
- April 17, 2024

Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board

The Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board was created to promote the growth and development of the Arkansas wheat industry by research, extension, promotion, and market development. The board consists of seven Arkansas wheat producers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Members serve two-year terms.

The board's activities are funded by an assessment of one cent per bushel on all wheat grown in Arkansas. The assessment is deducted from the amount paid the producer at the first point of sale or at the point the wheat enters the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan program.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration collected $115,022 on Arkansas wheat sold or entering the USDA loan program. DFA retained $3,566 in Treasury Charges and remitted $111,456 to the Arkansas Wheat Promotion Board.

Name	**Location**	**Term**
John Schwartz	Weiner	2021
Tim Smith	Clarendon	2022
Kenneth Clark	Newport	2023
Adam Cloninger	Keo	2023
Terrance Scott	Cotton Plant	2023
David Wallace	Crawfordsville	2023
Jack Evans	Carlisle	2024
Dusty Hoskyn	England	2024
Chris Shaefers	Conway	2024

Commissions and Committees with Department Representation

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture serves as a member of the following commissions and committees:

- Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission
- Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission
- Red River Compact Commission
- Buffalo River Conservation Committee
- Natural Resources Committee
- Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group

A summary of these entities' responsibilities and members is provided below.

Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission

The Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission administers the Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact (Compact) established by Public Law 93-152 in 1973 after formal approval of both states in 1972. The purpose of the Compact is to promote interstate comity between Arkansas and Oklahoma, provide for an equitable apportionment and orderly development of the waters of the Arkansas River between the two states, provide an agency for administering agreed upon water apportionment, encourage the maintenance of an active pollution abatement program in each state, and facilitate the cooperation of the water administrative agencies in both states in the development and management of water resources in the Arkansas River Basin.

The Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission is required to meet annually and prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of each signatory State and to the President of the United States covering the activities of the commission for the preceding fiscal year, together with an accounting of all funds received and expended by it in the conduct of its work.

The Commission is composed of three commissioners representing the State of Arkansas, three commissioners representing the State of Oklahoma, and one commissioner representing the United States. The Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Agriculture or his designee serves as one of the three Arkansas commissioners. The two additional Arkansas members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for four-year terms. The Oklahoma commissioners include the Director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and two members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The President of the United States or an authorized federal agency designates the member to represent the United States.

Member	Representing
Dr. Delia Haak	Federal Commissioner
Joel West Williams	Alt. Federal Commissioner
James Mardis, III	Arkansas Commissioner
Chris Colclasure	Arkansas Commissioner
Mark Weathers	Oklahoma Commissioner

Colby Davis	Oklahoma Commissioner
Julie Cunningham	Oklahoma Commissioner
Becky Keogh	Arkansas Commissioner

Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission

The Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission is the environmental policy-making body for Arkansas. The environmental policy is developed with guidance from the Governor, the Arkansas legislature, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and others and is implemented by the Division of Environmental Quality within the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment.

The Commission is comprised of 15 members, with eight appointed by the Governor to include at least one, but no more than two, from each of the four congressional districts. The remaining seven members are the directors or their designees of the following entities:

- Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Arkansas Geology Commission
- Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission

Member	Location	Representing
William “Al” Eckert III	Little Rock	District 2
Richard McMullen, PhD	Little Rock	State Agency Designee
Doug Melton	Bentonville	District 3
Swan 'Rusty' Moss, Jr.	Dermott	District 1
David B. Vandergriff	Little Rock	Pulaski County
Wes Ward	Little Rock	Secretary of Agriculture
Chris Racey	Little Rock	State Agency Director

Red River Compact Commission

The Red River Compact Commission promotes interstate comity among each of the four member states by governing use, control, and distribution of the interstate water of the Red River and its tributaries. Member states include Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. The Commission also serves as a basis for state or joint planning action because it identifies and provides an equitable apportionment of water among the signatory states by defining reaches or subdivisions of the Red River. It provides an active program for the conservation of water, protection of lives and property from floods, improvement of water quality, and development of navigation and regulation of flows in the Red River Basin.

The Commission is composed of two representatives from each signatory state, designated or appointed in accordance with the laws of each state, and one commissioner representing the United

States appointed by the President. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture is a member of the Commission. The Governor of Arkansas appoints a second member who must be an individual residing within the basin of the Red River and its tributaries in Arkansas. This member serves a seven-year term.

Board Member	Location	Representing
Sue Lowry	Cheyenne, WY	Chairman/Federal Commissioner
Julie Cunningham	Oklahoma City, OK	Oklahoma Commissioner
Charles Lynn Dobbs	Altus, OK	Oklahoma Commissioner
Erin Chancellor	Austin, TX	Texas Commissioner
Robin Phillips	Sherman, TX	Texas Commissioner
Edward Knight, P.E.	Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana Commissioner
John Michael Moore	Bossier City, LA	Louisiana Commissioner
Wes Ward	Little Rock, AR	Arkansas Commissioner
William Daniel York	Foreman, AR	Arkansas Commissioner

Buffalo River Conservation Committee

The Buffalo River Conservation Committee (BRCC) was established by Governor Asa Hutchinson in Executive Order 19-14 in 2019. The established BRCC was codified by Act 785 of the 2021 regular session of the Arkansas General Assembly.

The BRCC is required to:

- Work in cooperation with one another to identify opportunities to leverage their departments' expertise, resources, relationships, focus areas, and funding mechanisms in support of the vitality of the Buffalo River Watershed
- Annually review the Buffalo River Watershed Management Plan, provide recommendations for updates, and provide a report to the Governor on successes during the year
- Establish subcommittees to lead various aspects of implementing the watershed management plan, including identifying opportunities for training, relationship building, and specific projects to preserve and enhance water quality within the watershed
    - The subcommittee will include key stakeholders representing local landowners, conservation organizations, tourism industry representatives, environmental and technical experts, county and municipal officials, and federal partners
- Consider the continued sampling and analysis of water quality data throughout the Buffalo River Watershed as vital for informing the work of the committee and its member agencies and organizations

The BRCC membership consists of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Department of Energy and Environment, the Secretary of the Department of Health, the Secretary of the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, the County Judge of Newton County, and the County Judge of Searcy County.

Member	Location	Representing
Secretary Wes Ward	Little Rock	Department of Agriculture
Secretary Shane Khoury	Little Rock	Department of Energy and Environment

Secretary Shea Lewis	Little Rock	Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism
Secretary Renee Mallory	Little Rock	Department of Health
Judge Warren Campbell	Newton County	Newton County Judge
Judge Jim Harness	Searcy County	Searcy County Judge

Natural Resources Committee

The Natural Resources Committee is authorized to establish a schedule of minimum fees and royalties as well as terms and conditions for various types of permits and leases for state-owned lands other than lands held in the name of and managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

The eight-member Commission is composed of the following members or their designees:

- Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration
- Director of Production and Conservation of the Oil and Gas Commission
- State Geologist
- Secretary of the Department of Agriculture
- Executive Secretary of the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission
- Secretary of the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism
- Director of the Department of Environmental Quality
- Chair of the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Member	**Representing**
Jim Hudson	Department of Finance and Administration
Director Larry Bengel	Production and Conservation of the Oil & Gas Commission
Scott Ausbrooks- Geologist	State Geologist
Secretary Wes Ward	Department of Agriculture
Jennifer Sheehan	Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission
Secretary Shea Lewis	Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism
Secretary Shane Khoury	Department of Energy and Environmental Quality

Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group

The Arkansas Homeland Security Advisory Group was created as an advisory body to the Division of Emergency Management to develop and maintain comprehensive guidelines and procedures for implementing a statewide mutual aid system. The advisory group consists of representatives of federal, state, and local agencies and professional associations as determined by the Director of the Division of Emergency Management and shall include, at a minimum, representatives of the following:

- Division of Emergency Management
- Arkansas Ambulance Association
- Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police

- Arkansas Association of Fire Chiefs
- Arkansas Community Preparedness Coordinator
- Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment
- Department of Health
- Arkansas Emergency Management Association, Inc.
- Arkansas Highway Police Division of the Arkansas Department of Transportation
- Department of Agriculture
- Arkansas Municipal League
- National Guard
- 61st Civil Support Team of the Arkansas National Guard
- Arkansas Sheriffs' Association
- Division of Arkansas State Police
- County Judges Association of Arkansas
- Division of Information Services
- Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Secret Service
- U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas
- U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas

Member	**Representing**
AJ Gary	Arkansas Division of Emergency Management
Renee Mallory	Arkansas Department of Health
Wes Ward	Arkansas Department of Agriculture
Col. Anthony Sanders	Arkansas National Guard
Kristi Putnam	Arkansas Department of Human Services
Col. Mike Hagar	Arkansas State Police
Jay Harton	Arkansas Department of TSS (DIS)
Nicholas Ortiz	Governor's Office
Jimmy Hart/Conway County Judge	County Judges Association
Chief Gary Sipes	Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police
Marty Boyd/Scott Bradley	Arkansas Sheriffs Association
Randy Garrett	ARVOAD
Shane Khoury	AR Department of Energy & Environment
Glenn Moore	DHS, Cybersecurity, and Infrastructure Security Agency
Adina Marlatt	DHS, Office of Intelligence and Analysis
Joel Eubanks	FBI, Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator
J.T. Coleman	FBI, Special Agent/Bomb Technician (SABT)

BRANDING PROGRAMS

ARKANSAS GROWN

Arkansas Grown, administered through the Arkansas Department of Agriculture, began in 2012 to help promote the many agricultural products that are grown in Arkansas. The program helps connect the growing number of consumers, who want to know where their food originates, with local producers.

ARKANSAS MADE

Arkansas Made promotes goods and products manufactured in our state by businesses and connects them to potential buyers. Since 2014, Arkansas Made has encouraged the purchase of locally made products by creating a community of suppliers and buyers that call Arkansas home.

HOMEGROWN BY HEROES

When consumers search for an Arkansas Grown or Arkansas Made item and see a Homegrown By Heroes logo, they know the item was produced in Arkansas by an Arkansas veteran. In 2015, the Department adopted the national Homegrown by Heroes branding program that enables farmer veterans to market their agricultural products by labeling them as veteran-produced.

Learn more at **ArkansasGrown.org**

Annual and Biennial Reports

Reports	Requirement Citation	Presented To
Evaluation of Boards and Commission	A.C.A. § 25-1-106	Arkansas Legislative Joint Performance Review Committee
FEMA Community Assistance Program	National Flood Insurance Act and Flood Disaster Protection Act, 42 USCA 4001-4129	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Safe Drinking Water and State Revolving Loan Fund	Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 USC 300j-12	Environmental Protection Agency
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1383	Environmental Protection Agency
Federal Emergency Management Agency-Dam Safety Grant	Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, 33 USC 467f	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Secretary Report on State of the Department	A.C.A. § 25-38-202	Arkansas Legislative Council
Buffalo River Conservation Committee Annual Report	A.C.A. § 15-23-1001 et seq.	Governor/Arkansas Legislative Council
Department of Agriculture Annual Report	A.C.A. § 25-38-203	Governor/Arkansas Legislative Council
Farm to School Annual Report	A.C.A. § 6-18-2101 et seq.	Governor/Arkansas Legislative Council
Local Food, Farm, & Jobs Act Annual Report	A.C.A. § 15-4-3801 et seq.	Governor/Arkansas Legislative Council
The Nonpoint Source Management Annual Report	40 CFR 35.115 (a)	40 CFR 35.115 (a)
Arkansas Groundwater Protection and Management Report 2021	Arkansas Code Annotated 15-22-906	Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Promotion Boards		Governor and Senate and House Agriculture Committees

Schools & Scholarships

AWARDS!

$22,000	$7,500	$5,500	$41,250
AGRICULTURE SCHOLARSHIPS	FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTE PROGRAM	SCHOOL GARDEN OF THE YEAR	KITCHEN EQUIPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

$76K **$76K** in grant and scholarship funds managed and dispersed to qualified Arkansas residents and organizations

Managed and awarded **$5,500** total to **9** winning schools and early childhood education facilities as part of the 2023 Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest

Managed and awarded **$7,500** total to **5** schools as part of the Arkansas Farm to School Institute Program

Managed and awarded **$41,250** total to **11** schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments as part of the Arkansas Kitchen Equipment Grant Program

Hosted and spoke at **42** farm to school educational trainings, webinars, and events with **1,377** attendees

TOURS

Hosted lab tours for various youth organizations, including the MyARInternship Program, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff AgDiscovery Program, and the following Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) chapters: Unviversity of Arkansas, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Arkansas Tech University, and Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School

Completed the 2023 Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act Annual Report

Department grants and scholarships reach Arkansas students of all ages.

Data provided by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture 2024

INFOGRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE | Visit **agriculture.arkansas.gov** for more information.

Century Farm

The Arkansas Century Farm Program recognizes Arkansas farm families who have owned and operated a farm of 10 acres or more for a least 100 years. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture began the Century Farm program in 2012 as a way to highlight the impact of these families on the agriculture industry as well as their overall contributions to our state.

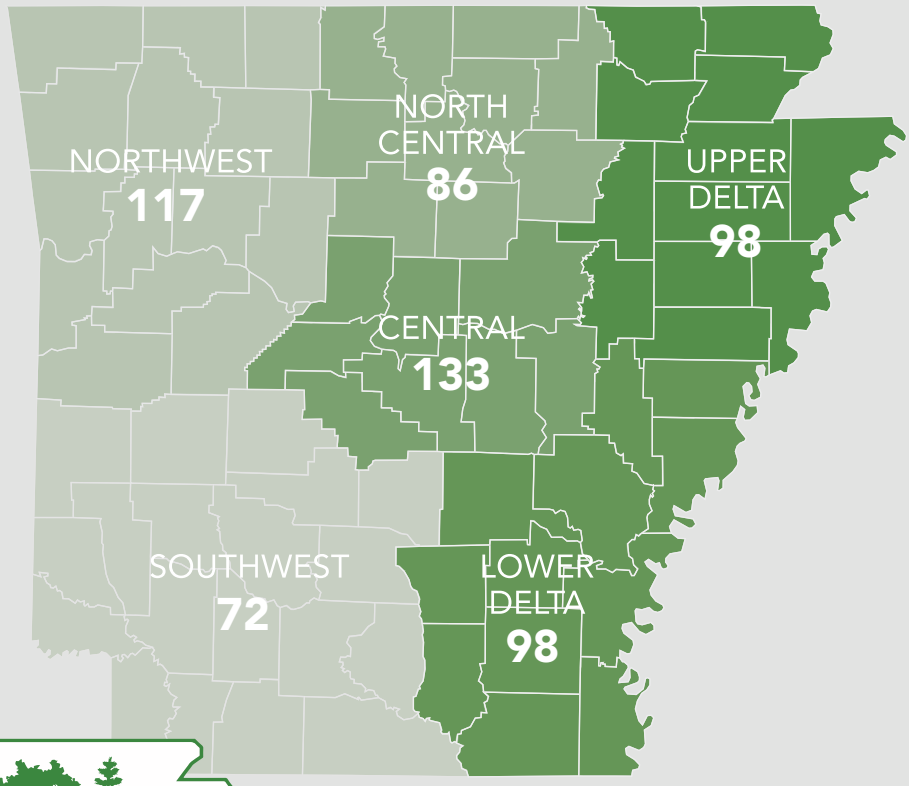
2023 Century Farm Inductees:

Abram Agriculture, Timber, and Wildlife Farm
Baxley Farm
C.R. "Rob" and Clara Barnett Family Farm
C.W. Ramey Farm - Section 8
C.W. Ramey Farm - Section 9
Circle T Ranch
Dan-Harton Farm
Doughty Family Farm
Flora Peggy Murphy Farm
Godfrey Homestead Farm
Grace Breeding Rogers Farm
Halfmoon Sisters Farm, LLC
Hazel Farm
Hensley Farm
HEW Farm
Hill Creek Farm
Hills Farm
Houston Farm
J Howard Tate Farm
Johnstown Camp Farm
Lizza Claire Farms Partnership
Lloyd Edward Johnson Farm
McSwain Farm
Moss Prairie Farms, Inc.
Patton Farms
Phillips Family Farm
Ponder Family Farm
Reddick Farm
Ridge Family Farm
Tucker Farm
Waters Brothers Farm
Webb Family Farm
White's Chapel Farm
Wilson Family Farm
Wilson-Thompson Farms
Windmill Hill Farm

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OR MORE

NUMBER OF CENTURY FARMS BY REGION

Over **604** farms have been inducted since 2012



Arkansas Century Farm

BY REGION

Northwest: **117**
North Central: **86**
Upper Delta: **98**
Central: **133**
Southwest: **72**
Lower Delta: **98**

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Recognizing important Arkansas farm families with a century of history.

Data provided by the Arkansas Department of Agriculture 2024

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