

# ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

## 2006 SCBGP FINAL REPORT

Agreement Number 12-25-B-0603

Contact: Zachary Taylor,  
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Report filed April 7, 2011

## **Arkansas Agriculture Department 2006 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program**

### **Project 1: Arkansas Brand ( Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Show)**

Project completed on September 23, 2010

#### **Summary:**

The Arkansas Agriculture Department requested SCBGP funds to develop and implement a marketing program to increase consumer awareness of and distinguish locally grown or produced Arkansas specialty crop products in the market place. This project was implemented because a growing trend in Arkansas was that Farmers' Markets in Arkansas were allowing vendors who purchase their produce from traditional wholesale outlets. Arkansas farmers requested a trustworthy program, which would differentiate their product from that not grown in our state and from that which may have been misrepresented. In addition, grocery store chains requested use of the state's official logo for display in their stores to draw attention to locally grown produce.

#### **Approach:**

The Arkansas Agriculture Department (AAD) utilized the Communication and Marketing Department of the University Of Arkansas Division Of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service (C&M) for much of what was accomplished in this project. Artist from C&M submitted several logo designs from which the logo seen on was selected (attachment 1 ). C&M staff, with input from AAD staff, devised a public relations campaign to lay out a strategy to bring awareness to the logo and its meaning.

Promotion accomplishments include:

- Two press articles in agricultural publications discussing the logo. (Attachment 2)
- A drawing at farmers' markets to attend a "Farm to Table" dinner featuring local chefs and farmers. (Attachment 3)
- Prominent placement of the AG logo on market bags.
- Prominent incorporation of the AG logo in the display used at PMA (2007 Project) and other venues. (Attachment 4)
- Dry erase signage/price boards for AG program participants to display in the markets. (Attachment 5)
- Wal-Mart in-store promotion featuring four local grower/suppliers, the Governor of Arkansas, two mayors, national and regional Wal-Mart executives and AAD staff. This promotion received extensive press on all major outlets and included prominent in-store displays.
- Development of new website [www.ArkansasGrown.org](http://www.ArkansasGrown.org)

In addition to the above achievements, during the 2009 calendar year the Arkansas Grown website ([www.arkansasgrown.org](http://www.arkansasgrown.org)) was created. The vender was Information Network of Arkansas. With the creation of this new website, the previous website Naturally Arkansas ([www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org)) was deleted. Visitors to the previous website are now automatically redirected to the current one. Since the startup date of the new website, April 1, 2009, we have had 15,460 visits, with the most traffic occurring during the months of July, August, and September. A month to month breakdown of the website visits is further seen in the Project 2 report.

On February 2, 2010 a request was made to commit funds from this project for the Fresh Summit International Convention and Exposition to be held October 15-18, 2010 in Orlando, Florida. The convention was attended by 4 Arkansas Producers and 2 AAD representatives. Sales contracts in an amount totaling 3 times the cost of the project were booked by the producers. (Attachment 6)

### **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The goals of the project were:

To develop and implement a marketing program to increase consumer awareness of and distinguish locally grown or produced Arkansas specialty crop products in the market place.

The expected measurable outcomes were:

1. Market place surveys to measure consumer awareness of the logo with a threefold increase in awareness by September 2008.
2. Increase in specialty crop producers participating in program by 50%.

The following major outcomes were a direct result of the project:

1. For the first measurable outcome, baseline market surveys were conducted at two farmers markets with a total of 97 customers surveyed. Of those surveyed, 92% said it was very important or somewhat important to them the produce they buy is grown "near" to where they live. Only 12% said they were very familiar with the AG program. Forty-three percent said somewhat familiar and 38% not familiar. Sixty-one percent said they had purchased items in the AG program. When asked who they thought oversaw the AG program, 58% said they did not know, 19% said AAD, 10% said the farmers. (Other information relevant to customer preferences and demographics was also collected) Requests to conduct surveys at retail grocers received no response. These surveys were supposed to be repeated near the end of the farmers' market season in 2009 to measure improvement;

however, the project manager retired before the fall of 2009. His replacement was not hired until spring of 2010.

2. For the second measurable outcome, the total number of registered participants in the AG program did not change after the limited promotion. There were 24 in 2007 and 25 in 2008. However, there were 13 new participants in 2008 as 12 of the 2007 participants did not renew. Part of this was due to normal attrition, part due to loss of crop from excessive spring rains. But another portion is due to the failure of known participants to submit the annual forms. In 2009 there were 43 participants; 18 of which were repeats and 25 that were new.

As a result of the Arkansas Grown program a new farmers' market opened in 2008 naming itself the "Certified Arkansas Farmers' Market" and encouraging their vendors to join the AG program. They see the AAD backed logo as important in differentiating themselves from local "resellers". Grocery retailers continue to push their suppliers to place the AG logo on their product containers, ties and PLU stickers. This remains to be a project supported by the industry.

### **Beneficiaries:**

This program benefited producers at 80 farmers' markets located in 40 Arkansas counties by enabling the local producers to distinguish themselves from the "resellers" in the market.

It benefited one national grocery store chain and one national food distributor who asked permission to use the Arkansas Grown brand to highlight produce grown by commercial producers in Arkansas.

WIC Nutrition in Farmers' Market program administrators used this program to aid in their verification that vendors are selling at least 50% locally grown produce.

Customers benefited in this program by being able to feel confident and be rest assured in their purchases. Producers informed AAD that they saw increased demand for locally grown or produced agriculture products and those consumers seemed to have greater awareness of the benefits of supporting Arkansas agriculture.

### **Lessons Learned:**

The biggest lesson learned in this project is that consumers have a set perception of where their produce should come from and that they usually assume that what they are buying meets their criteria. Another lesson that was learned is

that a state-based label, unless it is set up in state code with enforceable fines for misuse, is very hard to police and control.

### **Additional Information:**

1. Funding Expended:  
    Funding Spent:       \$51,526.49  
    Funding Remaining: \$ 1,148.67

### **Contact Person**

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### **Project 2: Farmers Markets and Naturally Arkansas Promotion**

Project completed on July 30, 2008

#### **Summary:**

In a previous Specialty Crop Block Grant project, the AAD used decorative sacks as a point of sale promotional item. This project repeated that popular and successful promotion. Promotional messages printed on the sacks targeted four subjects: (1) the Arkansas Agriculture Product Market website ([www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org)), (2) the “Arkansas Grown” brand, (3) the Arkansas Farmers’ Market Association, and (4) the state’s farmers’ markets.

At the start date of this project there were approximately 650 vendors selling at 46 farmers’ markets in 36 Arkansas counties. The use of these promotional bags was to help offset one of the direct costs farmers have, while providing an attractive presentation for specialty crop sales that placed the buy local message directly in the hands of the target demographic. This promotion was the educational component of the “Arkansas Brand” project and was to drive traffic to other venues for Arkansas specialty crop producers such as the AAPM website and other farmers’ markets.

Previous Project: Before this SCBG project, a similar project was funded from a previous specialty crop block grant. This project continued the popular point of sale promotion.

## **Approach:**

The Arkansas Agricultural Department worked with the Communications and Marketing Division of the University of Arkansas Cooperative extension service to create an attractive bag design that incorporated the four messages mentioned above. An example of the design can be viewed as an attachment to this report.

AAD released a bid notice on March 31, 2008 for 100,000 bags. Kerr Paper and Supply of Little Rock, Arkansas was the winning bidder with a bid of \$21,747.25. Bags were distributed by AAD and Cooperative Extension Service staff to over 50 farmers' markets and were also handed out at various events around the state.

A market place survey that was conducted for project #1 of this grant included 5 questions that measured the consumer awareness of the logo.

The project was completed by July 30, 2008.

## **Goals and Outcomes Achieved:**

The goals of the project were:

1. To increase awareness of the "Arkansas Brand",
2. Increase traffic on the AAPM website,
3. Increase awareness of the state's farmers' markets and the association of farmers' markets by providing promotional sacks to vendors at Arkansas farmers' markets.

The expected measurable outcomes were:

1. See a 15 % increase in traffic on [www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org) website by September 2008 as compared to September 2007 traffic.
2. Market place surveys to measure consumer awareness of the logo with a threefold increase in awareness by September 2008.

The following major outcomes were a direct result of the project:

1. An expected measurable outcome was an increase in traffic on the [www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org) website. The following is a table of monthly traffic reports for a seven month time period in 2007, 2008, and 2009:

Month	Visits 2007	Visits 2008	Visits 2009
Mar	2,245	4,074	0
Apr	2,852	4,639	0
May	3,974	4,084	166
Jun	4,824	3,361	717
Jul	3,805	3,746	996
Aug	3,291	3,930	985
Sep	4,148	4,502	893
Total	25,139	28,336	3,757

Given that the bags distributed by this project would not have been available in time in 2008 to influence March, April, or May traffic, it is unclear why these numbers were higher. Possibilities include other presentations or promotions where the website was mentioned, undocumented mentions in the press or listing on the home page of the state's website. In respective years, 45% and 47% of the visitors were referred by the [www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov) domain.

Many markets had similar bags held over from the 2007 year. These would have been in circulation during the 2008 rise in visits. The slight rise in visits during August and September 2008 could be an indication that markets upon depletion of their supply of 2007 bags had started using the 2008 bag and consumers were visiting the website.

In 2009 the Naturally Arkansas website ([www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org)) published on the paper market bags distributed in the 2008 year became obsolete due to the creation of the Arkansas Grown website ([www.arkansasgrown.org](http://www.arkansasgrown.org)). Visitors to the Naturally Arkansas website were automatically redirected to the current Arkansas Grown website.

Though the measure did not increase visits by 15% it did show an increase of almost 13%. In addition, this project was very strongly supported by farmers at the farmers' markets. Vendors and market managers routinely comment on their desire to continue and expand the promotion.

- Another expected measurable outcome was to conduct market place surveys to measure consumer awareness of the logo with a threefold increase in awareness by September 2008. This survey was conducted as part of the survey conducted in Project #1. Five of the questions in the survey pertained to the Arkansas Grown logo. A total of 97 people were surveyed. These five questions were asked:

- I. How important is it that your produce is grown near to where you live?
- II. How important is it that the produce you purchase at a farmer's market be locally grown?
- III. How familiar are you with the Arkansas Grown program?
- IV. Have you ever purchased items in the Arkansas Grown program, such as produce, meats and fresh-cut flowers?
- V. If you're familiar with the Arkansas Grown program, who do you think oversees it?

The results were:

1. 91.5% Believed it was Somewhat or Very Important
2. 94.6% Believed it was Somewhat or Very Important
3. 59.1% Where Somewhat or Very Familiar
- IV. 61.4% Had purchased items in the Arkansas Grown Program.
4. 58.4% Did not know who was responsible for the Program.

A second survey was not conducted as 60% of respondents were already aware of the program.

### **Beneficiaries:**

This program benefited not only the farmers' markets and the farmers who sell at those markets, but it was also a benefit to the consumer. The consumer not only made aware of the Arkansas Grown label, but they also received a bag that allowed them to transport their purchases while providing them a listing of all the locations of Farmers Markets in the state along with the address of the Naturally Arkansas website ([www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org)).

The majority of specialty crops grown in Arkansas are sold directly to consumers at Farmers Markets, On-farm stands and U-pick operations. These operations have low overhead and thus cannot afford point of sale promotions, but a promotion like the bag program benefits specialty crop producers by helping to promote and increase the demand for locally produced specialty crops.

### **Lessons Learned:**

1. Benchmarks and measureable outcomes are not always precise or easy to determine for promotional projects.
2. Consumers in Arkansas expect produce sold at a Farmers Markets to be locally grown.

3. A majority of consumers shopping at Arkansas Farmers' Markets already knew what the Arkansas Grown label was and what it meant.

**Additional Information:**

4. Funding Expended:  
    Funding Spent:       \$21,747.25  
    Funding Remaining: \$ 3,252.75

Following this report is an example of the 2008 Market Bag. (Attachment 7)

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**Project 3: GHP/GAP Audit Fee Assistance and Food Safety Promotion**

Project completed on 09/23/2010

**Project Summary**

Consumer demand for safe foods is steadily increasing, along with producer and handler liability. The purpose of this project was to educate more Arkansas growers and handlers of the importance of following and documenting GHP/GAP in their businesses to address liability issues and market accessibility. It also assisted in the development of third-party audits by providing audit fee assistance.

The project agreement was amended to grant an extension of the project to September 30, 2009. The extension was needed to provide additional time for producers to learn more and become more comfortable with GAP/GHP.

**Project Approach**

Project 3 started with a workshop for growers, handlers, and packers entitled “Good Agricultural and Handling Practices” on February 1, 2008. Through the promotion efforts of the Arkansas Agriculture Department and the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, over 70 people attended, with 38 registering as active producers. Eight registered as industry, packers/brokers. Other attendees included county extension agents, University of Arkansas food safety program managers, and representatives of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Arkansas Department of Human Service – Commodity Distribution. Speakers included representatives from industry leaders such as Wal-Mart and Del Monte,

third party auditors, a producer grower, and a USDA official from the Agriculture Marketing Service. See attached agenda.

## **Goals and Outcomes Achieved**

The goals of the project were:

1. to explain and promote the importance of good agricultural and handling practices to 10 producers at a food safety and GHP/GAP workshop for growers and handlers
2. Train five county extension agency on the third-party audit system
3. Grow participation in audits by 25% within two years.

The following 3 major outcomes were a direct result of the project:

1. Six cooperative extension agents were trained on the third party audit program. This exceeded our goal of training five extension agents.
2. Seventy participants were educated on good agricultural and handling practices and audits. Their importance, along with early adoption, was emphasized. The number of participants well exceeded our goal of 10 participating producers.
3. Twelve producers successfully completed a recognized GHP/GAP audit and received fee assistance totaling \$4,729.66 the first year. This was an increase from the seven participants in the GAP/GHP audits the previous year. During the year of the extension, an additional 18 growers received fee assistance totaling \$10,323.40 for GAP/GHP audits.

## **Beneficiaries**

Producers and handlers throughout the marketing chain and, ultimately, the consumer are beneficiaries of this project. Producers benefit by increased market access as more retailers, wholesalers and processors continue to require more food safety precautions. Producers, retailers, and wholesalers benefit from the liability protection provided by the GHP/GAP audit documentation. They also reap the benefit of increased sales and good will by the consuming public whose demand for a safer food supply continues to increase. The consumer benefits by having a safer food supply.

## **Lessons Learned**

The extension was definitely needed as we saw grower awareness and comfort level increase as positive word spread through the grower and handler network about the actual impact on and benefit to the participant. This further confirms that grower participation is vital to the success of any educational effort for agricultural producers. Producers like information from “experts” but the experience of other growers is key to their decision making process.

A change in the producer fee assistance process was required by State of Arkansas auditors. The original process benefited the producer because he/she didn't incur any out of pocket expenses unless the cost of the audit exceeded \$1,000. The new process required that the producer pay the fee up front and be reimbursed for the eligible portion. There was initial concern that this change might deter some producers from participating but it was not cited by any producer as a reason not to participate. The increase in participant numbers is additional indication that it was not a factor.

**Additional Information:**

- 1. Funding Expended:
  - Funding Spent: \$ 22,064.82
  - Funding Remaining: \$ 2,935.18

Following this report is a copy of the Workshop Agenda (Attachment 8), Workshop Press Release (Attachment 9), and the reimbursement letter sent to producers (Attachment 10).

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CMYK



Pantone 381



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# 'Arkansas Grown' label grows in popularity

Attachment 2

Arkansas Business, March 23, 2009 by Andrew Jensen

The Arkansas Farmers Market Association and the Arkansas Agriculture Department are helping the state's growers better market their products.

In September, the "Arkansas Grown" label was introduced and made available to Natural State producers of all goods raw and finished.

So far, according to Tim Ellison of the Arkansas State Plant Board, around 30 producers are participating in the "Arkansas Grown" project and applications keep coming in every day.

Some of the finished products approved so far include soap and lip balm, Ellison said. Five northwest Arkansas producers have signed up with goods including fruits, vegetables, grass-fed cattle, eggs, herbs and flowers.

Producers certified as "Arkansas Grown" may use the logo in branding and marketing their products. Ellison said he's seen the logo on cantaloupe PLU stickers, tomato display boxes, twist-ties bundling greens and on shelves at Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart has made a large national push toward sustainability and locally focused store offerings such as produce, Ellison said.

"Many of our farmers, even those at farmers markets who are from that county, still want to use the logo and remind people of the local connection," Ellison said. "I've been really impressed at the lengths that Wal-Mart has been willing to go to promote local growers. They are really the most aggressive as a company."

Jim McGuire, manager of the Springdale Farmers Market, said he recently applied for "Arkansas Grown" status for his variety of tomatoes, greens, berries and apples.

"People like to be able to come and meet the person who grew this and know it was grown locally," McGuire said. "So having a brand on your product that says 'Arkansas Grown' is an advantageous promotion. We'll see a lot more of it."

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## 'Arkansas Grown' logo guarantees local produce

Mon, 2008-09-15 08:54

[Delta Farm Press](#)

Food shoppers eager to support Arkansas growers have a sure sign to spot local produce — the Arkansas Grown logo.



Developed by the Arkansas Agriculture Department in partnership with the Arkansas Farmers' Market Association, Arkansas Grown is an assurance that the produce or product ingredients bearing the "Arkansas Grown" logo have been raised in Arkansas.

"Showing the logo will remove the guesswork for shoppers who support local producers," said Tim Ellison, spokesman for the state's Agriculture Department. "Shoppers can feel sure that any product carrying the logo, whether it's cheese, potatoes, ribeyes or beeswax lip balm, has been authenticated by Arkansas Agriculture Department personnel."

Shoppers will be able to find the logo at farmers' markets, grocery stores and major chains such as Wal-Mart, which is participating in Arkansas Grown as part of its locally grown initiative.

"This will be a tremendous boost for vendors who support community agriculture by selling locally grown produce and offering products made with Arkansas-grown ingredients," said Ron Rainey, an Extension agricultural economics specialist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

To learn more about Arkansas' farmers' markets, visit [www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org), [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu), or [www.aragriculture.org/horticulture/business/resource\\_guide/Marketing\\_Strategies.pdf](http://www.aragriculture.org/horticulture/business/resource_guide/Marketing_Strategies.pdf).

**Source URL:** <http://deltafarmpress.com/arkansas-grown-logo-guarantees-local-produce>

# FARM *to* TABLE

*a chef's collaborative  
celebrating our local farmers*

CAPITAL HOTEL

*June 8, 2008*

## MENU

### *Amuse*

Shane, Simply The Best

### *First Course*

Shane, Simply The Best

### *Second Course*

Donnie Ferneau, Ferneau

### *Third Course*

Adam Rosenblum, 3G

### *Fourth Course*

Lee Richardson, Capital Hotel

### *Cheese*

Adam Rosenblum, 3G

### *Dessert Amuse*

Donnie Ferneau, Ferneau

### *Dessert*

Tandra Walkins, Capital Hotel

### *Guest Farmers*

Jody Hardin, Hardin Farms • Ragan Sutterfield, Adama Farm • Rusty and Sue Nuffer, Armstead Mountain Farm  
Ed and Jacqueline Matsolf, Petit Jean Farm • Lee Edwards, Lee Edwards Distributors

*\$125 (plus taxes & gratuity)  
Proceeds going to all Arkansas farmers markets*



Special thanks to Lee Richardson, Cassidee Dabney & Matt McClure.

For reservations, call 501-370-7011, email [anapier@capitalhotel.com](mailto:anapier@capitalhotel.com) or visit [opentable.com](http://opentable.com) on the Web.





Attachment 4

Arkansas  
GROWN

Arkansas  
GROWN

10.03.2009

We Are An  Vendor!

Wye Mountain  
of  
FLOWERS

everything WAS RAISED  
And picked on our Farm

thank You  
the Eggen Family

ARKANSAS  
AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT

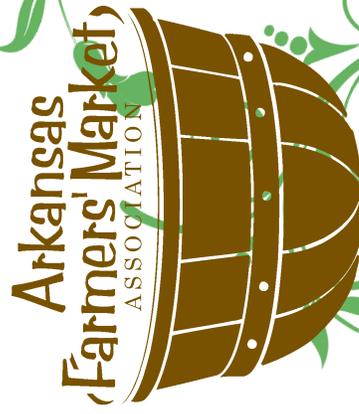




Attachment 7



ARKANSAS  
AGRICULTURE  
DEPARTMENT



## Arkansas Farmers' Markets

- Arkansas County**
  - Arkansas County Farmers' Market, Stuttgart
  - Arkansas County Farmers' Market, DeWitt
- Ashley County**
  - Ashley County Farmers' Market, Crossett
- Baxter County**
  - Cotter Farmers' Market, Cotter
  - Mountain Home Farmers' Market, Mountain Home
- Benton County**
  - Downtown Bentonville Farmers' Market, Bentonville
  - The Gentry Farmers' Market, Gentry
  - Rogers Farmers' Market, Rogers
  - Siloam Springs Farmers' Market, Siloam Springs
- Boone County**
  - Harrison Farmers' Market, Harrison
- Calhoun County**
  - Calhoun County Farmers' Market, Hampton
- Carroll County**
  - Berryville Farmers' Market, Berryville
  - Eureka Springs Farmers' Market, Eureka Springs
- Chicot County**
  - Mel's Farmers' Market, Lake Village
- Clark County**
  - Clark County Farmers' Market, Arkadelphia
- Clay County**
  - Clay County Farmers' Market, Piggott
- Cleburne County**
  - Cleburne County Farmers' Market, Heber Springs
- Conway County**
  - Conway County Farmers' Market, Morrilton
- Craighead County**
  - ASU Regional Farmers' Market, Jonesboro
- Cross County**
  - Cross County Farmers' Market, Wynne
- Drew County**
  - Drew County Farmers' Market, Monticello
- Faulkner County**
  - Conway Farmers' Market, Conway

- Garland County**
  - Historic Downtown Farmers' Market, Hot Springs
- Greene County**
  - Paragould Farmers' Market, Paragould
- Hot Springs County**
  - Hot Springs County Farmers' Market, Malvern
- Izard County**
  - Melbourne Farmers' Market, Melbourne
- Jackson County**
  - Downtown Newport Farmers' Market, Newport
- Jefferson County**
  - Pine Bluff Farmers' Market, Pine Bluff
- Johnson County**
  - Johnson County Farmers' Market, Clarksville
- Lee County**
  - Lee County Farmers' Market, Marianna
- Logan County**
  - Booneville Farmers' Market, Booneville
- Madison County**
  - Madison County Farmers' Market, Humisville
- Miller County**
  - Farmers' Market of Texarkana, Texarkana
  - Gateway Farmers' Market, Texarkana
- Montgomery County**
  - Montgomery County Farmers' Market, Mt. Ida
- Nevada County**
  - Nevada County Farmers' Market, Prescott
- Newton County**
  - Newton County Farmers' Market, Jasper
- Ouachita County**
  - Ouachita County Farmers' Market, Camden
- Perry County**
  - Perry County Farmers' Market, Perryville
- Phillips County**
  - Marvell Farmers' Market, Marvell
- Polk County**
  - Polk County Farmers' Market, Mena

- Pope County**
  - Pope County Farmers' Market, Russellville
- Pulaski County**
  - Certified Arkansas Farmers' Market, NLR
  - Home Grown Market, Little Rock
  - River Market Farmers' Market, Little Rock
- Randolph County**
  - Randolph County Farmers' Market, Pochontas
- Saline County**
  - Benton Farmers' Market, Benton
- St. Francis County**
  - Forrest City Farmers' Market, Forrest City
- Scott County**
  - Scott County Farmers' Market, Waldron
- Sebastian County**
  - Brunwick Farmers' Market, Fort Smith
- Stone County**
  - Stone County Farmers' Market, Mountain View
- Union County**
  - Main Street El Dorado Farmers' Market, El Dorado
- Washington County**
  - Fayetteville Farmers' Market, Fayetteville
  - Springdale Farmers' Market, Springdale
  - West Fork Garden Market Cooperative, West Fork
- *Denotes member of the Arkansas Farmers' Market Association*

## What is **Arkansas GROWN**?

Arkansas Grown is more than just a logo – it's an assurance that the produce, meat or other product you're buying was grown in Arkansas or made from ingredients grown in Arkansas. Only products authenticated by the Arkansas Agriculture Department may carry the Arkansas Grown logo. The Arkansas Agriculture Department developed the program to help consumers who want to support Arkansas farmers and farm-related enterprises.



To learn more, visit [www.naturallyarkansas.org](http://www.naturallyarkansas.org).

**Good Agricultural & Handling Practices Workshop**  
**Cooperative Extension Service State Office**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**  
**February 1, 2008**

- 8:30 - 9:00**      **Registration (Refreshments provided)**  
Moderating: Ron Rainey, Associate Professor  
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
- 9:00 - 9:15**      **“Welcome”**  
Richard Bell, Secretary of Agriculture  
Arkansas Agriculture Department
- 9:15 – 10:00**      **“The Future of Food Safety”**  
Andy Goldring, Sales Manager  
Del Monte Fresh Produce N.A., Inc.
- 10:00 – 10:30**      **“Wal-Mart Certification Audit Program”**  
Jaime Lastra, Director of Global Supplier Auditing  
Corporate Quality, Food Safety and Security Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- 10:30 – 10:45**      **Break (Refreshments)**
- 10:45 – 11:15**      **“Food Safety Auditing Process”**  
Juan Muniz, Director of Auditing  
Primus Labs
- 11:15 – 11:45**      **“Arkansas Food Safety Audit Program”**  
Tim Ellison, Director, Plant Board Marketing Division -  
Arkansas Agriculture Department
- 11:45 – 1:00**      **Lunch - Lunch limited to the first eighty (80) registrants**
- 1:00 - 1:30**      **“A Grower’s Perspective”**  
Harvey Williams  
Williams Farms
- 1:30 – 2:30**      **“USDA Federal-State GAP and GHP Audit Verification Program”**  
David Markwardt, Federal Program Manager  
Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of  
Agriculture – Kansas City  
Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service
- 2:30 – 2:40**      **Conference wrap-up**

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**UofA**  
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
Cooperative Extension Service

Program made possible by funding from United States Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant.

## Attachment 9

By Elizabeth Fortune  
Extension Communications Specialist  
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Jan. 14, 2008  
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(375 words)

### **Food safety on the farm subject of workshop**

LITTLE ROCK-- Good agricultural production and handling practices are the topics of a one-day food safety workshop Friday, February 1, 2008, at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service state office in Little Rock. The workshop is sponsored by the extension service and Arkansas Agriculture Department.

“Participants will increase their knowledge of the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) recommendations for good agricultural practices and good handling practices,” said Dr. Ron Rainey, associate professor of agriculture economics for the extension service. “In addition to learning these recommendations, participants will also learn about the USDA’s Federal-State auditing program.”

Commercial fruit and vegetable growers, as well as, processors and handlers of produce are encouraged to attend the workshop. Educators and industry representatives interested in increasing their knowledge of recommended agricultural production and handling practices and the auditing program are also encouraged to attend. Anyone interested in commercial produce marketing is invited to attend.

The following groups will present information: the USDA’s fruit and vegetable section, Arkansas Agriculture Department, a produce grower, third-party auditor and experts working in produce retail and wholesale distribution. Presenters also include representatives from Del Monte Fresh Produce, Wal-Mart and Primus Labs. These presentations will discuss the importance of evaluating food safety measures and the value of assessing business practices. A new program from the Arkansas Agriculture

Department assisting growers with the costs of participating in an auditing program will also be presented.

“Food safety begins on the farm, and the Arkansas Agriculture Department supports the adoption of good agricultural production and handling practices as important components in the reduction of food safety hazards,” said Tim Ellison, marketing director for the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

The auditing program on the agenda will help the produce industry verify voluntary adherence to the FDA’s “Guide to minimize microbial food safety hazards for fresh fruits and vegetables.” Personnel with the federal-state inspection service (FSIS) review a participant’s facility, agronomic practices and documented procedures to determine if good agricultural and handling practices are maintained.

There is no cost to attend this workshop. Registration deadline is Tuesday, January 28, 2008. For more information about the workshop and to register, visit [www.aragriculture.org/marketing/ag\\_handling\\_information.htm](http://www.aragriculture.org/marketing/ag_handling_information.htm), or contact Brenda Duggins at [bduggins@uaex.edu](mailto:bduggins@uaex.edu), and 501-671-2347.

The Cooperative Extension Service is part of the U of A Division of Agriculture.

# ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNOR

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January 16, 2008

John Doe  
Home Grown 2'Maters Inc.  
117 N. Main Street  
Hogs Wash, AR 72XXX

Dear Mr. Doe:

I want to congratulate you for participating in and passing the USDA Federal-State Audit Program for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices, farm review. The safety of our nation's food supply begins on the farm and your voluntary adoption of the practices found in the Food and Drug Administration's "*Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Foods and Vegetables*" signals your willingness to do your part.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet and for Arkansas agriculture, an important part of a healthy economy. Increasing the diversity of our states agriculture with such high-value crops helps Arkansas maintain its role as one of the nations leading producers of food and fiber. But for growth to continue in this segment of agriculture and for the sake of continuous improvement to our already safe food supply, I believe our states other fruit and vegetable producers and handlers should follow your lead.

Therefore, my department has applied for and received a grant from the USDA to conduct a program to encourage the adoption of GHP/GAP. As a part of this program, the Arkansas Agriculture Department will reimburse producers and handlers who successfully pass third party audits the cost of those audits up to \$500 per year.

In your particular case, the \$480.66 fee for the GAP audit Mr. John Lansdale conducted on August 24, 2007, has been paid by this program.

A second component of this program is a GHP/GAP workshop to be conducted by my department in association with the U. of A. Cooperative Extension Service. The workshop is scheduled for February 1, 2008 at the CES office in Little Rock. An agenda is enclosed. I hope you find the program useful and can attend.

Sincerely,

Secretary Richard Bell  
Arkansas Agriculture Department